

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON LEAVE POLICIES AND RESEARCH

12th International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2016

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JUNE 2016

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1. Introduction

The **International Network on Leave Policies and Research** has been producing an annual review of leave policies and related research since 2005 (for earlier reviews, go to the network's website: http://www.leavenetwork.org/archive_2005_2009/annual_reviews/).

The review covers Maternity, Paternity and Parental leaves; leave to care for sick children and other employment-related measures to support working parents; and early childhood education and care policy. As well as policies, it provides information on publications and research.

The review is based on **country notes from each participating country**, prepared by members of the network and edited by one of the network's coordinators. Each country note follows a standard format: details of different types of leave; the relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy; recent policy developments; information on take-up of leave; recent publications and current research projects.

The review also includes **definitions of the main types of leave policies**; and **cross-country comparisons**. These comparative overviews cover: each main type of leave; total leave available; the relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements; policy changes and developments since the previous review; and a summary of take-up of leave across countries.

The 2016 review includes **2 new countries: Korea and Romania**. Altogether, it covers 40 countries. Including the new countries, these are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Uruguay.

N.B. It was not possible to update and revise the country note for South Africa for the 2016 review; the country note for this country therefore, refers to April 2015.

The review is available online either as one complete document; or, for ease of downloading, divided into its constituent parts.

If citing the complete review, please do so as:

Koslowski A., Blum S., and Moss P. (2016) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2016*. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/

If citing an individual country note, please use the citation given as a footnote on the first page of that country note.

Italy¹

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April 2016

For comparisons with other countries in this review – on demographic, economic, employment and gender equality indicators and on leave provision and early childhood education and care services - go to [cross-country comparisons](#) page on website. To contact authors of country notes, go to [membership-list of members](#) page on website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

a. Maternity leave (*Congedo di Maternità*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and (for public employees) Ministry of Economy and Finance)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Twenty weeks (five months): at least four weeks before the birth. It is obligatory to take this leave.

Payment and funding

- Eighty per cent of earnings with no ceiling for salaried workers. For home helps, self-employed workers and agricultural temporary labourers, earnings are 80 per cent of conventional earnings determined each year by the law; for non-fixed term workers, Maternity leave depends on accredited contributions, though each professional sector has the possibility to determine, with approval by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies, a higher ceiling, after considering income and contribution potential of the professional sector and compatibility with its financial.
- Funded by INPS (National Department for Social Welfare), financed by contributions from employers and employees at a rate that is related to the sector and to the type of contract (for example, in manufacturing it is 0.46 per cent of earnings for employers and 0.28 per cent for employees). Workers on Maternity leave may be paid direct by INPS or else by their employer, who is recompensed by INPS. These contributions are directed to maintain pension rights.
- Pension contributions for women taking leave are made by INPS.

¹ Please cite as: Addabbo, T., Cardinali, V., Giovannini, D. and Mazzucchelli, S. (2016) 'Italy country note', in: Koslowski A., Blum S. and Moss P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2016*. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/

Flexibility

- For employees and workers enrolled in '*Gestione separata*'², the 20 week period is compulsory, but there are two options for taking this leave: four weeks before the birth and 16 weeks after (upon presentation of a medical certificate); and eight weeks before the birth and 12 weeks after. The allowance is accorded to autonomous female workers from eight weeks before the birth to 12 weeks after; maternity leave, however, is not compulsory for this category. The Jobs Act provides that, in case of premature birth, which take place before the 7th month, the amount of leave not yet used before birth is in addition to that postpartum same.
- In case of a premature birth, the mother may take unused prenatal leave after the birth; and if the infant is hospitalized, the mother has the right to suspend the Maternity leave, taking up the leave again after the child is discharged.
- The mother can transfer two days to the father.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- All employees and self-employed women with social security membership, including workers enrolled in *Gestione separata*.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent) or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- In the case of multiple or premature births, the length of leave increases by 12 weeks.

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Public sector employees receive 100 per cent of earnings.
- In general national collective agreements guarantee 100 per cent of earnings, with employers paying the additional 20 per cent.

b. Paternity leave (*congedo di paternità*) (Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies)

Length of leave

- Two days. Fathers can take two additional days if the mother agrees to transfer these days from her Maternity leave allocation.

Payment and funding

- One hundred per cent of earnings.

Flexibility

- Leave can be used until five months after childbirth.

Eligibility

² The INPS enrolls in *Gestione separata* ('separate administration') workers who do not contribute to other forms of welfare and who do not have any type of pension, e.g. workers on a fixed-term research project.

