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The Social Investment Paradigm and Migrant Families

The Australian and Italian case compared

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Abstract

The social investment paradigm has received widespread attention as an approach to ‘prepare’ individuals, families and societies to respond to new social risks they are likely to encounter throughout the life course, particularly those associated with post-industrialisation and globalisation. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) and policies that support women to participate in employment have been a central focus of the social investment paradigm.

But while post-industrialisation and globalisation are closely linked to increases in migration, migrant families are largely absent from social investment policies. From a social investment perspective, access to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policy measures are crucial for migrant children and families. Yet there is a gap in the social investment literature when it comes to access to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies by migrant families.

This paper compares social investment policies for migrant families in two countries: Australia and Italy. These two countries have markedly different migration, employment and care regimes, with both similarities and differences in the organisation of ECEC and policies to promote work/care reconciliation.

Against this backdrop, this paper asks: To what extent are migrant families included or excluded from ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies in the two countries?

Drawing on a comprehensive analysis of eligibility for and access to ECEC and work/care policies by migrant families in Australia and Italy, this paper critically examines the capacity of the social investment approach to respond to new life course risks associated with migration and mobility. It draws attention to the way in which the emergence of the social investment paradigm to address ‘new social risks’ does not take account of the importance of migration and mobility in the contemporary life course.

1. Introduction

The Social Investment paradigm has received widespread attention as an approach to ‘prepare’ individuals, families and societies to respond to new social risks they are likely to encounter throughout the life course, particularly those associated with post-industrialisation and globalisation. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) and policies that support women to participate in employment have been a central focus of the social investment paradigm. One product of post-industrialisation and globalisation has been an increase in migration and mobility. Indeed, the new social risks to which social investment-style policies purport to respond are often heightened for migrants and migrant families. Yet the needs of migrants have been largely absent in the social investment paradigm and its related policies. This gap in the social investment literature is particularly stark when it comes to access to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies for migrant families. Migrant families are highly heterogeneous and a range of factors shape their experience and management of social risks in their destination country. In particular, migrants’ duration of residing in their destination country and their residency status in that country have a considerable impact both on the social and economic risks they face and on access to employment and social rights that can support them to navigate these risks (Boucher, 2014N).

In the field of work/family policy, to date, the focus of scholarly literature and policy has been on migrants as welfare state providers, contributing to solving the care-deficit in destination countries (Bettio et al. 2006; Williams, 2012). However, less attention has been paid to their own ECEC and work-family reconciliation needs. The research that does exist suggests that in many OECD countries, migrant families’ access to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies are constrained by their migrant status (Seeleib-Kaiser 2018; Shutes, 2017; Knijn, . and Naldini., 2018; Westcott & Robertson, 2017). However, from a social investment perspective, access to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policy measures is important for migrant children and families in supporting them to overcome social, educational, and employment barriers associated with being a migrant (Kofman and Raghuram 2015).

This paper aims to analyse from a social investment perspective and in a comparative perspective migrant families’ access, or lack of access, to ECEC and work/family policies in Italy in Australia. The two countries have been selected because they have different welfare state types (Australia is a liberal and Italy a Conservative/Mediterranean welfare regime) and different migration regimes that shape access to ECEC and

work/family policies for migrants. Using a framework based on the concept of conditionality (Clasen and Clegg, 2007; Shutes, 2016) – or the notion that access to support is conditional and based on an individual’s personal and familial characteristics, circumstances or behaviours – the analysis examines the extent to which social investment-style policies designed to support families with young children are accessible to migrant families of different kinds. In doing so the paper aims to improve our understanding of how the social investment approach responds to new social risks associated with migration for children and families.

2. A critical look at the Social Investment approach from a migration perspective

The social investment approach has become a popular paradigm shaping policy in the twenty-first century. Whereas the focus of the post-WWII welfare state was on ‘protect[ing] people *from the market*’ (Ruggie, 1994, Crouch, 1999, Esping-Andersen et al. 2002), proponents of the social investment approach suggest that the focus of social policy should instead be on the role of the state in ‘facilitat[ing] the integration of people *into the market*’. The emphasis is on ‘preparing’ individuals to navigate new social risks and the orientation is future-focussed: state spending should ‘increase the promise of *future profits*’ (Jenson and Saint-Martin, 2003, 83, original emphasis). According to the social investment approach, the role of social policy should be threefold:

- to raise the ‘stock’ of human capital, through investment in education and training (including early childhood education and care);
- to support the ‘flows’ of human capital through life-course transitions, through policies that support labour market retention, entry and re-entry (such as active labour market policies and policies that support female employment);
- to provide ‘buffers’ that protect people during ‘risky transitions’, such as minimum-income safety nets (Hemerijck 2015; Bouget et al, 2015)

Governments and international bodies have adopted different variants of ‘social investment-informed’ policies (Morel et al, 2012b; Mahon, 2013). Many of these policies are framed by concepts of future productivity and the economic gains from investing in human capital. For policymakers, a central element in enabling labour force participation is the relationship between the ‘productive and reproductive spheres’, that is, policies for reconciling work and family (Morel et al., 2012b: 355). Here, social investment policies concern investment in early childhood education and care and other family policies as instruments to promote and increase the labour market productivity of parents (particularly mothers), foster children’s development and human capital for their role as citizen workers

of the future, and reduce child poverty (Jenson, 2009). This is especially true for disadvantaged children and families who are identified as ‘at risk’.

