Measuring Policy at the Micro–Level: 
The example of Parental Leave

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Mannheim, March 2015
EXISTING MEASURES

- Social Policies are largely measured at the Macro Level
- Measures predominantly use a ‘model household’ model
- Problems of representativeness (Danforth & Stephens, 2013)
- Reductive and omits within country variation
- Some examples of alternatives: (Zabel, 2008; Vaalavuo, 2013; Sutherland & Figari, 2013)
EXTENDING THE LOGIC

• Social Surveys such as the EU–SILC provide sufficient data to impute an individual's policy eligibility

• By calculating the policy coverage for every individual, aggregates can be produced that are representative

• Calculating policy at the micro level also allows for analysis by SES; Education level; Contract type; Region and many other social indicators
OUR EXAMPLE

• Data: EU–SILC, 2006–2010. 28 Countries across Europe

• Maternity and Parental Leave Coverage (Bartova, 2014)

• Policy Data taken from International Network on Leave Policies & Research, MISSOC, Multilinks, European Platform for Investing in Children

• 20,697 cohabiting couples were selected (sample limited for reasons unrelated to this research)

• Closest comparison is with OECD Family Policy Database
REPLACEMENT & COMPENSATION RATE…

![Graph showing compensation rates and OECD replacement rates for various countries.]

- Compensation Rate (Bartova, 2014)
- OECD Replacement Rate

Countries: IS, SE, EE, FI, LU, FR, AT, DK, NO, HU, CZ, BE, SK, NL, GR, IE, IT, SI, ES, UK, PL

Compensation rates range from 0.28 to 2.22, while OECD replacement rates range from 0.42 to 2.04.
DISTRIBUTION OF COMPENSATION RATE

(excludes outside values)
POLICY CHANGE: SWEDEN

[Boxplot showing compensation rates over years 2004 to 2010]
COMPENSATION RATE OVER AGE
SO WHAT…..

• Social Surveys have developed significantly as infrastructures

• Policy Databases are also heavily developed: MISSOC, CWED, SCIP

• Communication between the two could enrich both:
  • Policy databases have improved instruments
  • Social Surveys have a number of relevant and accurate indicators for free

• Could be achieved if policy databases code policies
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LIMITATIONS.....

• Model Households are a valuable theoretical tool and should not be abandoned in search of representativeness

• Social Survey data has improved but is not perfect (e.g. trade union data)

• Combining policy datasets with survey data means compounding the problems of both
FINALLY.....

Thank you for your time

We would greatly appreciate any comments