WORKPACKAGE 3

LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIAL POLICIES

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

FAMILY POLICY AND WELFARE REGIMES[1]

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to develop a tentative classification of family policy regimes for all 27 EU member states. This classification will be developed using four variables measuring different aspects of the strategies pursued by European households in coping with the work-family balance – childcare take up for children aged 0-3, effective parental leave, take-up of part-time among women and finally spending on family policy. Based on these four indicators we have been able to cluster the 27 EU Member States in five groups representing different caring models.

Most comparative studies of welfare issues – social security, social service provision, family support, and labour market policy – try to group the European welfare states into welfare regime clusters and nearly all contrast their result with the typology developed by Esping-Andersen in his book from 1990 *'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism'*. The discussion and disagreements about how to classify the welfare states takes several differences directions. On the one hand, what type of welfare issues are studied causes differences in the welfare state typologies. A study of social security or social services comes out with a complete different typology compared with a study of family policy or labour market regulation. On the other hand, there are also fundamental different approaches in the conceptualization of welfare provision and the kind of mechanisms creating social prosperity and equality. Therefore we have to be cautious in developing welfare typologies and circumspect in assuming their capability for explaining differences between welfare systems.

The prevailing welfare typologies are thus in many respects highly problematic. First, the typologies often create the impression of coherent welfare regimes, which typically is not the case. Within nearly all welfare regimes we find marked differences in the institutional and contextual construction of the national welfare systems. Secondly, the typologies are primarily based on empirical data from the Northern - Western European countries while the Central and Eastern European countries are usually absent. Thirdly, they are focusing on the conventional welfare providers – e.g. state and labour market - while other important welfare providers are not included – such as family, community, and organised civil society - and finally, as argued by gender researchers, most typologies exclude the family and its internal gendered dynamics. Analysing the work-family balance and how the policy regimes influence the strategies pursued by households illustrates some of the inconsistencies and weaknesses of the existing typologies.

The work-family balance refers to the strategies pursued by individuals and households in reconciling paid work, unpaid work and caring obligations in the families. Here we shall primarily focus on strategies taken by the families in different types of welfare systems in adapting the parents' work schedules to their caring obligations for small children.

This paper will scrutinize policy interventions, especially those introduced since the late 1990s, at both national and EU level designed to tackle issues relating to the reconciliation of caring and paid employment. The role of policy-making among EU countries takes different forms and operates under different constraints so that it merits separate investigation, which will not be done in detail in this paper. Nevertheless it is particularly interesting to see how compatible and effective these policies have been at improving conditions for combining work and care responsibilities in practice. However, proposed policy reforms are sometimes not taken up nor implemented. In some countries family-friendly policies have been carefully

implemented and have had a profound impact facilitating a better work-life balance, while in other countries they may have little relevance because they have been insufficiently implemented.

By analysing the different types of caring models in the EU, the gendering of European citizenship becomes more visible. For each of the European caring regimes we analyse the extension of common values and norms determining household practices in relation to childcare and equal sharing of housework and attitudes to gender roles and maternal employment. In the last section of the paper we reflect shortly on the implications these attitudes to gender roles and maternal employment have on the household strategies in the individual caring regimes. This analysis will be developed and elaborated in a later paper. This paper is based on empirical data from, on the one hand, different EU-studies of family policy and, on the other hand, data from the European Social Survey from 2004.

The paper starts with an overview of the extensive literature on work-family typologies. Then follows a discussion of the different family and welfare policies included in the proposed classification of EU Member States and a description of five different family policy models coming out of the cluster analysis done in the paper. Based on the modelling of the EU Member States we finally discuss the relationship between family policy and household practices. The paper ends with an analysis of how the gender norms in the individual care models influence the pattern of women's care for children and the attitudes towards women's involvement in paid work when having caring responsibilities for small children.

WORK-FAMILY TYPOLOGIES IN THE WELFARE LITERATURE

In analysing work-family balance, the concept of care is increasingly used in addition to the dichotomy of paid and unpaid work in understanding how provision of welfare services are organised in the individual welfare states. Care can be organised as private or public services and it can be provided as paid or unpaid work. Care is thus very much part of the mixed economy involving both state, market, family and voluntary sector in a specific composition (Alber 1995, Anttonen & Sipilä 1996). It is therefore not possible to understand the form and nature of contemporary welfare societies without including the provision of care. Ten years ago Knijn & Kremer (1997) argued for including care as an integrated part of the right to social citizenship by a distinction between the right to receive care and the right to provide care. However most comparative welfare literature is still dealing with the interface between work and family by focusing on the state-labour market relationship and on how to integrate women into paid labour (Lewis 1992 and 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1990 and 1999; Boje & Almqvist 2000; Lister 2002). The weakness of the state-market approach is, however, that it describes women's societal position, their social rights, and the impact of the welfare state policies based on women's position in the labour market and the extent that they take up gainful employment (Lewis, Cambpell & Huerta 2008). By taking this approach and by excluding the internal gendered dynamics in the family, most analysis fails to explaining why the gendered division of paid work, unpaid work and caring obligations has been so persistent in most European countries – even in the countries with the most comprehensive family policies (Orloff 1993; Ellingsæter 1998; Pfau-Effinger 2004).

In an attempt to overcome some of these weaknesses in analysing welfare

systems in a work-family perspective Lewis (1992) tried in an early critique of Esping Andersen to synthesis the debate on national differences in Europe by outlining different types of breadwinner systems. These systems are combining the gender contract in unpaid care work and the employment contract regulating the gender relations in the labour market. Lewis distinguishes between three different types of breadwinner systems. The strong male breadwinner system where the impact of motherhood is significant and reduces mothers' labour market participation markedly compared with non-mothers. The provision of childcare (at least for children under 3 years) is restricted or rather expensive, the parental leave is low paid or unpaid and the tax system favours the male breadwinner households. Germany and the UK are represented by this system. The modified breadwinner system we find in France and Belgium where there are generous child allowances for families with two or more children and comprehensive and cheap child care facilities for children which allow women a real choice between paid work and care for their children in the family. Finally there is the weak breadwinner system, which we find in the Scandinavian countries where a dual earner household is the rule and the motherhood even has a positive impact on women's labour market involvement (see e.g. Ellingsæter 1998; Leira 2002; Abrahamson, Boje and Greve 2005; Boje 2007).

During recent years much effort has been used in trying to combine the different approaches to analysing the complex interaction of gender relations in labour market, family and welfare state. One such attempt we find in Daly (2000) where she tries to construct a framework for studying welfare state variations in paid work, unpaid work and welfare by combining the breadwinner system, citizenship rights and decommodification approaches in classifying welfare systems. According to Daly the provision of care is organised through the breadwinner system and within this system the production of caring labour can be organised as either paid or unpaid work and it can be located outside or inside the family. Furthermore the provision of care can be a private or a public responsibility depending on how care is defined according to social citizenship.

In order to understand the relationship between work and care – paid or unpaid – and the different conditions by which men and women are integrated into the labour market, it has been necessary to introduce new concepts in classifying welfare systems. The importance of care provision has, as already discussed, seldom been considered as an integrated part of the basic needs of citizens and has therefore not been included in the definition of social citizenship rights. To solve this dilemma and to conceptualise the relationship between work and care numerous scholars have recently proposed that the concept of decommodification has to be replaced and/or supplemented by the concept of re-/defamilialisation defining the social citizenship rights by including both paid work, unpaid work and caring obligations. However again we are confronted with the problem of having only partly included the strategies pursued by individual households and the internal gendered dynamics of families. Here we need to combine studies of the institutional frame for work, care and welfare with narrative studies of the gender strategies pursued by the household members in reconciling work and care obligations (Leira 2002; Lister 2002; Saraceno 1997).

Another attempt is found in Pascall and Lewis (2004) who are mapping the European welfare systems and their labour market and social policies in relation to gender equality across a variety of key dimensions characterising the gender regime. These dimensions are paid work, care work, income, time use and voice. In advocating this model they argue that gender equality policies in most European countries have been limited

in effect, "because they have addressed part of the system rather than the whole. But gender regimes are interconnected systems through which paid work is connected to unpaid work, state services and benefits are delivered to individuals or households, costs are allocated, and time is shared between men and women in households, as well as between households and employment". If gender equality policies have to be more efficient in delivering equal treatment, in paid work and welfare provision, according to Pascall & Lewis, they need to address "the interconnecting elements of gender regimes as systems, with a logic of gender equality in care work, income, time and voice, as well as in paid employment" (Pascall and Lewis, 2004:379-80).

Most recently and closely related to the increasing number of European data bases on work-family relations and on welfare policy regulations – MISSOC, OECD (Bosses and Babies), ESS, ECHP and HWF – several European research programmes have developed typologies relying on information about provision of formal and informal care, the kind of care children receive inside the household and from someone others than their parents. Based on the time budget data from European Community Houesehold Panel (ECHP) Bettio & Plantenga (2004) have developed a typology of care regimes including organisation of care for both young children and elderly people. They have identified five different care regimes – a Scandinavian public care model, a parental choice model in Belgium and France, a Southern European family care model, a privatised part-time care model in the UK and the Netherlands, and a publicly facilitated, private care model in Germany and Austria. Another but similar comparison has been made by Wall (2007). Here the modelling of care regimes has been done using data on leave policies and leave arrangements for parents in 19 European countries. Three dimensions have been included in this analysis – paid parental leave take up, type of compensation during the period on parental leave, gender sharing of parental leave. The emphasis in describing the different caring regimes is thus on the social construction of motherhood and the relationship between working parents and the welfare system. The typology by Wall (2007) is very similar to the previous one made by Bettio & Plantenga (2004) except for two cases: the Scandinavian countries are divided into two different models – a gender equality oriented model in Denmark, Sweden, Iceland – and Slovenia - and a parental choice oriented policy model including Norway and Finland but also France and Belgium. Furthermore Portugal is separated from the other South European countries in an 'early return to full-time work leave policy model' (Wall 2007).

WORK-FAMILY RELATIONS AND THE WELFARE POLICIES TO BE ANALYSED

The 'Work-family' literature illustrates clearly some of the inconsistencies and weaknesses of existing welfare arrangements in comparing the different welfare systems, albeit that the nature of these problems varies between societies. During this decade all European countries are redefining and restructuring the relationship between paid work, unpaid work and caring and are seeking new solutions in provision of care – it may be private or public alternatives and inside or outside the family. In the recent decades there has been a growing attention among the EU member States paid to the role of family-friendly policies due to women's increasing rate of labour market participation and

changing family formations. At the EU level this development has been followed up by introduction of European standards for formal childcare and parental leave arrangements and by attempts evaluating the impact of family-friendly policies on employment relations, working time arrangements and family strategies. Altogether this has been done by the EU Commission in an effort to increase the female employment rate even more among the EU Member States.

In this paper we will primarily focus on three policy areas, which have had impact on the nature of the work-care relationships in the families and on the patterns of work take-up among men and women in the EU Member States. The policy areas dealt with in this paper are:

- Family policy and working time. The welfare systems differ in terms of how strictly the labour market and the working hours are regulated. Here we will primarily focus on how to balance time for work and for caring through part-time work.
- Parental leave schemes are one core element of family. These schemes differ widely in terms of eligibility, duration and benefit. The parental leave schemes are typically extended in countries where family policy highly emphasizes family care
- Childcare system is prioritised in countries where women's take up of gainful employment is strongly emphasized. Also here we find great differences among the EU Member States concerning provision, types of childcare and governance of childcare.

The three policy areas are developed for different purposes and have different effects on the 'work-family balance' but they have all some impact on the strategies followed by the household in reconciling work and care (Lewis 2001; Gornick and Meyer 2003; Haas et al 2006) First, a combination of working time and family policies might facilitate organisational arrangements at the workplaces and in the labour market generally. By introducing flexible working time or leave arrangements it is possible to give employees a real choice in combining work and care. Second, provision of childcare is essential in solving the households' caring obligations. Lack of access to childcare facilities is typically what keeps people – and especially women – out of paid work in all EU countries. Lewis (2004) has reviewed a range of different care strategies in different countries ranging from institutionalised services to carer allowances and care accounts in terms of 'policy bundles'. She argues that there is no single policy solution to such complex problems of managing time and care and who pays for it. Despite a situation where many countries are attempting to cut back on welfare prevision, social care has remained a growth area over the last decade. Policy makers in most EU countries are increasingly aware of the need to reform these provisions. In particular in the context of an aging population and lack of labour supply, they try to compensate by encouraging employees to work longer and women to increase their take up of gainful employment. Consequently, the focus in nearly all EU-initiated proposals promoting equal opportunities between men and women in work and family relations are concentrated on access to work and in removing the barriers for women into gainful employment – and not equality in a broader sense.

The existing policy frameworks and preferences will clearly affect the specific strategies pursued by the EU-member States in combining work and family obligations. However, the problem of solving the constraints between paid work, unpaid work and care is defined differently in the various welfare systems; in some countries as a business issue, as for example in the UK; in

others as a private family problem, which tends to be the case in Germany, or as a universal concern what has to be dealt with by the public, as is the case in the Scandinavian countries where paid parental leave and access to child care is considered as a social right.

The different policies, which are introduced aiming at solving work-family conflicts, are not necessarily internally consistent. For example, in the Netherlands labour market policies encourage the part time participation of women, whilst taxation policies encourage them to stay at home. In Denmark labour market as well as social policies are focusing strongly on full-time employment for both women and men but the family policies are insufficient in establishing equal conditions for women and men in taking up parental leave and in provision of the needed amount of child care facilities. Nor is there necessarily consistency between EU and national level policies. Thus, the EU tries to increase female labour market participation, whilst most New Member States have cut provisions for working mothers (Bruning and Plantenga 1999; Lewis 2002) Therefore we would not necessarily expect to find coherence between the different policies at different levels.

A TENTATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF THE EUROPEAN MEMBER STATES – CARE MODELS

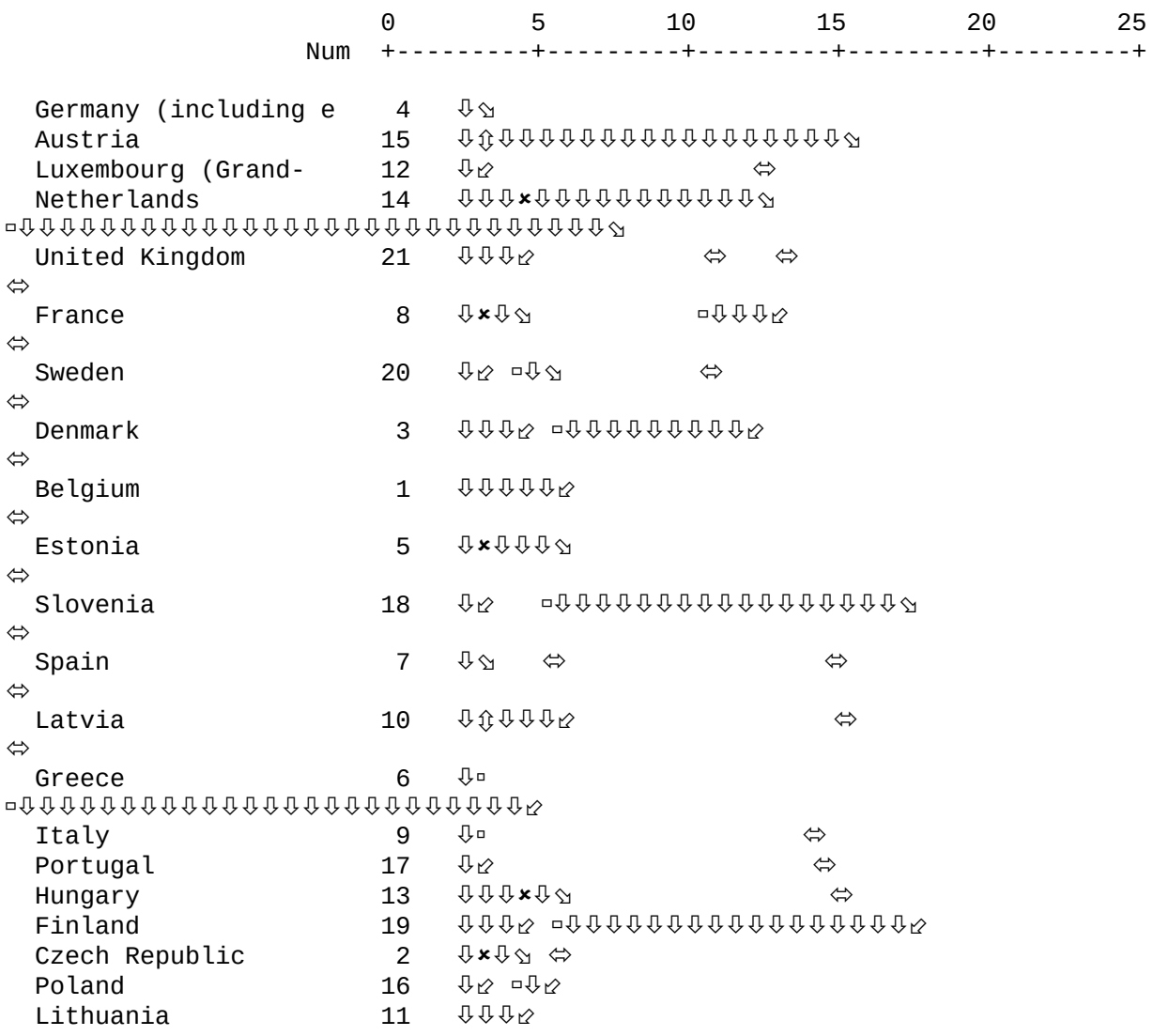
Following this short overview of the main policy instruments influencing the strategies in reconciling work and care in the households we now want analysis how the EU Member States are positioned in relation to a combination of family-friendly measures. This is done by a cluster analysis including four different variables:

- Childcare take up among children aged 0-3 in percentage of the total number of children in this age-group
- Effective parental leave in weeks
- Female part-time employment rate according to the EUROSTAT definition – self-declared part-time
- Total spending on family policy in percentage of GDP

Based on these four variables we have made a clustering of 21 EU Member States – excluding Cyprus, Malta, Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovak Republic, and Ireland due to insufficient data sources.

Clustering of the countries as we have done in this paper helps us in focusing on specific similarities and differences between the included countries but it does not give us any definite picture of the relationship between the countries and their family policy measures. This has to be developed in the following description of the individual care models coming out of the cluster analysis. However, the clustering is highly dependent on the selection of indicators and may change radically if other indicators are included. It is therefore very important to carefully outline the conditions for the cluster analysis by explicitly defining the different variables used in clustering the EU Member States – see Appendix 1.

Figure 1: Clustering of the EU-Member States



Source: See Appendix 1

Five different clusters can be identified based on the four chosen variables. Here we shall give a short description of each cluster based on the four variables used in the analysis.

Cluster 1: Extensive Family Policy Model

Four countries are included in this cluster – the two Scandinavian countries – Denmark and Sweden – and the two countries normally characterized by a pro-natalistic family policy – France and Belgium.

This cluster is characterised by a high level of childcare take up among children aged 0-3 years combined with comprehensive rights to parental leave in combination with generous payment during most of the parental leave period. The level of spending on family policy is high. These countries are in Lewis's (1992) breadwinner-typology classified as modified or weak

breadwinner countries. In all four countries there is a strong drive for women's integration into the labour force and towards women's social and economic independence. In Sweden children have nearly no impact on women's rate of employment while employment rates for Danish mothers with one child are even higher than for non-mothers (Abrahamsen, Boje & Greve 2003). Mothers with children aged 0 to 5 in France and Belgium have employment rates lower than in Scandinavia. For French women it is especially the case among mothers with two or more children. On the other hand a relatively high proportion of women in the four countries are in part-time employment. About one-third of the female employees in all four countries have part-time jobs, when "part-time employment" is defined as self-declared part-time. However the majority of women in part-time jobs in this cluster of countries are working long part-time - more than 20 hours a week.

Cluster 2: Short leave, Part-time Model

The Netherlands and the United Kingdom are both characterised as a short-leave, part-time regime. In both countries the period of parental leave is short and badly paid. There is a modest level of public childcare for children aged 0 – 3. The childcare take up is typically combined with women working part-time. When it comes to the labour market system the two countries differ both in relation to social protection and regulation of flexibility.

The UK is characterised by a market-driven labour market with low social protection. We find very few restrictions for employers employing workers on low wage and variable working hours. If employees are low paid or in part-time jobs they are not eligible for social security and the employers are not entitled to pay social contribution (OECD 2005:214). Furthermore, British women are often forced to take up the low paid part-time jobs after maternity leave because of insufficient paid leave and lack of childcare facilities (Plantenga & Hansen 1999).

The Netherlands is characterised by a working-time regime, which is more regulated than the British labour market concerning employment contract and social protection. The social partners are highly involved in regulating the working condition as in the Scandinavian countries, but is recent years the Dutch labour market system has become more deregulated in an attempt to balance flexibility and security in employment relations. This has encouraged individualised arrangements but without a comprehensive family policy for parental leave and with lack of childcare facilities it has been impossible to achieve even a modest level of gender equity in terms of work and care. Consequently the Netherlands holds a position in the bottom among the European countries on equal opportunities.

Cluster 3: The Long-leave, Part-time Model

This cluster includes Germany, Austria and Luxembourg, which in other typologies are characterised with a strong breadwinner model (Lewis 1992 and Esping-Andersen 1999). These countries have long parental leave, which is relatively well paid. Therefore, the level of spending on family policy is high due to generous paid parental leave for a long period.

For most mothers the period on parental leave has traditionally been followed by a longer period outside the labour market caring for the children. Part-time employment is especially widespread among mothers when they take up gainful employment after years of caring. In both countries it is part-time employment in unstable jobs with few weekly working hours. Typically mothers in these countries have been forced to leave the market to take care of the children because the provision of childcare facilities is very

restricted and that which is available, assumes primarily part-time caring.

During recent years a growing number of women in both Germany and Austria have taken up part-time work combined with caring for children, but their part-time jobs are typically short-hours in order to reconcile them with the caring obligations. Problems of getting back into regular employment having been out of work for a long period because of care obligations seem to be more serious among mothers in countries within this model, primarily because of the extended period most mothers stay on parental leave. Another serious problem for mothers who want to return to work after parental leave is the lack of part-time jobs fitting into the operating hours of the childcare institutions, which are typically only open during a restricted number of hours. Furthermore the number of childcare places is restricted and child caring has to rely on grandparents to a large extent (see table 4).

Cluster 4: Family Care Model

Included in this cluster is all the Southern European countries and two Baltic countries. There are countries characterized by a low proportion of women in gainful employment and consequently few women in part-time jobs. The period of parental leave varies among these countries but in all countries the parental leave is badly paid forcing most mothers to rely on a male breadwinner. In the Southern European countries the provision of childcare facilities is low and when they are available it is normally on short opening hours and often they are expensive. As a consequence of low payment of parental leave and restricted provision of public childcare facilities, the spending on family policy is low in the countries covered by this cluster

Cluster 5: Extended Parental Leave Model

This cluster is characterised by countries with very long periods of effective parental leave. Included in the cluster are the three Central European countries Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic plus Lithuania and Finland. All countries in this model have low level of take up of childcare and relatively few women in part-time work. Finland deviates to some extend having a higher childcare coverage and more women in part-time jobs than the other countries but still have possibilities of extended parental leave. In countries classified under the extended parental leave model women typically stay at home three years or more caring for their children. After the period on parental leave the children are cared for mostly by family arrangements or privately organised childcare.

The economic situation in Central and Eastern Europe forces both the man and the woman in the household to contribute to the survival of the family economy. Due to low level of wages it has been a condition for a decent standard of living that both adult household members were full-time earners and for many low wages have forced them to take up an extra job in the 'second economy'. The high level of employment for both men and women in Central and Eastern Europe has, however, not been transferred into a more equal division of labour within the family. Consequently, women remain the principal people responsible for care and domestic life both when they are on parental leave and during periods when they are in full-time employment.

Finland deviates in some respect from the other countries. Here we find a real choice between paid family care where one of the parents are paid for caring the child at home or formalised childcare in public institutions. These arrangements – both family care and public childcare - are relatively generously paid, which also explains the high level of spending on family policy in Finland. The parental choice in Finland between family care and public

childcare is also the main reason for the relatively high level of part-time employment among mothers with small children.

