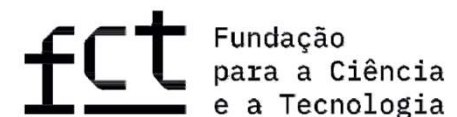


# The impact of employment precariousness on parental leave benefits: Evidence from Southern European countries

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# Research relevance

Why is it important to study employment precariousness and eligibility for parental leave benefits in Southern European countries?

- ❑ Changes in leave policies (more gender equality)
  - ❑ Changes in labour legislation (higher job insecurity)
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# Aim and sources of information

**Aim:** To understand the impact of employment precariousness on access to parental leave benefits in four Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece).

**Main sources of information:**

LEAVE Network country reports,

MISSOC (Mutual Information System on Social Protection),

Eurostat (Labour Force Survey).

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# Research questions

- Should parental leave eligibility remain linked to the parent's employment status and their social insurance record?
  - What policy measures have been adopted in order to minimise the impact of precariousness on access to parental leave benefits?
  - Is it possible to think of a parental leave scheme linked to a more universal and inclusive concept of leave entitlements?
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## Southern European Countries (general remarks)

- The emergence and development of maternity/paternity protection is related to **women's participation in the labour market**.
  - In the context of gender equality goals, there has been a **reinforcement of fathers' paid leave** (time and payment), particularly in Portugal and Spain.
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## Southern European Countries (general remarks)

- Paternity and maternity leave benefits are mainly **employment-based entitlements**, depending on a **selective model** linked to the parent's employment status and employment history (contributory scheme).
  - Over the past two decades, the **number of non-standard workers and self-employed workers** has been rising resulting in **higher risk of poverty** and **insufficient social protection**.
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# Theoretical framework

- **Emergence of a new paradigm** in the field of parental leave research - **the social inequality paradigm** (Fagnani and Boyer, 2007; McKay et al., 2016; Dobrotić and Blum, 2019; Dobrotić and Blum, 2020). This approach raises the question of **inclusiveness/exclusiveness** associated with parental leave benefits as **social rights** (Dobrotić and Blum, 2020).
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# Main topics

- ▣ **Eligibility criteria** for maternity and paternity leave benefits (2004 and 2019): **contributory** and **non contributory** schemes.
  - ▣ **Labour market conditions** (2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019): employment rate and **employment precariousness** (temporary work; part-time work; self-employment)
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Eligibility (1<sup>st</sup> topic)

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# What does it mean?

- ▣ **Eligibility for parental leave benefits** are the conditions under which leave rights can be exercised, as they typically define access to parental leave benefits (Dobrotić and Blum, 2019).
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# Leave schemes

- **Contributory scheme** - implies a relationship with the labour market, which can be assured through a previous employment situation and/or by having one at the time of birth.
  - **Non-contributory scheme** - implies insufficient insurance contributions record, that in some cases must be combined with living in a very low-income household.
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# Contributory scheme indicators

## **1<sup>st</sup> Dimension – Employment History**

- Previous insurance contributions
- Employment status at childbirth

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Dimension – Employment Sectors and/or Forms of Employment**

- Activity sectors (e.g. public and private sectors)
  - Professional occupations (e.g. agricultural workers, etc.)
  - Working status (including non standard forms of employment and self-employment)
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## 1<sup>st</sup> Dimension – Employment History

### Eligibility for **MATERNITY BENEFITS**:

- Portugal and Greece (private sector): **eligibility is based on previous insurance contributions** (180 days Portugal and 200 days Greece).
- Spain: based on the mother's **previous insurance contributions combined with their employment status at childbirth**. 180 days in the last 7 years (consecutive or aggregate) or 360 days during their working life.
- Italy and Greece (public sector employees): **mother's employment situation at childbirth and no previous insurance contributions are required**.
- Spain, Portugal and Italy: **unemployed mothers receiving the unemployment benefit are entitled**.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Dimension – Employment History

Eligibility for **PATERNITY BENEFITS**:

- Portugal and Spain: **eligibility criteria for paternity leave benefit are the same as for maternity benefit.**
- Greece and Italy: **all employed fathers (no previous period of insurance contributions).**
- Portugal, Spain and Italy: **unemployed fathers receiving unemployment benefits are eligible for paternity benefits.**

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Dimension – Employment Sectors and/or Forms of Employment

### DIFFERENT PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS/ACTIVITY SECTORS

- Greece: entitlement to parental leave benefits **also depends on the sector of activity** (private or public).
  - Portugal: **no differences between public and private sectors.**
  - Spain: **regional/local differences** benefit public sector employees.
  - Italy: important **distinction by professional occupations.**
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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Dimension – Employment Sectors and/or Forms of Employment

### SELF-EMPLOYED

- Portugal: **self-employed mothers and fathers are entitled** if they have an up-to-date record of insurance contributions.
- Spain: **self-employed mothers and fathers are entitled** if they meet general eligibility criteria for maternity/paternity leave.
- Italy: **self-employed mothers are entitled**. However, **maternity leave is not compulsory**. Since 2015, **self-employed fathers have been entitled**.
- Greece: **self-employed mothers are only partially entitled**. Shorter periods of paid leave (4 months), with a low payment level (maximum of 200 euros per month). **Self-employed fathers are not entitled**.