There is now a well-developed feminist critique of the social investment approach. This work argues that the focus of the approach on the ideal adult worker and on the valorisation of market-based productivity marginalises the ‘relational meaning of caring within households’ (Saraceno, 2015). It also marginalises the highly productive contribution of unpaid care work to families, communities and economies (Lister et al 2007). While the social investment approach aims to ‘prepare’ individuals, families and societies to respond to new life course risks, the focus on the *ideal adult worker life course* conceptualises care as a constraint on labour market participation – a social risk to be managed. The focus of the social investment approach is therefore on labour market participation, and the value of care and its distribution between women and men is ‘overshadowed’ (Saraceno, 2015). The focus on preparing individuals for future productivity also loses sight of inequalities in the *present*, and has been criticized for the emphasis on children’s ‘becoming’ future citizens, rather than their ‘being’ in the present (Lister, 2006; Adamson and Brennan 2014).

While there has been a large amount of critical engagement with the social investment approach, to date, there is a notable gap in the literature on the extent to which the social investment approach takes into account the dynamics of migration and mobility (Anderson et al 2018; Seeleib-Kaiser 2018). Globally, increasing levels of mobility and migration have changed individual life courses, patterns of labour market participation, family relationships and practices, and countries’ socio-demographic profiles (Kofmnan 2002). The contemporary life course is therefore increasingly characterised by mobility and migration, where life course transitions and risks are often driven by the migration projects of individuals and families. Recently, the social sciences have begun to pay much greater attention to the “importance of the systematic movements of people for work and family life,” known as the ‘mobility turn’ (Sheller and Urry, 2006, 2008). However, welfare state studies and specifically the literature on the social investment paradigm are yet to adequately engage with the meaning and consequences of the mobility turn. Recognising the centrality of migration in contemporary life courses is essential to the analysis of the social investment approach and its associated policies. Both the ‘stocks’ and ‘flows’ of human capital, for example, are both intra-national and transnational. In contrast, the ‘buffers’ are often static and situated in national contexts. Yet there have been few attempts to capture the dynamics of migration in the social investment approach, or to understand the extent which social investment-informed policies apply to migrants, particularly migrant families.

Ostensibly, migrant families with children are important subjects of social investment policies, with the potential to benefit from policies supporting them to participate in education, employment, and early childhood education and care. Children and families from migrant backgrounds are regularly identified as a population group that are ‘at-risk’ of poor outcomes when it comes to economic wellbeing and levels of participation in education and employment (Saraceno, Sartor, and Sciortino, 2013). Migrant children are more likely to be living in poverty and less likely to be engaged in early childhood education and care (Vandenbroeck and Lazzari, 2014). Migrant families are often living away from their extended families and have less ready access to grandparents to provide care for children while parents work (Westcott and Robertson, 2017; Strasser et al, 2009). Migrants are more likely to occupy precarious positions in the labour market, are over-represented in lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs (Reyneri and Fullin, 2011; Istat, 2015), and are more vulnerable to being exploited in informal and poorly regulated labour markets (Sciortino, 2004). Migrant women have higher rates of unemployment than non-migrant women and higher rates of unemployment than both migrant and non-migrant men (OECD, 2016). Migrants are also at greater risk of human capital depletion, with a growing body of research documenting the de-skilling experienced by many migrants in their new host country, as a result of not having their skills or experience formally recognised, and not being able to find paid employment commensurate with their skills and expertise (Hamilton, Hill and Adamson, under review). While the experience of marginalisation and exclusion varies widely across migrant communities, resulting from intersections between residency status and access to labour markets, access to social rights plays an important role in deepening or ameliorating this marginalisation, producing stratifying effects among migrant populations (Kofman, 2002; Halevy et al, 2018; Morris, 2003). Migrant families are therefore likely to benefit considerably from social-investment-informed policies but may be excluded to varying degrees from the welfare state infrastructure through which those policies are made available. Drawing on a social investment perspective, this paper examines the extent to which migrant families have access to social investment-informed policies such as ECEC and work/family policies, and how this level of access can affect their capacity to manage life course risks associated with migration and mobility.

3. Country contexts

Migrants’ access to ECEC and work/family policies depends on the migration regimes, welfare state contexts, and labour market contexts in the host country. Australia and Italy have different migration regimes, welfare state types (Australia has a liberal and Italy a Conservative/Mediterranean welfare regime) and labour market contexts.

3.1. Australia

While Australia has historically favoured pathways to permanent residency for migrants, recent changes have shifted the emphasis in Australia's migration regime (Mares, 2016, p.7). This shift has included a restructuring of visa categories and rules so that there is a much greater emphasis on *skilled* visas (rather than family-based visas) and tighter restrictions on the pathways for visa renewal and transitions to permanent visas status and citizenship (Mares, 2016). Australia has a non-contributory welfare state, which provides means-tested support for eligible parents. Early childhood education and care is subsidized by a combination of federal and state funding: the federal and state governments are committed to providing a preschool program for a minimum of 15 hours per week to all children in the year before school, usually at 4 years of age. For younger children, ECEC services are delivered through a market-based system, whereby public funding is attached to the child and flows to a mix of state, community managed and privately managed services (Adamson and Brennan, 2014). Australia has a short period of paid parental leave, 18 weeks paid by the government at the level of the minimum wage, and a set of National Employment Standards which provide employees with statutory paid carers leave (except casual employees) and *unpaid* parental and carers leave, as well as the right to request flexible work arrangements.