FAMILY POLICY AND HOUSEHOLD PRACTICE – THE IMPACT OF GENDER NORMS

A major issue related to the household strategies in combining work and care concerns the difficulties of parenting in the context of new forms of work, flexible methods of working and the increasing diversity of working time. The majority of families in the EU member states are now dual earners with all the multiplicity of demands and pressures that arise from combining work and family life. Policies to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, for example, childcare provision and parental leave schemes are extremely uneven across the welfare systems of the member countries. Such policies also have been implemented in terms of the pre-existing policy and cultural frame in each country and the particular 'gender order' underlying the welfare state (Ostner and Lewis, 1995).

While recent research has provided some very important insights into the development of modern industrial societies and into the on-going changes of family structures (Wallace 2003; Bertaux, McIntosh and Boje 2002) there has also been a growing recognition of the need to place households as a central focus of research. Household strategies provides a centrifugal point where "decisions" are made usually between men and women concerning who is involved in caring, and under what conditions. And what are the constraints or conditions that shape the choices and preferences for a (non)gendered division of paid and unpaid work? On the one hand, these results are very clearly influenced by the *structure* of welfare state provisions and transfers to family members, the opportunities for employment (career, part-time jobs life-long learning) and associated conditions (flexible, "family-friendly" working arrangements) (Gornick & Meyers 2003; Dulk 2001, Crompton 1999; Abrahamson, Boje and Greve 2005). On the other hand, we should not neglect the importance of *different cultures of work and care*, social attitudes, gender roles, values and preferences (Højgaard 1998; Hakim 2001). In this sense the household represents an important nexus allowing us to study the interaction of three different worlds: namely the nexus between the *worlds of work, care and welfare.*

We assume that a very high proportion of women are likely to drop out of the labour market after the birth of a child in welfare-care systems where family policies are non-existant or rudimentary while a comprehensive family policy supporting reconciliation of work, care and family obligations may encourage mothers to stay continuously in gainful employment (O`Reilly 2003; Leira 2002; Abrahamson, Boje and Greve 2005). We start our analysis by looking at how caring for small children is organised within households living in countries within the different care models described in the previous section. First we want to analyse the relation between the different care models and mothers' time spent on full-time care for their children – see table 1.

Table 1: Care model and women's time spent on full-time care for children

	Care Model	No full-time care at home	Up to 6 months	6 months to 12 months	1 year to 2 years	2 years to 4 years	4 years to 10 years	More than 10 years	Total
One child	Family care	20,3	28,0	18,8	14,3	11,4	3,9	3,3	100,0
	Short-leave, Part-time	12,3	30,5	14,3	13,0	9,1	13,6	7,1	100,0
	Extensive family care	15,8	31,2	20,5	14,8	7,3	6,6	3,8	100,0
	Long-leave, Part-time	13,7	15,8	18,8	18,2	17,6	8,9	7,1	100,0
	Extended parental leave	9,1	11,4	15,1	21,9	35,8	6,4	0,2	100,0
	Total	15,0	22,5	17,8	16,8	17,6	6,6	3,6	100,0
Two children	Family care	20,3	16,6	12,5	19,0	16,6	9,1	5,9	100,0
	Short-leave, Part-time	15,2	15,6	10,4	6,7	11,5	21,6	19,0	100,0
	Extensive family policy	9,4	11,8	17,3	25,7	21,4	6,9	7,5	100,0
	Long-leave, Part-time	10,5	8,1	11,0	14,8	20,8	21,3	13,5	100,0
	Extended parental leave	6,8	5,9	6,3	12,6	33,2	32,4	2,8	100,0
	Total	12,8	11,4	11,3	16,7	21,9	17,9	8,1	100,0
More than three children	Family care	23,9	12,9	7,1	11,2	15,6	14,1	15,1	100,0
	Short-leave, Part-time	7,2	3,6	6,0	6,6	9,0	26,5	41,0	100,0
	Extensive family policy	9,4	4,2	6,7	14,1	27,4	24,4	13,8	100,0
	Long-leave, Part-time	16,8	5,5	6,7	6,1	14,0	24,4	26,5	100,0
	Extended parental leave	10,0	3,2	3,4	9,3	25,6	33,7	14,8	100,0
	Total	14,0	6,1	5,8	10,0	20,0	24,7	19,3	100,0

Source: ESS 2003-4

According to table 1 the *family care model* represented by the Southern European countries and two Baltic countries is characterised by women spending the shortest period on full-time care for children. When having only one child nearly half of the mothers spend less than 6 months on full-time care. With two or more children still one-fifth of the mothers have no full-time care while another group of mothers take up extensive periods of full-time care. Looking at the individual countries within the family care model it is mothers in the Southern European countries who have the shortest period of full-time care while mothers in the two Baltic countries tend to have prolonged period of full-time care when more than one child (see table 2). In all countries within this care model we find a clear polarisation between mothers who return to the labour market after a short leave relying on help from grandparents and mothers who are not participating in the labour market for long periods or have left the labour market completely. The Southern European countries are 'familialistic' in their approach to care and its organisation is delegated to the family. The care obligations rely on the mothers or are taken over by the grandmothers in nearly one-third of the households (see table 4).

Within the *short-leave, part-time model* represented by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands we find a different pattern for mothers with one child, who only take full-time leave for a short period and for mothers with two or more children, who takes full-time leave for a longer period. Among British and Dutch mothers with two or more children nearly half of the mothers are on leave for more than 10 years. It means in reality that they have left gainful employment and if they later in their life want to return into employment it will only be in contingent low paid jobs. Care is in

this model a private concern and the family is considered as the 'natural' provider of care for the children – either in the family done by the mothers or outside the family in private and often highly expensive arrangements

The *extensive family policy model* represented by the Scandinavian and France / Belgium is characterised by successive extension of the period of full-time leave depending on the number of children. Mothers with one child have between 6 months and a year full-time leave while mothers with three or more spend from 2 up to 10 years on full-time care. Looking at the individual countries within the extensive family policy model we find a clear difference in pattern for mothers' full-time leave between the Scandinavian countries where the majority of mothers have between 6 month and a year full-time leave according to the parental leave legislation while mothers in France and Belgium are divided in two groups according to the number of children. In these two countries there is a parental choice between being on short leave and returning into full-time labour market career or being on extended full-time leave on family care allowance and out of gainful employment for a longer period (see table 2). France and Belgium are not normally considered in the same type of caring regime as the Scandinavian countries but thanks to a general improvement of the conditions for parent leave and an increase in provision of institutional childcare in both countries during the recent decade there exist a real choice– at least for families with two children - between caring in the family and public facilities for caring meaning that women can take up gainful employment – full-time or part-time - after about one year on parental leave. This type of parent choice we also find in Finland but with the possibilities of choosing leave for a much longer time period – therefore Finland is grouped in the extended parental leave model.

In the two last care models – the *long-leave, part-time model* and the *extended parental leave model* – a large proportion of mothers have relative long periods on full-time care. More than half of the mothers are on full-time for more than 2 years. However we find a clear distinction between mothers with one child who take up relatively short periods of leave and mothers with two or more children who are on extended leave The general leave pattern is however different within the two models. Among mothers in countries represented by the extended parental leave model – the Central and East European countries - the leave period is between 3 or 10 years depending on the number of children. Then they return into full-time gainful employment in large number. This is not the case among mothers in countries represented by the long-leave, part-time model – Germany and Austria – where a significant number of mothers are on full-time leave for more than 10 years meaning that they leave active labour market career for good or take up part-time jobs. Especially in Germany there are a growing number of mothers who take up part-time employment but there is only contingent part-time jobs available for these women when they return to the labour market (Abrahamson, Boje & Greve 2005) – see also table 2.

We want to analyse more in detail how households in the individual countries grouped in the different care models have chosen between gainful employment and caring for children at home. First, the proportion of mothers in the individual countries who have chosen full-time care followed by an analysis of the proportion of mothers who as an alternative have chosen part-time combined with part-time employment.

Table 2: Time spent by mothers on full-time caring for children in EU Countries

	No full-time care at home	Up to 6 months	6 months to 12 months	1 year to 2 years	2 years to 4 years	4 years to 10 years	More than 10 years	Total
Extensive family policy								
Denmark	7,7	11,9	24,5	26,4	18,0	7,7	3,8	100
Sweden	3,0	4,0	10,0	29,5	34,3	17,6	1,5	100
Parental choice								
Belgium	21,5	23,1	14,4	11,2	6,1	9,3	14,4	100
France	11,7	15,8	11,7	10,5	18,6	15,0	16,7	100
Short-leave, Part-time								
Netherlands	13,9	20,0	9,4	6,1	7,0	19,1	24,7	100
United Kingdom	8,6	5,3	6,4	10,2	16,0	23,5	29,9	100
Ireland	12,0	8,1	6,4	5,6	9,7	14,4	43,9	100
Family care								
Portugal	16,2	54,0	7,8	8,4	6,2	2,4	4,9	100
Greece	38,4	14,1	11,1	5,9	6,5	8,8	15,3	100
Spain	33,2	17,6	12,2	9,2	8,1	7,5	12,2	100
Estonia	10	7	11	23	32	16	2	100
Slovenia	8	6	24	34	18	5	5	100
Long-leave, Part-time								
Germany	5,9	8,2	12,4	13,8	21,4	23,9	14,3	100
Austria	10,5	4,3	9,1	16,0	18,9	19,9	21,4	100
Luxembourg	32	19	12	6	6	10	15	100
Extended parental leave								
Poland	20,6	14,6	11,5	12,2	21,0	17,0	3,1	100
Slovakia	4,6	2,9	7,8	15,2	37,4	27,0	5,2	100
Czech Republic	2,1	4,0	7,3	13,6	34,7	32,9	5,3	100
Finland	3,0	3,6	9,3	19,3	34,6	23,5	6,6	100
Hungary	5,8	4,2	4,5	16,7	39,8	22,0	6,9	100

Source: ESS 2003-4

Looking at the different countries within the five care models we find according to table 2 clear and homogenous patterns within most of the models but also some deviations. In the Scandinavian countries represented by the extensive family policy model the majority of mothers have between 6 months and two years of full-time leave. This pattern follows clearly the parental leave policies in the individual countries. In Sweden the majority of mothers are on leave between 1 or 4 years due to a longer parental leave than in Denmark and Iceland. France and Belgium we have sorted out as an under-group in the extensive family policy because of the duality especially for France in pattern of time women spend on full-time caring for children. In French families with one child the leave period is typically less than six month while it in families with two or more children seems to be two years or more.

In the family care model represented by the Southern European countries the pattern is the same in all countries. A short period on full-time leave - less than six months for more than half of those women

who remain in gainful employment - but in these countries the female employment rate are less than 50 per cent for mothers with small children. In the long-leave, part-time care model we find the same uniform pattern between Germany and Austria, but here the majority women on full-time caring stay out of employment for 4-10 years for returning to the labour market. In the extended parental leave model the period on full-time leave is long as in the long-leave, part-time model, but among these countries – Central European countries and Finland – the mothers return in large number to gainful employment after the leave period.

The alternative for women to full-time caring of small children is part-time caring in combination with part-time employment. This alternative is nearly not used in the family care model, where the mothers either have to be on full-time leave or delegate the responsibility for the small children to grandmothers. In the extended parental leave model part-time caring is also very seldom used. Here the long period of parental leave allow the mothers to be out of employment for a longer period and after the parental leave they are expected to return to full-time employment while the caring is delegated to public institutions – see table 3.

Table 3: Time spent by mothers on part-time caring for children in the EU Countries

	No time part time rather than full time	Up to 6 months	6 months to 12 months	1 year to 2 years	2 years to 4 years	4 years to 10 years	More than 10 years	Total
Extensive family policy								
Denmark	64,0	3,9	3,5	5,8	6,6	8,1	8,1	100
Belgium	57,0	2,3	3,9	5,5	6,5	11,7	13,0	100
France	58,9	1,2	2,2	6,5	10,8	12,7	7,9	100
Sweden	33,7	5,2	7,1	7,7	8,9	20,2	17,2	100
Short-leave, Part-time								
Netherlands	35,5	3,1	1,8	6,0	10,6	20,8	22,2	100
United Kingdom	37,3	3,8	2,7	5,9	10,8	15,7	23,8	100
Family care								
Greece	81,7	4,4	5,0	2,5	1,9	1,7	2,7	100
Spain	71,0	8,0	6,2	3,3	5,8	3,6	2,2	100
Portugal	71,1	16,0	7,7	2,5	0,7	0,9	1,1	100
Long-leave, Part-time								
Germany	41,4	5,2	5,4	8,9	10,7	15,9	12,4	100
Austria	34,4	2,4	8,3	11,1	15,0	14,9	13,9	100
Extended parental leave								
Hungary	86,9	2,6	3,1	3,4	1,8	2,1		100
Finland	77,9	3,6	4,8	5,2	4,8	2,1	1,5	100
Czech Republic	80,3	2,1	2,8	5,0	4,9	3,7	1,2	100
Poland	86,6	4,7	3,4	2,9	1,3	0,4	0,7	100
Slovakia	89,9	2,1	4,2	2,1	0,9	0,9		100

Source: ESS 2003-4

Part-time caring is most frequently used among women in the two part-time models. In the short-leave, part-time countries - the United Kingdom and the Netherlands - nearly half of the mothers are juggling between caring responsibilities and part-time employment for extended periods. Due to insufficient child care facilities and half-day

arrangements in the existing institutions it is typically not possible for these mothers to take up more than short hours part-time jobs.

Part-time caring has also become relatively frequent used by mothers in the *long-leave, part-time model*. In Germany and Austria, women return to employment after the end of long leave, but typically they are not able returning to their previous full-time jobs (Boje & Almqvist 2000). Most mothers in Austria and Germany who return to the labour market after parental leave, change employer because part-time jobs cannot be realised with the original employer (OECD 2003:19). Many mothers are then forced into contingent part-time employment, which has negative consequences on their occupational career and future earnings. Family policy in the long-leave, part-time care model is characterised by long duration of paid parental leave and lack of affordable institutional childcare. This forces women into a mommy track with an interrupted employment pattern.

Finally a large minority of women living in countries represented by the *extensive family policy model*, care for their children on part-time. This is especially the case in Sweden where we also find the most flexible parental leave system in Europe. Swedish mothers and fathers have the possibility to be on part-time leave for several years and when they return into gainful employment it is often at reduced working hours during the period when they have small children. By contrast the mothers living in countries represented by the two part-time models the time schedule for Swedish mothers working on part-time is typically long hours and close to the time schedule among full-time working employees. Compared with Sweden, Danish mothers take up full-time jobs more frequently when they return into gainful employment and do it earlier than Swedish mothers. Most mothers in Scandinavian countries change from part-time to full-time when the children have reached the age of 6 and starts in school (see Boje & Almquist 2000:54).

Alternatives to both institutional care and caring at home by the parents – typically the mothers – is caring by grandparents or other relatives. In table 4 we show these alternative caring possibilities. We find that grandparents are a very important source of care and rank higher than institutional care in all the caring models except for the extensive family policy model.

Table 4: Care of youngest child in household, other than yourself/partner

Care models	Grandparents	Institutional Care	No care needed, someone at home	Other	Total
Extensive family policy	16	39	26	20	100
Extended parental leave	33	14	29	24	100
Short-leave, Part-time	26	19	41	15	100
Long-leave, Part-time	30	18	34	18	100
Family care	32	16	32	20	100
Total	27	22	32	20	100

Source: ESS 2003-4

Care by the parents – the category 'No care needed; someone at home' - is most widespread in the two part-time models. Especially in the short-leave, part-time model the parents adapt their working time schedules to the children's needs of care. The widespread use of part-time job among mothers and flexibility in the working hours make it possible for at least one of the British and Dutch parents always to be at home. In the extensive family policy model institutional care is the most important

sources of care for the youngest child in the household. In the extensive family policy model - Denmark, Sweden, France, and Belgium - there is a long tradition of formal child care provision that is both available during the whole day and affordable to pay due to high public subsidies even to private childcare institutions.

GENDER NORMS AND HOUSEHOLD STRATEGIES

> Negotiations in the households and the decisions concerning the division of labour in paid work, unpaid work and caring are not only a result of socio-economic and institutional factors but also highly dependent of norms, values and practices in the societies (Pfau-Effinger 2004). Pfau-Effinger uses the term 'gender arrangement' to describe the complex interaction between cultural and institutional conditions in determining the different work-care models in Europe. Despite significant initiatives at national as well as European level in promoting a better balance between work and care obligations in the household the distribution of paid work, unpaid work and care is still characterised by the traditional gender contract and highly unequal divided (Plantenga & Hansen 1999; Pfau-Effinger 2004; Haas et al 2006)

There has in this context been a growing recognition of the need to place households as a central focus of research. "Household strategies" (Wallace 2002) provides a centrifugal point where "decisions" are made usually between men and women concerning who is involved in paid employment or caring, and under what conditions. Which norms and perceptions concerning the 'gender arrangements' do shape the choices and preferences for a gendered division of paid work and unpaid work. On the one hand, the outcome is very clearly influenced by the structure of welfare state provisions, tax regimes and transfers to family members, the opportunities for employment and "family-friendly" working arrangements (Crompton 2006; Gornick and Meyers 2003). On the other hand, we should not neglect the importance of different gender norms and preferences concerning work and care (Pfau-Effinger 2004; Hakim 2001).

In order to measure gender norms we have constructed an index based on data from the European Social Survey (ESS). Here we use three questions to describe the gender norms and attitudes towards women's engagement in paid work and men's caring responsibilities:

- A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family
- Men should take as much responsibility as women for the home and children
- When job is scarce men should have more right to a job than woman

The index is constructed on these three questions and goes from the value 3 indicating the most traditional gender norms to value 15, which represent the most gender equality norms. Table 5 shows attitudes towards women's engagement in paid work and fathers' care taking in the different family policy models. The results are mixed and we might no be able to differentiate strictly between the different family policy models in gender equality norms.

Table 5 Attitude towards Gender Arrangements in European Households

Country	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Extensive family policy			
Denmark	12,0	2,1	1450
Sweden	11,8	1,9	1911
France	10,7	2,5	1799
Belgium	10,6	2,4	1758
Short-leave, Part-time			
Netherlands	10,7	2,2	1862
United Kingdom	10,2	2,1	1868
Family care			
Portugal	9,5	2,1	2001
Greece	9,5	2,4	2385
Estonia	9,8	1,8	1857
Spain	10,1	2,5	1596
Slovenia	10,5	2,0	1388
Long-leave, Part-time			
Germany	10,4	2,3	2796
Luxembourg	10,2	2,1	1566
Austria	10,1	2,5	2179
Extended parental leave			
Hungary	9,3	2,0	1456
Czech Republic	9,6	2,3	2820
Poland	9,7	2,0	1641
Finland	11,5	2,1	1989

We find as expected the most gender egalitarian norms within *extensive family policy model* while the most traditional gender norms appears in both the *extended leave model* and the *family care model*. Among the individual countries Hungary and Portugal have the most traditional gender norms although the mothers' care strategies balancing work and care is quite different. Portuguese women have a continuous pattern of labour market activity and the shortest career interruption due to the parental leave while women in Hungarian households take up three years leave before they return to the labour market. On the other hand, Spain, Slovenia and Finland, all grouped in family policy models characterised by relatively traditional gender attitude, have gender egalitarian index at level with the countries grouped in the extensive family policy model.

Despite the fact that women in eastern European countries are highly involved in the labour market the gender norms are rather conservative. According Haas et al. 2006 women's involvement in the labour market coexists with more traditional gender role. In this respect the long parental leave period reinforce women's responsibility for children, and at the same time allow women to return to the labour market. Finland differs from the other countries in the *extended leave model*. The gender norms in Finland are more similar to the other Nordic countries despite the policy and the care praxis has many similarities with the post-communist countries.

These findings emphasize the importance of mothers' actual strategies in combining work and care. They seem to be

more influenced by structural and institutional condition than the gender norms in several of the analysed countries but further analyses of the relationship between the pursued household strategies in combining work and care and attitudes towards gender equality have to be done.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have tried to classify the EU Member States based on four variables describing on the one hand the household strategies followed in reconciling obligations in the work life and family life and on the other hand the ambitions put forward by the welfare state in pursuing a family-friendly policy towards the work-life balance. In a cluster analysis we have identified five different care models. For each of the models we have analysed in the paper the relation between family policy and the actual behaviour of mothers given the extent of caring obligations and how the pursued strategies followed by these women are determined 1) by the type of policies as defined by the care models or 2) by the cultural / normative context prevailing in the households measured by a series of questions describing gender norms and attitudes towards women's involvement in paid work in combination with caring for children. The caring regimes we found based on the family policy variables deviate markedly from the traditional welfare regimes as they have been developed in the welfare state literature.

By contrast to other welfare typologies we do not find a uniform Scandinavian model. Finland was not clustered together with Denmark and Sweden. The longer duration of paid leave allowances and the low level of female part-time workers we find in Finland can explain the difference between Finland and the other Scandinavian countries. In Finland parents have a real choice between caring for the small children themselves and being eligible for family allowances or take up gainful employment while the children are cared for in public childcare institutions. Neither Swedish nor Danish mothers have this choice. In these countries the family policy is more orientated towards motivating mothers to take up gainful employment as quick as possible after about one year of maternity / parental leave.

Our analysis showed that the different family policy regimes to a large extent affect mothers care praxis and the strategies pursued by the households in reconciling paid work, unpaid work and caring obligation in the families. We found that in the *extensive family policy model* mothers remain in gainful employment after 6 months-one year leave and rely on public child care. In the *short-leave, part-time model* the periods of leave are restricted to few months and the lack of affordable child care facilities often forces mothers to take up part time jobs on short hours or leaving the labour market completely for a longer period of time when becoming mothers. The period out of gainful employment depends on the number of children. With two or more children a significant number of mothers never come back in regular work. In the *long-leave, part-time model* mothers stay at home on long parental leave - up to three years per child - when the children are young and if they return into gainful employment it is typically contingent part-time basis on short hours and to extremely low wages. In the *family care model* we find a widespread polarisation between mothers who return to the labour market after a short leave relying on help from grandparents and mothers who are not participating in the labour market. In contrast to the family care model in countries represented by the *extended leave model* mothers stay at home on long parental leave when the children are young, but typically

they take up full-time employment when the children get older (3 years old) and also here the children are cared for by grandparents in large number.

We do not find any clear relationship between the gender norms and the different care regimes while a relationship between care regimes and the household strategies in reconciling paid work and caring obligations seems to appear. On the one hand different care regimes clearly affect parents caring strategies and how mothers allocate their time on care over the life courses. On the other hand gender norms and attitude towards women in paid work and men's caring responsibilities does not determine women's actual care praxis. The highest equality in gender norms we find within *extensive family policy model*, where we also have the countries with the most equalised gender division of paid and unpaid work in Europe. However, even in these countries we still find a situation where men are most involvement in paid work and women the main responsible for caring obligations towards children. This means that we in our analysis of gender arrangements and women's position in the household come to the same conclusion as Pascall and Lewis: 'No Western European country has put women on equal terms with men: even Scandinavian countries have labour market divisions which put women at a disadvantage in paid work, and pensions, and discourage men's participation in care work' (Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 275). A conclusion which is even more the reality in the Central and Eastern European countries where the transformation since 1989 has threatened many aspects of the previous dual earner system and to some extend reintroduced the traditional male breadwinner model in sharing the households' work and caring responsibilities.

In order to develop a more gender balanced citizenship in the European Union developing typologies of care models can spread light on mothers' constraint and opportunities in combining work and care. Policies at the EU level have to take into consideration how the interplay between different kinds of family policies and gender norms shape the relationship between paid work, unpaid work and care in different national contexts. The article shows that reconciliation policies can take many forms and there is huge difference among the EU member states.

The central question is what implications of our findings will have on the challenges of combining work and care at the EU level. The findings show that different caring regimes constraining mothers' choice in different way. In all care models except for the *extensive family policy model* we find a shortage of child care provision for children below three years. In order to increase women's engagement in paid work and give women more choices in combining work and care all EU Member States have to invest in more public and affordable childcare facilities. In the *extended leave model* an increased possibility for taking part-time leave could give woman more option in combining work and caring responsibilities and help mothers to an earlier return into the labour market.

Besides the need of more public and cheap childcare facilities the *family care model* also need better opportunities for paid parental leave and part-time job in order to help mothers in reconcile work and the caring obligations. These measures could avoid the tendency to polarisation between women who are in continuous employment and women who are not participating in the labour market at all. In both part-time models – *short-leave, part-time* and *long-leave, part-time* - the restricted provision of childcare on full-time for small children forces mothers to change their employment status and instead find a part-time job on a short hour basis and often with a low salary and unstable employment conditions.

