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1. The case for comparative reproduction policy research

Hannah Zagel

INTRODUCTION

Reproduction policy is an insufficiently defined domain of state regulation. This is because comparative welfare state research has neglected the area of reproductive welfare (O'Connor, 1993; O'Connor et al., 1999), and reproduction research tends to focus on 'ideas' or normative motives in the political processes of policymaking, rather than on the institutional setup. Depictions of welfare state systems and their typical policy configurations, such as in the universal, liberal and conservative models, commonly disregard state intervention in reproduction, and so it is unclear how these regulations align with common typologies and the differential systemic logics which they convey. These are significant shortcomings given the high political topicality of reproduction issues such as abortion, medically assisted reproduction and sexuality education, and the major insights comparative scholarship can produce into institutional drivers and barriers for particular policy goals and instruments. This introduction seeks to advance the understanding of reproduction policy by discussing key conceptual and methodological issues that arise in this regulatory domain, and foreshadows how the contributions in this edited book advance the field.

Viewing welfare states from their functional side of developing policies as responses to social issues of the time (Kaufmann, 2013), the omission of policies regulating reproduction is particularly glaring in the current era. Reproduction, that is, the processes around avoiding, starting, carrying or ending pregnancy and procreation (Almeling, 2015; Ginsburg & Rapp, 1991), has resurfaced as a hotly debated topic in many countries in the 2000s. Visible liberalisation in some aspects of how reproduction is regulated, most notably the diffusion of abortion legalisation since the 1960s, met with the emergence of new social issues.

Sexualities, relationships and family constellations have diversified (Adler & Lenz, 2023; Smock & Schwartz, 2020; Sobotka & Berghammer, 2021), and

this has gone hand in hand with increased visibility of diverse reproductive life courses. Yet, living arrangements that fall outside of the heteronormative ideal still lack recognition. Individual attitudes are often still more accepting of conventional living arrangements (Cheng et al., 2023), and show prejudices against reproductive practices such as abortion (Adamczyk, 2022) and fertility treatment (Szalma & Djundeva, 2020).

In addition, public attention towards reproduction is driven by major technological advancements in reproductive medicine, which promise greater control for individuals over their reproductive life courses, such as with improved contraceptive methods and medically assisted reproduction (MAR). The latter technology, in particular, fuels hopes to overcome infertility (Franklin, 2022), both among individuals with a desire for children as well as among politicians in and outside of governments wishing to increase fertility rates. These new possibilities initiated calls on states to regulate MAR procedures from various stakeholders in different countries (Griessler et al., 2022).

Social movements and non-governmental organisations have also pushed reproduction onto political agendas (De Zordo et al., 2016). In the European context, groups working towards increasing gender equality, in particular, address reproduction. Although gender equality initiatives at the European level have mainly focused on the work–family intersection, commitment to ‘sexual and reproductive health’ (SRH) is part of the nomenclature used by the EU (European Parliament, 2021). International organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) are vocal advocates for improving SRH globally. Not least, in the United States, the issue of reproduction has been extremely re-politicised after the constitutional right to abortion was overturned in 2022, so that commentators believe it would take a central role in the 2024 presidential election. What have these trends meant for how reproduction is regulated?

Historically, states have heavily restricted reproduction, with some of the most widely referenced examples being authoritarian China’s one-child policy (White, 2016), Romania’s Ceausescu regime (Kligman, 1998) and Nazi Germany’s eugenic sterilisation and forced abortion laws (Timm, 2016). In these cases, states used coercive or punitive measures that severely restricted people’s possibilities to pursue the reproductive lives they wanted. These interventions primarily targeted and took control over the bodies of women and those able to procreate (Ginsburg & Rapp, 1991; Riley & Chatterjee, 2022).

More recent examples highlight that restrictive state interventions in reproduction are not a thing of the past. Prominent cases are abortion restrictions in Poland and many US states (De Zordo et al., 2016; Halfmann, 2011; Roberti & Wright, 2024), and some EU countries’ reluctance to implement the EU Commission’s 2015 decision to legalise non-prescription emergency contra-

ceptive pills (European Consortium for Emergency Contraception, 2024). To the contrary, advocacy research and activist groups warn against backtracking on reproductive freedom and justice. In many countries, right-wing populist movements and conservative parties are increasingly attacking hard-won achievements of liberalisation struggles (Cook et al., 2022; Inglot et al., 2022). But democratic governments too have subscribed to a pronatalist paradigm (Kim, 2019; Schultz, 2015). How can we make sense of these approaches?

