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Codebook of the Global Dataset on Parental Leave (GDParL)

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ABSTRACT

The Global Dataset on Parental Leave (GDParL) provides harmonized cross-national data on paid parental leave policies for 153 independent nation-states with populations exceeding 500,000, covering the years 1995, 2013, and 2021. Developed within the framework of the Global Welfare State Information System (WeSIS), the GDParL systematically captures key dimensions of parental leave schemes across three time points, including their existence, duration, benefit level, entitlement types, and financing structures. The dataset includes detailed variables on the duration of paid leave (reported both in original units and standardized weeks), benefit levels (measured in original monetary terms as well as replacement rates), entitlement types (individual vs. family-based), and sources of financing (e.g., taxation, insurance, or employer liability). To ensure consistency and facilitate analytical clarity, the GDParL applies a standardized coding scheme to identify missing values and inapplicable cases. Taken together, these features make the GDParL a comprehensive resource for the comparative analysis of global trends in the design, scope, and coverage of parental leave policies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Global Dataset on Parental Leave (GDParL) provides harmonized data on paid parental leave policies in 153 independent nation-states with populations exceeding 500,000, covering the years 1995, 2013, and 2021. The dataset captures key policy dimensions, including the duration of paid leave (reported in original units and standardized weeks), benefit levels (measured in original monetary terms as well as replacement rates), entitlement types (individual versus family-based), and sources of financing (e.g., taxation, insurance, or employer liability). To ensure consistency and facilitate analytical clarity, the GDParL applies a standardized coding scheme to indicate missing values and inapplicable cases.

The dataset was compiled as part of the project *Pathways to Family Policy Universalism: Coverage and Generosity of Family Policies in a Global Perspective*, conducted within the Collaborative Research Center (CRC) 1342 "Global Dynamics of Social Policy" at the University of Bremen. The project is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation; Project number 374666841 – SFB 1342), spanning the periods 2018 until 2021 and 2022 to 2025.

1.1 Data

» Countries: 153 independent states with populations exceeding 500,000, for which information has been regularly updated in either *Women, Business, and the Law* or *ILO TRAVAIL*.
» Years: 1995, 2013, 2021

The GDParL provides information on paid parental leave policies with the spatial coverage shown in Table 1. As information on parental leave coverage in the dataset is provided only for the years 1995, 2013 and 2021, the longitudinal component of the dataset is restricted to these time points in order to ensure a balanced dataset across all variables included in this codebook. In a few cases, particularly for earlier periods, no information is available. These cases are coded as "-999". If a parental leave policy did not exist in a given year, this is coded as "-888" (for a detailed discussion of the treatment of missing and inapplicable values, see Section 1.3).

Table 1 lists all 153 countries included in the dataset, together with their country codes for 1995, 2013, and 2021, showing either the recorded value or "-888" where no parental leave policy existed in a specific year.

Table 1. Spatial coverage of the Global Dataset on Parental Leave for 1995, 2013, and 2021

Country Name	Country Code	Country Name	Country Code
Afghanistan	700	Lesotho	570
Albania	339	Libya	620
Algeria	615	Lithuania	368
Argentina	160	Luxembourg	212
Armenia	371	Macedonia	343
Australia	900	Madagascar	580
Austria	305	Malawi	553
Azerbaijan	373	Malaysia	820
Bahrain	692	Mali	432
Bangladesh	771	Mauritania	435
Belarus	370	Mauritius	590
Belgium	211	Mexico	70
Benin	434	Mongolia	712

Country Name	Country Code
Bolivia	145
Bosnia and Herzegovina	346
Bostwana	
Brazil	140
Bulgaria	355
Burkina Faso	439
Burundi	516
Cambodia	811
Cameroon	471
Canada	20
Cape Verde	402
Central African Republic	482
Chad	483
Chile	155
Colombia	100
Congo	484
Costa Rica	94
Croatia	344
Cuba	
Cyprus	352
Czech Republic	316
Democratic Republic of the Congo	490
Denmark	390
Djibouti	522
Dominican Republic	42
Ecuador	130
Egypt	651
El Salvador	92
Equatorial Guinea	411
Estonia	366
Ethiopia	530
Fiji	950
Finland	375
France	220
Gabon	481
Gambia	420
Georgia	372
Germany	255
Ghana	452
Greece	350
Guatemala	90
Guinea	438
Guyana	110
Haiti	41
Honduras	91