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Appendix 1

Family policy, childcare and parental leave and female part-time employment among the EU Member States

	Child care coverage aged 0-3 2003*	Effective parental leave weeks, 2003-2002*	Female part-time employment 2003**	Total spending on family policy pct of GDP 2004**
Extensive family policy model				
Belgium	60[2]	18	39	2,0
Denmark	56	47	33	3,9
France	43	48	30	2,5
Sweden	41	78	36	3,1
Part- time model				
Netherlands	35	11	74	1,2
United Kingdom	26	21	44	1,7
Continental model				
Germany (including ex-GDR from 1991)	7	49	41	2,9
Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	14	54	31	3,9
Austria	9	63	36	3,0
Family care model				
Portugal	19	20	17	1,3
Greece	7	13	8	1,7
Italy	6	24	17	1,2
Spain	10	50	17	0,7
Slovenia	27	53	8	2,0
Estonia	22	80	12	1,7
Latvia	16	50	13	1,2
Parental leave model				
Czech Republic	8	117	9	1,6
Lithuania	18	152	12	1,1
Hungary	6	152	6	2,5
Poland	2	88	13	0,9
Finland	21	107	18	2,9

Sources: *Plantenga et al 2007 **Eurostat

[2] An estimate

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES IN SHAPING WORK AND CARE IN THE ENLARGED EU?

Anders Ejrnæs

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to examine the role of parental leave in shaping a mother's choice between work and care in the enlarged EU. A central question is how parental leave schemes affect mothers' employment and the occupational consequences for mothers who spend time on full-time caring. The article uses comparative data from the second round of the European Social Survey carried out in 2004/05. The analysis shows that both time spent on full-time care and different care policies influence mothers' subjective feelings that caring for children has negative consequences for their careers. On the one hand, our findings confirm the hypothesis that long term absence from the labour market due to parental leave has negative consequences for women's occupational careers. On other hand, our findings show that countries with well paid parental leave schemes combined with access to high quality child care reduce mothers' perceived occupational consequences of taking leave.

Key Words: Work-life balance, Family policy, Parental leave, EU comparison, Employment pattern.

INTRODUCTION

In comparative welfare research, social care and how it is provided has become an increasingly important issue. At the time where the male breadwinner model prevailed in Europe, there was no need to provide external care for dependent children and elderly citizens, and the conflicts between care and work responsibilities, therefore, were not high priorities on the social policy agenda. Since the early 1990s, the demand for maternity and parental leave, as well as for external child care facilities has been increasing throughout Europe. This is closely connected to the influx of women into gainful employment. At the EU level, this demand has been materialised in several recommendations/directives to the Member States, in 1992 a recommendation on child care (92/241/EEC) was issued which was succeeded by the approval of the Directive on Parental Leave (96/34/EC) in 1996.

The EU directive on parental leave has obliged the Member States to introduce legislation on maternity/parental leave, but still we find huge differences between countries in terms of eligibility, duration, benefit levels and flexibility in taking up parental leave. The effects of parental leave schemes on gender equality are double edged. On the one hand, the parental leave scheme might minimize the gender employment gap and thereby increase women's employment because parental leave enables mothers to combine caring with employment. On the other hand, long leave periods may reinforce a traditional gendered division of paid and unpaid work and thereby damage women's future career opportunities, which might further contribute to gender differences in wages and to weaker promotion opportunities.

The aim of the article is to examine the role of parental leave in shaping parents' choices between work and care. It will examine variations in leave schemes and the consequences of different kinds of leave policies in Austria, Denmark, Hungary, UK, Portugal and Sweden. These countries, except from Sweden, are included in the WORKCARE project. The WORKCARE project is an EU six framework project which analyses the most recent developments in 'work-life balance' among selected EU member states.

A central question is how different legislations concerning parental leave influence parents', especially the mother's, employment and the perceived occupational consequences of spending time on full-time caring. The perceived occupational consequences of full-time caring can be seen as a measure of mothers' expectations about their career opportunities compared with the mothers' actual employment situation and possibilities to fulfil the expectations. The perceived consequences measure how much mothers feel they sacrifice when they take time off for care.

The article begins by outlining the theoretical perspective. Second the data and methods will be presented. Third I will describe the variation in duration and payment among different leave schemes in the 6 selected countries. I will examine how different leave policies influence the amount of time women spends on full-time caring for children. In the fifth section I will analyse the impact of different leave policies on women's employment patterns. Finally I will analyse how leave policies and time spent on caring influence the subjective feeling of occupational consequences of caring for children.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

At the time when the male breadwinner model was the norm, there was a clear distinction between paid labour and unpaid care work. As a consequence of the influx of women into employment the borders between breadwinning and caregiving have been blurred (Olsen 2002:382). Family policy and flexible working arrangements give parents the opportunity to combine paid work with caring responsibilities; however it is still the women who carry the main responsibility for care giving. Today care giving within the family is typically paid through parental leave benefits or other kinds of care allowances in most of Europe.

Feminist theorists have disagreed over whether women's status should be improved on the basis of equality to men or by valuating the difference from men. Equality based feminists have fought for women's right to economic equality primarily through participating in the labour market on equal terms with men. Difference based feminist theories emphasise the importance of an inclusion of care in citizenship rights. This approach gives women the right to stay at home to provide care (Lister 2002). Others have tried to avoid the essentialist notion of valuing care and the masculine notion of equality (Lister 2002:525). This perspective defines citizenship more broadly as women's right not to engage in paid work and thereby do the unpaid work and at the same time also their right to do paid work and thereby not to engage in unpaid work (Lewis 1997:173-174). The concept of citizenship has to include the right and the obligation of paid work as well as the right to receive care and the right to time for care (Knijn and Kremer 1997) (Abrahamsen et al 2005). A more radical perspective is Fraser's universal caregiver model which encourages women to be like men and men to be like women in the way they combine the obligations of paid work and care work (Fraser 1997:60).

Parental leave can be seen both as a policy that enables women to engage in paid work and a policy that gives parents the right to time for care. The theoretical views on the role of parental leave have been divided. One approach focuses on the consequences of leave policies' for women's employment and occupational opportunities. Another approach focuses more on how leave policies give the right to time for care and how leave policy influences the distribution of unpaid care work in the home. Both perspectives have a positive and a negative side on the role of parental leave.

Table 1 Theoretical perspective on leave policies

	Care promoting policies	Employment promoting policies
Positive view	Value care by giving women a right to time for care	Enable mothers to return to the labour market after birth
Critical view	Reinforce women's responsibilities for their children	Damage women's future careers and earnings prospects

The first approach focuses mainly on the economic and societal consequences of parental leave from an economic point of view. According to Fagan & Hebson, leave entitlement creates an integration mechanism in two ways. Firstly, they encourage women to enter the labour market up to the birth of the child in order to ensure an entitlement; secondly, women are not forced to quit and re-enter the labour market when they want time off for childrearing (Fagan & Hebson 2004:39). Others have argued that long parental leave can reduce women's accumulation of human capital because of the long separation from the labour market (Gornick 2000). Much literature has found that a part of the wage gap between women and men is a result of women having longer career interruptions due to parental leave (Pylkänen & Smith 2003). Gubta & Smith find that the growth in men's wages is considerable higher than for women in the childrearing years. According to Smith and Gupta, the explanation could be that women face a kind of statistical discrimination because the employer expects a career interruption as mothers make use of parental leave (Gubta & Smith 2002). The consequences of generous parental leave could be a weakening of women's earning and promotion opportunities.

The second approach focusing on parental leave can be seen as a care enabling policy that provides parents a right to time for care (Knijn & Kremer 1997). From this point of view, parental leave legislation is a way to guarantee the citizens a right to time for care and thereby valuating the former unpaid care work (Knijn & Kremer 1997). By valuating the unpaid care work parents get more options for choosing how to reconcile work and caring responsibilities. Others have been worrying that incorporating payment for care as a citizenship right could undermine women's claim to citizenship through equal participation in paid work on the labour market (Lister 2001). According to Lister, the central dilemma is how to value care without reinforcing the gendered division of work (Lister 2002).

Many authors have argued that policies which value care have a tendency to reinforce the gendered division of work in the home and thus affirm the association of care-giving as feminine praxis (see Fraser 1994:609). The gendered consequences of parental leave policies can then be that mothers are assumed to reconcile employment

with their caring responsibilities while men are not expected to reduce their employment activities in order to do the care work (Hobson et al 2006). A generous universal parental leave policy could serve as a "mommy track" which affirms women's interrupted employment pattern and reinforces women's responsibility for children (Fraser 1994:608). The fear is that the consequences of paying women for child care will cement the gendered division of work and damage women's labour market position (Moss & Davon 1999). This article sheds light on how the variety of parental leave regulations influence women's ability to combine paid work with caring responsibilities.

DATA AND METHOD

The article makes use of different data sources. In order to describe the national criteria of maternal and parental leave, the article uses data from MISSOC, EUROSTAT and the OECD.

In the more detailed analysis, the article makes use of data from Round 2 of the 2004 European Social Survey. In the study I focus on mothers with children living in the household having at least six months of labour market experience. I use the data to describe how long women spend on full-time caring and test how different factors influence the mothers' perceptions of the occupational consequences of full-time caring.

As a measure of time spent on full time care and the perceived occupational consequences I use responses to the following questions:

- Including any time spent on maternity or parental leave, around how long in total have you spent full-time at home because you were caring for child(ren)?

- Do you think that this has had negative consequences for your occupational career?

The measure of time spent on full-time care is used to see how different leave legislation influences the time women are in fact spending on full-time care because they were caring for children.

The measure of perceived occupational consequences can be seen as a measure of how much mothers think they sacrifice when they are caring for children instead of being involved in paid work. For the analysis of the perceived occupational consequences I use a multivariate logistic regression model. The regression model analyses the impact of individual factors as time spending on care, education and labour market experience as well macro factors such as the duration of paid leave schemes and childcare coverage.

In order to investigate different parental leave policies' impact on women's employment behaviour I analyse the effective parental leave (the length of the leave weighted by payment) in relation to following factors:

- Female employment rate (25-54)
- Employment gender gap (Difference between men and women's employment rate)
- The employment impact of parenthood (The difference in percentage points in employment rates for women without the presence of any children and with presence of a child aged 0-6).

To draw a broad picture of how parental leave policy influences women's employment pattern I make several simple correlations

between the effective parental leave and three employment indicators.

LEAVE POLICIES IN THE EU

All the EU member States have to some extent legislation providing maternity / parental leave for working parents. The EU directive on parental leave has obliged the Member States to introduce legislation on maternity / parental leave, but still we find considerable differences between the countries in terms of eligibility, duration and benefit levels in taking up parental leave.

Comparative research on national differences in care has categorised European countries into different care and parental leave models. In order to analyse the consequences of different types of parental leave policies in EU, the article has select six countries which represent different types of parental leave/ family care models in Europe. In this study I use a typology of parental leave model/ family care model based on the work of Wall 2007, Bettio & Plantenga 2004 and Ejrnæs & Boje 2008.

1) The extensive Nordic family policy model is associated with approximately one year's paid leave (12-13 month) with full or high compensation combined with high child care coverage for children under three. This policy enables mothers to remain in gainful employment after the childrearing period (Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland).

2) Short leave, part-time model. The UK represents this model which combines a short leave period with a high level of mothers working in part-time jobs. This model is characterized by a market-driven, highly expensive and individualised care system, and very restricted paid parental leave (UK, Netherland and Ireland).

3) Long Leave, part-time model includes Germany and Austria, which in other typologies are characterised with a strong breadwinner model or a conservative-occupational welfare system (Lewis 1992 and Esping-Andersen 1999). These countries have long parental leave and have a high level of mothers working in short-hours part-time jobs.

4) The extended parental leave model is characterised by countries with very long periods of parental leave and poor provision of child care for children under three years. The policy is home centred and encourages mothers to stay home when the children are under three years old and return to the labour market when the children reach school age (Hungary, Estonia, Czeck Republic, Slovakia and Poland).

5) Family care model is characterised by a short period of paid leave, low provision of childcare facilities and a high level intergenerational care (Bettio & Plantenga 2004) (Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain).

6) The parental choice model is a more heterogeneous groups' of countries which consists of Finland, Belgium and France. This policy model allows women to choose between caring for children at the home or, putting the children in regulated child care institution.

I will now briefly describe the principles behind the leave legislation in the six selected countries.

Duration of parental leave

We find a marked variation in the duration of parental leave among the EU Member States. Continental and Eastern European countries have long parental leave periods; most of the Eastern European countries have parental leave duration up to three years. Among the countries included in the project, Austria and Hungary have the longest parental leave periods, while the UK and Portugal only have a short period of paid leave. Compared to the other WORKCARE countries, the Hungarian and Austrian policies on parental leave provide a higher support to those parents (the mothers) who choose full time care when their children are young.

Compensation / payment during parental leave

Another crucial dimension determining the parents' take up of parental leave is the level of compensation under the periods of leave. Today, all EU Member States have some kind of payment during leave but again with huge variations. In Sweden and Denmark payment is wage related. A large proportion of the Danish and Swedish parents' get full salary compensation from the social security funds during the first year of parental leave with 80 / 90 per cent up to an income ceiling. The Austrian and Hungarian system of parental leave is divided into two separate schemes; an employment protected leave and a childcare benefit, which has a lower level of compensation. The employment protected leave schemes cover all employees with a sufficient work record. The childcare benefit in Austria covers all parents whose annual income is below an upper limit (OECD 2003). Given the inequality in labour market affiliation and income inequalities between men and women, it is mainly mothers who use parental leave. This further increases gender inequality in Austria. In Portugal and UK parental leave is unpaid.

Effective leave

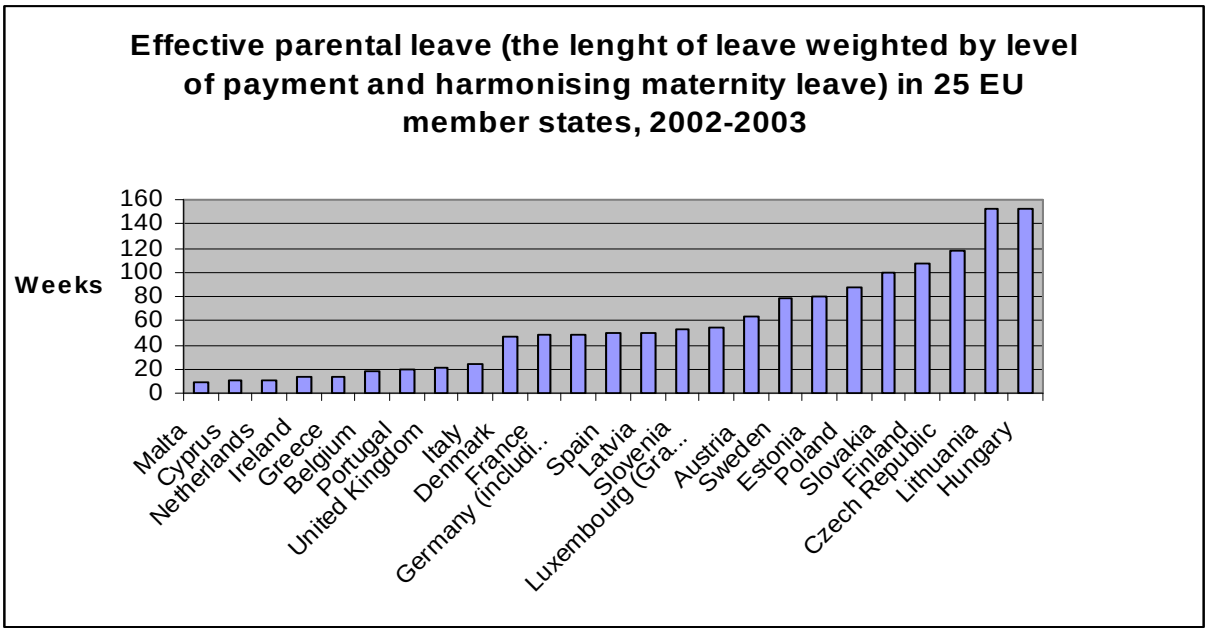
It is very difficult to compare parental leave schemes between countries because parental leave schemes differ in duration and payment. In some countries parental leave is unpaid, while in other countries parents are more or less compensated for their loss of earning during parental leave.

In order to compare and rank different countries' parental leave schemes, Plantenga and Remery have computed the so-called effective parental leave. The effective parental leave measure the duration of parental leave weighted with the payment (Plantenga et al 2007).

Figure 1 gives an overall picture of the generosity of parental leave schemes in different EU countries.

Figure 1[3] Effective leave

[3] Effective leave= Maternity leave+ total parental leave
Maternity leave =(maternity leave in weeks -14 weeks)* % payment benefit
Payment Benefit calculated by (corrected for payment benefit):
If benefit is between 0-33% of minimum wage, then payment is 33%
If benefit is between 34-66% of minimum wage, then payment benefit is 66%.
If benefit is between 67-100% of minimum wage, then payment benefit is 100%



Source: Plantenga et al 2007

Among the selected countries, Hungary has the longest period of effective parental leave (152 weeks of paid leave) while UK and Portugal have the shortest period of effective parental leave. In these countries the effective paid leave is below 21 weeks. Portugal has a short period of leave but with a high level of compensation. Mothers have the choice of four months post natal leave with 100 percent compensation or five months with 80% compensation. In between these countries we find Sweden, Austria and Denmark. The Austrian leave policy differs from that of the two Nordic countries because parents are entitled to three years leave but with a much lower compensation rate than the Nordic countries.

PARENTAL LEAVE REGULATIONS' IMPACT ON WOMENT'S CARE WORK

In the following section, the article examines how different parental leave models influence the amount of time that women spend on full-time caring. On the one hand, we can expect that women spend more time on full-time caring for children in countries with long durations of paid leave. On the other hand, short durations of paid leave and lack of childcare facilities can force women to exit from the labour market. In the European social survey (ESS), women with children and at least six months of labour market experience are asked how long they have spent on full-time caring in total.

Table 2 shows how long mothers in the six selected countries spend on full-time caring for mothers with respectively one child, two children and more than two children living in the household.

Table 2 Approximately how long in total have you spent full-time home because you were caring for child(ren) (Including any time spent on maternity or parental leave)? Source: ESS 2004

		No time home full-time because of children	Up to 6 months	More than 6 months, up to 12 months	More than 1 year, up to 2 years	More than 2 years, up to 4 years	More than 4 years, up to 10 years	More than 10 years	Total
One children	Hungary	13,4	5,2	5,2	30,9	41,2	4,1		100
	Austria	9,0	10,8	15,3	29,7	18,9	8,1	8,1	100
	Sweden	5,9	16,2	30,9	39,7	4,4	2,9		100
	Denmark	8,3	28,3	43,3	8,3	6,7	3,3	1,7	100
	Portugal	16,4	59,6	9,8	3,8	4,9	1,6	3,8	100
	United Kingdom	6,3	12,7	17,5	12,7	15,9	25,4	9,5	100
Two children	Hungary	9,2	1,7	2,3	8,6	41,4	33,3	3,4	100
	Austria	6,3	2,5	9,6	15,9	25,9	24,3	15,5	100
	Sweden	0,7	0,7	8,1	43,4	43,4	2,9	0,7	100
	Denmark	8,4	8,4	26,1	31,9	15,1	5,9	4,2	100
	Portugal	19,1	49,3	10,5	5,9	9,2	2,6	3,3	100
	United Kingdom	11,7	5,3	5,3	13,8	16,0	22,3	25,5	100
More than 3 children	Hungary	6,6	2,2	1,1	7,7	22,0	34,1	26,4	100
	Austria	13,7	2,4	4,0	5,6	13,7	26,6	33,9	100
	Sweden	4,0	0,8	0,8	8,8	40,8	41,6	3,2	100
	Denmark	6,1	4,9	8,5	31,7	30,5	13,4	4,9	100
	Portugal	19,1	47,1	4,4	16,2	1,5	4,4	7,4	100
	United Kingdom	6,3	1,6	3,1	6,3	12,5	26,6	43,8	100

ESS 2004

The table indicates that in Hungary, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Portugal there is a clear relationship between the duration of paid leave and the amount of time mothers spend on full- time caring. This indicates that policies on parental leave matter when it comes to how much time mothers spend on full-time caring.

In Hungary and Austria, the majority of all mothers with one child spent either 1-2 years or 2-4 years at home. In these countries, women are eligible for up to three years paid leave.

The majority of Swedish mothers with one child spend either 6-12 month or 1-2 years on full-time caring which reflects the 16 month long paid leave. Danish mothers spend less time at home caring for children than Swedish mothers which reflect that Danish mothers are only eligible for one year's paid leave. In Portugal, 60% of women with one child only spent up to six months at home because of caring responsibilities. The low frequency of women spending longer time at home can be explained by the short duration of paid leave and low income level in Portugal. Compared to Denmark and Sweden, Portugal has insufficient public care facilities. The central question is how parents in Portugal reconcile work and family in a dual earner household with lack of access to formal as well as informal care. According to Torres (2006), 30 % of children age 0-2 of mothers working outside the home stay with the mother. The possible explanation could either be that children stay by themselves or that they go with there mother on her job (Torres 2006:26).

The UK does not follow the same pattern because the majority of women spend more than four years on full-time caring despite the short duration

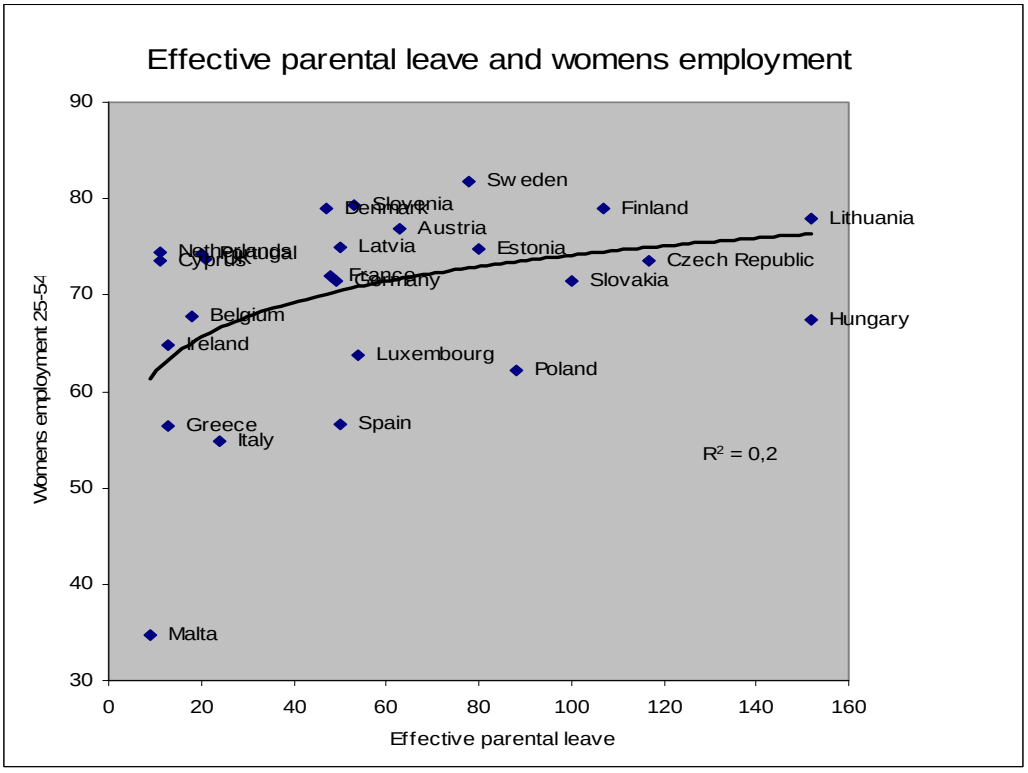
of paid leave. It seems that the low level of paid leave and poor child care provision force a high proportion of British mothers to exit the labour market and to engage in full-time caring in the childrearing years.

Table 2 shows that on the one hand long parental leave policies reinforce the mother's responsibility for the children. On the other hand short leave and badly paid leave can force women to exit from the labour market and be involved in full-time caring as we saw in the UK. The UK's and Portugal's pattern of care shows that the impact of a short period of paid leave can go in two different directions. Mothers in Portugal return to the labour market after a short period of leave while a high proportion of mothers in UK exit the labour market and engage in full-time caring when the children are young.

