



LABOUR MARKET PROTECTION AND FAMILY POLICY IN HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE (1990-2020)

Doctoral student

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Education

Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) – 2013:
Bachelor of Business and Administration and Management.

Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) – 2016:
Master of Science in Economic and Social Sciences.

Professional experiences

- International IDEA at the United Nations (New York, USA)
- Action Institute (Milan, Italy)

Selected papers and book chapters

- *Labour Market Protection Across Space and Time (with Emanuele Ferragina)*. Journal of European Social Policy, 2022
- *Eppur si muove: labour market protection varieties and trajectories of change across 21 high-income countries (with Emanuele Ferragina)*. LIEPP working paper n°119, 2021
- *Assessing Labour Market Policy Change (with Emanuele Ferragina and Alessandro Arrigoni)*. Handbook of Labour Market Policy, forthcoming

Other activities

- PhD representative at Sciences Po for the European Graduate Network (EGN)
- Member of the Family Policy Group (Sciences Po, Paris)

This dissertation employs a mix-methods research design to investigate processes of welfare state change through the prism of labour market protection and family policy, the two social policy areas that underwent the most noticeable transformations over the last three decades (1990-2020). This investigation builds on the insights developed in the regime varieties literature and the debate bridging regime varieties and accounts of welfare state change. Our measure of labour market protection and family policy makes it possible to overcome the increasingly unrealistic Average Production Worker assumption, simultaneously accounting for dimensions of protection related to both 'old' and 'new' social risks. Labour market protection and family policy continuity and change are analysed quantitatively by employing Principal Component Analysis and two multidimensional scores to gather a holistic perspective on policy similarities and differences across countries and over time, and on the relationships between institutional arrangements and labour market outcomes. The historical process-tracing of labour market protection and family policy reforms in Italy and France complements this investigation, and helps to observe details on policy and welfare state change that are invisible to quantitative descriptive methods. This work contributes to the literature in five ways, by: 1) providing new typologies of labour market protection and family policy varieties resulting from three decades of institutional change; 2) developing a series of country-specific taxonomies of labour market protection and family policy trajectories of change; 3) showing that the path-dependency hypothesis developed in the welfare state change literature is partially rejected for labour market protection, while it mostly holds for family policy; 4) specifying, through historical process-tracing, that the labour market and family policy trajectories of change identified in previous contributions and in the quantitative analysis do not capture the full spectrum of the changes occurring in Italy and France; and 5) showing that trajectories of change can be dynamic – in other words, a country can move from one trajectory to another over-time. .

Research question(s) and argument in brief

How have labour market protection and family policy evolved in high-income countries over the last three decades?

Worlds of Welfare (WoW), Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) and École de la Régulation (ER) are frameworks customarily used to evaluate similarities and differences in labour market protection and family policy across countries (Aglietta, 1976, 1972; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Hall and Soskice, 2001; Estevez-Abe et al., 2001; Amable, 2003; Boyer, 2004; Estevez-Abe, 2005; Thévenon, 2011; Ferragina et al., 2013). These frameworks identify typical institutional varieties to which countries more or less adhere in function of their levels of labour market protection and family policy. Nevertheless, they conceive institutions as fundamentally stable over-time. Several scholars highlighted the issue of institutional immobility, questioning the inter-temporal validity of both VoC and WoW (see e.g.: Bruff and Horn, 2012; Crouch, 2005; Hanckè et al., 2013; Schneider and Paunescu, 2012; about WoW see Hay and Wincott, 2012). I employ Principal Component Analysis in two time-periods (1990-2015) to answer the first sub-research question:

1. *Are WoW, VoC and ER appropriate frameworks to compare labour market protection and family policy in a context of widespread change?*

Only few works attempted to bridge the debates on institutional diversity and accounts of change in labour market protection and family policy. In the field of labour market protection, Thelen (2012, 2014) identified three regime-specific liberalisation trajectories. In the family policy debate, Daly and Ferragina (2018) analysed the evolution of family policy in 23 high-income countries since the 1960s. However, both contributions do not provide a systematic evaluation of trajectories of change. On the one hand, Thelen analyses a restricted sample of countries using a limited selection of indicators. On the other, Daly and Ferragina, despite the larger country selection, analyse family policy changes at the aggregate level, and do not account for country (or regime)-specific trajectories. Hence, a more holistic analysis of the evolution of labour market protection and family policy might provide results that do not necessarily conform to previous contributions, leading to the identification of a second sub-research question:

2. *How can we characterize country's trajectories of change in labour market protection and family policy? Are these trajectories consistent within institutional varieties?*

Italy and France experienced similar deterioration of labour market and gender-related outcomes (such as the unemployment rate, the share of temporary and bad-quality contracts and mothers' employment rates), but opposing trajectories of change in labour market protection and family policy. On the one hand, Italy dualised its labour market protection through the harsh deregulation of employment protection for temporary contracts, with all the other dimensions remaining at very low levels. Contextually, family policy, that was residual already in the 1990s, has been only marginally reformed – mainly through the increase in family allowances. On the other hand, France was the only Coordinated country that increased its levels of labour market protection in all the dimensions under consideration. Moreover, the country experienced an expansion in the three family policy dimensions. The third sub-research question proceeds as follows:

3. *Why, despite a similar deterioration in outcomes, have Italy and France undergone opposing trajectories of labour market and family policy change? Are these trajectories dynamic?*

Mesuring labour market protection

- *Employment protection: EPL for permanent and temporary contracts, the share of workers protected with a collective bargaining agreement and union density.*
- *Unemployment protection and income maintenance: replacement rate and the spending as a % of the country's GDP.*
- *Activation: spending on active labour market policies as a % of the GDP.*
- *Workforce composition: unemployment rate, share of permanent and temporary contracts and involuntary part-time jobs*

Measuring family policy

- *Leave: length and replacement rate of maternity, paternity and parental leave and the spending on maternity and parental leave as a % of the GDP.*
- *Allowances: replacement rates of universal, tax-based and total childcare benefits and spending on cash benefits and family allowances.*
- *Services: participation rates of children aged 0-2 and 3-5 to ECEC programmes and spending on ECEC and in-kind benefits as a % of the GDP.*
- *Gender-related labour market outcomes: share of women employed with part-time and involuntary part-time contracts, and the employment rates of mothers with at least one child under 15 (all mothers and sole mothers).*

Countries under analysis

Quantitative analysis: 21 high-income countries across four welfare regimes. Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (social democratic welfare regime); Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Netherlands, Switzerland (Christian democratic welfare regime); Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain (Mediterranean welfare regime); Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, the US and the UK (liberal welfare regime).

The process tracing analysis of labour market and family policy reforms includes France and Italy.