Country Name	Country Code
Montenegro	341
Morocco	600
Myanmar	775
Namibia	565
Nepal	790
Netherlands	210
New Zealand	920
Nicaragua	93
Niger	436
Nigeria	475
Norway	385
Oman	698
Pakistan	770
Panama	95
Paraguay	150
Peru	135
Philippines	840
Poland	290
Portugal	235
Qatar	694
Romania	360
Russia	365
Rwanda	517
Saudi Arabia	670
Senegal	433
Serbia	342
Sierra Leone	451
Singapore	830
Slovakia	317
Slovenia	349
Solomon Islands	940
Somalia	520
South Africa	560
South Korea	732
Spain	230
Sri Lanka	780
Sudan	625
Swaziland	225
Sweden	380
Switzerland	225
Syria	652
Taiwan	713
Tajikistan	702
Tanzania	510
Thailand	800

Country Name	Country Code		Country Name	Country Code
Hungary	310		Togo	461
Indonesia	850		Trinidad and Tobago	52
Iran	630		Tunisia	616
Iraq	645		Turkey	640
Ireland	205		Turkmenistan	
Israel	666		Uganda	500
Italy	325		Ukraine	369
Ivory Coast	437		United Arab Emirates	696
Jamaica	51		United Kingdom	200
Japan	740		United States of America	2
Jordan	663		Uruguay	165
Kazakhstan	705		Uzbekistan	704
Kenya	501		Venezuela	101
Kuwait	690		Vietnam	816
Kyrgyzstan	703		Yemen	679
Laos	812		Zambia	551
Latvia	367		Zimbabwe	552
Lebanon	660			

1.2 Definition of parental leave

In this dataset, parental leave is defined as paid leave available to parents shortly after childbirth. If a country transforms maternity leave into a parental leave program without maintaining a separate maternity leave scheme (as in the case of Norway, Sweden, and Portugal), the leave is coded as parental leave in the GDParL. By contrast, in the Historical Dataset on Maternity Leave (HDML), such cases are recorded as "policy does not exist" (coded as "-888"), reflecting the absence of a distinct maternity leave program.

Furthermore, this dataset classifies the father's quota as parental leave, even though it is functionally equivalent to paternity leave. To obtain a comprehensive overview of leave policies, maternity, paternity, and parental leave provisions should be considered jointly[1]. Importantly, the GDParL includes only leave policies that are regulated at the state level.

1.3 Treatment of missing values

As part of the Global Welfare State Information System (WeSIS), the GDParL aims to provide comprehensive and systematic information on the existence, design, and implementation of paid parental leave policies worldwide, including explicit documentation of cases in which no such policies are in place.

Despite this objective, data collection inevitably encountered instances in which complete information could not be obtained. To ensure transparency and facilitate analytical clarity, the dataset applies a standardized system for coding missing values. These codes are used consistently across all variables and country-year observations:

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1   Specifically, within the WeSIS framework, users are encouraged to also consult the Historical Dataset on Maternity Leave (HDML) and the Global Dataset on Paternity Leave (GDPatL) alongside the Global Dataset on Parental Leave (GDParL).

» **-999 = No information available**: This code is used when relevant data are unavailable or could not be identified from the available sources.

» **-888 = Policy does not exist**: This code indicates that data collection was intentionally not pursued because it is known that no relevant policy existed for the country-year in question, or that the policy had been formally discontinued.

» **-777 = Not applicable**: This code is applied when a variable is conceptually irrelevant to a given policy/context or was not collected because it was not relevant for a specific country or parental leave system.