EMPLOYMENT CONSEQUENCES OF PARENTAL LEAVE

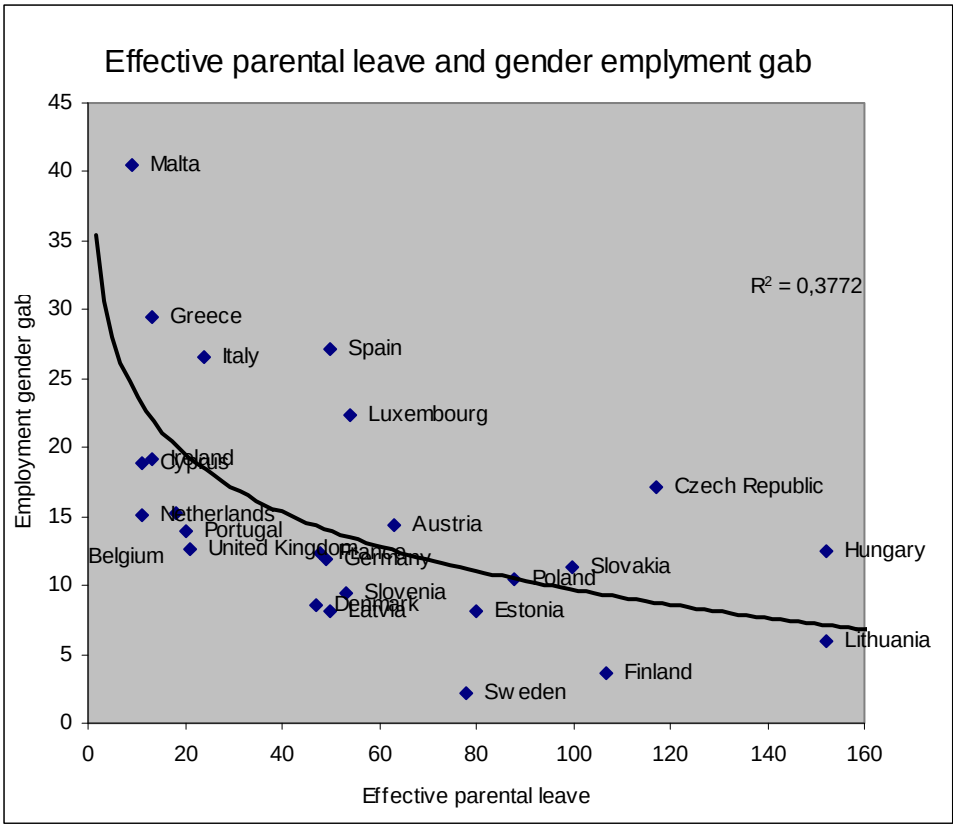
Several studies have found that maternal and parental leave schemes have a positive effect on women's participation rate (Gubta et al 2006, Joumette 2003). Formal rights to maternal and parental leave make it easier for mothers to return to work after childbirth and the childrearing period. Figure 2A shows that there is a weak positive correlation between the effective paid parental leave and the women's employment rate. Paid parental leave has a positive impact on female employment. However the correlation is very weak and it seems that the employment effects on parental leave are flattening.

Figure 2A Women's employment and effective leave



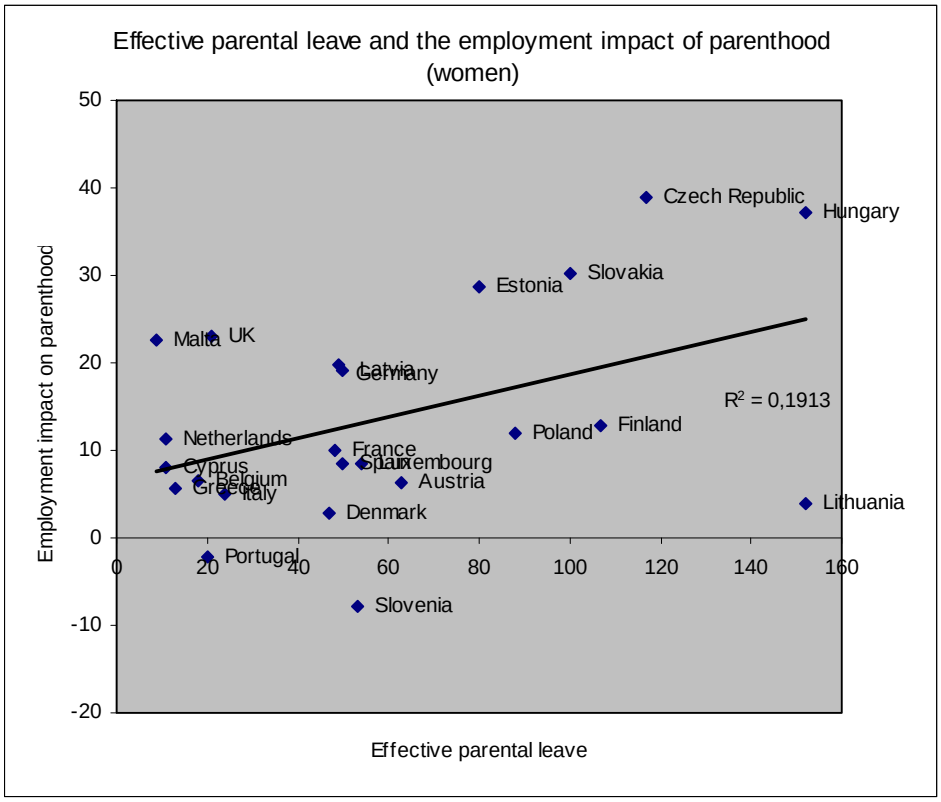
Source: Eurostat, Plantenga et al 2007

Figure 2B Employment gender gap and effective leave



Source: Eurostat, Plantenga 2007

Figure 2C Employment impact of parenthood [4]and effective leave



Source: Eurostat, Plantenga 2007

When it comes to the gender employment gap figure 2B shows that there is a negative correlation between effective parental leave and gender difference in employment. Countries with longer duration of effective parental leave have a smaller difference in employment between men and women. The figure shows that the employment gender gap is relatively low in the post-communist countries with long periods of paid leave while it is high in Southern European countries characterised by short periods of paid parental leave. This could indicate that parental leave policies encourage women to enter the labour market before the birth of the child and returning to the labour market after the childbirth and childrearing period. Portugal differs from the other south European countries because women's employment rate is higher and the employment gender gap is lower.

A central question is how the impact of paid parental leave influences the difference between the employment rates among women without the presence of children and the maternal employment rate (i.e. mothers with children in the age category 0-6). Figure 2C shows a positive correlation between effective parental leave and this difference (the employment impact of parenthood). The difference between women without children and mothers' employment rates is highest in countries with a long paid parental leave. The figure shows that employment differences are higher in

[4] Employment impact of parenthood: The difference in percentage points in employment rates without the presence of any children and with presence of a child aged 0-6, by gender (age group 20-50).

the new member states, which are also characterised by long periods of paid leave. For women in Hungary and the Czech Republic, for instance, the difference is close to 40%. The leave policies in these countries encourage mothers to stay home when the children are young and gradually undertake work again when the children get older.

Lithuania is an outlier because they have a long effective parental leave but the employment impact of parenthood is little. One explanation could be that women on parental leave in Lithuania are probably counted as being employed, whereas mothers on parental leave in Hungary and Check Republic are not. If we exclude Lithuania, the correlation would be stronger (r square=0,35).[5]In Slovenia, the employment rate is higher for mothers with children under the age of six years than for women in age group of 20-50. The combination of a relatively well paid medium length parental leave and public childcare in Slovenia seems to be a successful way of keeping women in the labour market (Fagan & Hebson 2005: 91). In Portugal, the employment rate is also higher for mothers than for women in general.

In Italy, Spain and Greece there is a low gap between the employment rates for mothers with children below six years and for women in general. This reflects the general low activity rate in South European countries for both women with and without children.

[5] In Austria parents on parental leave are not counted as employed, either. This probably also explains the low impact of parenthood on employment among Austrian women.

PERCEIVED OCCUPATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF FULL-TIME CARE

In this section, I will analyse women's perception of occupational consequences of full-time caring for children. The perceived occupational consequences give an indicator of the costs women experienced when they spend time on care rather than on employment.

In the European Social Survey, mothers with at least six months labour market experience and children living in the household have been asked about their perceptions of the consequences of full-time caring. Table 3 shows that Denmark and Sweden have the lowest proportion of women stating that maternity leave has had a negative effect on their careers. Denmark's and Sweden's employment protected parental leave and generous child care provision enable mothers to return to their jobs after being one year on parental leave. This could be an explanation as to why a lower proportion of Danish and Swedish women experience negative occupational consequences of full-time caring than women in the other countries.

Table 3 Perceived negative consequences of full-time care

	Mothers spending less than 2 years on full-time caring		Mothers spending more than 2 years on full-time caring	
Country	Percentage of mothers who experience negative consequences of full-time care **	Total respondents N	Percentage of mothers who experience negative consequences of full-time care ***	Total respondents N
Austria	23,6	140	46,7	285
Denmark	13,0	162	26,7	75
United Kingdom	26,3	57	44,4	142
Hungary	23,2	69	27,1	251
Portugal	19,0	274	64,0	50
Sweden	10,0	140	31,4	175
Total	18	842	38	978

*;(.01<p<= .05),**; (.01<p<= .01), ***; (p<= 0.001).

ESS 2004

Austria, the UK and Portugal have the highest proportion of women stating that maternity leave has had a negative effect on their occupational careers.

The parental leave system in Austria provides employment protection up to the child's second birthday. Thereafter, parents are able to take up an additional year of unprotected childcare benefit. The result of this lack of available child care facilities is that almost half of the women do not return to work at the end of the employment protected leave period. Fifty percent of those who do return to

work change employer, often because of lack of part-time opportunities at the original workplace (OECD2003:19). About 40 percent of mothers who return to the labour market after the leave period are employed in so-called marginal jobs with limited earnings (OECD 2003:17).

This could be an explanation of why so many mothers have stated that full-time care has had negative consequences on their occupational career. Mothers in Hungary experienced fewer occupational consequences than mothers in Austria; despite the fact that the Hungarian leave system has many similarities with the Austrian system. One explanation could be that Hungarian mothers are more often returning to full-time employment after three years' parental leave than Austrian mothers, who often take marginal part-time jobs after the parental leave period has expired. Another explanation could be that women in Hungary have lower career expectations than mothers in Austria.

In Britain, the low level of leave provision and lack of affordable child care force many mothers to either exit the labour market or take a part-time job with limited career prospects after birth. This could explain the high percent of mothers in UK who think that more than two years spent on full-time care giving have negative consequences for their occupational careers.

In Portugal most women return to the labour market after maternity leave. Those women who take more than two years' full time caring face much higher perceived consequences than mothers in the other countries. The unpaid leave forces women in Portugal to either exit the labour market or to return early. This can create a division between those women who remain in gainful employment and those who exit the labour market. This might explain the high level of mothers who think that full-time care giving has had negative consequences for their occupational careers.

In the logistic regression analysis (Table 4), we have estimated the probability of mothers answering that full-time care has had a negative impact on their occupational careers.

Table 4 Logistic regression model – Factors explaining the perceived consequences of full-time caring

		Frequencies[6]	Odds ratio
Time spent on full-time caring	More than 10 years	54.5%	12.16***
	More than 4 years, up to 10 years	42.3%	8.49***
	More than 2 years, up to 4 years	27.2%	4.56***
	More than 1 year, up to 2 years	20.6%	2.86***
	More than 6 months, up to 12 months	17.7%	1.77***
	Ref:Up to 6 months	14.9%	1.00
Country	Austria	39.1%	1.95***
	Denmark	17.3%	0.93
	Hungary	26.3%	1.07
	Portugal	25.9%	3.98***
	Ref :Sweden	21.9%	1.00
	Tertiary education	25.3%	2.16***
	Secondary education	29.8%	1.79**
	Ref: Primary education	23.4%	1.00
	Pseudo R square (Nagelkerke)		0.13
	N		1619
	Constant		0.08

*;(.01<p<= .05),**; (.01<p<= .01), ***; (p<= 0.001).
Source: ESS 2004[7]

Regression analysis shows that longer periods of full-time care increase the frequency of negative perceptions of the consequences of full-time care. The analysis thus confirms that long separation from the labour market has negative consequences for women's occupational status. According to Gornick, long periods of leave reduce workers' accumulation of skills and experiences which have negative consequences for women's wages and job advancements (the leave trap) (Gornick 2000). This can also explains why more highly educated women seem to have a higher frequency of negative perceptions of the consequences of full-time care than lower educated women after controlling for country differences and length of full-time care.

There is also a difference between countries after controlling for the length of full-time care and education. In Austria and Portugal the probability of mothers stating that full-time care has had negative consequences on their occupational careers, is significantly higher than in Sweden, Denmark and Hungary.

The frequency of negative perceptions of consequences of caring work is much less in countries with available and affordable child care provision and employment protected leave. Women in these countries can, after parental leave, return to full-time work at the same

[6] Percentage of mothers who experience negative consequences of full-time care.
[7] UK is not included in the model because the educational variable is missing in the British sample.

employer, thus reducing the negative occupational consequences of full-time care.

In order to analyse how different care regimes affect the perceived occupational consequences of taking leave, the analysis will now include 19 European countries. In the regression analysis (table 5) I have classified 19 European countries in six groups, which represent the six different care models.

Table 5 Logistic regression model with macro indicator – Factors explaining the perceived consequences of full-time caring

		Frequences[8]	Odds ratio	
Total time spent full-time at home caring for your children	More than 10 years	43.1%	5.31	***
	More than 4 years, up to 10 years	36.0%	4.76	***
	More than 2 years, up to 4 years	24.2%	3.01	***
	More than 1 year, up to 2 years	18.0%	1.97	***
	More than 6 months, up to 12 months	12.5%	1.14	
	Ref: Up to 6 months	11.6%	1.00	
Care	Extended parental leave model	19.7 %	1.01	
	parental choice-model	23.4 %	1.24	
	Short leave part-time-model	39 %	1.71	***
	Family care-model	24.9 %	2.23	***
	Long leave part-time model	37.3 %	2.50	***
	Ref: Nordic extended family policy model	16.3 %	1.00	
years_employed	0-10 years employed	33.5%	2.06	***
	11-20 years employed	25.0%	1.39	***
	21-30 years employed	15.7%	0.91	
	Ref: Above 31 years employed	16.7%	1.00	
Education	Ref: Tertiary education	23.0 %	1.67	***
	Secondary education	24.4 %	1.30	*
	Primary education	23.0 %	1.00	
	Constant		0.075	
	Pseudo R (Nagelkerke)		0.14	
	N		6462	

*;(.01<p<= .05),**; (.01<p<= .01), ***; (p<= 0.001).

The analysis confirms the result of the former regression analysis that different family policy models have an impact on mothers' perception of negative occupational consequences of caring for children. The regression shows that we find the highest frequency of perceived negative consequences among mothers in countries which represent the long leave part-time model, followed by the South European family care model and the short leave part-time model. The explanation of high frequency of perceived occupational consequences in these three models could be that women who take time of for care are forced either to exit labour market or to

[8] Percentage of mothers who experience negative consequences of full-time care

reduce their working hours after their parental and maternity leaves have expired. The reason for this is lack of employment protected leave and available and affordable child care places.

The regression analysis shows that mothers in the Nordic extensive family policy-model which is characterised by high child care coverage for children below three years and one year's paid parental leave with full compensation have a lower proportion of mothers who answer that full-time caring has negative occupational consequences. The frequency of perceived occupational consequences is also lower in countries which have a parental choice oriented model. Leave models which allow women to remain in full-time employment after the period of paid leave has expired, experience less negative occupational consequences. Mothers in countries which do not give the opportunity to combine paid work with caring responsibilities experience more negative occupational consequences of full-time caring. Surprisingly, the East European parental leave model have the same frequency of mothers stating that full-time caring has negative consequences for the occupational career as the Nordic countries. The explanation could be that mothers actually return to the labour market on full-time basis after three years of paid parental leave. That differs from the long leave part-time model where mothers reduce the working hours after the leave period have expired. It seems that both well paid parental leave and available childcare provision modify the negative occupational consequences experienced by mothers in Europe when they spend time on full-time caring.

The number of years working full-time or part time also seems to influence the frequency of perceptions of negative occupational consequences. Spending a long time on paid work decreases the perceived occupational consequences of caring. It seems that women with a more secure labour market position experienced fewer occupational consequences when they spent time on caring.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the variation and consequences of care leave policies in 6 different European Countries. The article shows that practice and variation in parental leave arrangements do affect women's employment behaviour and their options to choose between work and care. However, the gendered consequences of the right to time for care in terms of parental leave are complex and ambiguous.

Two paradoxes emerge: On the one hand, the research confirms the hypothesis that policies offering parents time to care in terms of long paid parental leave can encourage women to stay home and care for young children as we found in Austria and Hungary. Long paid parental leave can then serve as a mommy track and reinforce women's responsibility for children. On the other hand, insufficient leave provision and lack of available child care facilities can force women to choose between an early return to the labour market or to exit the labour market and consequently be full-time carer as we found in Portugal

(early return) and UK (full-time or part-time carer).

When it comes to mothers' perceptions of career consequences of full-time caring the other paradox emerges. On the one hand, the research confirms that the longer mothers are full-time carers, the higher their subjective perceptions of negative career consequences. On the other hand, leave policy schemes with the right to time for care and the right to receive care reduce mothers' subjective feelings of occupational consequences. Leave policies and available child care provision give women more options to combine work and care and reduce mothers' perceptions of negative occupational consequences of taking time off for care.

The question whether parental leave enables women to remain in gainful employment or encourage women to withdraw from the labour market is highly dependent on how the leave policy and other family policies are governed as well as the interplay between family and labour market policies (child care policies, working time regulation and tax benefit policies etc.). Policies at the EU level on parental leave have to take into consideration how the interplay between different kinds of family policies shape work and care in different national contexts. In some countries long parental leave serve as a means to compensate for the lack of child care facilities (East and Central Europe), in other countries parental leave is used to prevent permanent employed mothers from exit from labour market (South Europe) after maternity. Other countries use leave policy as a measure of shaping a more flexible transition between paid work and care work and redistributing the gendered division of care work in the home (Nordic countries).

In Central East European countries such as Hungary, women are eligible for a long period of parental leave. The combination of long paid parental leave and lack of affordable child care places forces women into full time caring until the youngest child's third year's birthday. From an economic perspective, the long separation from the labour market reduces women's earnings and career prospects (OECD). Instead of balancing the division of labour in the home, it seems that long periods of parental leave reinforce the existing gendered division of work in the home. This kind of parental leave model is valuating care work, but at the same time is undermining women's place in paid work.

In Continental European countries such as Austria, women return to employment after the end of leave, but they remain often in part-time jobs and marginal employment. This also explains the huge perceived occupational consequences of full-time leave in Austria. The Continental European leave regimes of a long duration of paid leave and lack of affordable child care force women into a mommy track with an interrupted employment pattern.

Southern European countries are often labelled as countries with a family care model characterised by insufficient parental leave provisions. The insufficient parental leave and lack of child care in many South European countries combined with the lack of possibilities for part-time jobs force women to choose between an early return into the labour market after maternity leave or care giving on a full-time basis. The employment pattern of women in Portugal differs from that of other South European countries. Despite the poor provision of parental and maternity leave in all South European countries women's

participation in gainful employment is much higher in Portugal than in the other Southern European countries. In Portugal women's return to the labour market after maternity leave reflects the general low income level and poor provisions for time to care which force both parents to be engaged in gainful employment. Mothers who do not return to the labour market after the maternity leave has expired more often experience negative occupational consequences. In the UK, the combination of a short maternity leave (and an unpaid parental leave) and poor provisions of child care force women to choose between an early return to the labour market often on part-time basis or full-time care giving. The case of Portugal and the UK shows that similar leave policies can have different outcomes when it comes to shaping work and care.

In the Nordic countries, parental leave is relatively long and well paid compared to other EU countries. This combination of well paid employment protected leave and high child care coverage among children less than three years old enables mothers to combine care giving with paid work with fewer perceived occupational consequences than in the other countries. The right to time for care combined with the right to receive care gives women more choices to reconcile work and care and minimize the occupational consequences for women.

APPENDIX 1

Country	Effective parental leave 2003	Womens employmen 25-54 2003	Parenthoods impact on employment women	Employment gender gap
Belgium	18	67,8	6,6	15,3
Bulgaria		67,1		7
Czech Republic	117	73,5	38,9	17,1
Denmark	47	79	2,9	8,6
Germany (including ex-GDR from 1991)	49	71,4	19,7	11,9
Estonia	80	74,8	28,8	8,2
Ireland	13	64,8		19,2
Greece	13	56,4	5,6	29,4
Spain	50	56,6	8,5	27,2
France	48	72	9,9	12,4
Italy	24	54,9	5,1	26,6
Cyprus	11	73,6	8	18,8
Latvia	50	74,9	19,1	8,1
Lithuania	152	78	4	6
Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	54	63,8	8,4	22,3
Hungary	152	67,4	37,1	12,5
Malta	9	34,7	22,6	40,5
Netherlands	11	74,4	11,3	15,1
Austria	63	76,9	6,2	14,4
Poland	88	62,1	12	10,5
Portugal	20	74,3	-2,1	14
Romania		66		11,8
Slovenia	53	79,3	-7,9	9,4
Slovakia	100	71,5	30,2	11,3
Finland	107	78,9	12,9	3,7
Sweden	78	81,7		2,2
United Kingdom	21	73,8	23,9	12,7

Sources: Plantenga et al 2007, Eurostat 2003

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CHAPTER 3

FLEXIBILITY AND THE WORK-LIFFE BALANCE IN EUROPEAN HOUSEHOLDS

Thomas P. Boje & Anders Ejrnæs

INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of this paper is to analyse how flexibility in work organisations and employment relations have influence on the relationship between family and work obligations and the level of conflicts between work and family obligations. It is often argued that flexibility in working time and in the work organisation more generally can be considered as an opportunity for both women and men to handle the conflicts between work, care and family obligations more easily. However, the argumentat goes that this is only the case if flexibility is controlled by the employees or negotiated between employees and employers and not imposed by the firms. Being able to control your work situation has typically been considered as an important strategy helping employees dealing with work-family conflicts. In this paper we seek to qualify these assumptions more carefully.

In research on working life as well as in family relations balancing work and family obligations has become an increasingly important theme at the European agenda. There are many reasons for this. Firstly, women's employment and earnings have for many low-income families been a necessity for keeping the families out of poverty, as well as contributing to the rising costs of welfare (Esping-Andersen et al 2002). Secondly, women have been encouraged to enter the labour market, even when their children are young, and still more women have found permanent employment. This has lead to a change in the dominant family pattern from the traditional male breadwinner family to a dual-earner family characterized by two full-time jobs or at least a full-time job for the man and a part-time job for the woman. Thirdly, introduction of still more flexible work conditions in relation to the organisation of work and the allocation of working time have changed the premises for controlling the work situation. The employees are increasingly responsible for defining the goals, organising the work process and drawing the boundaries between work and non-work, what in many situations make the work condition highly stressful (see Grönlund 2007).

Having said this, there exists still in most European countries a basic incompatibility between the demands of paid employment and the responsibilities for housework and care within the family. However, this concern goes beyond the dilemmas faced by individual families and has increasingly been reflected in the national and European family and welfare policies. The growing attention in EU policies on work/family reconciliation and equal opportunities has primarily focused on measures facilitating women's access to gainful employment by protection of female workers as mothers, promoting family-friendly leave policies, provision of public child care facilities etc. Only recently we have seen a shift towards policies concerned with the gender equality in the society as a whole by promoting a more equal sharing between men and women of the paid work, unpaid work and care obligations (see Stratigaki 2004, Lewis, Campbell & Huerta 2008)

Flexibility in work organisation as well as regulation of working time depends strongly on the prevailing welfare-employment regime in the individual European countries

and we may expect that the level of work-family conflicts will vary with both national, individual and family conditions. Several recent studies have demonstrated a so-called 'societal' effect based on cultural values and policy interventions in the level of experienced work-family conflicts among families with small children (see Cousins & Tang 2002; Gornick & Meyer 2003; Crompton & Lyonette 2006). In this paper we analyse work-family conflicts in a number of European countries characterised by different flexibility and family policy regimes – Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Hungary. The data used in analysing the work-family conflicts were gathered in connection to the EU research project 'Household, Work and Flexibility' running in the years 2000-2003 (see Wallace 2002a).