Historically, Australia has been described as a 'one and a half earner' model characterized by a high rate of part-time work among women, where ECEC and work/family reconciliation policies are generally organised accordingly. In migrant communities, participation in employment is segregated by gender and residency status: men are more likely to be employed than women, migrants of both genders who are permanent residents/citizens are much more likely than temporary residents to be employed, and are less likely than temporary residents to be in casual or precarious work (ABS, 2017). This is significant because individuals in casual work (i.e. in temporary and irregular jobs) have lower levels of access to leave entitlements. In particular, parents' eligibility to parental leave pay is determined by attachment to the workforce in the year before commencing leave. Participation in casual work also has implications for parents' access to ECEC subsidies, as the number of hours of subsidized ECEC that a family is eligible for is determined by the number of hours worked/fortnight. There is concern by the sector that unpredictable patterns of work are affecting parents' decisions to enroll their children in ECEC because their eligibility for subsidies is unreliable.

3.2 Italy

In Italy, migrants from European Union (EU) countries enjoy mobility rights and the status of being "EU citizens". However, even for migrants from within the EU, work-related conditions restrict the right to reside in Italy. To be granted the right to reside in Italy for longer than three months (or 'legal residency'), EU citizens must be

‘workers’ (or self-employed persons) or have sufficient resources for themselves and their family members not to draw on the social assistance system of the host Members State (see Seeleib-Kaiser, 2018, p. 167). Only EU citizens who are legal residents (i.e. obtained by being ‘economically active’ or having sufficient resources) can access most non-contributory benefits (Knjin and Naldini, 2018). In contrast, entry by Third Country Nationals (or ‘TCNs’, citizens from outside of the EU), is based on a system of quotas that governs how many TCNs may enter annually, in which industries and from which countries. The quota system has been tightened, and recently frozen, so there are extremely limited pathways for TCNs to migrate to Italy for work. TCNs who reside in Italy uninterrupted for five years, have sufficient income and “adequate” accommodation, and have completed a civic integration test, are granted permanent residency, which provides access by TCNs to many non-contributory benefits. Citizenship status is very difficult to obtain even for children of immigrants born in Italy (Caponio, Naldini and Ricucci, 2019).

Italy has a Conservative/Mediterranean welfare state model which combines contributory benefits available to parents with children (i.e. maternity, paternity and parental leaves) with residual social assistance-style means-tested benefits. Its model of welfare provision is one of “unsupported familialism” (Saraceno & Keck, 2010), resulting in scant development of family policy and high levels of unpaid family care, especially by women. ECEC for under-3s is publicly provided, but access is limited and varies hugely geographically. Migrants, both within the EU and TCNs of both genders, are more likely to work in lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs. Migrants often work in ethnicized labour market niches, such as manual work for men (Istat, 2015) and care work for women (Da Roit, González Ferrer & Moreno-Fuentes, 2013). There is a higher unemployment rate among migrant women, and children born to migrant families are at a higher risk of poverty (Saraceno et al. 2013; Santero e Naldini, 2017).

So while Australia and Italy have different welfare state types and migration regimes that shape access to ECEC and work/family policies for migrants, the two countries share limitations in migrants’ integration into the labour market and access to social rights. In this paper, we ask the question: To what extent can migrant families access ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies in Australia and Italy?

4. Methods and analytical approach

To answer this question, we conducted an audit of eligibility criteria governing access by migrant families to ECEC, family policies and work/family reconciliation policies in Australia and Italy. We organised our analysis into three areas: access to services, access to cash benefits, and access to leave and flexible workplace policies

such as parental leave (we label these ‘services’, ‘cash’ and ‘time’). We then conducted an analysis of the policies using a conditionality framework, described below.

The study focuses on families who have migrated on a work or family visa. For the purpose of this paper we have excluded some categories/groups of migrants, namely students (who have usually not formed a family yet), working holiday makers, and families who migrate for humanitarian purposes because the number and proportion of these groups are relatively small in both Italy and Australia and there tend to be eligibility exceptions and targeted supports for migrants entering under the humanitarian stream.

4.1 Analytical approach

In order to disentangle the complex barriers shaping migrants’ access to ECEC and work/family reconciliation policies, this paper builds on Clasen and Clegg’s (2007) framework of conditionality extended by Shutes (2016) to include migration. Clasen and Clegg developed the framework of conditionality to identify the possible ‘levels’ and ‘levers’ of conditionality that make access to social benefits (i.e. income support or social security payments) more or less restrictive in the context of welfare state restructuring. Clasen and Clegg’s three ‘levels’ of conditionality distinguish between *conditions of category* (membership of a defined recipient group i.e. people with disability, sole parents); *conditions of circumstance* (eligibility criteria governing access to benefits i.e. means-test, workforce participation); and *conditions of conduct* (conditions placed on recipients in order to continue receiving the benefit) (p167). Shutes (2016) extends the framework of conditionality to include migration. According to Shutes, the three ‘levels’ of conditionality interact to restrict access to both social benefits and rights of residence/citizenship. Shutes’ emphasis in conditions of category is on the role of membership of a defined *migrant* group in shaping access to social benefits. This approach – particularly the one offered by Shutes – is also useful for breaking down the ‘binary of citizens and migrants’ (Shutes, 2016, 702) and allowing us to explore inequalities in access to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies among different groups of migrants.