Social science research discusses state involvement in reproduction from various angles, many of which highlight underlying ideologies. A common perspective is that states regulate reproduction in the course of wider efforts to control their populations, both in countries with authoritarian rule as well as in democracies (Dumbrava, 2017; Riley & Chatterjee, 2022; Schultz, 2015; Timm, 2016). Centring on individuals' experiences, reproduction scholarship hints 'bottom up' at the multiple ways in which the state interferes with reproductive lives (Roberts, 1997). That literature gestures at the significance of states, revealing the often problematic aspects of its involvement, and teaches about the rich and heterogeneous policy landscape but without a policy-lens or particular interest in the policy configurations.

Facilitated by demographic monitoring, and driven by fears of the respective population growing too fast or shrinking too much, governments across the world have sought to install policy measures to avert the realisation of their fears. Recurrently, population control narratives go along with economic objectives (Solinger & Nakachi, 2016), such as maintaining a sizable workforce for sustaining the social security systems or securing economic growth. Nationalism is invoked as a further ideological driver of regulating reproduction. By enabling reproduction for some groups in society while restricting it for others, states define whose procreation is valued and whose is not in order to mould the national citizenry (Heitlinger, 1991; Roseneil et al., 2017). These accounts reveal the ideological endeavours that underpin the regulation of reproduction.

The focus on the close links between ideas and the institutional setup of regulating reproduction is also reflected in the concepts that researchers use. One example is the framework of 'reproductive governance' (Mishtal, 2019; Morgan & Roberts, 2012), which understands governance in a broad (Foucauldian) sense to include state and non-state actors' actions, narratives and moralities. The framework considers how historical constellations of actors shape the dominant ideas underpinning laws and policies regulating reproduction. For example, Morgan and Roberts (2012) discuss how abortion restrictions and IVF-bans in several Latin American countries in the 1990s and 2000s cemented ideational shifts from 'universal human rights' towards the 'rights of the unborn child'. Overall, the literature on how reproduction is

regulated highlights the emergence of new ideas and the recurrence of others, such as pronatalism.

An implication of the strong focus on ideas such as pronatalist approaches or rights-based approaches in much of the previous literature is that, more than in research on most other regulatory domains of the welfare state, policies addressing reproduction tend to be analytically treated as a subcategory to such ideas. In this view, policies appear to primarily follow from higher-order goals, such as preserving a particular image of the nation or upholding moral order. Likely in part due to different research traditions, the focus on normative motives also differs from the way policies such as social policy, family policy and pension policy are conceptualised and analysed in the literature. In these domains, too, policies are assumed to build on underpinning ideas (Béland & Cox, 2013; Hall, 1993; Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1996), but processes of how policies emerge, what are the policy goals and policy instruments, and how are all of these changing are much more central to the analysis. In the domain of reproduction, policies have rarely been considered as a dimension worthy of study in itself.

Policies and ideas are closely connected, but they may also diverge. Prevailing ideas are crucial for which problems are addressed, which policy goals are formulated and which instruments sought out (Hall, 1993; Pfau-Effinger, 2005; Rothstein & Steinmo, 2002). However, policies can endure and outlive the normative motivations that initiated them or they may be changed or abolished, for example because a competing idea is gaining traction (Princen & 't Hart, 2014). In fact, one reason for explicitly focusing on the policy level rather than primarily on the ideational level is to tell it apart from ideologically driven political narratives, to show where policies and ideas align and to uncover where they might diverge. This is conceptually especially important in the sphere of reproduction where morally loaded issues are omnipresent.

While reproduction policy is not the only institutional factor that shapes individuals' reproductive welfare (Riley & Chatterjee, 2022), it is an important component. Beyond the reproductive rights advocacy benchmarking of international organisations¹ (EPF, 2023; EPF & IPPF, 2021; Ketting & Ivanova, 2018), we still lack a systematic understanding of policy configurations in the regulatory domain of reproduction. Pursuing questions commonly addressed in other policy domains will allow a new understanding of the field: What are the different policy approaches taken to regulate reproduction in different countries and how does reproduction policy change over time? What is the design of different policy instruments and how do they sit beside each other? How do different types of policies regulating reproduction align with or contradict each other in their goals or in their instruments?