- All employees

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Employed fathers, including those who are self-employed and enrolled in *Gestione separata*, may take three months paid leave following childbirth in the following circumstances: the mother's death or severe illness; the child being left by the mother; or the child being in the sole care of the father. An important verdict by the Tribunal of Florence extends the possibility of obtaining Paternity leave, paid at 80 per cent of earnings, to two months before childbirth. This means that the father can take the whole period of Maternity leave in certain circumstances, i.e. if the mother is a housewife or ill or, alternatively, if she is a self-employed worker who cannot take advantage, for various reasons, of the leave. The Tribunal is a civil court and its decision acts as an important precedent for other Tribunals, but is not automatically binding on them. Conditions are the same as for Maternity leave.

c. Parental leave (*Congedo Parentale*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policies and (for public employees) Ministry of Economy and Finance)

Length of leave (before and after child's birth)

- Six months per parent. Leave is an individual entitlement and non-transferable.
- The maximum total length of leave per family is ten months unless the father takes at least three months of leave; in which case the total length of leave can be extended to 11 months and the father can extend his leave to seven months. During this period, parents receive pension credits so they do not suffer a reduced pension because of taking leave.

Payment and funding

- Thirty per cent of earnings when leave is taken for a child under six years; unpaid if taken when a child is six to twelve years according to the implementing decree of the Jobs Act (March 2015).
- Funded as Maternity leave.
- Pension contributions for parents taking leave are made by INPS.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken at any time until a child is twelve years old.
- Leave can be taken as a single leave period up to a maximum of six months; or as shorter periods amounting to a maximum of six months.
- Leave can be taken on an hourly basis, up to half of the daily hours worked during the month immediately preceding the start of Parental leave. Workers cannot take 'hourly based leave' and another kind of permitted absence from work on the same day.
- Parents can take leave at the same time.
- From the end of Maternity leave until 11 months after the birth, mothers - mothers who meet the requirements of the law- can exchange their Parental leave for vouchers of €300 per month for use in reducing childcare costs. It is an experimental measure until 2018 and is realized as part of the annual budget defined by specific regulations.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- All employed parents, except domestic workers and home helps. Self-employed workers are generally entitled to three months, which can be taken only during the first year after child's birth.
- The father is entitled to leave even if the mother is not, for example if she is a housewife. Circular letter B/12-5-2009 from the Department of Labour, Health, and Social Policies extends the right to fathers to make use of the leave indicated in the art. 40c, Act of Law n. 151/2001 (right to work reduced hours with full earnings compensation for the first 12 months after childbirth) if the mother is a housewife; previously this right was limited to fathers where the mother was self-employed. This change gives equal value to the domestic work of non-employed mothers as to paid work.
- Parental leave of three months, to be taken within the first year of the child, is available to workers enrolled with *Gestione separata* by the INPS.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- As the leave is per child, each parent is entitled to additional leave in the case of a multiple birth (e.g. the length is doubled for twins, tripled for triplets).
- A lone parent may take ten months of leave.

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Public sector employees receive 100 per cent of earnings during the first 30 days of leave.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- For adoptive and foster parents the same regulations for Maternity and Parental leave apply as for other parents. The period of Maternity leave does not depend on the age of the child adopted and must start within five months of entering the family; in case of international adoption, the leave can be taken also for overseas visits in connection with adoption. The Parental leave for adoptive and foster parents can be taken within eight years of the child entering the family and not after his/her eighteenth birthday; payment, generally, is 100 per cent of earnings for the first 30 days and 30 per cent for the following five months, if taken within three years of the entrance of the child into the family.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Without limit for a child under three years; five days a year per parent for a child aged three to eight years. Unpaid.

- Employees are entitled to two years leave over the course of their entire working life in the case of a serious need in their family, for example the disability of a child or other relative, even if not co-resident. The order of priority for taking leave is: husband/wife, parents, children, brothers and sisters of the person who needs care. During the period of leave, the applicant is entitled to receive an allowance of 100 per cent of their previous earnings, up to a ceiling of €47,351 per year.