In this paper we want to analyse the effects of working time flexibility on work-family conflicts and does it make a difference whether employers or employees control this flexibility. Furthermore the paper discusses how different institutional settings in the European labour market systems have impacted on flexibility and work-family conflicts. The paper starts with two overview sections, first, outlining the theoretical position in research on work-family relations and, second, revising some important results from the immense empirical literature on the relationship between flexible work organisation and work-family relations in 'late modern' European societies. A section describing of the database and the variables used in the study follows these sections. After this we turn to the empirical study starting with a description of the relationship between working time flexibility, hours worked and level of work-family conflicts. Finally through a regression analysis weo determine the principal individual and structural variables in explaining the experienced level of conflicts between work and family obligations in the countries covered by the study.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The growing flexibility in work organisation and working time can make the synthesizing of family and work easier but also more difficult, depending on the nature of national and local working time regimes and the extent and generosity of policy support for mothers' employment and their caring responsibilities (Nelson and Smith 1999; O'Reilly and Bothfeld 2002; Gornick and Meyers 2003). The increased female labour market participation has made new household strategies necessary but despite this we have seen an increase in dual-earner households in nearly all European countries there have only been few and marginal changes in the gender division of labour in the domestic sphere. In households with small children it is typically the mothers and only recently some Scandinavian fathers who have been willing to adapt their working hours and working schedules to the demands for care in the family. This juggling between organisation of work and family obligations has increasingly become a stress factor for the individual employees as a consequence of growing individualisation of working time and the transferring of work control from the organisation to the individual workers (Beck 1992).

Pressures from globalization and intensified market competition have lead to the introduction of the 24 hour society including flexible hours for work, care and consumption but this has disrupted the traditional model of family based upon regular working hours. The high level of flexibility is a consequence of less regulation of working time, which has meant that the individual employee have to define and structure the boundaries between work, care and leisure time. We can register many different working / non-working patterns in Europe. If we look for illustration at the take up of part-time work among the EU 25. For women this varies from less than five percent of women in Slovakia to more than seventy percent in the Netherlands. The same variation can be found in the organisation of the un-paid caring work in Europe (EU Commission, 2005).

The variety in working time regimes in Europe means that 'individual solutions', such as part-time work or flexible work schedules, are not always the optimal solution in resolving work and care conflicts for particular households; nor may individuals be in a position to choose themselves between different options either because they cannot afford to support themselves on reduced working hours or because employers are reluctant to issue such employment contracts. The chosen working time solution made by the individual household is very much dependent on the nature of regulatory protection accorded to atypical employment, as well as issues of gender segregation and pay, and employers perceived advantages in organising work in this way (O'Reilly et al. 2000; Perrons et al 2006; van der Lippe & Peters 2007). Although Gershuny (2000) tell us that over the last fifty years most Europeans have experienced an increase in leisure time, the increased individualisation of employment contracts, and the growing demands for flexibility in both work, family life and caring, have challenged previously taken for granted norms and assumptions about the organisation of work and care in the households (Hochschild 1997; Wallace 2002b).

The challenges of managing work and care are usually discussed under the concept of "work-life balance" (WLB). It might be argued that it is possible to distinguish between three drivers to WLB – firstly, enhancing the quality of life for both men and women by keeping families out of poverty as more women enter the labour force, secondly, as part of a strategy to promote gender equality in employment and universal access to social citizenship rights, and thirdly, by encouraging/enabling more married women to take on paid employment and thereby reinforce their social integration and independency (see Gambles. Lewis and Rapoport 2006; Wallace and Pichler 2008). At the same time research on WLB has found that there exists a growing incompatibility between balancing the demands of paid employment in terms of career management and earning a sustainable income alongside fulfilling caring responsibilities within the family. Policy initiatives on WLB from the European Commission are primarily focused on facilitating women's integration in the labour market in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the European economies by an increase in the level of female labour force participation but this aim is pursued without a proper implementation of policies for equal sharing of paid and unpaid work between men and women (see Lewis, Campbell & Huerta 2008; Kok-report 2004). In this context research shows clearly that the declining importance of

the male breadwinner family model together with the growing demand for flexibility in working time have raised a variety of dilemmas for the households and have intensified potential work-family conflicts (Lewis 2002; van der Lippe, Jager & Kops 2006; Crompton & Lyonette 2006). On one hand, women, and especially mothers, increasingly expect, and want, to be in paid employment but on the other hand it is a big issue who is going to provide the unpaid caring work that previously non-employed women took charge of and how is it to be organised in the individual households as well as in a national context?

In this debate it is usually stated that flexibility in working time can be considered as an opportunity for both women and men in handling their conflicts and constrains dealing with work and family obligations. Flexibility in working time and in the organisation of work might give more freedom in planning and making decision concerning reconciliation of work and family obligations. However, empirical studies find that this is not always the case and it depends highly on who decide the flexibility and which type of flexibility we are talking about. First of all, most flexibility is decided by the employers and often the demands of the firms will be in conflict with the needs of the employees. Secondly, employee-lead flexibility does not always make it easier for the employees to control the conflicting demands of work and family obligations. Thirdly, the flexibility used to be highly gendered. Both men and women are exposed to flexibility but in different ways. Asking employees who are making the decisions on the number of hours they work the result is that a larger proportion of men than women in all European countries decide themselves the length of working hours and how they are scheduled (see Sik & Wallace 2003: 190-91). A recent Swedish study of the relationship between flexibility and gender based on detailed interviews with both employers and employees confirms this result but this study also finds that it is primarily the male-dominated types of flexibility, which are controlled by the employees and not the female-dominated types of flexibility, which typically are imposed by the employers such as part-time work or temporary jobs (Grönlund 2004). To conclude, today's work organisation is very demanding and information-technology makes it extremely complex and difficult for employees to set-up strict boundaries between work and family life for a lot of the knowledge-based occupations (Sennett 1999).

Much of the dominant research on work-family conflicts has a social-psychological approach. In this approach we are talking about having different social roles and how individuals are confronted with demands from these roles. In the literature on work-family relations the different and conflicting roles are typically analysed according to two broad theories: the role stress theory and the role expansion theory. According to the role stress theory having several different social roles normally is considered by the individual as a burden. Empirical results supporting this perspective argue that the reconciliation of family obligations and work demands creates stress and conflicts for the individuals meaning that work at home is conflicting with the demands imposed by the paid work (Moen & Yu 1999; Nordenmark & Strandh 2006). These conflicts seem to increase in work organisations with irregular and flexible working time schedules (Presser 2003). The alternative theory

explaining the reaction of individuals in case of multiple social roles is the role expansion theory, which argues that multiple social roles use to be beneficial for the individual. According to this theory a strong and active involvement in paid work has a positive effect on involvement in the family. This means that well-being in either paid work or in family life generates social resources and makes it possible for the individuals to utilise the support and mental energy in one part of the life situation when having trouble in the other. Having different roles means according to the expansion theory increased well-being through e.g. a better family economy, social support and higher self-confident. Several empirical studies show that women who are active in paid work have a better life and higher social involvement than women outside the labour market. Being active in the labour market prevent poverty and increase social capital. In the literature on volunteering it is also a common finding that those who are most active in voluntary activities also are the individuals who are in gainful employment. (Boje 2007).

Empirical studies, however, have documented that these two alternative explanations are too simple and not sufficient in explaining the relationship between work and family obligations (Grönlund 2007). According to recent literature on 'work-life balance' it seems that involvement in work paid work and family matters are positive – but under certain conditions and up to a certain level of involvement. It is generally accepted that too high demands from one of the two sectors - it may be responsibility for small children or long and unsocial working hours – tend to increase the work-family conflicts and the level of stress in both sectors.

In this paper we want to focus on work-family conflicts in relation to flexibility in working time. Here we distinguish between working time flexibility decided by the employee and by the employer. A common argument is that working time flexibility will make it easier to reconcile work and family obligations when the flexibility are controlled by the employees. However, as mentioned earlier this assumption may not be true given the growing individualisation of employment relations, the flexible work schedules and the unclear boundaries between work and family life. A development we especially find in white-collar job and among highly educated employees. When the job is not finished at the office but work has to be taken home then 'work has become home and home has become work' as argued by Hochschild (1997).

An another dimension to be considered in the empirical analysis is the relationship between actual working time and the working time schedule preferred by the individual employee considering her / his other obligations outside the work place. It is here the argument that in cases where we find agreement between actual working time schedule and what is preferred by the employee the level of conflict between work and family obligation supposes to be low while the level of conflict will be high in situations where there is disagreements between the individual employee's actual and preferred working time schedule.

In addition to these two dimensions – flexibility in working time schedule and actual versus preferred schedule of working time – we also want to introduce a third dimension into the analysis in explaining the level of conflict between work and family obligations. This dimension is the contextual level

– the national differences in social and family policy – which will be analysed by comparing the five European countries belonging to different welfare and/or flexibility regimes. Combining work and family obligations is supposed to be easier or harder depending on the prevailing national regime for, on the one hand, regulation of working time regime and, on the other hand, the type and comprehensiveness of family-friendly welfare policies. In countries with strict regulation of working time and measures supporting families who have extensive obligations towards small children it is expected that it will be easier to reconcile work and family demands and the level of conflicts between these two roles will consequently be lower. In our comparison this situation we might expect to find primarily in Sweden. The opposite case we are expected to find in countries characterised by unregulated working time schedule and few family policy measures, which is the case for the United Kingdom. In this type of welfare / flexibility regimes the level of conflict between work and family obligations is dependent on the individual employee's capacity and strength negotiating a working time schedule, which fits into the demands coming from the housework and caring responsibilities in the family. The other three countries represented in the paper are expected to be positioned in between the two extreme cases in relation to level of flexibility in working time, family-friendly policies and employment pattern.

NATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN WORKIGN TIME FLEXIBILITY AND POLICY REGIMES

In the prevailing literature on differences in women's employment involvement and working time pattern it is shown that each type of welfare model has specific consequences for women – and men - and 'that women really want to work, but they can only do so when the social policy barriers are removed' (Kremer 2006:8). It is commonly accepted in the welfare literature that the political and economical context varies significantly between different European countries, but it is often ignored in the analyses that the cultures of work and work organisation also are markedly different and are modifying the outcome of policy measures. In this context the level and type of flexibility and how it is regulated become crucial for understanding the impact of work organisation on the work-family balance. Here we want to focus on working time and who decides on flexibility in working time arrangements. On the one hand, standardization of working time has strengthened the workers in their fight for a regulated and normal working day, but, on the other hand, working time preferences have with the growth of service sector employment and the use of IT-technology become still more diverse. Many employees want flexible work schedules combined with high quality child care to handle the balance between work, care and family obligations (Wallace 2002b and 2003). A central question is in this context how different types of labour market regulations influence employees' possibilities in choosing their working time schedule. This will be shown in our empirical analysis of the

relationship between working-time flexibility and work-family conflicts in the different countries. Here we shall give an overview of the different regulation regimes prevailing in the five countries - see figure 1.

Figure 1 Labour market regulation in five European countries

	Denmark	**The UK**	**Netherlands**	**Sweden**	**Hungary**
Labour market regimes (Gallie & Paugam 2000)	Universal social protection	Liberal-minimal social protection	Employment-related social protection	Universal social protection	Employment-related social protection
Family-social policy regime (Ejrnæs & Boje 2008)	Extended family policy model	Part-time leave model	Part-time leave model	Extended family policy model	Extended parental leave model
Flexibility regime (Wallace 2003; Madsen 2006)	Partial regulated flexibility and flexicurity	De-regulated or partial regulated flexibility	Regulated flexibility and flexicurity	Regulated flexibility	Regulated non flexibility

The five European countries compared in this paper represent different combinations of policy regimes concerning labour market structure, family and social policy, and regulation of flexibility (see Esping Andersen 1990 and 1999; Wallace 2003; Gallie and Paugam 2000; Ejrnæs & Boje 2008). To get a more complete picture of what characterise the individual countries we have combined descriptions from different regime typologies. Typologies, which cluster the individual countries differently, but all give a characteristic of the countries relevant for the purpose of this paper.

Both Denmark and Sweden are characterised as universal social protection regimes with an extended family policy given access to high quality childcare combined with comprehensive rights to parental leave generously paid. The prevailing employment pattern is dual earner households and those women who take up part-time job are working long-hours part-time and often during a restricted period when the children are small. Both countries score high on equal opportunities, are characterised by labour market regimes with few disincentives against equity for men and women and pursue an active policy on reconciling work and family. However, there are also considerable differences in regulation of flexibility between the two Scandinavian countries. Labour relations are regulated in both countries but in different ways. Employment protection is in Sweden regulated according to statute and in Denmark according to local collective agreements. The same concerns regulation of working time. This difference in type of regulation leaves much more room for variation and arbitrary decision making in working time schedule in Denmark than in Sweden. Looking at the family reproduction models we also find differences between the two Scandinavian countries. The Swedish leave system has traditionally been more flexible in combining parental leave and gainful employment, the leave period is more extended in time,

the period to be taken by the secondary carer – normally the father – are longer and the compensation used to be more generous than in the Danish system. (see e. g. Ellingsæter 1998; Leira 1992 and 2002; Boje and Almqvist 2000)

The Netherlands and the United Kingdom are both characterised as part-time leave regimes. In both countries the period of parental leave is short and badly paid. There is a modest level of public childcare for children aged 0 – 3. The childcare take up is typically combined with women working part-time. When it comes to the labour market system the two countries differ both in relation to social protection and regulation of flexibility. The UK is characterised by a market-driven labour market with low social protection. We find very few restrictions for employers employing workers on low wage and variable working hours. If employees are low paid or in part-time jobs they are not eligible for social security and the employers are not entitled to pay social contribution (OECD 2005:214). Furthermore, British women are often forced to take up the low paid part-time jobs after maternity leave because of insufficient paid leave and lack of childcare facilities. (Plantenga & Hansen 1999). The Netherlands is characterised by a working-time regime, which is more regulated concerning employment contract and social protection. The social partners are highly involved in regulating the working condition as in the Scandinavian countries. In the recent years the Dutch labour market system has become more deregulated in an attempt to balance flexibility and security in employment relations. This has encouraged individualised arrangements but without a comprehensive family policy on parental leave and with lack of child care facilities it has been impossible to achieve even a modest level of gender equity in terms of work and care. Consequently the Netherlands holds a position in the bottom among the European countries on equal opportunities.

The last country included in this comparison is Hungary which represents an extended parental leave model combined with employment related social protection and regulated non-flexibility. The Hungarian system is characterised by very long periods of parental leave and women stay home for three years or more caring for their children on paid leave. Part-time work is not very common in Hungary. According to Medgyesi (2003), this has historical explanations. Due to low level of wages it has been a condition for a descent standard of living that both adult household members were full-time earners and for many Hungarians low wages have forced them to take up an extra job in the 'second economy'. The high level of employment for both men and women has, however, not been transferred into the family life and women remain the principal responsible for care and domestic life. Despite changes in the economic system during the nineties part-time work is not popular neither among Hungarian employers nor employees. For the employer, part-time is not used because the social security contributions and taxes are so high that it is too expensive for employers to hire part-time workers. For the employees the economic situation still forces both man and woman in the household to contribute to the survival of the family economy. A combination of economic hardship and strict labour market regulation can explain why Hungary has the lowest level of working time flexibility but highest level of weekly working hours among the countries compared in this paper.

DATA AND VARIABLES USED IN THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The primary data source for this article is a large comparative data set collected within the "Household Work and Flexibility" (HWF) project, financed through the EU's fifth framework program. The survey was conducted in Spring of 2001 using face-to-face or telephone interviews. The HWF survey used a common questionnaire on a random sample of the population in eight EU and transition countries: Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Romania. A Danish survey has been added to this database in 2004 using the same questionnaire.

In this study only data from four of the original HWF countries and Denmark are analysed. The questionnaire was designed to cover the different types of work among household members and included the amount and gender division of housework, voluntary work, and caring work inside and outside the household, along with the various kinds of regular employment. A particular aim of the questionnaire was to get an idea of the activities of household members and how these fit together. The survey included also questions about the flexibility in organisation of work, in the working time schedule and in work place. Furthermore, it covered areas such as the economic resources of the households, work attitudes, and conflicts between work and family obligations, which are the primary focus in this paper.

The response rate varied but in line with what was normal for each country. The response rate, the number of interviews, and the type of survey for the involved countries are presented in Table 1. As can be seen attrition was quite high in some countries and weights were used in order to compensate for skewed falling-off in the cases of the Netherlands, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. For more information on the HWF questionnaire, and for detailed descriptions of the HWF survey in the respective countries, see Wallace (2002a).

Table 1: Response rates, number of completed interviews, and type of survey in the countries presented in the paper

	Response rate	***Completed interviews***	***Type of survey***
Denmark	73%	1.402	Telephone
Sweden	69%	1,287	Telephone
Netherlands	-20%[a]	1,008	Telephone
United Kingdom	58%	945	Face to face
Hungary	60-65%	1,165	Face to face

[a] Low response rates in surveys are and have been a problem in the Netherlands for some time. The rates in the HWF survey are therefore quite normal. The falling-off analysis indicates that the results should be representative for the country using a weight designed by the Dutch partners in the project.

In this paper we use two questions from the HWF questionnaire that describe the experienced level of work-family conflicts

- My work makes it difficult for me to do some of the household tasks that need to be done
- My work makes it difficult for me to fulfill my responsibilities toward my family and other important persons in my life.

Each of the questions has 5 answering alternatives going from always to never. The index constructed based on the two questions goes from the value 2 (answering always to both questions) indicating the highest level of experienced work-family conflict to the value 10 (answering never to both questions) representing the lowest level of work-family conflicts.

In the regression models the experienced level of work-family conflicts is the independent variable. The dependent variables used in the analysis are the traditional controlling variables – gender, age, level of education, children under the age of 6, and country. In addition to these variables the analysis also includes decisions and preferences concerning working time as part of the explanatory variables.

FLEXIBILITY, WORKING HOURS AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT – A DESCRIPTION

We start our analysis by describing the relationship between who decide the working time schedule, the number of worked hours and the level of work-family conflicts. First, we will analyse the relationship between control over working time and the weekly working hours worked by the employees. For men we find that the average number of worked hours are highest for employees who decide themselves on working time or when the decisions on working time is out of control for both employee and employer. Contrary, the shortest worked average hours we find for employees where the employee and employer decide the working time in common or when it is the employer who decides.

That male employees who control their working time schedule work longer hours than when the working time schedule is control by the employer or by employee and employer in common holds for all five countries. This result fits well into other studies, which have found that for the large majority of male employees the preference in working time is full-time or close to full-time. Those employees who are most dependent on employers' decision on working time schedule are part-time workers. The relationship between working hours and control of working time forms thus for men a U-shaped curve with longest hours for the two extreme situations – own decision and out of control. Among female employees we find only small differences in the average weekly working hours depending on who take the decision on working time schedule and none of the differences are significant. Only in Denmark and the Netherlands we find a tendency to longer weekly working time for female employees if the working time schedule is control by neither employer nor the employee but by external conditions. Men and women seem to use different strategies when they have

control over their working time schedule. Men choose to work more hours when they decide themselves while it is not the case for women. They seem more to coordinate their time in paid work with the care obligations they have in the family. For most women it is primarily their household obligations and not the career opportunities, which decide their weekly working hours – se figure 2 A and B.

Figure 2 A: Average working Hours and control of working time schedule - Men

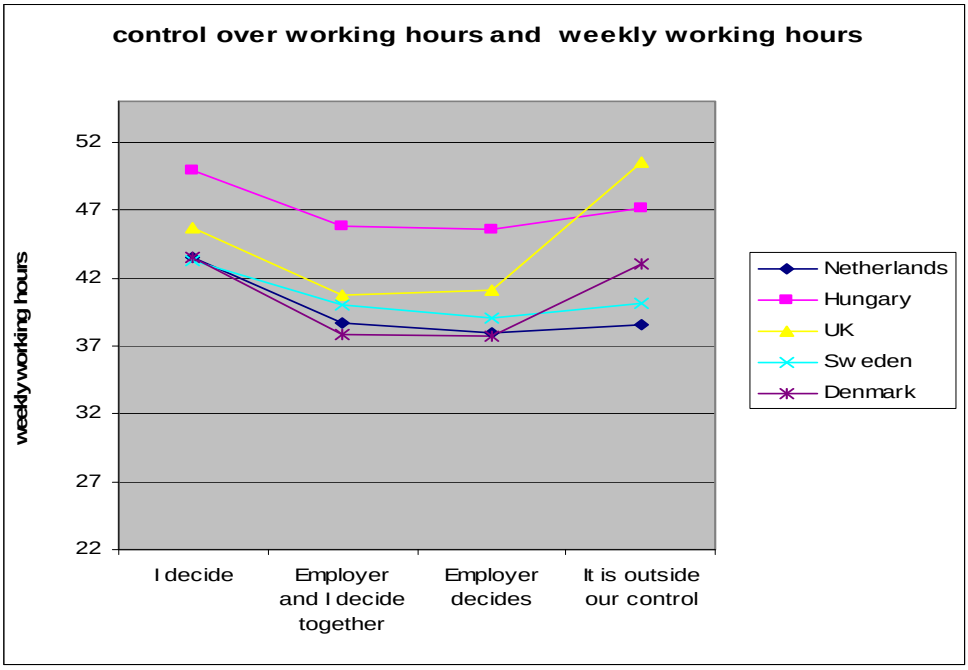
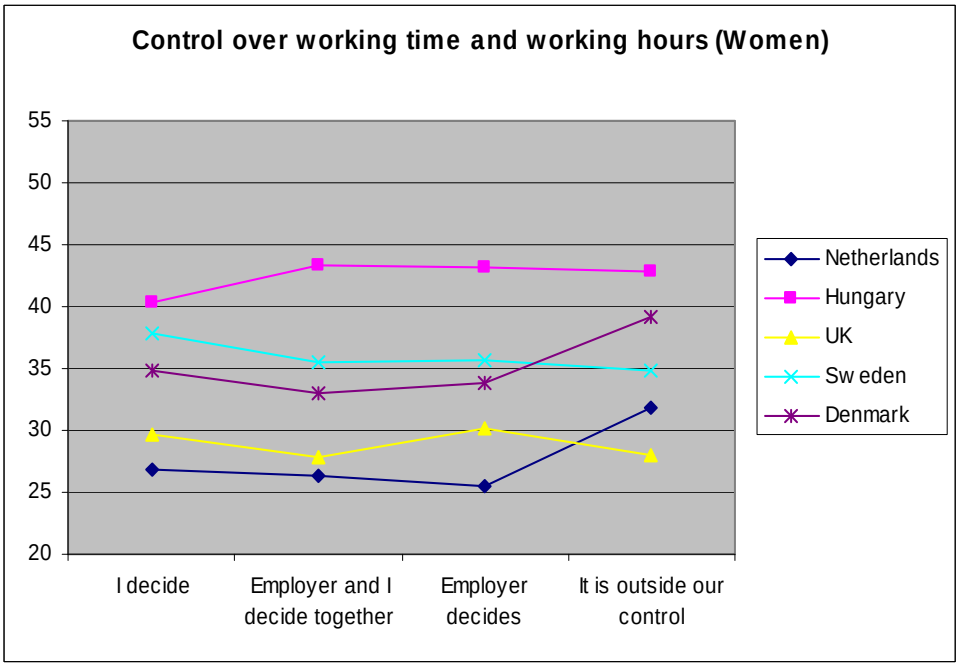


Figure 2 B: Average working Hours and control of working time schedule - Women



Source: HWF-database own calculation

Despite similarities among the five countries in the relationship between control over working time schedule and average weekly working hours we also find some interesting variations. For men the average number of worked hours is highest in the country with the most regulated working time regime – Hungary – followed by United Kingdom, where we find the least regulated working time regime. The male weekly working hours are shortest in the Netherlands characterised by a high level of part-time. For women the average worked hours are again highest in Hungary and low in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where we find some of the largest proportions of women working part-time in Europe (Visser 2000). The most differentiated pattern of average working hours we find in United Kingdom followed by Denmark. Both countries are characterised by decentralised regulation of the working time. In United Kingdom working time is unregulated at national level and the degree of regulation depends completely on the strength of the company-based labour force. In Denmark the labour market partners have set up some guidelines for regulation of working time but implementation of these guidelines depends on local negotiations at the individual company.

Having analysed how the average number of hours worked weekly by the employees depends on how the working time schedule is decided we now want to look at the level of experienced work-family conflicts. For each type of decision on working time schedule we have calculated the level of conflict between work and family obligations – see table 2 (low values mean high level of conflict; high values mean low level of conflict). Comparing the five countries we find the highest level of experienced conflicts between work and family obligations in Sweden and the lowest level in Hungary. Again we find significant differences between the countries in men's experienced level of conflict between work and family but not for women.