In the remainder of this introduction, I will discuss some conceptual considerations and outline a framework for studying reproduction policy as an institutional domain of welfare states. I will then make the case for a comparative approach. I suggest that this approach can make at least two contributions. First, it introduces new analytical tools to reproduction research that will facilitate the identification of recurring configurations, complementarities and contradictions in reproduction policies. Second, the perspective contributes to comparative policy research, which has tended to sideline the domain of reproduction, and allow for cross-domain comparisons and more comprehensive appraisal of welfare production. Third, going forward, this introduction sets the path for an interdisciplinary research agenda of comparative reproduction policy research.

INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS OF REPRODUCTION POLICY

For establishing reproduction policy as a component of the welfare state, this section proposes an analytical framework that applies a bottom-up consideration of state involvement in reproductive processes and builds on the perspective of policies as institutions. Reproduction policy can usefully be defined as the combined formalised statements of governments about what they intend to facilitate or obstruct with regards to reproduction across people's life courses. It is the regulatory domain in which the welfare state makes use of a range of techniques to achieve reproductive welfare. Here, policymakers formulate policy goals, develop policy instruments, and align their goals with underpinning ideas (Hall, 1993; Kaufmann, 2002; Saraceno, 2011). Following institutionalist traditions (Hall & Taylor, 1998; Palier, 2010), I assume that countries historically develop characteristic logics by which they strive to achieve welfare, and in this case: reproductive welfare.

Instruments

Since reproduction has so far largely gone unacknowledged in welfare state research, a bottom-up approach is instructive, which brings unattended policy areas into attention (Michener et al., 2022). Applied to reproductive welfare, the question "what programs a person might encounter in their daily lives while trying to meet basic needs, secure against risk, and improve their circumstances" (ibid., p. 159) returns a number of crucial policy instruments, that is, techniques to attain specific policy goals. Instruments span different fields of regulation, addressing reproduction at various points throughout people's life courses (Zagel, 2024).

Reproduction policy instruments comprise states' involvement in educating about reproduction and how (sex education), measures allowing the planning and control of fertility in the life course (contraception), provisions (if any) for pregnant people who want to end their pregnancy (abortion), and measures to support pregnancies and birth (pregnancy care). In addition, states may provide measures to address the issue of involuntary childlessness, or support other people with parenthood intentions such as same-sex couples (medically assisted reproduction). In each of these fields, states intend to enable or obstruct particular reproductive processes that are considered to be conducive to reproductive welfare, and instruments may be designed in different ways to achieve such goals.

Broadly aligning with institutionalist frameworks applied in comparative welfare state research (Palier, 2010), the institutional setup of reproductive welfare provision may be defined by: rules and criteria governing eligibility and entitlement (who is entitled to access, what are claimant groups?); the types of benefits and services (what is being delivered?); the financial mechanisms (who pays and how?); and the organisation and management of the policy (who decides and who manages?). In the domain of reproduction, this translates into the following:

- a. As for eligibility and entitlement, reproduction policy is more permissive if more reproductive procedures and technologies are accessible, and it is more restrictive if these are criminalised or access is limited, for example by age thresholds, marital status or other social conditions.
- b. Reproduction policy varies in terms of generosity in providing different reproductive procedures and services, such as comprehensive sex education, contraceptive methods, abortion facilities and information, MAR treatment methods and pregnancy care services.
- c. In terms of financial mechanisms, reproduction policy varies in the degree to which reproductive procedures and services are covered by contributions-based or tax-based flat-rate health care systems or have to be paid out-of-pocket.
- d. The organisation and management of reproduction policy varies by the level at which it is regulated, such as the national or regional levels, and by whether it is primarily governed by laws, by medical guidelines, and/or by the degree of court involvement.

Comparative research of these principles across countries can reveal countries' specific approaches to combine these principles, the institutional configurations. Future empirical research will show how coherent the institutional configurations of reproduction policy are across different branches of the system. For example, do systems with high permissiveness go together with generosity

in types of services and coverage of costs, while restrictive systems also have limited in-kind and in-cash generosity?

It should be noted that the institutional configurations of reproduction policy will relate to the structure and organisation of health care systems. This is important because health care systems diverge from other policy domains in the welfare state, mainly because of the exceptionally high support of health care in the population, the important role of professions, and because it is driven not only by demand (such as an ageing population) but also by supply (medical knowledge and technology) (Kennedy et al., 2015). Reproduction policy is a special domain in that, on the one hand, it comprises health issues that are comparatively uncontroversial, and on the other hand, it touches on moral issues that are extremely controversial. Reproduction policymakers navigate this uneven terrain with the domain's receptivity for ideological controversy.