Flexible working

- Until a child is 12 months old, women who are employees are entitled to work reduced hours (one hour less per day if working six hours a day or less; two hours less per day if working longer) for breast feeding, with full earnings compensation. Fathers are entitled to use this benefit in certain conditions, for example: if the mother is self-employed or freelancer; if the mother opts not to use it; if the mother is not employed; or if the father has sole custody of the child. Home helps, domestic workers and autonomous workers are not entitled to reduced hours, but in this case too, the father can work reduced hours.
- Employees (mothers and fathers) who have parental responsibility for a child under six years or a disabled child under 18 years have a legal right to apply to their employers to work flexibly (e.g. to reduce their working hours). Employers have a legal duty to consider these requests and may refuse them only 'where there is a clear business ground for doing so [and must give] a written explanation explaining why'.

Leave for women victims of gender violence

- The victims of gender violence employed in the public or private sectors who have care responsibilities (as certified by municipal social services or anti-violence centres) may request leave from work for three months, with a right to full pay. For the same period they are also entitled to switch from full-time to part-time employment. The Italian National Institute of Social Security (INPS) produced an explanatory implementation statement on leave for women victims of gender violence in April 2016.

5. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Italy is 14 to 15 months (depending on bonus months if the father takes Parental leave), and there is only around four months of well-paid leave entitlement. There is no entitlement to ECEC, though nearly all children attend ECEC from three years of age. However, despite being recognized as a social right for children and working mothers by Law 1044/1971, provision of ECEC for children under three years is much lower and very variable between different regions. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are below the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries, but above average for children over three years. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since April 2015 (including proposals currently under discussion)

The Legislative Decree of 15 June 2015, no. 80 'Measures for reconciliation of the needs of care, life and work' implements Article 1, paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Law of 10 December 2014 no. 183. For Maternity leave, the Decree introduces two new provisions: a) in the case

of premature birth, the Maternity leave not taken before birth can be taken by the mother after the birth of the child; b) in the event of hospitalization of a new-born child, the mother has the right to request the suspension of Maternity leave and to take the leave, in whole or in part, from the date of the child's discharge. To return to work during the period of the child's hospitalization working mothers must still produce a medical certificate declaring the compatibility of his state of health with the resumption of work. This provision also applies in cases of adoption. In addition, the Decree specifies that maternity allowance is payable to mothers in professional occupations (female employees already benefit) even in cases of adoption or fostering. The Decree extends Paternity leave from covering only employees, to include self-employed workers. The Decree enables Parental leave to be taken on a part-time basis, for a few hours per day, up to a maximum of half the average daily hours worked in the year immediately preceding the start of Parental leave. It also extends the period during which leave can be taken in the case of children with severe disabilities and in the case of adoption, from eight years after birth to 12 years. Payment at 30 per cent of former earnings can now be taken until a child is six years, up from the previous three years.

4. Take-up of leave

a. Maternity leave

Maternity leave is obligatory for employees. In 2012, according to administrative data referred to by Istat (2013), about 360,000 employees used Maternity leave; nine per cent were temporary workers and 91 per cent permanent workers.

b. Paternity leave

As this was only introduced in January 2013, there is no information as yet on take-up of leave.

c. Parental leave

In 2012, Parental leave was used by 285,000 employees (6.7 per cent with temporary contracts and 93.3 per cent with permanent contracts); as with Maternity leave, the type of contracts varied regionally. According to the INPS data used for this analysis, 89 per cent of employees using Parental leave in 2012 were women and 11 per cent men³. Analysis of the measure that allows women to exchange paid Parental leave for vouchers to use in childcare services, introduced by Law 92/2012 and operating on a trial basis in 2013-14, shows that only a third of the €20 million allocated for this policy has been spent⁴. It is still to be determined if this is due to the criteria for eligibility being too strict or to a low number of applications. The low number of vouchers can also in part be related to the application procedure to be followed by childcare institutions that has been considered too complex and to be accomplished within a very limited time leading to take-up by only a few institutions amongst those that are eligible⁴. Moreover, as stressed by Cardinali (2013a, b⁵), the measure's focus on women could lead to the reproduction of the already very unequal division of care responsibilities within Italian families.

³ Istat (2013) 'Rapporto sulla coesione sociale: anno 2013 - nota per la stampa' ['Report on Social Cohesion: year 2013 - Note for the press']. Available at www.istat.it

⁴ Prioschi, M. (2013) 'Flop dei bonus per l'asilo nido. Assegnato un terzo dei fondi', *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 28/07/2013, p.17.