In this paper, we build on this framework of conditionality to understand the way in which conditions of category, circumstance and conduct in migration, employment and social policies shape the access of migrant families in Australia and Italy to ECEC and work/care reconciliation policies:

Conditions of category: refers to membership of a defined migrant group i.e. temporary residents, permanent residents/citizens, EU citizens, non-EU citizens. Length of residence also creates categories of eligibility for migrant families.

Conditions of circumstance: refers to eligibility criteria governing access to ECEC or work/care reconciliation measures such as: individual or household income; workforce participation or employment history; number and/or ages of children; extent of childcare responsibilities (i.e. primary carer); geographical location.

Conditions of conduct: refers to conditions placed on recipients in order to continue receiving ECEC or work/care reconciliation measures, such as level of participation in work or training; ‘good parenting’; and the vaccination of children.

5. Findings

The audit of ECEC, family policies and work/family reconciliation policies in the two countries are listed in Table 1. The Table presents the ways in which the criteria governing eligibility form conditions of category, circumstance and conduct that, in turn, shape access by migrants to ECEC, family policies and work/family reconciliation policies. The following sections present the analysis for Australia and Italy, followed by a country comparison.

Australia

In Australia, the following policies were captured in the audit:

- **Services:** Australia provides assistance with the cost of ECEC through a subsidy for families paid directly to the (mostly private) ECEC service (Child Care Subsidy)
- **Cash benefits (‘cash’):** Australia provides tax rebates (Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A for low/middle income families, Family Tax Benefit Part B for low/middle income families *with one main earner*) and an income support payment (Parenting Payment) for unemployed parents. It also provides 18 weeks parental leave pay and 2 weeks ‘partner leave’ pay (Parental Leave Pay, Dad and Partner Pay). These sit between cash benefits and leave provisions. While they are payments made during periods of parental leave, they are not formally linked to statutory unpaid leave. Rather, they are administered as if cash benefits through the Department of Human Services (responsible for income support) rather than the Department of Employment (responsible for statutory unpaid parental leave).
- **Leave and flexible workplace policies (time):** Australia provides unpaid leave following the birth of a child (Unpaid Parental Leave) and paid and unpaid leave when a child is unwell or has an accident (Personal/Carers Leave). It also offers flexible arrangements for parents to balance work and care responsibilities (Right to Request Flexible work)

Access by migrants is shaped by conditions of category, conditions of circumstance, and conditions of conduct.

Conditions of Category

In Australia, the primary ‘levers of conditionality’ (Clasen and Clegg, 2007) that govern access by migrants to ECEC and work/family policies are two-fold: a categorisation between temporary residents and permanent residents/citizens (with several notable exceptions); and what are known as the Newly Arrived Resident’s Waiting Periods. In most cases, temporary residents as a category are excluded from access to support for services and cash benefits, but not from leave and flexible work provisions, whereas permanent residents/citizens have access to all three sets of provisions. For example, only permanent residents/citizens are eligible for the Child Care Subsidy to support them with the costs of formal childcare, and temporary migrants are *not* eligible (with the exception of some migrant parents on student visas). Eligibility for all other cash payments (FTB A & B, Parenting Payment, Parental Leave Pay, Dad and Partner Pay) require claimants to be permanent residents/citizens. Interestingly, Parental Leave Pay and Dad and Partner Pay are constructed as family assistance payments rather than leave provisions (Baird and Whitehouse, 2012), so are restricted to permanent residents/citizens.

While permanent residents/citizens are eligible for all of the above services and cash benefits, their access to the payments is also governed by the other condition of category applying specifically to migrants: the Newly Arrived Resident’s Waiting Periods. Newly Arrived Resident’s Waiting Periods are minimum waiting periods that newly arrived migrants – temporary or permanent – must wait before they become eligible for social benefits. Hence, while temporary residents are *excluded* from eligibility for the above provisions and permanent residents/citizens are *included*, permanent residents/citizens must *also* have been residing in Australia for a minimum period to access the provisions. The minimum periods vary for each provision. For example, there is no waiting period for Child Care Subsidy and Family Tax Benefit Part B so permanent residents/citizens are eligible from the time they arrive (provided they meet other conditions of circumstance and conduct). To be eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A, permanent residents/citizens must wait one year, and it is a two year waiting period before they become eligible for Parental Leave Pay and Dad and Partner Pay (provided they meet other conditions of circumstances and conduct). The Newly Arrived Resident’s Waiting Period for Parenting Payment – the income support payment for unemployed parents – is four years.

Access to leave and flexible workplace policies (unpaid parental leave, personal/carers leave, right to request flexible work) are the least conditional provisions for migrant families. There is no Newly Arrived Resident’s

Waiting Period for these provisions and both temporary and permanent migrants/citizens are able to access these policies, provided they meet certain conditions of circumstance and conduct.