Considering institutional configurations of reproduction policy also raises the question of potential complementarities between the different institutional components. Although these have, in the context of macroeconomics, labour market and social policy, primarily been considered in terms of economic objectives (Hall & Soskice, 2001), analogies can be drawn in the domain of reproduction. The question would be, given a particular goal (see next section and Table 1.1), are the institutional components somehow more successful together (Crouch, 2010)? Possible complementarities, for example to achieve the goal of reducing unwanted pregnancies, could be expected between maximising young people's knowledge about sexuality and reproduction through compulsory comprehensive sex education and providing permissive and accessible contraceptives. For the same goal, restrictive sex education may be complementary with comprehensive abortion information and services, and pregnancy care that centres on the pregnant person's welfare.

Ideas and Goals

Ideas and goals for achieving reproductive welfare can vary over time and place. Table 1.1 gives an overview of variations on the analytical dimensions of ideas and goals in the domain of reproduction policy, also considering the role of paradigms as dividing ideas and goals. Prevailing ideas influence the nature of problems that policymakers consider worthy of addressing and provide the motives for policies. Paradigms, as understood here, set the tone for how reproduction is regulated. Table 1.1 divides ideas and goals by two principal paradigms that have been prominent in the domain of reproduction policy, the population control paradigm and the rights-based paradigm. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo marked a watershed moment in paradigm shift towards a rights-based

Table 1.1 Analytical dimensions of reproduction policy and variants

Dimension	Ideas and Goals by Paradigm
Ideas <i>ideological, normative motives</i>	Population control: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic pronatalism• Nationalist pronatalism• Eugenic (racist) pronatalism• Antinatalism Rights-based: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justice• Human rights• Gender equality• Choice• Protection of unborn life
Policy goals <i>orientations regarding policy outcomes</i>	Population control: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fostering population health• Increasing pregnancies• Reducing pregnancies• Increasing deliveries/births Rights-based: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting sexual development• Reducing unwanted pregnancies• Increasing reproductive autonomy• Improving (women’s sexual and reproductive) health

Note: Lists examples of ideas and goals of reproduction policy by population control and rights-based paradigms and gives examples for policy instruments.

perspective (Shalev, 2000), which has since then influenced reproduction policymaking. While I assume strong links between paradigms, goals and instruments, paradigms are not deterministic. The loose coupling is illustrated by the stark differences between and even opposing character of some of the ideas and goals within the realm of each paradigm as suggested in Table 1.1.

It is well known from previous research that ideas around reproduction are commonly implicated with norms about gender relations, sexuality, bodily autonomy, and the beginning of life, but also with perceptions of the ‘national body’, the population (Marx Ferree, 2021; Roseneil et al., 2017; Solinger &

Table 1.2 Policy instruments dimension

Policy instruments techniques to attain goals
Examples for increasing the autonomy goal following the eligibility and entitlement principle: comprehensive sexuality education as compulsory school subject, provision of free contraceptives without prescription, abortion on request, medically assisted reproductive treatment to singles, regular routine examinations during pregnancy

Nakachi, 2016). These themes can be seen as cross-cutting to the analytical dimensions. In general, due to the morally charged nature of some of these issues, ideas are often presented in a fierce way in the political arena, especially for abortion and MAR (Engeli et al., 2013). Overall, the literature documents an ideational shift from ‘population control’ to more ‘rights-based’ since the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, which structures the ideas and goals governments tend to pursue with reproduction policy.

Historical examples show a strong orientation towards pronatalist ideas of many countries in the first half of the twentieth century (Solinger & Nakachi, 2016; Timm, 2016). Pronatalism can conceptually be differentiated further by distinguishing more culturalist from more economic motives (see also Szalma & Sipos in this book). A competing idea is the human rights motive, which has, in extension of the reproductive rights idea and alongside the gender equality motive, underpinned sexual and reproductive health initiatives of international organisations since the 1994 Cairo conference (see Conlon in this book).

More recently, the justice motive has become more visible, although it still has a marginal role for policymakers internationally. It emerges from the reproductive justice movement, which criticises the individual autonomy-focused rhetoric and activism of the ‘choice’ framework and offers instead a more expansive notion of reproductive advocacy rooted in a human rights framework, encompassing not only the right to avoid having a child, but the right to have a child, and to parent one’s children in safe communities (Ross, 2006). Originating in the US, the reproductive justice framework is increasingly used in the academic and legal spheres (Luna & Luker, 2013).