⁵ Cardinali, V. (2013a) 'Voucher per asili nido. Perché così non va' ['Voucher for nurseries. Why so wrong?']. *Ingenere* online. Available at: <http://ingenere.it/articoli/voucher-nidi-e-baby-sitter-perch-cos-non-va>; Cardinali V. (2013b) par. 4.2, 4.3, 4.4.1. in: Isfol (2013). *Rapporto di monitoraggio del mercato del lavoro 2012* [Monitoring report of the labor market 2012]. Roma: Isfol.

5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2015

a. General overview

The literature analysed relates to different topics: changes in family structure and its effects on childcare and child well-being; childcare supply (new models, fiscal sustainability, effects on child well-being); fatherhood and its intergenerational transmission; and public and private policies that foster work-life balance.

b. Selected publications since April 2015

Bernardi, F., Boertien, D. (2015) 'Do parental separation and single motherhood strengthen intergenerational inequality in educational attainment? A decomposition analysis for Germany, Italy, the UK and the US', *Families and Societies, Working Paper Series 45*. Available at: <http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/WP45BernardiBoertien2015.pdf>

This paper tests the hypothesis that parental separation and single motherhood amplify children's inequality in educational attainment by social background. This hypothesis lies on two premises a) parental separation and single motherhood are more common among low Socio-Economic Status (SES) families and b) they are also associated to worse educational outcomes for children. We argue that there is a third premise that is largely overlooked in the literature, namely that c) there is no heterogeneity by social background in the consequences of growing up in a non-intact family. If the third premise does not hold and the consequences are more negative for children of high SES parents, the overall aggregate contribution of parental separation and single motherhood is difficult to predict a priori. We test the hypothesis in four countries that differ in the prevalence and consequences of parental separation and single motherhood: Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US. We use an Oaxaca decomposition approach to calculate a 'counterfactual' estimate of inequality of educational attainment by social background in the absence of non-intact families. Overall, we find very little influence of family structure on the level of inequality of educational attainment by social background in the four countries considered.

Bettio, F. and Gentili, E. (2015) *Asili nido e sostenibilità finanziaria: una simulazione per l'Italia [Childcare for children aged less than 3 years old in Italy and fiscal sustainability. A simulation for Italy]*. Rome: Fondazione Brodolini. Available at: http://www.ingenere.it/sites/default/files/ricerche/bettiogentili_asilinido_simulazione_italia_ottobre_2015.pdf

The study provides an analysis on the fiscal sustainability of an increase in the supply of childcare services in Italy. It analyses the possible employment outcomes of different hypothesised increases in the supply of these services.

Boccacin, L., and Bramanti, D. (2015) Active Ageing: from individualistic withdrawal to social generativity, *La Familia*, Universidad de Salamanca, No. 5 (2015): 111-128.

The concept of active ageing applies especially to the young old, i.e. people aged between 65 and 74 years. Through this contribution the authors aim to support the idea that a) there are different ways of dealing with the transition to the last phase of life, b) and that, if by focusing on active young old (65-74 yrs), a number of ways can be identified to live and make meaning of active ageing. Living longer corresponds in fact to a longer period of cohabitation (actual or 'at distance') of at least three generations (grandparents, children, grandchildren) and this enables mutual relational exchanges, whose presence or absence and subjective perception as positive or problematic have to do with the quality of life of older people and all the other generations. By analysing data concerning the 65-74-year-old European population gathered through the SHARE's wave 4, the authors are able to show different ways of experiencing, embodying and giving meaning to active aging: a)

'individualistic withdrawal'; b) 'competitive ambivalence'; c) 'social generativity'. This demonstrates that a) primary relations play a crucial role in enabling young old subjects (65-74 years) to give a sense to the transition they are experiencing and can therefore be defined generative; b) these generative relationships (at personal and family life level) give origin to forms of social generativity, thus excluding other forms of active ageing. We conclude, in accordance with the most recent international sociological and psycho-social literature, that active ageing cannot be limited to a generic activism or mainly aimed at the preservation of a vital and meaningful sense of self, nor to a compensatory aspect of the elders' lost social and relational centrality.

Boccacin, L. (2015) 'Nuovi modelli di analisi nei servizi alla persona e alla famiglia' ['New analytical models in services for individuals and families'], *La Famiglia*, vol. 49/259, pp.87 - 105 (19).

The paper aims to explore the concepts of social partnerships, social co-production and governance, in order to promote a comparison between current thought and ongoing research. The term 'partnership' refers to a structural configuration characterized by the co-presence of different social subjects - state, market and third sector - and by reciprocal and collaborative social action that seeks to achieve project goals and is based on the implementation of mostly medium- to long-term relations.

