Diverse Families on the Move: barriers and challenges from a social rights perspective

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Background

- EU mobility - of goods, capital and individuals.
- Mobility a challenge in relation to social and civil rights
- Particularly **diverse families**?
- National **attitudes** as a barrier?
- Important research gap: attitudes towards mobility of EU residents and citizenship rights
- No existing comparative data
- Little research on position of diverse families
Our study

- A six-country pilot study among students
  - Denmark, Spain, Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, and Israel
- Aims:
  - Exploring differences in national attitudes
  - Test newly developed items on these attitudes
- Towards family and reproductive rights for diverse families
- Towards gender roles
- Towards European efforts to converge social and civil rights for family members
- On the portability of these rights while moving within EU
Our study (II)

• We developed a questionnaire on:
  • In favour of what rights and for whom?
  • What role for the EU?
• Family diversity
  • heterosexual vis-à-vis homosexual couples;
  • married vis-à-vis cohabitating couples.
• Two types of rights:
  • Civil rights: guarantee an individual’s right to equality by due process of law
  • Social rights (Marshall, 1950): wide cache of rights and benefits, such as the right to work (full employment), income protection, housing, education and healthcare, in essence ensuring a minimum standard of living
• What rights and for whom? Portability? Role of EU?
What rights, for whom?

Homosexual and heterosexual couples should have the same right to:

- Get married
- Form a registered partnership

Notes: Completely disagree (0) - Completely agree (10)

HR: Croatia, IT: Italy, DK: Denmark, NL: the Netherlands, ES: Spain
What rights, for whom? (II)

The individuals in the following couples should have access to parenthood rights:

- Married heterosexuals
- Cohabiting heterosexuals
- Married homosexuals
- Cohabiting homosexuals

Notes: parenthood rights here include the right for the members of the couple to adopt children and use assisted reproductive technologies.

Completely disagree (0) - Completely agree (10)

HR: Croatia, IT: Italy, DK: Denmark, NL: the Netherlands, ES: Spain
What rights, for whom? (III)

Do you agree that, in times of economic crisis, social rights should be:

- Greater for married couples than for cohabitating ones
- Greater for heterosexual couples than for homosexual ones

![Bar chart showing responses from different countries](chart.png)

Notes: social rights here include access to housing benefits, economic support for a dependent spouse, economic support for dependent children, public childcare, paid parental leave.

Completely disagree (0) - Completely agree (10)

HR: Croatia, IT: Italy, DK: Denmark, NL: the Netherlands, ES: Spain
What rights, for whom? (IV)

• *Polarization* between traditional (i.e. Italy and Croatia) and less traditional (Spain, Denmark and the Netherlands) countries

• Traditional countries: greater gap between approval of rights for married, heterosexual couples vs. other family forms

• Greater acceptance of *equal treatment in relation to social rather than civil rights* (i.e. partnership and especially parenthood rights)
Portability of rights

Some European countries grant greater civil and social rights than others. Should citizens who move between countries be allowed to maintain their civil and social rights?

Completely disagree (0) - Completely agree (10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Civil rights</th>
<th>Social rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: civil rights here include: marriage for homosexuals, civil unions for heterosexuals and adoption for homosexuals.
Note: Social rights here include: cash benefits for parents, housing benefits, paternity leave and childcare subsidies.
Portability of rights (II)

Some European countries grant greater social rights than others. If citizens who move between countries maintain their social rights, who should pay for these?

Note: Social rights here include cash benefits for parents, housing benefits, paternity leave and childcare subsidies.
EU role in unifying rights for diverse families

Who should decide the rules on civil and social rights?

Each nation for itself (0) - The European Union for all members (10)

Note: civil rights include marriage, civil partnerships, divorce law, abortion, adoption, assisted reproductive technology. Social rights include tax benefits, housing benefits, family allowances, childcare benefits, childcare services, paid parental leave.
EU role in unifying rights for diverse families (II)

EU members should have a common legal framework to determine which couples have the right to get married.

Completely disagree (0) - Completely agree (10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Homosexual couples</th>
<th>Heterosexual couples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>HR</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EU role in unifying rights for diverse families (III)

EU members should have a common legal framework to determine which couples have the right to form a civil partnership. Completely disagree (0) - Completely agree (10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Heterosexual couples</th>
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<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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Portability of rights and role of EU?

- Portability of rights more accepted for civil vs social rights
- Regulation of portability of rights: should be a national issue (Netherlands and Denmark)

- Greater support for intervention at EU level for civil rights vs social rights.
- Less support for EU intervention in countries with less traditional attitudes (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands)
Link attitudes / EU intervention?

- Evidence of a link between attitudes towards diverse families and support for a common EU framework;
- Link is stronger in more traditional countries
- Europe a promising means (for people with non-traditional attitudes) for extending rights to individuals living in diverse family forms
Challenges and moving forward

• Attitudes (and policies) as barriers to improved social and civil rights for mobile families
• Particularly for diverse families

• Greater evidence base needed: local, national, supranational
• Pillar of Social Rights
  • Clearly on the EU agenda. But...
  • Mobility?
  • Diverse families?

• ...?
Thanks for listening!

Questions?

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