As pathways to permanent residence and citizenship are becoming more difficult to obtain in Australia, and the Newly Arrived Resident's Waiting Periods are gradually being lengthened, the role of conditions of category as 'levers' are becoming more restrictive.

Conditions of Circumstance

There are a number of conditions of circumstance governing access to ECEC and work/family policies. Migrants' work status and history is the most important condition of circumstance governing access to services, cash benefits and leave and flexible work provisions. While conditions of category *explicitly* exclude certain groups of migrant families from access, conditions of circumstance associated with work status and history *indirectly* exclude migrants from access due to their differential access to employment opportunities. For example, to be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy, both parents must be participating to some extent in paid work or study (see Conditions of Conduct). In order to be eligible for Parental Leave Pay, the claimant must meet an activity test that requires them to have worked for at least 10 of the 13 months before the birth or adoption of the child. This excludes recently arrived migrants, and may also disproportionately affect migrants as they are more likely to have precarious attachment to the labour market. The leave and flexible work provisions – available to both temporary and permanent residents/citizens – are limited in the extent to which they are accessible by some migrants. For example, unpaid parental leave and the right to request flexible work are limited to workers who have been with their employer continuously for 12 months, and casuals are only entitled where they have been working 'regularly and systematically' for a period of 12 months and who are likely to continue working for that employer into the future. Paid carers leave is not available to casual workers, though unpaid carers leave is available for casual workers. As migrants are more likely to be in casual work (ABS, 2017), and less likely to have been with the same employer for 12 months or more, the limitations on access to leave and flexible workplace provisions are likely to disproportionately exclude migrants.

Other conditions of circumstance include income tests (in some cases designed to 'screen in' the needy and in others designed to 'screen out' the wealthy (Clasen and Clegg, 2007)), the number and ages of children, and whether the claimant is the primary (or principal carer) of the child. Combinations of these conditions are visible in all of the provisions underpinning services and cash benefits.

Conditions of Conduct

There has been a general tightening of eligibility requirements for ECEC and family benefits by stipulating the work and care activities that parents must be engaging in to access a payment. This is most evident in the introduction and tightening of activity tests for receiving the Child Care Subsidy, the strict workforce activity/monitoring to receive Parenting Payment, and the increasingly strict ‘parenting’ requirements attached to all service support and cash benefits. While these *conditions of conduct* apply to migrants and non-migrants alike, some of the eligibility restrictions create barriers that may be more pronounced for migrants.

For example, the activity test for the Child Care Subsidy that was introduced in July 2018 requires both parents (or a single parent) to be participating in paid work, study or volunteering to receive the Subsidy. This provision may disproportionately exclude migrant families from access to the Subsidy, as the proportion of dual earner families is lower in migrant communities. Recently arrived migrant families, in particular, are likely to be excluded from access, as research suggests that secondary visa holders often delay their entry into work and study upon arriving in Australia due to a lack of skill recognition, language, and caring responsibilities (Hamilton, Hill and Adamson, under review). At the same time, continuing access to Parenting Payment is subject to increasingly strict job search requirements.

Another condition of conduct for receiving Child Care Subsidy, FTB A & B, and Parenting Payment are immunisations. In order to receive these subsidies and payments, children must be up to date on the National Immunisation Program Schedule. It is suspected that recent migrants would be less likely to have an updated record of immunisation in Australia, and may therefore be restricted from accessing benefits, even if they have received relevant immunisations in their home countries.

Italy

In the Italian case the following policies were captured in the audit:

- **Services:** Italy has a two-fold childcare services system. Childcare services for children under 3 are very limited in coverage and expensive for parents, who must share the cost of the services. Pre-school services for children 3-6 years are considered part of the education system and are therefore fully funded by public administration. Enrolments reach near universality.
- **Cash benefits (cash):** In Italy, rather than a universal child benefit system, there is a fragmented array of policies to support the cost of children. Three main different types of child benefits can be claimed: a semi-universal universal cash benefit provided to families below an income threshold (*Bonus bebé*); a means-tested, partially-contributory cash benefit to households (*Assegno al Nucleo Familiare*); and a

means-tested transfer targeted to (large) poor families with no waged employment (*Assegno con 3 Figli Minori*). Indirect benefits, i.e. tax allowances are also an increasingly important part of support for the cost of children in Italy.

- **Leave and flexible work (time):** Italy provides contributory paid maternity leave for twenty weeks at 80 per cent wage replacement, and parental leave for 10 months, of which neither parent can avail for more than six. If the father takes at least three months, an extra month is added. A very short paternity leave period has been recently introduced.

Conditions of Category

In Italy, EU citizens have the right to free movement, whereas entry by migrants from non-EU countries (TCNs) is much more restricted. Once in Italy, access by both EU citizens and TCNs to ECEC, family payments, and work/family benefits depends on their **residency status**. To be granted the right to reside in Italy for longer than three months (or ‘legal residency’), EU citizens must be employed (or self-employed) and financially self-sufficient. Therefore, for EU citizens the primary distinction is between those who are temporary visitors/residents, and those who are ‘legal residents’. In contrast, TCNs acquire the right to long term residency if they reside in Italy uninterrupted for five years, have sufficient income and “adequate” accommodation, and complete a civic integration test. For TCNs, the primary distinction is therefore between temporary residents and long term residents.