Bosoni, M.L. and Baker, S. (2015), The intergenerational transmission of fatherhood: a comparative study of the UK and Italy, *Families, Relationships and Societies*, Vol.2, No.4: 239-251.

This article explores the issue of intergenerational transmission of caring practices and parental style, focusing specifically on findings from various research studies on men and fathers in the United Kingdom and Italy. It considers the tension between change and continuity in the context of fathering/fatherhood and family practices through an intergenerational lens, it discusses key cultural differences and similarities between the two countries, and it critically examines the language and semantics of the 'new' fatherhood discourse.

Bramanti, D. (2015), 'Capitale sociale e ambiente amichevole: quali risorse per le famiglie con figli (0-13 anni)' ['Social capital and friendly environment: what resources for families with children'], *Sociologia e Politiche Sociali*, vol.18, No.2:130-151.

This paper presents findings from the Survey 'Aspects of daily life', conducted by ISTAT in 2012, which included a section dedicated specifically to families with children aged 0 to 13 years. Theoretically, the study refers to social capital, a key concept in relational sociology. Social capital is understood as the set of cooperative and trust-worthy relationships promoted by the families for their own wellbeing, and may be present to different degrees depending on a number of variables that refer to both the structural level (resources and constraints) and the referential level (values and goals of wellbeing). In this work, through a number of multivariate analyses, the author presents the analytical framework for the characteristics of the Italian families in different areas of life, which may be more or less friendly toward the needs of the families with respect to social capital.

Bulgarelli, D. and Molina, P. (2015) 'Early childcare, maternal education and family origins: differences in cognitive and linguistic outcomes throughout childhood', *Families And Societies Working Paper Series 41*. Available at: <http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/WP41BulgarelliMolina2015.pdf>

Centre-based care in early childhood has been associated with better scores on linguistic and cognitive tests at later times. Nevertheless, there is a lack of consensus about the stability of these effects across the preschool and primary school stages. Furthermore, no data about the effects of early care have been reported from the Italian context. Using a cross-sectional design, this study analyses the effects of early childcare, maternal education and parental origin (native versus foreign) on the cognitive and linguistic outcomes of 175

three- to ten-year-old children, from a Northern Italian city. Analysis of the single effects of type of care, maternal education and parental origin on children's outcomes, showed no differences. When the interactions among these variables were explored, centre-based care appeared to play a protective role with respect to maternal education, whereas home-based care appeared to play a protective role with respect to parental origin. The importance of educational intervention and training for professionals to better support children's development will be discussed.

Del Boca, D. (2015) 'Paternità. Servono congedi più lunghi' [Paternity. Longer leaves are needed]. *Ingenere*, 20/11/2015. Available at: <http://www.ingenere.it/articoli/paternita-servono-congedi-piu-lunghi>

This article taking the lead from the evidence provided by applied research on the positive effect of fathers' investment not only on child development but also in terms of gender equity and better work-life balance achievement in the family, analyses the new norms on Paternity leaves and the reform proposal and highlights the need of having longer Paternity leaves.

Del Boca, D., Pronzato, C. and Sorrenti, G. (2015) 'Does child care availability play a role in maternal employment and children's development? Evidence from Italy', *Families and Societies. Working Paper Series 47*. Available at:

<http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/WP31BrilliEtAl2015.pdf>

This study explores the impact of selection criteria on the costs and benefits of early childcare for mothers' employment, child development, and municipalities' revenues by exploiting the selection criteria of different Italian municipalities in assigning childcare places. In Italy, only around 13 per cent of the demand for public childcare coverage is met, and the number of applications exceeds the number of places in childcare services in all regions. In conditions of excess demand, municipalities introduce selection criteria to give priority to families for whom access to public child care appears to be more valuable. The authors analyse through simulations the consequences of introducing different selection criteria, using a representative Italian sample of households with children under three years of age (EU-SILC), and the selection criteria employed by six representative Italian municipalities. Our results have interesting policy implications. The benefits for child outcomes and mothers' employment are stronger in municipalities where the selection criteria give priority to more disadvantaged households. However, in these contexts selected households are less able to contribute to the financial sustainability of the service.