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2. VARIABLES

We strongly recommend that users download all variables from WeSIS whose names begin with "fam_par_leave" and end with "_own". These variables were developed by our research group during the data collection process to provide a comprehensive and coherent overview of paid parental leave policies worldwide.

While standardized variables, such as the duration of paid parental leave (measured in weeks) or benefit levels expressed as replacement rates, provide a robust basis for comparative statistical analysis, the informative variables—such as the duration of paid parental leave reported in original units and the accompanying notes—offer important contextual detail. Together, these variables enable users to more accurately interpret and validate the standardized measures.

Duration of parental benefit (in original units) (fam_par_leave_dur_ben_own)

» This variable provides detailed information on the duration of parental benefits, preserving the original coding used in national legislation as closely as possible. As a result, a pre-processing is required to extract information suitable for cross-national analysis. The unit of measurement varies across countries and may range from days to years.

» The indicator measures the duration of parental "benefit" rather than the duration of parental "leave." In cases where leave schemes are only partially paid, the duration of benefits may differ from the total duration of leave. For example, if a program provides one year of paid leave followed by one year of unpaid leave, the duration of the parental benefit is recorded as one year.

» The duration of parental benefit reflects the total length of paid leave available to both parents combined. For instance, if both the mother and the father are individually entitled to six months of paid leave, the combined duration of parental benefits is recorded as one year. To distinguish between individual or family-based entitlements, users should refer to the variable *fam_par_leave_entitlement_own*.

» In some cases, the duration of parental benefits is reported as a range. When benefit duration varies according to factors such as contribution histories or occupational group membership, the range is coded using the format "[digit]–[digit] duration," (e.g., 12–36 months). As a general coding rule, if a state offers higher benefit levels for shorter leave durations, the shorter duration is recorded.

Duration of parental benefit (in weeks): (fam_par_leave_dur_ben_own2)

» This variable standardizes fam_par_leave_dur_ben_own by converting the duration of parental benefits into weeks. In most cases, calendar days were converted into weeks. However, when national legislation or authoritative secondary sources explicitly indicated that reported days referred to working days, this distinction was taken into account

in the conversion. The resulting values were cross-validated using data from *Women, Business and the Law* by the World Bank.

Amount of parental benefit (in original units) (fam_par_leave_amount_own)

» This variable provides detailed information on the level of parental benefits, preserving the original coding used in national legislation as closely as possible. Most entries are recorded as "[digit] % of earnings". In a few cases, benefits are specified as flat-rate payments or as amounts linked to the minimum wage (e.g. Australia).

Amount of parental benefit (replacement rate) (fam_par_leave_amount_repl _own)

» This variable standardizes fam_par_leave_amount_own by expressing the amount of parental benefits as a replacement rate of previous earnings. When standardization is not possible (e.g., in cases of flat-rate benefits or benefits linked to the minimum wage), the value is coded as "-777" (not applicable).

Financing of parental leave (fam_par_leave_finance_own)

» This variable indicates the primary mode of financing for paid parental leave. Financing mechanisms include, for example, general taxation, social insurance contributions, and employer liability.

Entitlement principle of parental leave (fam_par_leave_entitlement_own)

» This variable specifies whether parental leave is granted as an individual right or as a family-based entitlement. Individual entitlements are typically non-transferable, meaning they cannot be transferred to the other parent, whereas family-based entitlements may be shared between parents.

Table 2. List of variables

Technical variable name	Variable definition	Coding
fam_par_leave_dur_ben_own	Duration of parental benefit (in original units, own coding)	String
fam_par_leave_dur_ben_own2	Duration of parental benefit (in weeks, own coding)	Metric
fam_par_leave_amount_own	Amount of parental benefit (in original units, own coding)	String
fam_par_leave_amount_repl _own	Amount of parental benefit (in replacement rate, own coding)	Metric
fam_par_leave_finance_own	Financing of parental leave (own coding)	Multinomial variable: Employer liability/social insurance/general taxation
fam_par_leave_entitlement_own	Entitlement principle of parental leave (own coding)	Binary variable: Individual/family

3. Common Sources

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