Table 2: Work-Family conflict index by gender and who control of working time

Men	**Netherlands**	**Hungary**	**UK**	**Sweden**	**Denmark**
Who makes the decision on the number of hours your work		*	***	***	**
I decide	7,5	7,9	7,3	7,2	7,2
Employer and I decide together	7,8	7,9	7,8	7,4	8,0
Employer decides	8,0	8,3	8,5	8,1	8,0
It is outside our control	7,2	8,6	6,0	7,8	7,2
Total	7,7	8,2	7,8	7,6	7,6
N	390	357	285	462	494

Women	**Netherlands**	**Hungary**	**UK**	**Sweden**	**Denmark**
Who makes the decision on the number of hours your work					
I decide	7,9	7,8	8,1	7,2	7,4
Employer and I decide together	7,7	7,8	7,7	6,9	7,7
Employer decides	8,1	8,0	8,1	7,4	7,8
It is outside our control	6,6	8,4	8,2	8,0	8,1
Total	7,8	8,0	8,0	7,3	7,7
N	363	343	361	446	502

Source: HWF-database own calculation

For all countries except Hungary the pattern of experienced work-family conflicts among male employees is a reversed u-shaped curve with the highest level of conflicts among employees who decide themselves working time schedule or when this decision is out of control. It is precisely those male employees who have the longest weekly working hours. This pattern is especially marked among male employees in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Denmark. These three labour markets are characterised by a relatively high level of working time flexibility and this flexibility comes primarily through when the working time is determined by the employees themselves or by external conditions. High flexibility in working time schedule seems thus to cause a high level of experienced work-family conflicts for men while we for women do not find the same significant relationship between who decide working time schedule and work-family conflicts. Hungary is the deviant case where the experienced level of conflicts between work and family obligations is most pronounced when the working time is determined by the employee or by employer and employee in common. On the other hand for Hungarian employees the lowest level of conflicts is experienced when the working time schedule is out of control for both employee and employer.

For all five countries the highest proportion of employees who want fewer working hours are found when the working hours schedule is outside the control of both employer and employee while a wish for more weekly working hours is most pronounced in situations where the employer determines the schedule (results not shown here). It is not surprising that in situations where the working time schedule is determined by external factors sudden changes in the schedule creates conflicts and might encourage the employees to go for fewer hours and a more controlled working time schedule. For the total group of employees it is primarily in the Netherlands and Hungary that the employees want to work more hours while a large group of Swedes want fewer working hours. For the Dutch employees the wish for more hours comes as a combined result of a high proportion of part-timers in the labour market and a relative low number of weekly hours among part-timers. In Hungary a wish for more hours might be an indication of low salaries for large groups of employees, which make the need for additional hours of great importance. When more than one-third of the Swedish employees want less working hours this is an indication of a stressful labour market and a high level of work-family conflicts for many Swedes, but also that alternative routes of income maintenance are available through a generous universal social security system – parental leave benefit, educational income support etc.

EXPLAINING THE DETERMINANTS FOR EXPERIENCED WORK-FAMILY CONFLICTS

In the following we want to continue our analyse specifying the determinants for work-family conflicts by controlling for different backgrounds variables – gender, age and education – and for decision making and preferences concerning the employees' weekly working hours. In the analysis we made separate calculations for men and women in explaining the determinations of experienced the work-family conflicts. The regression analysis is made in two steps. In the first regression we look at work-family conflicts without working time and in the second regression we include the same dependent variables but add working time as explaining variable.

The dependent variables included in explaining work-family conflicts are following:

- **Age of the employees** assuming that employees in the mid-age group might experience the highest level of conflicts because they used to have the most stressed working life considering a high level of family responsibilities – children, elderly relatives etc.
- **Level of education** assuming that a high level of education also means high demand in the job but also more possibilities for controlling the work situation than it is the case for employees with low education.
- **Present in the household of small children** means a higher level of caring responsibility and consequently a higher risk of having conflicts between work and family responsibilities.
- **Who makes decision on working hours** which we in figure 1 and table 2 found were correlated with both the number of hours worked and the level of conflicts between work and family conflicts
- **Working time preferences** among the employees – it is our assumption that whose employees who are satisfied with the present working hours or who want more working hours experienced less work-family conflicts than employees who want less working hours

Finally we know from the literature on work-life-balance that the experienced work-family conflicts are related to the national level of family-friendly policies both in relation to employment conditions and the possibilities of reconciling work and family responsibilities. Therefore we assume that the family policy regime / working time regime prevailing in the five analysed countries has a significant influence on the level of conflict and country is included among the explanatory variables.

Table 3 A: Explaining the experienced work-family conflicts for men and women – without controlling for working time

	Value Label	Men		Women	
	Intercept	7,11	***	6,30	**
Age	18-29	-0,57	**	-0,50	*
	30-59	-0,75	***	-0,61	***
	60-65	0,00		0,00	
Levels of education	Low level of education	0,60	***	1,09	***
	Medium level of education	0,30	**	0,60	***
	High level of education	0,00		0,00	
Children under the age of 6	No children	0,85	***	0,39	***
	Children under 6	0,00		0,00	
Who makes decision on the number of hours that you work?	I decide	-0,56	***	-0,07	
	Employer and I decide	-0,28		-0,20	
	It's outside pour control	-0,40	*	0,54	*
	Employer decide	0,00		0,00	
Preferences for number of working hours	More hours	0,83	***	1,30	***
	Same hours	0,84	***	1,09	***
	Less hours	0,00		0,00	
Country	DK	-0,15		0,38	**
	Netherlands	0,24		0,56	***
	Hungary	0,30	*	0,44	**
	UK	-0,04		0,43	**
	Sweden	0,00		0,00	

Table 3 B: Explaining the experienced work-family conflicts for men and women – controlling for working time

	Value Label	Men		Women	
	Intercept	8,51	***	7,66	***
Age	18-29	-0,48	*	-0,37	
	30-59	-0,61	***	-0,49	**
	60-65	0,00		0,00	
Levels of education	Low level of education	0,60	***	0,92	***
	Medium level of education	0,28	*	0,46	***
	High level of education	0,00		0,00	
Children under the age of 6	No children under 6	0,78	***	0,52	***
	Children under 6	0,00		0,00	
Who makes decision on the number of hours that you work?	I decide	-0,39	**	-0,11	
	Employer and I decide	-0,27	*	-0,25	*
	It's outside our control	-0,30		0,46	*
	Employer decide	0,00		0,00	
Preferences for number of working hours	More hours	0,52	**	0,87	***
	Same hours	0,74	***	0,88	***
	Less hours	0,00		0,00	
I.25. Country	Denmark	-0,12		0,30	*
	Netherlands	0,23		0,23	
	Hungary	0,56	***	0,66	***
	UK	0,10		0,20	
	Sweden	0,00		0,00	
Working time		-0,04	***	-0,04	***

From the regression analysis in table 3 A we find several similar determinants for both male and female employees in the experienced level of work-family conflicts concerning

- Age where we found that the middle-age group has the highest level of work-family conflicts for both men and women followed by the young employees. It is in families with small children, the parents in mid-career, and high economical commitments that the work-family becomes most pronounced.
- Level of education increases significantly the level of work-family conflicts. Highly educated employees experience significantly higher level of work-family conflicts for both men and women than low-educated employees. The demands of work are higher and the boundaries between work and family obligations are more blurred among high-educated employees. Other studies confirm this result and find that professional workers have significantly higher work-family conflicts than manual workers (Crompton & Lyonette 2006:384)
- Presence of small children in the family increases the level of work-family conflicts – this is most obvious for male employees. Small children in the family means less flexibility in organising the family life and therefore more restrictions in planning your working time schedule.
- When there are correspondence between actual working time and the preference for number of worked hours the level of work-family conflicts are lower than if these two dimensions are conflicting.

There are also important differences between male and female employees in the experienced level of conflicts between work and family responsibilities – these differences are mostly related to two dimensions:

- Between the countries we find marked differences in the level of conflict among women but not for men. Swedish women experience a significantly higher level of work-family conflict than women in any of the other four countries while Dutch women seem to have the lowest level of conflicts. Among male employees the level of conflict seems to be about the same in all five countries with a slightly lower level of experienced conflicts among Hungarian men.
- The probably most interesting difference between men and women we find in the relationship between decisions over working time and experienced work-family conflicts. Male employees experience most conflicts when they decide working hours themselves or if a decision on working hours is out of control for both employees and employers. For women the experienced level of conflict is highest but not significant when the decision on working hours is taken by themselves or together with the employers while the level is low and significant when the decision is out of control for both employees and employers. The difference between male and female employees in experienced work-family conflict when the decision over working time is out of control for both employers and employees might be explained by differences in working time patterns. Men on unusual working time are typically on shift work or working long hours which are highly conflicting in relation to family obligations while women on unusual working time normally are working part-time which more easily can be combined with family obligations and therefore do not creates conflicts. This difference between men and

women remains even when we control for working time – see table 3 B.

As mentioned above in the first regression we have not included working time as dependent variable. If this is done the level of experienced work-family conflict is weakened but it definitely does not disappear. We thus find that middle-aged and highly educated employees and parents with children below 6 years experience still significantly higher level of work-family conflicts than other groups of employees when controlling for working time. The higher level of experienced conflict is found among Swedish women compared with Hungarian and Danish women while this is not the case compared with British and Dutch female employees. They work significantly shorter hours than Swedish women and this makes the difference when explaining the experienced work-family conflicts. Swedish women seems to be the most stressed group of employees in the five countries compared in this paper despite comprehensive family policy in relation to parental leave schemes and access to high quality child care. However, given the strong emphasis on gender equality in the Swedish society Swedish women – and men - might also have the highest expectations concerning equality in paid work, housework and caring obligations.

Not surprising we find in table 3 B a highly significant relationship between the length of working time and the experienced conflicts between both men and women. This correlation leads us to a concluding analysis explaining how the length of working time correlates with the same independent variables as used in the two previous regression analyses. In table 4 we show the results from this analysis explaining the length of working time for men and women.

Table 4: Explaining the length of weekly working hours

	Value Label	Men		Women	
		39,87050213	***	37,48681884	***
Age	18-29	2,036439055	*	3,956471728	**
	30-59	3,617932579	***	3,124247439	***
	60-65	0		0	
Levels of education	Low level of education	-0,516231548		-4,270471622	***
	Medium level of education	-0,618549496		-3,793854711	***
	High level of education	0		0	
Children under the age of 6	No children	-1,504691121	*	3,838923661	***
	Children under 6	0		0	
Preferences for number of working hours	More hours	-8,852624534	***	-12,4836341	***
	Same hours	-3,256458772	***	-5,93614049	***
	Less hours	0		0	
Who makes decision on the number of hours that you work?	I decide	4,052029786	***	-0,259874602	
	Employer and I decide	0,441504409		-0,965208379	
	It's outside our control	2,958345227	**	-0,322842405	
	Employer decide	0		0	
Country	Denmark	0,637999677		-1,892218363	
	Netherlands	-0,582853197		-9,059122349	***
	Hungary	7,13328121	***	6,556452713	***
	UK	3,394360015	***	-6,508562624	***
	Sweden	0		0	

According to table 4 we find the longest weekly working hours for both men and women in the middle aged group and among the highly educated. Both results confirm the previous findings that these two groups are also the groups experiencing the highest level of work-family conflicts. Having children in the household affects men and women differently. Fathers work significantly more than non-fathers and it is the opposite for mothers compared with non-mothers. There are several reasons for this pattern. Probably the most decisive reason is the gendered division of labour in both labour market and family. Men's working time is primarily decided of career reasons while women are continuously juggling between working and caring obligations. Furthermore, in most families the man has typically higher income than the woman. When caring for children and other dependent relative make it necessary to reduce the labour market commitment in the family then it is thus most obvious that it is the woman who reduces the working hours. Not surprisingly, men who decide the weekly working hours themselves therefore tend to work more than if working hours are decided by employers or by employee and employer in common. On the other hand, we find no relationship between who decide working hours and the length of working hours among women. For women working time and involvement in paid work seem to be determined by the conditions outside the work organisation – the load of housework, caring obligations etc.

The countries differences are more or less as expected. Hungarian men have the longest weekly working hours followed by British men while there are no significant differences for men in working hours between the other three countries when controlling for age, education and children. Among women it is also Hungarian women who have the longest working hours while working time is significant shorter for Dutch and British women compared with the Scandinavian women.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The relationship between working time flexibility and level of work-family conflicts is more complex than often argued in the literature. Our analysis has shown that controlling the working time does not mean a low level of work-family conflicts among the employees. Today's work organisation is highly demanding, the IT technology makes it possible to work 24 hours and therefore extremely difficult for the employees to set up boundaries between work and the family sphere. Therefore, flexible working time schedules may threaten stable relations at home and will often cause stress and tension in reconciling work and caring responsibilities in the households. This is the case in all five countries among mid-aged, highly educated employees with small children.

The level of work-family conflicts in all five countries is highest among male employees who have the longest weekly working hours. This is not surprising, but it is remarkable that the employees with the longest working hours are men who decide

themselves the working hours. For women we do not find the same strong relationship between decision-making on working hours and conflicts in work-family relations. For men the working time schedule is determined by external labour market related obligations– career possibilities, work organisation etc – even when they decide the working time schedule themselves. Family related obligations come second for men and this causes conflicts in the family relations. Women, on the other hand, accommodate their work obligations in relation to the needs of the family, which in advance prevent conflict between work and family obligations. Therefore we do not find any significant relationship between length of average working hours, who are controlling the working hours and the level of work-family conflicts. This relationship is already calculated into the decision-making process of women when reconciling work and family responsibilities.

Work-family conflicts depend according to our analyses both on the contextual and societal level - the type of employment regulation and family policy regimes – and on the individual level – individual and household variables. We find the highest level of work-family conflict in Sweden and lowest in Hungary. This is a surprising result considering that others studies have found that Sweden among the five countries compared in this paper comes out as the most flexible country in organising the working time while Hungary have the most restricted pattern of working time flexibility. In Sweden the employees seem to have a large variety of possibilities in organising their working day but the many opportunities can also be difficult managing in a time period where career demands, family responsibilities and leisure activities often are conflicting in a society with a strong emphasis on equal opportunities and self-realisation (Sennet 1999, Nordenmark 2002, Grönlund 2004). More than in any of the other countries the Sweden families aim at equal gender division of labour in both gainful employment and sharing the duties at home. This seems especially for women to create a lot of tensions and conflicts between work and family obligations. In Hungary, the working time flexibility is typically determined by the employers and is restricted. Among the five countries compared in this paper we found the longest average working hours among Hungarian men and women. Despite this, the level of work-family conflicts we significantly lower among both Hungarian men and women compared with the other countries. The reason for this is that a large group of Hungarian women with caring obligations for small children are out of employment, this means a more predictable working time pattern and thereby less work-family conflicts in organisation of the daily life.

Despite significant initiatives at national as well as European level in promoting a better balance between work and care obligations in the household the distribution of paid work, unpaid work and care is still characterised by the traditional gender contract and a highly unequal divided (Plantenga & Hansen 1999; Pfau-Effinger 2004; Haas et al 2005). As has been concluded in an analysis of work-life balance in the EU-countries ‘No Western European country has put women on equal terms with men: even Scandinavian countries have labour market divisions which put women at a disadvantage in paid work, and pensions, and discourage men’s participation in care work’ (Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 275). Our analysis show clearly that introducing more flexibility

in determining the working time schedule for the employees does not changes the gendered pattern in paid work, unpaid work and caring. Women solve the conflicts by reducing their work commitments while it is the demands from the work organisation, which are decisive for men's choices in organising the working time schedule.

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CHAPTER 4

‘FLEXICURITY’ AS A POLICY STRATEGY: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Jane Lewis & Ania Plomien

1. INTRODUCTION

Flexicurity has become a prominent policy strategy at the European Union (EU) level since the mid-2000s, dominating the European Employment Strategy (EES), and also informing the wider approach to reform of labour markets and social policies, including proposals regarding labour law (CEC, 2006a). The main idea of flexicurity is to promote flexibility and security simultaneously for paid workers – the policy documents employ gender-neutral language - using a combination of policy instruments. The policy strategy aims to promote greater competitiveness and growth: raising employment rates at all stages of the lifecourse and making workplaces more 'adaptable', by offering more flexible contract arrangements (external flexibility) and achieving more flexible patterns of work organisation (internal flexibility). Policy instruments intended to recast the work/welfare relationship, which has always been central to the workings of modern welfare states, are favoured.

In many respects flexicurity continues the established focus on employment-led social policy (O'Connor, 2005), whereby the modernisation of social security systems has been urged since the end of the 1990s so as to tie cash benefits more firmly to labour market participation and/or training, in the effort to make social policy 'a productive factor' (CEC, 2000). The main aims of flexicurity are to secure labour market entry, maintain labour market attachment, and enable progression up the ladder for workers. The European Commission's statement on the 'common principles' that should inform the pursuit of flexicurity in Member States stressed the importance of ensuring that workers were able to make 'successful moves' from job to job, and move into better jobs, as well as securing flexibility at the level of the firm (CEC, 2007a). Thus security is geared above all to maintaining the adult's status as a paid worker and to income security in the form of wages, the point being to promote employment rather than job security via programmes designed to provide support for getting into, or back to work (in the form of 'life-long learning' and 'active labour market policies'), as well as benefits during what are envisaged will be short periods of unemployment. Security is depicted as an integral part of the package, and the Commission has thus sought to put distance between flexicurity and the 'Anglo-Saxon' model of 'flexibility first' (Klammer, 2005; Keune and Jepsen, 2007), which in parts of continental Europe is widely associated above all with greater insecurity in the labour market for employees and worsening working conditions[9].

The flexicurity strategy assumes an individualised 'adult worker model family' (Lewis, 2001), with both men and women in the labour market. The 2000 Lisbon Council set a target of 60 per cent for women's labour market participation in Member States by 2010 and the need to secure higher female employment rates has been written into the successive reformulations of the Employment Guidelines accompanying the EES. While the flexicurity strategy is expected to increase women's employment rates, as Gazier[10] (2006) has pointed out,

[9] E.g. Barbier, 2004 and many of the papers in *Travail, Genre and Sociétés* no. 19, 2008

[10] Together with Schmid, Gazier has promoted the 'transitional labour market' approach to work/welfare reform, which has taken more

women are already more 'flexible' employees than men, making 60 per cent of 'transitions' between jobs and in and out of the employment relationship, largely as a result of their responsibility for the unpaid work of care. They also tend to have flexible patterns of work, largely because such a high proportion work part-time. Given that the quality of women's jobs and their pay levels are also often low, the emphasis on security alongside flexibility thus appears to have much to offer to this group of workers. However, neither flexicurity as a policy strategy, nor the academic analysis which has informed it, have addressed the issue of the relationship between paid work and unpaid care work (Jepsen, 2005), the profoundly gendered inequalities associated with it, or the kind of work and family policies that might be needed to address it. The flexicurity strategy has focused on the combination of policies needed to achieve an integrated approach to flexibility and security and, while insisting on the benefits for 'weaker' groups in the labour market, it has not differentiated the labour market position or needs of particular groups of workers within this category.

This paper explores further the meaning of flexicurity as a policy strategy and its treatment of gender issues. It offers evidence as to the flexibility of women workers, particularly in relation to internal, working time flexibility, and then examines how women fare on the security side of the equation in terms of the supply-side policy instruments favoured by the strategy, before suggesting what further instruments are necessary if greater gender equality is to be achieved. Here it pays special attention to the contrasting position of women in the Netherlands and Denmark, which are usually regarded as the two best exemplars of flexicurity, with reference also to the UK, which is held to be a high flexibility but low security country. For as the Expert Group on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment has commented: 'The relationship between flexicurity and gender equality is not self-evident' (Plantenga, Remery and Rubery, 2007, p. 67). Indeed, this link has consciously to be made and involves consideration of the structural determinants of inequality, especially the part played by women and men in both paid and unpaid work, alongside women's unequal position in the labour market. In particular, flexicurity assumes a degree of progress towards equality in the form of economic autonomy for men and women that is probably optimistic. The small literature on gender and flexicurity has tended to be critical (Fredman, 2004; Jepsen, 2005, 2008; Hansen, 2007) and the findings of this paper reinforce these conclusions.

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note of the kind of transitions made by women between paid and unpaid work (Schmid, 1998; Schmid and Gazier, 2002; Schmid, 2008).

2. THE MEANING OF FLEXICURITY

The EU-level documents on flexicurity point out that flexibility at work is demanded by employees as well as employers, although it is likely that these two groups will prefer different forms of flexibility (Vermeylen and Hurley, 2007). For example, in respect of external flexibility in contractual arrangements, in Spain in 2007 31.7 per cent of the workforce as a whole was on fixed-term contracts, including 33.1 per cent of women workers, but EU Labour Force Survey data suggest that these were not desired by the workforce (Eurostat, 2007; see also Flaquer 2000; Petrongolo, 2004). In respect to internal flexibility and working patterns, requests to work weekends, evenings and nights usually come from employers; employees are more likely to be interested in forms such as working time accounts, flexible starting and finishing times and parental leaves.

In his development of the concept of flexicurity, the Dutch sociologist, Ton Wilthagen, offered a matrix of four types of flexibility and four types of security (Wilthagen et al., 2003):

- external numerical flexibility (relating to contractual arrangements and the ease with which employers can hire and fire);
- internal numerical flexibility (relating to working hours, overtime and part-time work, etc.);
- functional flexibility (relating to multi-employability and the flexible organisation of work at the level of the firm);
- wage flexibility (for example performance related pay);
- job security (the certainty of retaining a job with a specific employer –measured by the OECD (2004) as an index of employment protection legislation);
- employment security (the certainty of remaining in work, but not necessarily with the same employer);
- income security (via social security benefits during periods of unemployment, and sufficient wages to secure independent living);
- combination security (the certainty of being able to combine paid work with other social responsibilities such as carework).

This list reproduces that provided by Wilthagen et al. (2003), except that 'sufficient wages' has been added to the definition of income security. The flexicurity literature tends to assume that labour market participation results in wage security, but for women in particular, this is not necessarily the case.

The point of flexicurity as a policy strategy is to promote better, as well as more, jobs and to help workers move into permanent employment, albeit with more flexible standard contracts (CEC, 2007b). Proponents of flexicurity have been at pains to reject the characterisation of the policy strategy as social protection for a flexible workforce (e.g. Keller and Seifert, 2004). However, a win/win balance within the flexibility/security matrix is not necessarily easy to achieve. Schmid (2008) has stressed the importance of institutional arrangements that foster the complementarity of flexibility and

security through a strategy of 'protected flexibility' if the relationship between flexibility and security is to be 'virtuous' rather than 'vicious'. Most striking has been the possibility of a (vicious) trade-off between job and employment security. Furthermore, if the move towards employment security is badly managed it may increase rather than decrease the development of segmented labour markets, thus diminishing the prospects of many for better jobs. For example, in Spain, employment protection legislation was loosened for workers on the periphery of the labour market - resulting in an increase in temporary and fixed-term contracts - but not for core workers. Furthermore, such a policy strategy may affect different groups of workers differently. The expansion of female employment in Spain took place relatively late – in the 1990s - with little by way of state policy supports, such as childcare, which accompanied the entry of Scandinavian women into the labour market during what was still the 'golden age' of the welfare state. Spanish women have thus been much more likely to occupy precarious jobs that also tend to be more intensive (Burchell et al., 2007). More generally, *Employment in Europe 2004* (CEC, 2004) reported that of those taking non-standard contracts in EU15 in 1997, 60 per cent had moved into standard work by 2003, but 16 per cent were in the same position and 20 per cent had left the labour market.

Wilthagen's original flexibility/security matrix was particularly interesting from a gender perspective because it seemed to recognise the importance of being able to 'reconcile' paid and unpaid work by making 'combination security' one of the four types of security in the matrix.[11] However, as the flexicurity policy strategy was developed at EU-level with the identification of four key focuses for policy in the form of (i) active labour market policies, (ii) life-long learning, (iii) reformed, modern social security systems and (iv) flexible and reliable contractual arrangements, so consideration of the promotion of combination security became subsumed under other policy initiatives and lost its claim to an equal place in the policy package. In later work for the Commission as Chair of the European Expert Group on Flexicurity (CEC, 2007b), Wilthagen linked work and family balance policies to flexible and secure contracts, rather than seeing them as a form of security in their own right. The whole point of policies to promote flexicurity is that they should alone or, more likely, in combination, promote *both* flexibility and security. But as we shall see in relation to the policy choices available under the heading of work and family reconciliation or balance, outcomes depend on the nature of the policy instrument, which in turn is related to policy aims.