Koslowski, A., McLean, C. and Naumann, I. (2015) 'Report on incentive structures of parents' use of particular childcare forms', *Families and Societies Working Paper Series 35*. Available at:

<http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WP35KoslowskiEtAl2015.pdf>

Parents across the European Union use a range of childcare arrangements. This working paper contributes to our understanding of the determinants and consequences of different childcare arrangements for different families and different family members. The paper has three aims. The first is to deepen understanding of the motivations of parents for using a particular source of childcare. The second is to set the scene for an exploration of the extent of policy implementation gaps between an administrative understanding of statutory childcare service provision and the actual experience of users of these services. Third, the report highlights where the policy community might benefit from improved data to address certain knowledge gaps around childcare use. This research employs a mixed methods approach, combining primary data collection in six countries (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, UK); reviews of the statutory childcare policies in these six countries; and a methodological critique of the available data on childcare use for those countries, including harmonized comparative survey data. The central aim is for this working paper to be used as a reference tool for further analyses.

Mazzucchelli, S. and Rossi, G. (2015) "'I'd like to but I can't': The Implementation of the Italian Act on Parental Leave', *Families, Relationships and Societies*, Vol. 4, No.2: 295-308. The male breadwinner family model has long been the hegemonic cultural model in Italy. This has defined family members' relationship with the employment system; the environment considered suitable for bringing up children; and the division of work within the family, with data on the allocation of time showing the persistence of a gendered unbalanced distribution of work. Within this context an attempt has been made to respond to the problem of reconciling work and family care. The main relevant policy is Act No. 53/2000. This article outlines the essential features of this law, analyses its implementation and identifies its strengths and weaknesses. The Italian case raises wider questions about the design of Parental leave policies, their impact on parenting practices and the gendering of care. Despite being rather advanced in comparison with other European Parental leave schemes, the measure introduced in 2000 in Italy actually fosters a 'short-leave male breadwinner' model, where the involvement of fathers in care is still very limited. It also confirms the centrality of women to domestic and care work, as well as their limited presence in the labour market, compared with other EU countries.

Nitsche, N., Matysiak, A., Van Bavel, J. and Vignoli, D. (2015) Partners' educational pairings and fertility across Europe, *FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper Series 38*. Available at:

<http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/WP38NitscheEtAl2015.pdf>

This paper provides new evidence on the education-fertility relationship by using EU-SILC panel data on 17 countries to investigate how couples' educational pairings predict their childbearing behaviour. We focus on differences in first, second and third birth rates between couples with varying combinations of partners' education. Our results show that there are indeed important differences in how education relates to fertility depending on the education of the partner. First, homogamous highly educated couples show a distinct childbearing behaviour, at least in some countries. They tend to postpone the first birth most and display the highest transition rates to second and third births subsequently. Second, contrary to what may be expected based on conventional economic models of the family, hypergamous couples with a highly educated man and a lower educated female partner display among the lowest second and third birth transition rates across the majority of countries. Our findings underscore the relevance of interacting both partners' education for a deeper understanding of the education-fertility relationship.

Oláh, L.S. (2015) 'Changing families in the European Union: trends and policy implications', *FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper Series 44*. Available at: <http://www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WP44Olah2015.pdf>

The paper discusses changes in family patterns in the European Union over the past fifty years and the policy implications of these trends. First, it addresses regional developments in family formation, with respect to childbearing and partnership patterns, and how these changes affect household structures in different European countries. Thereafter, it turns its attention to socio-economic trends, focusing especially on changes in women's labour force participation. It examines the linkages between these trends and the new family patterns, followed by a discussion on policies, mainly at the EU-level. In the brief conclusion we summarize the main policy challenges ahead. Throughout, we rely on data from the Eurostat Database, Eurobarometer, OECD Labour Force Statistics and the OECD Family Database.

Riva, E. (2015) 'Familialism reoriented: continuity and change in work-family policy in Italy', *Community, Work and Family*, Vol.19, No.1: 21-42.

This article examines the process of policy-making in the work-family field in Italy and outlines the main changes in the way work-family policy has been framed and pursued. The overall objective is to investigate to what extent discourse has concurred to produce policy change. In this regard, following previous literature, the focus is on the kind of change in the three components of policy that have been brought about in the following domains: leave

schemes, childcare provision and flexible working arrangements. Insights from the Italian case deliver substantive inputs to international scholars, policy-makers and practitioners as regards the nature and extent of factors preventing change in national policy settings. In addition, results help to promote discussion and identify the ways and tools that could overcome the risk of policy failure and contribute to foster suitable and effective work–family strategies and policy frameworks.

Ruspini, E. and Tanturri, M.L. (2015) 'Father involvement with young children in contemporary Italy', in: M.A. Adler and K. Lenz (eds) *Father Involvement in The Early Years: An international comparison of policy and practice*. Bristol: Policy Press.