A normative idea diametrically opposed to reproductive justice is the ‘protection of unborn life’ motive, which is championed by so-called pro-life organisations. This motive is an illustrative case for looking at potential competition of ideas or at contradictions between them (see Kaminska in this book). It is at odds with the gender equality and the justice motives, but can be aligned with pronatalist motives. Although contradicting the intention of the original human rights logic, the protection-of-unborn-life motive has discursively been integrated with human rights narratives by ‘pro-life’ groups, with some impact on policy, for example in Latin America and in the United States (Morgan & Roberts, 2012; Penovic in this book).

Policy goals tend to be formulated and policy instruments to be designed in accordance with the dominant ideas. However, these links are not deterministic and policy change is possible even without a change in ideas (Hall, 1993). There may also be different competing ideas underpinning one policy domain in the same period (Princen & ‘t Hart, 2014). Likewise, and similar to other policy domains (Mätzke & Ostner, 2010; Palier, 2005), reproduction policy can comprise different policy goals, which are sometimes pursued at the same

time. This book aims to provide further insights into the links between ideas, goals and instruments in the domain of reproduction policy.

COMPARISON AS ADVANTAGE

In addition to the proposed framework for establishing reproduction policy as a domain of the welfare state worthy of study, this introduction promotes a comparative approach. Mapping the institutional configurations of reproduction policy and disentangling links between ideas, goals and instruments requires systematic analysis of a range of issues including the policy landscape, policy variations and innovations, policy trade-offs and interactions between policies, policy coherence, policy conflict and interdependencies, policy change, policy drivers, as well as policy effects. Although many of these issues are for future research to explore, several are addressed by chapters in this book.

Due to the breadth in disciplines, approaches and internationality of the contributions, the authors of this book's chapters did not follow one coherent conceptual framework. What unites the chapters is, in fact, the decidedly comparative endeavour and the focus on the policy level of how reproduction is regulated across many parts of the world today. Each chapter sets out a clear conceptualisation of what is the subject of comparison and a solid argument for case selection as required by a comparative approach. Finally, each chapter explicitly considers how the comparison advances our understanding of its particular area of reproduction policy.

So far, knowledge on state regulation of reproduction heavily relies on (historical) case study research. Comparative research can add to these rich accounts. Of the reproduction policy fields, abortion policy may be considered an exception in that there is a dynamic literature using multi-country cross-country comparisons (Fernández, 2021; Johnson et al., 2018; Sommer & Forman-Rabinovici, 2021). A growing number of available abortion policy datasets, such as the Global Abortion Policy Database (Johnson et al., 2017), makes quantitative multi-country studies possible. However, these accounts commonly consider abortion separately from other reproduction issues and rarely link it to broader questions of regulating reproduction (but see Vayo, 2022).

Comparative research is a multidisciplinary field, includes a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, and relies on a diversity of data sources and materials (Della Porta & Keating, 2008; Peters & Fontaine, 2020). This book advocates a pluralist methodological view to comparative policy research generally and comparative reproduction policy research in particular. Rather than pushing for a specific methodological approach, the book suggests that

different types of comparison are useful for analysing the domain of reproduction policy.

Different types of comparison have features that are suitable for different kinds of research questions and analytical goals around the nature of reproduction policy as a policy domain. First, comparing the same policy across countries is particularly useful for identifying variations in ideas, goals and instruments, explaining policy change and evaluating policy effects. It is also a good descriptive exercise to learn from other contexts, especially in a field such as reproduction policy that is arguably understudied. Many chapters of this book are cross-country comparative, some comparing across several countries (Conlon, Gietel-Basten, Ivanova et al.), others comparing two countries (Malunoud, Tamakoshi).

Comparing different policies within the same country can also be a favoured approach. It is particularly useful for understanding the broader policy landscape, identifying policy trade-offs and interactions, locating policy biases such as how some social groups are catered for and others are excluded, and analysing coherence or conflict in goals. It is also conducive to understanding policy interdependencies. Three chapters in this book compare policies within one country (Kaminska, Khan, Szalma & Sipos), while one chapter compares within country across federal states (Kluge) and one chapter compares cross-border politics in one policy field (Penovic).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS BOOK