These different residency statuses intersect with the different ‘welfare logics’ (i.e. universal benefits, non-contributory means-tested benefits, contributory benefits) underpinning Italy’s ECEC and work/family policies to govern access by migrant families. For example, ECEC services, such as ‘day-care’ or ‘pre-school services’, are universal, so are accessible to temporary and legal residents (EU citizens), and temporary and long term residents (TCNs). Non-contributory (or partially contributory) means-tested cash and leave benefits are only accessible by legally resident EU citizens and long term resident TCNs. This is consistent with the European Directive 2003/109/EC, which stipulates that long term residents enjoy the same treatment as nationals with regard to social benefits, social assistance and social protection. Contributory leave-based benefits, such as maternity leave, parental leave, and paternity leave, are accessible to temporary and legal residents (EU citizens), and temporary and long term residents (TCNs), provided they have the necessary contributions records (see conditions of circumstance).

Conditions of Circumstance

Since work-related conditions restrict the access to rights of residence for both for EU citizens and TCNs, and participation in paid work is more important than residency status in shaping access to contributory benefits, conditions of category and conditions of circumstance are closely intertwined.

In Italy, conditions of circumstance – such as participation in formal paid work, adequate income, and for TCNs, adequate accommodation and civic integration – are central to obtaining the residency status (legal residence for EU citizens and long term residence for TCNs) required to access non-contributory (or partially contributory) work/family benefits (funded from general taxation revenue) such as the *Bonus Bebé*, Household Allowance for families with at least three children under 18 years old, or Maternity Allowance (there are two Maternity Allowances: the first (*Assegno di maternità di Stato*) is a partially contributory benefit granted by the State for temporary and ‘precarious’ working mothers; the second (*Assegno di maternità municipale*) a means-tested benefit granted by the municipalities for fully unemployed or ‘home-maker’ mothers).

Once EU citizens and TCNs obtain the required residency status (legal residence and/ or long-term residence) to be eligible to receive these benefits, they must also meet a series of other conditions of circumstance, such as having an income below a specified level, and meeting requirements about household size and number of children. For instance, the partially contributory Maternity Allowance (*Assegno di maternità di Stato*) also requires that a mother has made three months of contributions between 18 and nine months before the birth.

Participation in paid work is also required in order to build the contributions record needed to access contributory benefits, such as maternity, parental and paternity leave. In the case of these contributory benefits, conditions of circumstance ‘trump’ conditions of category, in that there are no distinctions made between EU and TCN citizens when determining the eligibility. Instead, access depends on minimum contribution levels over the 12 months prior to making the claim, which varies depending on the employment status of the parent at the time of claim (i.e. employed, self-employed, unemployed). While both temporary and legal/ long term EU citizens and TCNs are eligible to claim contributory benefits, the minimum requirements regarding contributions records and work histories mean that newly arrived migrants will not have access to these benefits.

Universal benefits such as ECEC services are dependent on income in some circumstances or on family size/characteristics, but not on work status/history.

Conditions of Conduct

Conditionality of conduct becomes important in governing access to childcare services and pre-school services, where children who are not following the immunization program are excluded from public and private services.

6. Discussion

Access to ECEC and work-family policies for migrant families in comparative perspective

In both Australia and Italy, access by migrants to ECEC and work-family policies is shaped by complex intersections of the conditions of category, circumstance and conduct, especially residency status and/or duration of residence (conditions of category), and labour market status or history (a condition of circumstance and sometimes of conduct). These conditions create varying levels of access by different groups of migrants. The extent to which, and the *way* in which, residency and labour market status/history operate as ‘levers of conditionality’ (Clasen and Clegg, 2007), and the stratifying effects they have, is linked to the two countries’ different migration regimes and welfare regime logics.

In both Italy and Australia, residency status and duration of residence are ‘levers of conditionality’ shaping access by migrants to ECEC and work-family policies. In both countries, eligibility for ECEC and work-family policies differs for two ‘categories’ of migrants: temporary residents and long-term/permanent residents. In Australia, temporary residents are migrants who enter Australia on a temporary visa, and the pathways to permanent residency are varied. It is possible to enter Australia as a permanent resident, usually on a highly-skilled employer-sponsored visa or a family reunion visa. In Italy, temporary residents enter Italy from the EU or non-EU countries for a range of purposes. After five years, all temporary residents, provided they have employment and adequate incomes to sustain themselves (and for TCNs, provided they also have adequate accommodation and civic integration) can become ‘long term residents’ or permanent residents. However, after just three months, EU citizens who are employed and have adequate income can become ‘legal residents’ whereby they have access to the same social rights as permanent residents/citizens.