This is a chapter in an edited volume about fatherhood in transition, as men try to balance being both active and involved fathers while meeting the demands of the workplace. The book explores these challenges in the context of cross-national policies and the influences of these policies on the daily childcare practices of fathers. Highlighting the increasing interest in the enduring impact of early life experience, the contributors present the most up-to-date research on father involvement with young, preschool-age children in six countries—Finland, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—offering insight into the effects of different national policies related to parenting in general and fathers in particular.

Senatori, I. (ed.) (2015) *Going Up the High Road: Rethinking the Role of Social Dialogue to Link Welfare and Competitiveness: Final Report*. Quaderni Fondazione Marco Biagi - Sezione Ricerche, 2.

This report outlines the main findings of the research project 'Going Up the High Road. Rethinking the Role of Social Dialogue to Link Welfare and Competitiveness', whose focus was on the implementation of occupational welfare schemes across Europe by means of social dialogue and emerged from a broader reflection on the shortcomings of the flexicurity approach in the current economic crisis. In the context of the crisis, many companies in the European Union have adopted labour flexibility and management strategies for the reduction of labour costs as the main driver for competition. In so doing, the ability of the European Social Model to operate as a policy framework has been called into question, along with the narrative construct of the European integration project. The research project sought to analyse the rationale and the functioning of occupational welfare schemes and to cast light on best practices. It was carried out by the Marco Biagi Foundation, at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy), in close cooperation with The Institute for Social and Trade Union Research (Bulgaria), Tartu Ulikool (Estonia), Eotvos Lorand Tudományegyetem (Hungary), IRES Emilia Romagna (Italy), Università degli Studi di Trento (Italy), Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain), Goteborgs Universitet (Sweden), and the Anglia Ruskin University (United Kingdom).

Bosoni, M.L., Crespi, I. and Ruspini, E. (2016) '*Between change and continuity: fathers and work-family balance in Italy*', in: I. Crespi and E. Ruspini E. (eds.) *Balancing Work and Family in a Changing Society: The fathers' perspective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.129-142.

The chapter discusses the changing role of men and fathers and particularly fathers' work-family concerns in the Italian context. A review of international literature on fathers' identity and roles, on policies supporting fathers in work-family balance and an analysis of Italian national data (ISTAT Multipurpose Survey on Households) enables the authors to explore the transformation that affects fathering. The data confirm that although the time spent by fathers with children is increasing, there is still a considerable gap between the maternal and the paternal involvement. Parenting is still deeply gendered in terms of daily childcare activities, the relationship between care and paid work, discourses on what is appropriate and who has ultimate responsibility for nurturing and caring. The help offered by grandparents is crucial but does not challenge the gendered division of care. Data also suggest a strong relation between paternal and maternal job patterns, thus our hypothesis

that gender roles are relational and influenced by the family/couple structure seems confirmed.

Brighi, L. and Silvestri, P. (2016) 'Inefficiency in childcare production: Evidence from Italian microdata', *CAPP Working Paper no 135*, March 2016. Available at: http://155.185.68.2/campusone/web_dep/CappPaper/Capp_p135.pdf

The purpose of the paper is to study inefficiency in the production technology of the childcare service and to carry out a comparative analysis of public and private day-care centres. An empirical analysis on cross-section micro-data from a region of northern Italy has been conducted by using an input-distance function with a translog specification. Estimates of the multi-output production technology and input-oriented technical inefficiency are obtained in a stochastic frontier model with a half-normally distributed one-sided error. Heteroscedasticity has been modelled to investigate the determinants of inefficiency and estimate their marginal effects. We find that production exhibits increasing returns with an estimated elasticity of scale of 1.21. Separability between inputs and outputs is rejected at a 5 per cent level of significance. The average estimate of technical inefficiency is 10 per cent and public centres are more inefficient than private centres by 4.1 percentage points. The proportion of part-time children and the presence of mixed-age classrooms are significant determinants of inefficiency which equally affect both public and private centres.

Crespi, I. and Ruspini, E. (2016). *Balancing Work and Family in a Changing Society: The fathers' perspective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book explores, with an international perspective, the changing roles of men and fathers in a global context and how contemporary fathers deal with the work-life balance. It also intends to discuss the social issues (but also tensions) associated with changing male and father identities and with the existing social and policy agendas. Both research and policy on balancing work and family life have tended to focus on mothers' lives. As a result, men's fathering roles and their struggle with work-life balance have often been neglected. This book explores how fathers fulfill their roles both within the family and at work and what institutional support could be of most benefit to them in combining these roles.

c. Ongoing research

Being a parent couple: the parental alliance pact within the family relationship web (2013 - in progress). Sonia Ranieri, Rosa Rosnati, Raffaella Iafrate, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano.