Broadly speaking, at the EU level, flexicurity has been seen as the way of achieving the key employment guideline no. 17 in the EES, which aims for full employment, improvements in the quality and productivity of work and strengthened social and territorial cohesion (CEU, 2005). It is important that simple labour market participation, to be promoted by more flexible contracts and ways of working, has remained the fundamental policy goal. In the

[11] The use of the term 'combination' is reminiscent of the Combination Scenario, which was developed by the Dutch Social Democratic Governments at the end of the 1990s and which advocated the sharing of paid and unpaid work between men and women (Plantenga, 2002).

guidelines proposed in 2008, work family balance policies were mentioned under guideline 17 and also under no. 18, which emphasises the importance of labour market participation over the lifecycle. But such policies were not mentioned under guideline 21, which specifically promotes flexicurity as a means of addressing labour market segmentation.

Proponents of flexicurity have stressed that flexible labour markets need more rather than less security for workers, while arguing that the security offered should be of a different type from that developed for the standard career pattern of the male breadwinner (Wilthagen and Tros, 2004). The point about the need for fundamental reform of social security systems has long been made by feminist analysts, tracking the erosion of the male breadwinner model family (e.g Lewis, 1992, 2002; Orloff, 1993) and by mainstream critics of the capacity of welfare systems laid down in the early twentieth century to cope with profound changes in family forms, and with changing contributions (in the form of wages and unpaid work) made by men and women to families, as well as changes in labour markets (Supiot, 2001; Esping Andersen, 1999; et al., 2002). The old social protection offered by western welfare states was based on what kind of social security would be offered to workers seeking to 'decommodify' (Esping Andersen, 1990) their labour and under what conditions. The new forms of protection have focused more on securing and maintaining their 'commodification'. Thus while generous social security benefits are part of the flexicurity package, designed to secure income between jobs, active labour market policies become crucial to get workers back into work; wages being the best form of income security and hence the best form of 'welfare'. However, both academic analysis and the policy documents have been at pains to stress that there is no one model for the pursuit of flexicurity. Denmark and the Netherlands, are used as the main exemplars of high flexibility and high security, but these countries have taken very different routes to the positions they occupy (and also differ profoundly in respect of women's position in the labour market). Denmark has low job protection – 25-35 per cent of the workforce change employers each year (similar to the UK figures), generous social security benefits and highly developed active labour market policies, whereas the Dutch model has relied more on non-standard work, particularly part-time work for women, which has been accorded pro-rata pay and benefit protection.

The policies closely associated with the flexicurity strategy have consolidated around a limited number of instruments that have a clear and direct link to promoting labour market entry and attachment. More consideration of the various dimensions of family change, which have been as productive of challenges to welfare states as labour market change, and of workplace-based inequalities would dictate a widening of the kind of policies necessary for the promotion of a form of flexicurity in which better jobs for women become a reality. Yet both the academic analysis of flexicurity and the policy documents have been curiously silent in these respects, usually making little more than a cursory recommendation to increase the provision of childcare services.

3. GENDER EQUALITY AND THE FLEXICURITY AGENDA

The main concern regarding women in relation to both the EES and the flexicurity strategy has been to promote an increase in their labour market participation rate. Work-family balance policies have been supported in so far as it is thought that they will enable this outcome (Lewis, 2002, 2006). The focus has been on securing access to the labour market and there has been relatively little attention to problems of job quality for women. Indeed, many of the job quality indicators identified by the Commission in 2003 relate more to access and participation (e.g. employment rates for women with and without children) than to job quality *per se* (CEC, 2003). Nor has there been explicit consideration of the dimensions and causes of gender inequalities. Indeed, the 2007 annual report on *Employment in Europe* dropped consideration of women's employment altogether - the Lisbon target was felt to be within reach – focusing instead on the participation rates of young and elderly people (CEC, 2007c).

From the late 1990s, it is possible to see a shift in emphasis at EU level from first, concern with equality as same treatment (written into the 1957 Treaty of Rome in the form of equal pay), towards a preoccupation with opportunities for mothers to engage in paid work; and second, towards policy instruments that are believed to be more certain to achieve that: so away from long parental leaves towards more concern about the provision of childcare services. Following the Lisbon targets for women's employment, the 2002 Barcelona Council set targets for the provision of childcare services to reach 90 per cent of children between three and school age, and 33 per cent of under 3's.

Until 2003, the promotion of gender equality was one of the 'pillars' of the EES. Subsequently the principle of gender mainstreaming was supposed to guarantee consideration of gender equality issues in relation to all policy initiatives. However, considerable doubt has been cast on the extent to which this has been the case, particularly in respect of the reduced priority accorded to gender equality in the sense of 'equal sharing' of paid and unpaid work between men and women at the household level (Rubery et al. 2003; Rubery, 2008; Stratigaki, 2005). The policy approach has continued to be instrumental, designed primarily to secure economic and employment goals. For example, a 2006 Commission consultation document on extending EU legislation on childcare leaves, services and working time reiterated: '…the need for a better work-private life balance in order to achieve economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness…' (CEC, 2006b: Introduction). Similarly, the Joint Employment Report for 2006/7 issued by the Council argued that 'affordable and accessible quality childcare provision must be expanded to allow both parents to work' (CEU, 2007, p.4).

Flexicurity documents have not addressed the issues raised by the fundamental differences in the positions occupied by men and women in the labour market. So the prevalence of part-time work among women – historically one of the main ways in which women have sought to reconcile paid work with family responsibilities –together with work-family balance policies have been treated as part of either or both the flexibility and

security agendas, because they enable employment, which is in turn the main way of achieving security. Nevertheless, the idea that flexicurity will contribute to gender equality has been firmly stated (CEC 2007d).The mechanisms have never been specified, but the assumption seems to be that equality follows more equal labour force participation. In 2007, the Commission warned – but in a document on gender equality rather than on the mainstream policy strategy of flexicurity - that flexicurity policies 'should avoid stressing the "flexibility" aspect for women [mainly in the form of reduced working hours and short or fixed-term contracts] and the "security" aspect for men' (CEC, 2007e: para 3.1). Nevertheless, a few months later it was still possible for the European Expert Group on Flexicurity to issue a document on 'flexicurity pathways' with no reference to gender equality issues (CEC, 2007b). This absence has not passed wholly unremarked. The European Parliament has been particularly scathing in its comments on flexicurity in relation to gender equality:

> Whereas while the Commission communication on flexicurity sets out the principle of equality between women and men, its formulation is weak as it does not challenge the fundamental inequality between women and men encountered with regard to access to participation in the labour market and equal sharing of unpaid work…[and] completely disregards the obligations and responsibilities set out in the commission communication entitled, 'A roadmap for equality between women and men' (European Parliament, 2007, J. and 7).

In the Dutch and Danish exemplars of flexicurity, both countries have high female employment rates, but in the Netherlands the vast majority of women work relatively short part-time hours, a model that has similarities with the UK, although in terms of flexible contract arrangements in general, the UK is much nearer to the Danish position. But the simple test of employment rates gives no indication as to gendered inequalities regarding job quality and employment security.

4. WOMEN AND FLEXIBILITY

This section reviews some key dimensions of external and more especially internal flexibility for EU15 Member States. Table 1 presents data for fixed-term employment, an important dimension of external flexibility, and shows that the proportion of employees with fixed-term contracts varies considerably between countries, but not so much between men and women in the same country. Except for Germany, women are more likely to demonstrate this form of flexibility than men, but particularly large gaps can be observed in Italy, Sweden and Finland. A large proportion of Finnish women on fixed-term contracts (38 per cent) are substituting for mothers on long homecare leaves (Lehto and Sutela, 2005). Fixed-term employment is much higher for younger workers in all EU countries, and in several the gender gaps are wider as well. For example, in Finland among 15-24 year olds, the gap between men and women increases to 7.4 per cent and in Sweden to 16.7 per cent.

Table 1 Fixed-term[1] employment rates as a percentage of employees (15-64) by sex, 2007.

Type	EU15	BE	DK	DE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	LU	NL	AT	PT	FI	SE	UK
T	14.5	8.6	8.6	14.6	7.2	10.9	31.7	14.3	13.2	6.8	17.9	8.9	22.4	15.9	17.2	5.7
W	15.2	10.8	9.9	14.5	8.6	13.2	33.1	15.5	16.0	7.6	19.5	9.0	23.0	19.4	19.7	6.3
M	14.0	6.8	7.4	14.7	6.0	9.3	30.6	13.3	11.2	6.2	16.4	8.8	21.8	12.3	14.7	5.1
Gap	1.2	4.0	2.5	-0.2	2.6	3.9	2.5	2.2	4.8	1.4	3.1	0.2	1.2	7.1	5.0	1.2

Source: Eurostat (2007).

1: Eurostat defines employees with fixed-term contract as those who declare having an employment contract or a job which will terminate; Eurostat and the Commission use 'fixed-term', 'limited duration' and 'temporary' terms interchangeably; contracts include: seasonal, agency or third party employment, exchange, specific training.

Tables 2 and 3 show various dimensions of internal flexibility. The first four columns of Table 2 show types of 'asocial hours of working' for men and women aged 25-49 (who are most likely to be parents) which are more likely to be carried out at the behest of the employer than the employee. However, the picture is not always as simple as this, for example, in the UK shift work is often accompanied by shift parenting (La Valle et al., 2002), which is valued in a country where childcare by kin is often preferred and formal childcare is expensive, and where men's asocial and long-hour working is also likely to be welcomed if it is paid at overtime rates, because a large proportion of workers are low paid and a high proportion of women work part-time. Generally, more men than women tend to work unsocial hours. But the country rank orders are usually similar for men and women for these different patterns of working, which suggest that they are related to the nature of the labour market, for example the proportions working shifts are relatively high in Sweden and Finland, but low in Denmark. Some countries have low figures compared to the EU15 average for all four types of asocial working, e.g. Denmark; in some a high percentage for one type of work is offset by low percentages for other types (e.g. in France only the proportions working Saturdays are high, particularly for women, and in the Netherlands there are low proportions working shifts and long hours); and in some countries high proportions engage in all four forms of asocial work: this is true of men in Greece.[12]

Table 2 also shows figures for three patterns of working hours that are more likely to serve the interests of employees in columns 5-7. Working time banks are particularly important in Germany, but more for men than for women; in Denmark and Finland they are equally important for men and women. The ability to vary the start and end of the working day is often thought to be particularly important for parents who need to take children to daycare or school and to collect them, but it is noteworthy that the proportions of employees who can do this is relatively low, except in Denmark, and that the figures for men and women are rather similar, with a slight advantage in favour of women in a majority of countries. The story is very similar for the proportions working staggered hours according to regulation or collective agreement, except that the proportions of men are slightly higher than women in a majority of countries, reflecting the less dense unionisation of women in many countries and the fact that women tend to work in lower status jobs.

[12] European Social Survey data also indicate that this is true of men in the UK (Lewis et al., 2008).

Table 2. Employed men and women aged 25-49 in various forms of flexible work (%).

Category		Saturdays[1]	Evenings[1]	Shift work[2]	48+ (2005)[3]	Time Banking[4]	Start & End variable[5]	Staggered Hours[6]
EU15	M	27.7	23.9	18.1	13.8	:	:	:
	W	27.2	18.8	14.2	7.4	:	:	:
BE	M	20.1	18.3	12.6u	12.5	8.0	6.4	8.0
	W	20.2	10.9	7.9u	4.6	8.2	6.8	8.1
DK	M	20.0	19.5	5.6	10.6	21.5	21.2	5.0
	W	17.1	13.0	5.2	9.5	21.6	26.5	8.0
DE	M	27.3	32.1	21.2	11.3	42.5	4.8	5.3
	W	27.1	24.7	15.2	3.2	38.2	4.9	5.0
IE	M	4.9	2.9	3.7	18.2	4.7	3.8	12.4
	W	3.0	1.7	2.5	3.9	5.3	3.0	7.3
EL	M	40.5	24.5	21.9	31.6	1.8	2.4	7.4
	W	30.1	22.1	17.9	26.0	2.2	3.3	6.9
ES	M	26.5	20.0	17.3	16.8	1.4	5.3	4.4
	W	29.4	17.3	17.5	13.3	1.2	6.7	3.5
FR	M	27.7	19.5	11.3	4.8	2.4	13.2	3.2
	W	34.1	15.0	6.8	4.3	4.2	14.5	2.8
IT	M	37.9	18.3	20.9	16.4	1.4	5.5	22.8
	W	35.3	11.5	17.8	7.5	1.4	4.6	21.4
LU	M	21.2	16.5	13.4	11.0	12.8	4.3	17.0
	W	19.4	11.6	9.3	5.6	11.6	6.7	13.1
NL	M	26.8	32.3	11.0	9.9	8.9	1.7	11.1
	W	24.9	27.4	7.0	4.1	6.0	2.6	10.2
AT	M	31.4	17.4	20.8	10.5	17.6	9.9	3.3
	W	30.7	10.9	16.8	4.7	13.2	11.5	3.5
PT	M	21.7	:	18.6	16.7	1.4	2.5	11.9
	W	22.0	:	18.6	10.8	1.1	1.8	7.6
FI	M	22.7	27.3	23.8	7.0	25.2	6.3	12.4
	W	23.0	24.0	25.9	2.3	25.5	5.9	12.0
SE	M	11.4	16.5	22.2	11.6	:	:	:
	W	14.5	14.5	27.5	6.8	:	:	:
UK	M	22.3u	29.5u	22.5u	22.0	9.3	9.3	4.1
	W	17.2	23.6u	16.0u	7.1	13.1	7.2	3.0

Sources: columns 1-3 Eurostat (2007); column 4 EWCS (2005); columns 5-7 Eurostat (2008), p. 191.
Notes: 'u' unreliable or uncertain data; ':' data not available

1. Work 'usually' on Saturdays (two or more) and Evenings (at least half the number of days on which the person worked) during a four-week reference period before the interview; taking office work home and/or occasionally working at the workplace not included. Data for 2007.
2. Shift work: work schedule during which an enterprise is operational or provides services beyond the normal working hours. Data for 2007.
3. 48+: proportion of employees in full-time (self-reported) employment usually working 48 or more hours per week in the main paid job, no age specification. Data for 2005.
4. Time banking: accumulation and settlement of debit and credit hours around the standard number of weekly/ monthly working hours; over a longer period, the average number of working hours is equal to the number of contractually agreed working hours; should not be interpreted as total autonomy when to start and finish work. Data for 2004.
5. Start/end of the working day variable: by mutual agreement with the employer. Data for 2004.
6. Staggered hours: possibility to start earlier and finish later outside a range of hours according to regulation /collective agreement when presence is compulsory. The number of hours worked each day is equal to the contractual number. Data for 2004.

Table 3 shows self-reported data on part-time work, a form of internal flexibility that is overwhelmingly the province of women. In many countries part-time work has been the main way in which women have managed to 'reconcile' paid work with childcare, although in some this form of employment seems to have become normative. Part-time work is very important in the Netherlands (above all), but also in Germany, the UK, Belgium, Austria, and Sweden, where over 40 per cent of employed women worked part-time in 2006. Furthermore, the proportion of employed women working part-time has increased substantially in Austria, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain over the last decade, although in Spain, as in Italy and Greece, the tendency is still for women either to work full-time or be out of the labour market altogether. In some countries part-time employment has fallen over the last decade, notably so in Sweden, and perceptibly in the UK.

Women's employment rates have increased substantially often *because* of the high proportions entering part-time employment. Table 3 shows that 8 EU15 countries already meet the Lisbon target of 60 percent of women in employment. Over time, the Dutch story appears to be particularly impressive, with a 35 percentage point rise in women's employment since 1970, giving the Netherlands a slightly higher employment rate than the UK and lower only than Denmark and Sweden. However, as the full-time equivalent figures in Table 3 show, Dutch women work predominantly part-time; only Italy has a (slightly) lower full-time equivalent rate. Furthermore, large proportions of Dutch women work very short (under 20) part-time hours. There are also differences between countries in the extent to which women without children or with grown-up children are likely to engage in part-time work – in other words, the extent to which part-time work is the norm for women workers. Anxo et al.'s (2007) report on working time in European companies suggests that this seems to be the case in Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, but less so in Austria, Belgium, France, Italy and Luxembourg. These findings thus cast doubt over the extent to which part-time work is ever a bridge to full-time work in many countries; only 9 per cent of the companies surveyed offered full reversibility in working-time arrangements, from part-time to full-time and *vice versa*.

Table 3. Employment, full-time equivalent and part-time rates (15-64) by sex, 2006.

Category	Employment rate			FTE employment rate			Part-time employment rate		
	T	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W
EU-15	66.0	73.5	58.4	66.0	70.8	48.2	20.8	8.1	36.8
BE	61.0	67.9	54.0	55.8	66.9	45.2	22.2	7.4	41.1
DK	77.4	81.2	73.4	69.0	76.1	62.5	23.6	13.3	35.4
DE	67.2	72.8	61.5	57.8	69.4	46.5	25.8	9.3	45.8
IE	68.6	77.7	59.3	61.0	74.9	47.1	16.8	6.1	31.5
EL	61.0	74.6	47.4	59.9	74.6	45.4	5.7	2.9	10.2
ES	64.8	76.1	53.2	60.8	74.6	46.8	12.0	4.3	23.2
FR	63.0	68.5	57.7	58.4	66.7	50.7	17.2	5.7	30.6
IT	58.4	70.5	46.3	55.4	69.9	41.4	13.3	4.7	26.5
LU	63.6	72.6	54.6	59.7	73.5	46.1	17.1	2.6	36.2
NL	74.3	80.9	67.7	57.3	72.3	42.9	46.2	23.0	74.7

AT	70.2	76.9	63.5	61.0	72.6	49.9	21.8	6.5	40.2
PT	67.9	73.9	62.0	66.5	74.1	59.1	11.3	7.4	15.8
FI	69.3	71.4	67.3	66.2	69.5	62.9	14.0	9.3	19.2
SE	73.1	75.8	70.7	66.6	72.4	61.0	25.1	11.8	40.2
UK	71.5	77.3	65.8	61.9	73.0	51.7	25.5	10.6	42.6

Source: CEC (2007b), pp. 283-318

Note: The distinction between full-time and part-time work is based on self-response (except in the Netherlands, where part-time is determined if the usual hours are fewer than 35 hours, and in Sweden the same definition is applied to the self-employed). Part-time employment for Ireland data for 2004.

How far do these gender differences in working hours, particularly in part-time hours, actually matter for women? First, much depends on the other characteristics of this form of work. Ashiagbor (2006) has argued that there has been insufficient attention paid both to guaranteeing the conditions of such work, which has often remained 'precarious' despite the European 1997 Part-Time Work Directive 97/81 designed to improve its quality. In fact the position varies between countries. The Netherlands is distinguished by the security it affords part-time workers in terms of pro-rata pay and benefits, whereas in the UK, Manning and Petrongolo (2008) have shown the extent to which high levels of sexual segregation and poor wages are associated with part-time work (see also Corral and Isusi, 2005). However, van Oorschot (2004) has pointed out that temporary, stand-by and agency workers have not been so well protected in the Netherlands. In brief, part-time work and fixed-term contracts may often be combined with other job characteristics which renders them 'precarious' (Fudge and Owens, 2006).

Second, it depends in some measure as to how far part-time work (and other forms of unsocial hours) are 'voluntary'. According to the 2007 report on *Employment in Europe*, 'part-time work is largely voluntary' (CEC, 2007c, p.133). Not surprisingly, Table 4 shows that involuntary part-time work is much more often reported among women aged 25-49 in some countries than in others. Countries with a long history of full-time work for women (France and Finland) and where it is usual for women to work full-time (or not at all) – as in the Southern European countries – report high percentages of involuntary part-time work. These figures need to be linked to the proportions saying that they work part-time in order to carry out carework, which Table 4 shows are particularly high (for men as well as women) in the Netherlands and the UK (where care services have been relatively slow to develop), and low in Denmark and Portugal.[13] Thus in countries where women *expect* to work part-time and to care, the proportions reporting 'voluntary' part-time work are also high. Given the importance of cultural and institutional contexts, it may not be possible to treat such figures as the simple expression of preferences.

[13] The figure for Ireland is also low, but the data are unreliable and are certainly counter-intuitive.

Table 4. Percentage of part-time employees due to involuntary and family care reasons (25-49) by sex, 2007.

Category	Involuntary[1]			Family Care[2]		
	T	M	W	T	M	W
EU-15	22.5	40.1 u	19.7	38.7	9.0 u	43.5
BE	14.9	27.0	13.0	26.3	9.4	28.9
DK	17.2	16.1	17.5	13.0	:	15.8
DE	21.5	44.3 u	17.9	27.3	4.2 u	31.0
IE	2.1 u	:	1.6 u	5.6	:	6.3
EL	51.3	58.5	48.9	17.3	:	22.5
ES	33.8	41.7	32.5	23.2	2.5	26.6
FR	32.8	47.2 u	30.9	45.4	11.4 u	49.8
IT	39.3	61.9	34.8	33.7	1.9 u	40.1
LU	5.2 u	:	4.4 u	22.6	:	22.8
NL	5.0 u	10.8 u	4.0	59.8 u	28.8 u	64.8
AT	11.0	20.7	9.7	47.5	6.9 u	52.9
PT	49.4	46.6	50.4	7.1	:	9.4
FI	33.6	35.5	33.0	22.9	7.0 u	28.2
SE	27.1	33.4	25.7	34.9	13.2	39.6
UK	10.0	34.1	6.8	62.7	18.6	68.6

Source: Eurostat (2007), LFS series annual results
Notes: 'u' unreliable or uncertain data; ':' data not available
1. Involuntary part-time: those who declare that they work part-time because they are unable to find full-time work: 'Could not find a full-time job'
2. Family care: those who declare that they work part-time because they need to care for family members: 'Looking after children or incapacitated adults'.

Third, it is the gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work that underpin much of the gender inequality that can be observed in the labour market: a disproportionate number of women tend to work in low paid human service jobs. In 2005, just over 60 per cent of women in EU25 were employed in six sectors of activity, all related to the supply of market and public services. Sectoral concentration is lower for men: the six most important sectors accounted for 42 per cent of male workers (Franco, 2007). Dolado et al. (2003) have offered evidence as to the particularly high levels of sexual segregation in the labour markets of the Scandinavian countries. The large proportion of women in public sector employment and in paid carework in these countries contributes to this. In addition, Eurostat data for 2006 show that the gender pay gap in EU15 varies from a high of 21-22 per cent for the UK and Germany, to a low of 7 per cent in Belgium. In 2005, in Denmark and the Netherlands the gender pay gap was 18 per cent. The fact that in many countries substantial proportions of men of prime working age, who are also likely to be fathers, work long hours and are more likely to do other forms of atypical work may make it difficult for them to do care work. Women who work shorter hours are likely to take a disproportionate responsibility for this unpaid work. Fagan (2003) has argued that working overtime is a form of 'negative flexibility' because it does not improve work/life balance, even though male workers especially may welcome the possibility of extra hours that are more highly paid. However, research has shown that even in the absence of long working hours, fathers do not necessarily increase their share of

unpaid work (Crompton, 2006). Nevertheless, unless it is possible for men to opt to do carework it remains difficult to address the gendered divisions of unpaid and paid work that structure 'choices'.

5. GENDER AND SECURITY

The flexicurity strategy is premised on the idea that security can be derived from wages. The EU has long had a commitment to equal pay, but the flexicurity policy strategy has had little to say about the need to address women's inferior structural position in the labour market, which is due in part to their markedly greater flexibility, particularly as part-time workers, which is in turn linked strongly to their responsibility for carework. Together with workplace-based discrimination,[14] this results in the high levels of sexual segregation and substantial gender pay gap which diminish the security that women are able to derive from wages. Sigle-Rushton and Waldfogel's (2006) analysis of Luxembourg Income Study data show that the cumulative earnings (to age 45) of the mothers of one or two children, born when the mothers were in their late 20s, are lowest relative to non-mothers for German, Dutch and UK women, and lowest relative to those of men in Germany and the Netherlands. While the Netherlands has the largest proportion of women part-timers, the pay gap figure is much lower than for Germany and the UK, which also have high part-time employment figures for women, because of the security afforded this group of workers in the Netherlands **[**a relatively high proportion of Dutch men also work part-time].

Nevertheless, women working short part-time hours in the Netherlands or in one of the recently created German 'mini-jobs' cannot secure an independent subsistence (Keller and Seifert, 2004). In the Netherlands, one third of less well-educated women work less than 12 hours (van Oorschot, 2004). Women's flexibility often comes at the price of sexual segregation, poor pay and career prospects, as the 2007 *Employment in Europe* Report acknowledges (CEC, 2007c). Economic autonomy at the level enjoyed by men remains far from the grasp of most women.

