

# Measuring Policy Entitlements at the Micro-Level: Maternity & Parental Leave in Europe

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## Abstract

Comparative social policy has been shaped by the measurement of policy as a macro phenomenon. However theories of social policy have consistently asserted that entitlements and social rights vary across class, gender, ethnicity, employment history and the life course (Taylor-Gooby 2004). In order for these within country variations to be examined it is necessary to consider how policy is distributed amongst individuals on the micro level and this knowledge needs to be integrated into an aggregate measure. A number of approaches have been explored which aim to more fully incorporate the heterogeneity of the population. This paper builds on these approaches and synthesises a number of existing innovations to produce an indicator which allows researchers to explore the policy heterogeneity within populations, across populations and over time. Using the example of maternity and parental leave, entitlements are identified through the calculation of the amount of financial support an individual would receive if they were to have a child using data from the EU-SILC. This calculation produces an indicator of policy coverage and generosity using a combination of legislative rules with representative survey sample. The applications of this approach are not limited to maternity and parental leave benefits but demonstrate a way for researchers to explore comparative social policy in greater depth and detail by combining macro level policy data and micro level survey data.