On the basis of the concept of family as a social organisation, composed of several subsystems which exert reciprocal influence on each other, this research study aims to make an in-depth study of family relationships and the well-being of families with school-age children, taking into consideration the possible interconnections between the different relational contexts, and focusing on the role played by the parental alliance. In this study, parental alliance is not seen in terms of the division of tasks and agreement on educational methods, but refers to underlying relational dimensions such as support, the sharing of responsibility, respect, trust and reciprocal appreciation. The study involves the participation of 200 parent couples with children aged between six and eleven years. The tool used is a self-report questionnaire administered to both parents, which includes various scales validated in literature for investigating the constructs of interest, and a parenting alliance scale developed by the research team, which we intend to validate.

Diversity Maturity in Italy, Survey on gender diversity in Italian companies (2015-2016). Department of Research and Innovation ValoreD⁶

⁶ ValoreD the first association of large companies formed in Italy in order to support women's leadership in the corporate world with the mission to support and increase women's representation in top positions in major Italian companies through tangible and concrete actions.

How do Italian companies handle gender diversity issues? How, beyond the principles of equal opportunities, now widespread, do companies effectively organize to enhance and grow female talent, facilitate the reconciliation between private and professional life, removing the barriers that too often hinder the path of women's career? To understand what happens behind the figures and indicators, 62 companies have participated at this survey, answering a questionnaire divided into the four areas: governance and strategy; diversity of management tools; specific programmes and activities implemented; and measurement and monitoring. This research represents the first step towards greater integration of these issues into business operations, meeting the challenges posed by growing complexity and maximizing the benefits of diversity. Contact: Paola Castello at ricerca@valored.it

Intergenerational Family Solidarity across Europe (INTERFASOL) - SCH COST Action [2013]-[2016]. Italian research group: Camillo Regalia, Daniela Barni and Stefania G. Meda, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano. Funded by the European Commission. This is an Action that is promoted and sustained by the European Community with the aim of creating a multidisciplinary network for the realization of a research project to: a) investigate the intensity and the benefits of intergenerational family solidarity, focusing on exchange between elderly and adult generations; and b) explore the modalities and best practices for reinforcing intergenerational solidarity. The action is coordinated by Anne Marie Fontaine (University of Porto) and involves 23 European countries.

Men, work and family life [2011 - in progress]. Giovanna Rossi, Maria Letizia Bosoni and Sara Mazzucchelli, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano. The area of research on fatherhood provides an in-depth look at the theme of reconciliation between family and work from the point of view of the father within the research network Oxford Network of European Fatherhood Researchers (ONEFaR - <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/onefar/>), coordinated by Prof. Tina Miller (Oxford Brookes University, UK), with whom we have for years had a rewarding and solid collaboration.

Politiche del Buon rientro [Good return policies] (2015-). Dino Giovannini and Tindara Addabbo, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. Funded by the Hera Group. This research, carried out in the Emilia-Romagna Region, concerns *family-friendly policies* within organizational contexts, with specific reference to policies for a good return to work after Maternity leave. The focus of this study is an analysis of the effects produced by training interventions for female employees returning from leave in order to facilitate the process of returning to work. The interventions were intended to learn cross-cutting and *self-empowerment* competences not only to update knowledge and competences necessary to carry out one's working tasks. The project 'Buon Rientro' [*Good Return*] was shown to be a valid instrument to prevent the negative effects related to the return to work and to facilitate the well-being of female workers. A comparative analysis has been carried out comparing the group of workers in the Buon Rientro programme to those who did not have access to it, which showed positive outcomes for the enterprise and for the workers. Contact: Dino Giovannini at: dino.giovannini@unimore.it

Povert  E Politiche Sociali In Emilia Romagna [Poverty and Social Policies in Emilia Romagna Region] (2015-2016). Centre for the Analysis of Public Policies, Department of Economics Marco Biagi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. Funded by Emilia Romagna Region.

The research project aims at analyzing poverty in the Emilia Romagna region with special reference to the impact of social policies to reduce it and to the effect on childcare services of different fees policies. Contact: Professor Massimo Baldini at massimo.baldini@unimore.it