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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Dimension – Employment Sectors and/or forms of employment

### NON-STANDARD WORKERS

- Portugal: **non-standard workers entitled** to maternity and paternity benefits if they fulfil a **minimum record of social insurance contributions**. **Very short-term contracts** and **some categories of voluntary social security schemes may not be entitled**.
  - Spain: **non-standard workers have full statutory** access to maternity and paternity benefits. However, **access to these benefits is partial for agricultural workers**.
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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Dimension – Employment Sectors and/or forms of employment

### NON-STANDARD WORKERS

- Greece: **non-standard workers have full statutory** access to maternity and paternity benefits **excluding vocational trainees**.
  - Italy: **non-standard workers have full statutory** access without exceptions. However, **non-fixed term contracts need to fulfil previous insurance contributions**, which is the opposite of what happens with standard workers.
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# Non contributory scheme

Citizenship-based criteria

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## Citizenship-based criteria

- Portugal: mothers and fathers are both eligible for parental social benefit (introduced in 2008), **provided that the household income is very low**. It comprehends the **whole period of paid leave (120, 150 or 180 days)** as well as **fathers' exclusive paid leave (25 days)**. The amounts ranged from **274 euros** to **343 euros/month** (2019).
- Spain: non-contributory maternity benefit (introduced in 2007, revised in 2009) **only applies to working mothers**. It comprehends the **42 calendar days of mandatory maternity leave** (or 56 days : single mothers, large families, multiple births, or disabilities). Amount **537 euros/month** (2019).

## Citizenship-based criteria

- Italy: **working mothers with low income or temporary unemployed mothers, and non-working mothers with low household income** are entitled to **specific maternity allowances (dello Stato and dei comuni)**, paid monthly for **5 months** (the same length of compulsory maternity leave). The **amounts ranged from 346 to 421 euros/month** (2019) and **can be cumulated**.
- Greece: **low-income working mothers (employees) are entitled to the maternity benefit for uninsured mothers**, a mean-tested benefit (maximum of 586.94 euros monthly family income). **Total amount of 440 euros**.

## Eligibility criteria (conclusions)

- In Southern European countries, **parental leave benefits** are mainly an **employment-based entitlement** based on a **selective model**. Those having **more stable careers** are **better protected than those with less secure jobs** (e.g. short-term or temporary contracts).
- The difference between public and private sector employees, (Greece), the distinction by professional occupations (Italy), and the continuous differentiation based on previous insurance contributions (Portugal and Spain), results in a **general restriction of fully paid maternity and paternity leaves benefits for some groups of parents**, generally **non-standard workers** (temporary, part-time, family workers, etc.) **and the self-employed**.

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## Eligibility criteria (conclusions)

- As a way of including workers with less stable and secure careers, **the four countries in analysis introduced a flat-rate social parental benefit available for mothers** (and fathers in the Portuguese case) who do not meet eligibility criteria and/or live in a very low-income household.

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# Labour market (2<sup>nd</sup> topic)

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Table 1 – Employment rate population aged 25-64 years (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	75,0	66,9	63,4	66,8	68,1
2009	73,2	65,9	63,9	<b>68,3</b>	70,3
2014	70,4	62,7	62,9	<b>56,0</b>	70,5
2019	<b>78,9</b>	<b>70,6</b>	<b>66,4</b>	<b>64,1</b>	<b>75,2</b>

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Table 2 – Gender employment gap population aged 25-64 years (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (difference p.p.)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	14,1	<b>28,3</b>	27,9	32,0	17,5
2009	11,2	15,3	25,0	27,1	14,6
2014	7,9	11,1	20,7	19,1	12,3
2019	<b>7,3</b>	<b>12,5</b>	<b>20,7</b>	<b>21,7</b>	12,3

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Table 3 - Women employment rate (25-49 years old) by education level (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004 and 2019 (%)

		Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
Lower education (levels 0-2 ISCED)	2004	<b>72,2</b>	47,3	<b>44,8</b>	<b>46,6</b>	51,9
	2019	<b>74,8</b>	54,9	<b>39,9</b>	<b>43,0</b>	49,5
Secondary education (levels 3 and 4 ISCED)	2004	81,1	65,2	<b>67,9</b>	<b>59,0</b>	71,4
	2019	86,0	69,3	<b>61,8</b>	<b>56,3</b>	74,8
Tertiary education (levels 5-8 ISCED)	2004	<b>91,2</b>	77,8	<b>79,5</b>	<b>79,1</b>	83,4
	2019	<b>89,4</b>	80,8	<b>76,6</b>	<b>73,9</b>	85,0

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

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## However...