This book is structured into four parts framed by an introduction and a discussion chapter. Part I includes two chapters that each focus on one reproduction policy field and one country, but use comparison to unravel a particular aspect of the organisation and management of the respective reproduction policy field in focus. In Chapter 2, Tania Penovic traces the US anti-abortion movement's cross-border efforts to drive a backlash to abortion rights within the international regulatory framework, looking in particular at influences on Australian policymaking. The chapter illuminates how powerful political networks originating in the US context actively sought to determine abortion bans as policy instrument domestically and internationally by spreading the idea of the 'protection of unborn life' rooted in Catholic doctrine. In light of the above framework, this case also illustrates the glaring lack of a specific policy goal that goes beyond the normative motivation. In Chapter 3, Anna E. Kluge also considers the distribution of power between actors involved in reproduction policy by introducing the concept of knowledge responsibility in sexuality education. Applying it comparatively to Germany's federal states, she shows a high diffusion of responsibility and reveals the complex organisation and management structure in the field of sexuality education. In this environment,

the links between particular ideas, policy goals and the translation into instruments seem more processual than deterministic.

Part II comprises three chapters that compare single policy fields across multiple countries. In Chapter 4, Stuart Gietel-Basten compares five Asian countries' approaches to promoting ideal family sizes with information, education and communication programmes. The chapter discusses the possible link between such programmes' promotion of small families and current (low) fertility preferences, alerting us to the possibility that new goals and policy instruments may be working against the force of previous ones that are still unfolding in society. In Chapter 5, Olena Ivanova, Elizabeth Kemigisha, Mariana Cruz Murueta and Rayan Korri reveal challenges to implementing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in contexts normatively opposed to ideas underpinning CSE, comparing Lebanon, Mexico and Uganda. The chapter carves out particular policy instruments that could help to reduce conflict over ideas in sexuality policymaking. In Chapter 6, by comparing abortion policy in high-income countries against a WHO health care standard, Catherine Conlon shows the persistence in exceptionalism of this policy field in countries expected to adhere to human rights standards, as well as the different approaches to over-regulate abortion. As Ivanova et al. do for sexuality education, Conlon's chapter identifies gaps between internationally agreed ideas and countries' reproduction policy instruments.

Part III features three chapters that compare different types of reproduction policies within single countries. In Chapter 7, Rohan Khan introduces a research agenda to study the links between public attitudes and reproduction policy by drawing on insights from other domains of the welfare state. His chapter provides the conceptual toolkit to trace the effects of ideas on reproduction policy instruments and vice versa. In Chapter 8, Ivett Szalma and Alexandra Sipos look at the evolution of the idea of pronatalism in Hungary, and analyse how reproduction policy instruments reflect variants of this orientation. In Chapter 9, Monika Ewa Kaminska looks at changes in reproduction policy within the context of post-communist transition in Poland. She reveals contradictions both between different reproduction policies as well as between policies and the goals of pronatalism stated by the conservative political and religious actors.

Part IV comprises two chapters that each consider the interactions between policies in two countries. In Chapter 10, Mio Tamakoshi contrasts how Japan and Italy regulate multifetal pregnancy reduction (MFPR), a medical case in which abortion policy and MAR policy both apply. The chapter highlights how the evolution of reproduction policy instruments (MFPR) may depend on ideas inscribed in another instrument (abortion), such as about the status of the foetus vs. the pregnant person's autonomy. In Chapter 11, Zaina Mahmoud compares how, in California and the UK, surrogacy regulation interacts with

kinship law. She shows that the instruments in the two jurisdictions differ but that they uphold similar ideas about motherhood and family.

Finally, in the Discussion chapter, Hannah Zagel and Rene Almeling reflect on the contributions of this edited book to the study of reproduction scholarship broadly and to reproduction policy research in particular. They invite thinking about the implications of viewing reproduction policy as a cohesive policy field and embark on thought experiments regarding what reproduction policy might look like if it were to support reproductive autonomy, as well as how different welfare systems would likely implement this goal.

The chapters in this edited book offer diverse reflections of scholars from different disciplinary and geographic spheres on one of the most hotly debated issues of state regulation to date. Together, the chapters reflect an impressive range over the scholarly terrain of what I have here called comparative reproduction policy research. Each chapter presents an original analysis of a particular aspect of reproduction policy while developing new analytic tools for future research. I expect comparative reproduction policy research to become a growing field in the years to come, and hope this edited book will spark new questions and inspire empirical research among welfare state scholars and beyond. My hope is, too, that the book contributes to intellectual work that informs political thinking towards creating policy landscapes supportive of reproductive welfare for all.

NOTE

1. Advocacy research may be considered an exception, but the goal of that research is to reveal shortcomings in how countries currently deliver on what is often called “sexual and reproductive health and rights” (SRHR) (Starrs et al., 2018) – a concept that comprises both state regulation (‘rights’) and outcomes (health).

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