In both countries, temporary residents have little or no access to cash benefits (Italy has only one universal cash payment available to both temporary and permanent migrants). In Australia, temporary residents are not eligible for support for ECEC services and in Italy, while access to ECEC services is ostensibly ‘universal’, permanent residents (and ‘legal residents’) are accorded priority and temporary residents face some practical barriers to access, such as difficulties registering in their municipality, long waiting lists and access criteria that privilege dual earner families and disadvantage those in irregular work – more likely to be migrants. In contrast, in both countries, permanent residents are eligible for all cash benefits and support for ECEC services (provided they meet other conditions of circumstance and conduct). However, because in Australia it is possible to *enter* in the country as a permanent resident, permanent residents must *also* have been living in Australia for a minimum

number of years in order to be eligible for almost all cash benefits. Hence in both Australia and Italy, temporary residents have much more limited access to cash benefits. Temporary residents have no access to ECEC supports in Australia, and in Italy temporary residents are eligible for ECEC services but experience practical barriers. In both countries, permanent residents have access to all ECEC services and cash benefits after a waiting period – in Italy, the waiting period for TCNs is essentially the five year period until they are granted permanent residency; in Australia, the waiting period is one to four years after arriving in Australia.

In both Australia and Italy, access to leave and flexible workplace policies is much less stratified by residency status than access to ECEC services and cash benefits, and conditions of circumstance become the dominant condition shaping access. In Australia, both temporary and permanent residents are eligible for unpaid parental leave, personal/carer leave, and the right to request flexible work. In Italy, leave provisions are divided into contributory and non-contributory benefits and the contributory benefits are less stratifying according to residency than the non-contributory benefits. In Italy, both temporary and permanent (and legal) residents are eligible for contributory leave provisions (provided they meet other conditions of circumstance and conduct), whereas only permanent (or long term) residents are eligible for non-contributory or partially contributory maternity allowances.

In both countries, residency intersects with employment status and/or history in governing access to ECEC and work/family policies. In Italy, support for ECEC services is not linked to employment status/history. However, employment history intersects with residency status to shape access to leave-based provisions. Contributory leave-based provisions, for which *both* temporary and permanent residents are eligible, require a history of labour market participation and contributions. Non-contributory leave provisions, funded by general revenue, are accessible to permanent residents *only*, and require a shorter contributions history. In Australia, in contrast, support for ECEC services and several cash benefits (all accessible only to permanent residents) *are* linked to participation in employment. This is in part due to Australia's increasing focus on the 'activation' of cash benefit recipients. Leave-based provisions, accessible to *both* temporary and permanent migrants and funded by employers, require at least 12 months working with the same employer and are more difficult to access for casual employees. Parental leave pay (which sits between a cash benefit and a leave policy in Australia) is funded by general revenue, is accessible to permanent residents *only*, and requires approximately 12 months labour market participation. In sum, in all cases, where provisions are contributory or not funded by general revenue, residency status or length of residency are less important in governing access to provisions. However, access to these provisions *is* governed by employment history and/or contributions record (something that newly arrived residents are less likely to have

achieved). In Australia, unlike Italy, some general-revenue-funded provisions (available only to permanent residents) are also governed by employment status or history.

Immigration, family policies and the social investment approach

In most cases, the levels of conditionality (especially residency and employment history) require that the migrant family has lived and/or worked in the new host country for a minimum period of time in order to be eligible for work/family policies. This suggests that the period during which they are most exposed to the life course risks associated with migration and mobility – immediately after the transition – and the time at which they are likely to be in the greatest need of support (or ‘investment’), is the time during which they have highly limited access to ECEC or work/family policies. Access to ECEC and work/family policies immediately after migration would have the potential to act as a ‘buffer’ for migrant families as they navigate some of the life course transitions and risks that are either specific to migration and mobility or heightened by migration and mobility, such as employment transitions, precarious work, lack of recognition of skills (or human capital depletion), social deprivation and exclusion, and difficulty balancing paid work and unpaid care.

Instead, these levels of conditionality intersect with poor labour market opportunities for migrants, and gender and cultural norms in migrant families, to deepen legal and institutional barriers to migrant parents' access to measures designed to support families with children and to help parents reconcile work and care responsibilities. Migrants who are more marginalized from labour markets are in the greatest need of support, yet often, it is strong attachment to employment that creates pathways to permanent residency and all of the access to ECEC and work/family policies that come with that.

Changes to migration regulation in both countries that focus more heavily on skilled or work-based migration – which reflect changes to the conditions of category – align with the emphasis in the social investment approach on workforce participation and productivity. Workforce-linked benefits in both countries and activation measures in Australia also reflect a targeted, work-orientated approach to social policy that is consistent with the social investment approach. However, both of these result in the exclusion of some groups of migrants from ECEC and work-family policies, another essential component of the social investment approach.

8. Conclusions: What a life-course perspective can offer the social investment approach?

The social investment approach offers a way of preparing people for the risks associated with the life course, such as transitions in and out of work. However, social investment-informed policies are limited in the extent to which they meet the needs of migrant families. While the three objectives of the social investment approach identified

above (raising the stock of human capital, supporting flows of human capital through life-course transitions, and providing buffers during risky transitions) *could* see considerable investment in ECEC, employment and support for migrants through the major life-course transition of migration, the approach is limited in its potential to do so by the overarching premise that *current government spending* is justified by *future government savings*. Social investment-informed policies are consequently ‘conditional’ upon *previous* contributions to the nation, primarily measured through extended residency and contributions to the labour market, social insurance, and general revenue. The requirement for permanent residency to access many provisions also suggests an expectation of *future* contributions (if it were just a previous contribution that was required, long term temporary residents would be eligible). Policies that limit pathways to permanent residence or citizenship among migrants further interrupt the logic of social investment-informed policies, by creating a larger ‘temporary’ population without access to support managing life course risks associated with bearing and rearing children.