The growth of the employed population and the professional integration of women have been closely accompanied by the increase in subcontracting or underemployment, that is, precarious employment.

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Table 4 – Temporarily employed population aged 15-74 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	<b>19,8</b>	<b>32,2</b>	<b>11,9</b>	<b>12,5</b>	14,3
2009	21,9	<b>24,8</b>	12,4	12,3	14,8
2014	21,4	<b>24,1</b>	13,6	11,6	15,3
2019	<b>20,8</b>	<b>26,4</b>	<b>17,0</b>	<b>12,5</b>	15,1

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Table 5 – Temporarily employed population aged 25-34 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	<b>24,5</b>	38,6	<b>14,3</b>	15,3	16,9
2009	30,8	31,9	17,1	16,3	18,2
2014	31,5	34,8	23,2	16,8	20,5
2019	<b>32,1</b>	<b>38,4</b>	<b>29,1</b>	<b>17,2</b>	19,8

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Table 6 - Involuntary temporary employment population aged 15-74 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	<b>68,8</b>	<b>69,0</b>	<b>56,5</b>	71,8	49,5
2009	81,9	78,2	66,9	70,4	53,2
2014	83,5	85,6	72,4	69,1	55,5
2019	<b>81,6</b>	<b>80,1</b>	<b>79,9</b>	<b>73,6</b>	<b>51,5</b>

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Table 7 – Part-time employment rate population aged 15-74 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	10,4	<b>8,8</b>	<b>12,7</b>	<b>4,6</b>	15,7
2009	10,7	12,5	14,2	6,1	17,4
2014	12,1	15,9	18,3	9,4	19,3
2019	9,6	<b>14,6</b>	<b>18,9</b>	<b>9,2</b>	<b>19,0</b>

Source: Eurostat, 2020.



Table 8 – Involuntary part-time employment, population aged 15-74 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	22,9	<b>20,4</b>	35,5	51,5	22,0
2009	29,5	43,8	45,5	47,8	25,9
2014	40,4	63,4	64,1	69,8	30,6
2019	<b>36,8</b>	<b>53,7</b>	<b>64,7</b>	<b>65,4</b>	<b>24,6</b>

Source: Eurostat, 2020.

Table 9 – Self-employment rate population aged 25-64 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	<b>22,6</b>	<b>17,8</b>	<b>25,6</b>	<b>31,3</b>	16,3
2009	20,0	16,6	23,3	30,2	15,7
2014	16,2	17,2	22,6	31,6	15,3
2019	<b>14,3</b>	15,5	<b>21,0</b>	<b>28,7</b>	14,3

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurostat, 2020.

Table 10 – Self-employment rate population aged 25-49 (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, and EU27), 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 (%)

	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Greece	EU27 (from 2020)
2004	17,5	15,2	23,7	27,0	14,5
2009	15,6	14,3	22,1	25,1	14,2
2014	12,5	14,9	21,6	26,4	13,7
2019	11,9	13,3	<b>19,8</b>	<b>23,7</b>	12,6

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurostat, 2020.

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## Final Remarks (i)

**More women** entering the labour market and **lower quality of employment contracts** (non-standard contracts – temporary jobs and part-time employment). **Less social protection** rights.

Huge **discrepancy regarding parental leave entitlements** (time and payment), depending on men's and women's working status and insurance regimes.

In Southern European countries, at least **one-quarter of the population of reproductive age cannot fully benefit from existing parental protection schemes**. In some categories of precariousness, these figures increase to higher percentages.

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## Final Remarks (ii)

Introduction of a **non-contributory regime** and introduction of a scheme adapted to less protected workers within the contributory regime.

**More social inequalities** in the take-up of parental leave. **The issue is not so much whether or not the worker has access to leave, but the type of leave they are entitled to and the level of payment associated.**

By analysing the non-contributory leave policy regimes in the countries under review, we see that it is still far from a more citizenship-based model. In fact, **non-contributory schemes are reproducing the existing social inequalities of the contributory scheme as also reinforcing its gender inequality dimensions.**

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## Final Remarks (iii)

By placing **too many obstacles** in the way of **eligibility regarding fully paid maternity and paternity leaves**, we may well be contributing to **the permanence of inequalities** that not only **prevent younger generations from becoming parents** but also **discriminate against children's first care** according to the employment status and contributions record of their parents.

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Thank you for your attention!

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Atalaia, S. and Leitão, M. (in press, 2023) **The impact of employment precariousness on parental leave benefits in Southern European Countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece)**, In P. Michón and S. Gabel (Eds.) *The effects of precarity on diversity, and work and family life* (Routledge).

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