Mobility therefore creates a major challenge for the social investment paradigm, and migrant life-courses expose limitations in the associated social investment-informed policies. In spite of its goal of addressing ‘new social risks’, the social investment paradigm does not take account of the importance of migration and mobility in the contemporary life course, and fails to include the new profile of risks related to one of the main features of globalization. Migration and mobility increase the vulnerability related to ‘new social risks’, such as precarious work, family breakdown and capacity to balance work and care, and creates other risks, such as human capital depletion. But the extent to which the social investment approach is able to meet its objective of ‘preparing’ individuals, families and societies to respond to the new social risks they are likely to encounter throughout the life course depends on them staying within national borders. The analysis in this paper suggests that migration may entail exposure to another, as yet *overlooked* ‘new social risk’ associated with globalisation and mobility: a temporary deficit of social rights. Amplifying this risk is the policy tendency in both Australia and Italy to increase *conditionality* in access to permanent residency and to social rights, extending the duration and nature of this deficit. A life course approach focusing on transitions of individuals and families in structural, social and cultural contexts within *and across* nation states can help us to think differently about the stocks and flows of human capital, and how to buffer the risks associated with mobility and migration.

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Table 1: Comparison of conditions for receipt of ECEC services and benefits for migrant families, Italy and Australia

		ITALY	AUSTRALIA
CONDITIONS OF CATEGORY	Services	Public childcare services (0-2 years) <u>Resident Requirements</u> Priority to resident parents Non-Eu citizens without long term residence or length of legal residence in the municipality/region may face legal restrictions or practical barriers	Child Care Subsidy <u>Residency requirements</u> Claimant and their partner must be living in Australia and either: have Australian citizenship; hold a permanent visa; hold a Special Category (humanitarian) visa
	Cash	Child benefit (<i>Bonus Beb�</i>) (under income threshold) <u>Residency requirements</u> EU citizens with legal residency Non-Eu citizens with a long-term residence permit or refugee status	Parenting Payment <u>Residency requirements</u> Claimant and their partner must be living in Australia and either: have Australian citizenship; hold a permanent visa; hold a Special Category (humanitarian) visa <u>Waiting period for new residents</u> Claimants must have been residing in Australia for at least 4 years.
	Time	Maternity leave (contributory based) <u>Residency requirements</u> None	Unpaid Parental Leave (non-contributory) <u>Residency requirements</u> None
CONDITIONS OF CIRCUMSTANCE	Services	Public childcare services (0-2) <u>Work status/history</u> Families where both parents legally employed receive priority access <u>Income circumstances</u> Income test <u>Family circumstances</u> Priority access to single parents, families with disability Subsidy related to household size	Child Care Subsidy <u>Work status/history</u> Both parents must be working/studying <u>Income circumstances</u> Income test <u>Family circumstances</u> Calculated per child, increases with number of children
	Cash	Child benefit <u>Income circumstances</u> Income tested: household ISEE <u>Claiming provisions</u> Timely application (by 90 days after child's birth)	Parenting Payment <u>Work status/history</u> Longer waiting period if you chose to leave your job, were dismissed for misconduct, or moved to an area with lower employment prospects <u>Income circumstances</u> Income and assets tests <u>Family circumstances</u> Need to have a child under 6 (partnered) or 8 years (singles) Increases according to number of children

			Claimant needs to be the 'principal carer'
	Time	<p>Maternity leave: (<i>contributory based</i>) <u>Work status/history</u> Employees must have a job at the moment of request. Self-employed mothers required to work during the 12 months before and to have at least 3 months of contributions. Unemployed mothers qualify if the maternity leave starts within 60 days from their last working day.</p>	<p>Unpaid Parental Leave <u>Work status/history</u> Need to have worked with the same employer for at least 12 months; causals need to prove they have worked 'regularly and systematically' for their employer for the previous 12 months and are likely to continue working for them into the future <u>Family circumstances</u> Must be the primary carer of the child</p>
CONDITION OF CONDUCT	Services	<p>Public childcare services (0-2) <u>Parenting practices</u> Immunisations: children must be immunized</p>	<p>Child Care Subsidy <u>Activity test</u> Must participate in 8-16 hours work=36 hours ECEC; 16-48 hours=72 hours; 48 + hours=100 hours <u>Parenting practices</u> Children need to be fully immunised</p>
	Cash	<p>Child benefit (<i>Income Tested</i>) <u>Family circumstances</u> The claimant must not move abroad The claimant must reside with child</p>	<p>Parenting Payment <u>Activity test</u> Must participate in job search and job readiness interviews Extensiveness of activity requirements depends on age of child</p>
	Time	<p>Maternity leave: (<i>contributory based</i>) <u>Work status/history</u> Must not participate in paid work while on leave</p>	<p>Unpaid Parental Leave <u>Work status/history</u> Must be taken in one continuous period – must remain on leave with exception of 10 'keeping in touch days'</p>