The flexicurity strategy emphasises the importance of policies aimed to increase the individual's attachment to the labour market and to enable a shift from job to employment security, which becomes more crucial as job protection lessens and there is more movement between jobs over the lifecourse. In particular, two forms of policies to promote security have been put forward: labour market activation and life long learning. Women's greater number of transitions in and out of work and higher unemployment rates in all EU15 countries except the UK (CEC, 2007c, Statistical Annex) make such support particularly important. However, the limited comparable data available (CEC, 2008; Melis, 2007) show that men benefit somewhat more from activation

[14] Using US data, Correll et al. (2007) have shown the overwhelming importance of workplace-based discrimination against mothers.

'measures'[15] than women. Many Member States work with a narrower definition that focuses on activating the unemployed and those drawing state benefits (see Clasen and Clegg (2006) on definitions of activation). For example, in both the UK and the Netherlands, there has, since the mid-1990s, been a strong focus on increasing the employment rates of lone mothers, using reforms to both the benefit structure and specific activation policies (van Drenth et al., 1999; Knijn et al., 2007). Thus in the UK in 2007, the Government announced its intention to introduce a work obligation for lone mothers with children over 12 years of age in 2008 and for those with children over 7 in 2010 (DWP, 2007). But definitions of activation rarely capture the position of women who have exited the labour market, often in order to do unpaid carework, and who are classified as non-active. From their analysis of the National Reform Programmes in relation to the EES, Rubery et al. (2006) concluded that gender mainstreaming was rather uneven and narrow in terms of activation policies. Using national level data, Hansen (2007) has shown that in Denmark the *effect* of (as opposed to access to) activation programmes on women's employability is lower than on men's. Nevertheless, Bergemann and van den Berg's (2006) review of studies of the effects of active labour market policies have concluded that they have positive employment outcomes for women, but especially in economies with relatively low labour market participation (which excludes Denmark). With regard to involvement in life-long learning (which is defined broadly in the European Labour Force Survey as the percentage of those aged 25-64 who reported participating in any form of education or training in the four weeks prior to the survey date) women tend to do somewhat better than men, considerably so in Denmark, Finland and the UK.[16] But women's greater number of transitions in and out of the labour market and low status, part-time, low paid work mean that they are likely to have less access to workplace based training (OECD, 2003).

The evidence offered in the previous section suggests that women's disproportionate responsibility for carework is fundamental to explaining both their apparently greater flexibility in respect of part-time work and fixed-term contracts, and inferior labour market position. This points to the need for specific attention to what Wilthagen et al. (2003) called 'combination security', and to the structural determinants of inequality as well as supply-side policies (see also Jenson, 2008). While most flexicurity documents make some reference to the importance of access to childcare services, little attention has been paid to what kind of work-family balance policy package is necessary, or to policies that reach men as well as women.

Two policies have been particularly important in the recent history of state intervention in this field in Europe: parental leave, which provides time to care, and childcare services, which provide time to work. Parental leave policy is a good example of the way in

[15] Activation 'measures' are defined in terms of participants in training, job rotation and sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, job creation projects and start-up incentives. Eurostat also provides data on labour market policies that provide financial 'support', and which provide 'services' related to job-search.

[16] The high figure for the UK women is surprising given the extent of part-time and low paid, low skilled employment.

which policy goals have changed in accordance with the general trajectory promoted by the flexicurity strategy. For example, in Germany, when parental leave was introduced in 1986, the main policy outcome was, in keeping with traditional attitudes towards the contributions that are considered appropriate for men and women in families, that mothers were enabled to leave the labour market for a long period, particularly, as it turned out, low income, married mothers. For in the past, parental leave policies were conceptualised in most continental European countries as a way for mothers above all to be able to choose to exit the labour market for a specified period to care for young children (Koopmans et al., 2005). However, recent policy reform in Germany has changed parental leave such that it now promotes relatively rapid return to the labour market, and has also focused much more on the provision of childcare services (Evers et al., 2005). The OECD (2007) and the Commission (CEC, 2003) have suggested for some years that long leaves to care have held back the growth of women's labour supply.[17]

Parental leave tends to be popular and is also important for the welfare of infants, but is taken primarily by women and is usually seen by policymakers as a policy providing reconciliation for women. In regard to gender equality, it is crucial to consider the effects of parental leave on women's labour market position and, relatedly, how far leave is also taken by fathers. There is a growing consensus that long leaves to care have adverse effects on mothers' pay, on the gender wage gap and on gender segregation (Ruhm, 1998; Evans, 2002; Nyberg, 2004). Galtry and Callister (2005) recommended that to meet the demand for gender equality, to achieve higher labour market participation, and improvements in children's welfare it would be best if the mother took six months leave, followed by the father for a further six months. Furthermore, for successful re-entry to work after a period of leave, mothers require *job* protection, which is usually weak for those taking long homecare leaves (which are also poorly compensated).

The duration of parental leave and the compensation offered are the most important determinants of the decision to take leave, particularly for fathers, but whether the leave can be taken flexibly (in blocks of time, spread over the pre-school years, and/or on a part-time basis), whether it is an individual entitlement for men and for women, and whether there is a right to return to the same job or only a similar job, are also very important, with somewhat different implications for mothers and fathers (Moss and Wall, 2007; Plantenga and Remery, 2005). Only the Scandindavian countries have introduced a specific period of 'daddy leave', usually lasting one or two months, but in Denmark, a two week 'daddy quota' of leave introduced in 1998 was abolished by a Right-of-centre government in 2002, on the grounds that it interfered in the private affairs of families (Borchorst, 2006). This was a dubious argument given the 'use it or lose it' nature of 'daddy leave': the measure does not 'force' men to take care leave. Nevertheless, Gupta et al. (2008) have argued that the Nordic model tends to create a 'system-based glass ceiling' in

[17] Of course, contract workers (particularly numerous in Spain) and self-employed workers (particularly numerous in Greece) often have only limited rights to paid childcare leaves of any kind.

part because of the extent to which women are able to take time to care (see also Smith, 2003). In the Netherlands, a relatively high proportion (still only 19 per cent) of men take parental leave, which is explained largely by the high rates of compensation (75 per cent) enjoyed by men who take leave in the public sector. The UK has the longest (12 months) maternity leave of any EU15 country, although it is proposed to make six months of this transferable to fathers. However, the low rate of compensation makes the prospect of high take-up unlikely.

The main emphasis in both flexicurity and recent EES documents has been on the provision of childcare services, in terms of their availability, with increasing emphasis on affordability. Reference to the importance of securing quality has been rather rare. While the vast majority of older pre-school children have access to childcare and/or early years education in EU15 Member States (Ireland and Greece are exceptions), the proportion of under 3s in formal care is particularly high only in Denmark (62 per cent), with the only other countries recording percentages higher than 30 being Sweden and Belgium. Danish children also spend relatively long hours in formal childcare: the qualifications of childcare workers and the quality of settings are high. OECD data show that the costs of childcare to parents are low in the Nordic countries, and that they moderate the negative impact of high marginal effective tax rates (OECD, 2007). In these countries, a parent can be described as 'a thief of one's own wallet' if s/he does not use childcare and enter paid work (*ibid*: 160). In contrast, the costs to UK parents are shown to be extremely high compared to other EU15 Member States (Ireland excepted).

The Danish model in particular emphasises affordable, available and high quality childcare, which does enable mothers to secure high employment rates in full-time or long, part-time jobs. However, such a solution is costly (Boeri et al, 2005, OECD, 2007, Gupta et al., 2008). Denmark spends 1.6 per cent of GDP on childcare services, compared with 0.5 per cent in the Netherlands and 0.6 per cent in the UK. Policies to secure gender equal contributions at the level of the household to unpaid work are a cheaper option, but have not been systematically pursued.

Informal care by both parents and other kin is important in the vast majority of EU15 countries. Using European Social Survey data, Lewis et al. (2008) have shown that grandparents (more often grandmothers) are a highly significant source of childcare everywhere (overwhelmingly so in Greece), except Sweden, Denmark and France. In the first two of these last three countries, a particularly high proportion of women aged 55-64 (67 and 54 per cent respectively) are in employment. This is important given that flexicurity policy documents have supported the more general EU-level insistence that employment rates for older women as well as men should rise. The Danish and Swedish experience suggests that this would necessitate much greater provision of formal care to keep prime age women in the workforce, which requires much higher public expenditure. According to Bettio and Plantenga's (2004) index of the intensity of informal care (for dependent children and elderly people) using 1996 European Community Household Panel data, informal care is most intense in the Netherlands and the UK and lightest in Finland and Denmark, and also in France and Portugal.

Carework has to be done, and the care needs of elderly people will increase substantially in the near future. It is not clear how many Member States will be able to afford the Danish model, which means that greater consideration must be given both to adequate compensation for informal care work, and to the promotion of more sharing of this work between men and women if gender equality is to remain a policy goal.

6. CONCLUSION

The flexicurity policy documents make little mention of gender and do not specify measures of gender equality. The tendency has been to assume that the rise in women's employment rates signifies increasing gender equality and greater economic independence. But these cannot be assumed, and nor are the policies advocated as part of a flexicurity package sufficient to ensure adequate progress towards them, focusing as they do on supply-side policies that are designed in the main to enhance human capital and re-balance rights and responsibilities in welfare states. The flexicurity policy strategy does not address institutional and structural barriers to greater equality in the labour market.

The two countries held up as exemplars of high flexibility and high security both have high female employment rates, but are very different in terms of the position of women in relation to paid and unpaid work. The Danish model relies on, above all, high public spending on services and offers more to women by way of equality in the labour market, although there are problems of sexual segregation and career progression. Furthermore, as Ellingsaeter and Leira's (2006) analysis of gender equality in the Nordic countries shows, only in Sweden are men as well as women given substantial encouragement to do unpaid work.

The Netherlands has relied much more on the creation of atypical work for women, much of which has been made secure in terms of pro-rata pay and benefits. Visser (2002) has argued that the Dutch one-and-a-half earner model was built from the bottom-up and enjoys considerable popular support (something the attitudinal data also suggests), but voluntary inequality may still be a matter for policy. Should women in particular be 'allowed' to make the choice to do care work rather than paid work if it disadvantages them financially? For example, mothers may choose to stay at home to care for children without realising the extent to which this will impose costs in terms of their career advancement and pension entitlements. Should government merely applaud such altruism (which may not be fully understood at the time by mothers themselves), seek to inform the choice, or compensate mothers for it? It is surely problematic to do the first without attempting either the second or third of these. In addition, what should be done about the fact that men's choice not to do care work constrains women's choice to do paid work? The flexicurity strategy does not address these difficult questions, but if modern welfare systems increase the expectation that all individuals, male and female, will become more self-provisioning, they will become more pressing.

The temptation for governments to treat men and women as though they are already individualised in the sense of economically independent citizen workers is strong and is likely to carry

with it a greater emphasis on more individualised, cash-based social policies. Thus the Dutch Life Course Savings Scheme (LCSS), introduced in 2006, which may be used to fund periods of unpaid leave, such as parental leave or early retirement, provides a good example of the problems of treating men and women as if they are equally individualised workers, equipped to choose when to move in and out of the labour market. Male and female workers can save 12 per cent of their wages per year up to 210 per cent of their last earned salary in order to take time out of the labour market (Delsen and Smits, 2007; Maier et al., 2007). However, the low-paid are highly unlikely to be able to save 12 per cent of their wages per year and those working part-time will probably not join the scheme. In addition, it is unlikely that sufficient savings can be accumulated quickly enough to finance a period of parental leave; (male) savings for early retirement (which runs counter to the desire to lengthen working lives) are a more realistic prospect. Such a policy highlights the significance of both the pathway chosen to achieve flexicurity and the policy instruments that are used. The EU level documents have eschewed prescription, but from the point of view of achieving gender equality as opposed to a policy confined to increasing female employment rates, the Danish focus on services is crucial to address some of structural barriers to women's labour market participation. Policies that assume that women and men have an equal capacity for individualisation are particularly problematic.

Flexicurity aims to improve both labour market access and job quality. Women have often secured access to the labour market via flexible jobs. In addition, non-standard careers and working days may serve to call into question the traditional male careers and working patterns, but it seems that the way in which flexibility is gendered threatens to exacerbate the patterns of sexual segregation and unequal pay that already exist. Carework, which is everywhere typical service work for women, is low paid,[18] and no country has found a way of offering much by way of even adequate compensation for informal care work. It is crucial that policies to promote gender inequality in the workplace and the issues raised by responsibility for care work be addressed by the flexicurity strategy.

[18] For example, see England et al's. (2002) analysis of the pay of childcare workers.

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CHAPTER 5

WELFARE STATE, GENDER, AND RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY IN POLAND: POLICY DEVELOPMENTS AND PRACTICE

Ania Plomien

In the context of welfare state change and EU and national debates on activation, this paper engages in a systematic analysis of reconciliation of work and family policies in Poland since the fall of socialism, and their outcomes for men and women regarding participation in paid work and unpaid care. The developments in childcare services, maternity and parental leaves, and parent-friendly employment show that the post-socialist state bears strong tensions between motherhood and employment and does not provide incentives for fathers to participate in the caring labour. Reconciliation of work and care appears challenging for mothers and fathers alike, but the nature of the problem differs - men face obstacles to greater involvement in family and women in work. In terms of EU prescriptions in this area, Poland is far from achieving Barcelona targets for the provision of childcare services. Regarding leave arrangements it complies with EU legislation and generally does not stand out among other member states, but lags behind the states that provide special arrangements for fathers. And finally, the organisation of the labour market and flexible forms of employment seem less relevant for the Polish context than in several West European countries. Although participation in the Lisbon Strategy has proven important for raising the visibility of reconciliation policies on the political agenda in Poland, employment rate goals remain distant and recent policy reforms have been modest, and have not transcended the traditional view of gender roles in the division of paid and unpaid labour.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mainstream welfare state scholarship, focusing on the relationship between paid work and welfare and classifying advanced democracies into three or four distinct regimes (e.g. Titmuss 1974; Esping-Andersen 1990; Leibfried 1992; Ferrera 1996), has spurred a feminist critique which pointed out that its state-market dimension lacks sufficient attention to women, family and care, and that welfare and gender regimes do not cluster in the same ways (e.g. Lewis 1992; O'Connor 1993; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1999). Welfare state modelling has been applied to the Central East European (CEE) countries, although post-socialism has been 'an era of socio-economic experimentation in which *all* forms of "welfare system" are being considered and to some extent tried' (Standing 1996: 225; original emphasis). The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland have thus been categorised as social democratic, liberal capitalist, and post-communist conservative corporatist (respectively) (Deacon 1993), grouped together as fast reformers (World Bank 1996), moving towards conservative corporatism (Nielsen 1996), supporting liberal strategies (UNDP 1999), combining elements of Bismarckian and Scandinavian solutions (Deacon 2000), forming a distinct group from Western Europe (Manning 2004), and clustering together with or separately from the old European Union (EU) countries (Ferreira and Figueiredo 2005). A gender sensitive analysis has classified the CEE states as different from the Nordics but still dual-earner models (Pascall and Manning 2002; Pascall and Kwak 2005), as subject to refamilialization or retraditionalization (Watson 1993; Pascall and Manning 2000; Hantrais 2004; Pascall and Lewis 2004; Pascall and Kwak 2005), or as exemplars of several types of childcare

provision (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008).

These studies have demonstrated that welfare state types shift according to variables, dimensions and methods used; and that the omission of the relationship between paid and unpaid labour paints an incomplete picture of the production and consumption of welfare based on gendered division of paid and unpaid labour. Consequently, this paper does not develop yet another welfare state typology, but focuses instead on a systematic analysis of a subset of state policies in a specific country, and places it in a wider context. Namely, it examines recent changes and trends in reconciliation of work and family policies in Poland – a post-socialist new EU member state – and the extent to which reforms reflect EU prescriptions in the field. This focus leads to an understanding of developments taking place at the policy level and tracing their outcomes for men and women regarding paid work and unpaid care.

The processes of transformation and EU membership have exposed CEE states to challenges facing mature welfare systems. At the EU level the pressures of globalisation, technological development, and demographic change have reinforced the need to modernise social security systems and achieve *active* welfare states (e.g. CEC 2000, 2003, 2005a/b; EC 2000). In effect, employment friendly reforms – such as activation, flexicurity, or reconciliation – have moved to the top of the debate. This stress on paid work is particularly relevant to women. Although over the last few decades female employment across Europe has grown steadily, the 'huge potential of women in the labour market remains to be fully exploited' (CEC 2005b: 26) and policy efforts support this. In 2000, the EU has set employment targets for the year 2010 to reach 70 percent overall and 60 percent for women (EC 2000). Because of women's responsibility for family and household work, the emphasis on employment makes reconciliation policies even more pertinent to the division of paid and unpaid labour and the tension between work and care. Such policies include: childcare services, maternity and parental leaves, parent-friendly organisation of work, and mechanisms encouraging the sharing of paid and unpaid labour between women and men (Council of EC 1992).

In this context, the concept of *decommodification* (Esping-Andersen 1990) gives way to *defamilialization* (Lister 1997; Esping Andersen 1999; Leitner 2003) depicting the extent to which adults can maintain a decent standard of living independently of family relationships, and to *commodification* for women (Orloff 1993). The tensions between work and care and the gender inequality related to it, and thus the significance of reconciliation of work and family life policies, have become particularly evident in the post-socialist countries. While West European states have witnessed a decline of the male breadwinner model and support an individualised adult worker arrangements (Lewis 2001, 2002), an opposite trend has been occurring in the CEE region. The socialist system maintained policies of full employment, where a dual earner model was the norm; after the fall of socialism, measures enabling the combination of work and care have been withdrawn (e.g. Einhorn 1993; Pascall and Manning 2000; Pascall and Kwak 2005; Pollert 2005; Plomien 2006) with implications on parental choices surrounding work and care.

Policy mixes of care services and leaves which support family care or shift this function to the public sphere, have resulted in four variations in EU15

countries ranging from explicit, implicit, and optional familialism to de-familialism (Leitner 2003). Similarly, in eight CEE countries childcare services and leaves have been examined with a view to facilitate access to paid work and categorised into explicit or implicit familialism and female mobilizing or comprehensive support models (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008). Overall, the four worlds of defamilialization in the East and the West are based on similar principles, where the organisation of services and leaves portrays to what extent the structural environment supports particular care arrangements with implications for women's and men's employment. However, these studies do not examine the situation of women and men in the labour market, and thus do not assess the degree of defamilialization against commodification. This paper, therefore, takes defamilialization as a departure point for an analysis of reconciliation policies in Poland, that is, childcare services, leave arrangements, and organisation of work in the context of the position of women and men in the labour market. It begins with a brief review of the socialist support for the dual earner model and what has happened to it after the 1989 transition, pointing out the most relevant issues regarding paid and unpaid work. It then considers reforms in the three policy areas, with attention to policy output and outcome, as well as the extent to which they fit with EU prescriptions.

2. THE FALL OF SOCIALISM AND THE WORK-CARE NEXUS

The socialist welfare states are known for comprehensive provision of benefits based on principles of full employment, job guarantees, work related privileges, institutionalised care, state funded health care and education, price subsidies and low income disparity. Despite these and the proclamation of egalitarian ideals and high levels of female work activation, they have not achieved gender equality in public or private spheres. Poland fits within these broad welfare state contours. By the mid seventies public childcare services covered nearly 50 percent of children between 3 and 6 years old, but just under five percent of those under three (GUS 1975). Maternity and parental leaves and benefits were introduced in 1924 and 1968, respectively, but were directed at women and only from 1974 and 1981 granted partial rights to fathers when the mother was incapable of providing care herself. The duration of maternity ranged between 16 and 26 weeks (depending on the type and order of birth) with 100 percent remuneration, while the one year parental leave was extended to three years in 1972 and was unpaid until 1981 when a means test was applied (Wóycicka *et al.* 2003). Childcare services and leaves were complemented by other state and work benefits, which further facilitated reconciliation of women's roles as mothers and workers. Fertility rates, ranging from 3.7 in 1950 to 2.13 in 1988 (GUS 2007b), have remained above the replacement level throughout the socialist period.

But, while the state encouraged reproduction and employment, it fluctuated between viewing women as primarily workers or carers, and did not encourage men to share unpaid labour (Piotrowski 1963; Łobodzinska 2000). Unsurprisingly, the growth in female labour force participation was accompanied by gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work. The employment rate of working age women reached 74 percent in 1970 (compare with 62 percent of women in total, and 79.9 percent of men), and as

proportion of the workforce has grown from 30.6 percent in1950 to 45.5 percent in 1990 (GUS 1975, 2003, 2007a; Kurzynowski 1986) approaching thus a dual earner model, especially as part-time rates were only 5 percent (Dach 1976). But, women's full-time work and high educational levels did not overcome inequality in positions of authority or income with a 20 to 40 percent gender pay gap (Hauser *et al.* 1993; Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk 2000). At the household level, men tended to spend more time than women in paid employment, but much less in unpaid housework and childcare. In 1984 men spent on average 51.9 hours a week on paid and unpaid labour, while women as much as 59.8 hours (UN 1991). Thus, state policies have activated a large share of women, although not without tensions between reproductive and productive labour.

During the transition to market democracy the economic, political, and social system was overhauled, changing the structural environment in which women and men negotiate work and care. First, there have been significant changes in the labour market of falling employment and rising unemployment. Among the population of 15 years of age and older between 1988 and 1992 male employment decreased from 74.3 to 70 percent, and that of women from 57 to 54.2 percent; whereas unemployment rates officially non-existent during socialism have reached 6.5 percent in 1990, with higher rates for women (7.1 percent) than men (5.8 percent) (GUS 1995, 2004, 2007a). Second, the growth of market competition and the private sector aroused fears that women's problematic relationship with paid work will exacerbate their disadvantage. Indeed, studies and labour inspections have documented preferences for males in job adverts, women have been asked more often than men about having children in job interviews, and job offers have been made conditional on relinquishing the right to childcare leave or on the supply of a medical certificate stating they were not pregnant (PIP 2000; Kolaczek 2001). And finally, the fall of the GDP by 18 percent between 1988 and 1992 (reported in Jackman and Rutkowski 1994) has mounted a substantial challenge to social provision. Albeit the financial support for children has decreased only slightly, where in 1995 benefits were at 97 percent of 1989 values (Pascall and Manning 2000), institutional provision of childcare has been cut dramatically (as shown in table 1 below). To what extent have recent policies resolved the dilemma of, on the one hand, competing interests and limited resources, and, on the other, of the mounting internal and external pressure to improve reconciliation of work and care?

3. CHILDCARE SERVICES

Provision of good quality and affordable childcare facilitates maternal employment (Fagan and Rubery 1997; O'Connor *et al.* 1999; OECD 2007). This is recognised at the EU level with *childcare provision targets* to accommodate 90 percent of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and 33 percent of children under 3 years of age by the year 2010 (EC 2002). Recent policy debates in Poland highlight child development and social inclusion goals as well as to mothers' ability to reconcile work and care. Low fertility rates (1.26 in 2006 – GUS 2007b) and demographic ageing reinforce these objectives further. As table 1 illustrates, there has been a diminishing tendency in the provision of nursery facilities and coverage for

children below the age of three, while for the three to five year olds coverage has grown, and for the six year olds it has been practically universal.

In Poland the state has been the main provider of care facilities, as in 2006/7 more than 95 percent of nurseries were run by public authorities, as for preschools 85 percent were operated by self-governments, less than six percent by civil society organisations, and below 10 percent by the private sector (based on GUS 2007a/c). The role of employers has been negligible – only about 2.1 percent of firms provide services and 3.2 percent assist in financing costs (Kotowska *et al.* 2007). In some areas local administrations offer preschool facilities for six year olds only and do not cater to younger children (NIK 2004). Indeed, an overview[19] of media reports confirms the shortage of services in public and private sectors alike. Public authorities justify this by limited resources and insufficient demand, whereas legal regulations governing the organisation of care constitute a substantial barrier to the set-up of new institutions and limit market response. The care-gap is thus often filled by grandparents, as a third of working women use their help (MPiPS 2006) with implications for active ageing goals and the extension of the work-care tensions to later life.

[19] Articles and childcare centred websites accessed on 18 March 2008, including: Gazeta Wyborcza, Fundacja Rozwoju Dzieci, Polityka, PiS Parliamentary Club, Przedszkola, Przedszkolak, Wiadomosci24.

Table 1. Childcare facilities and the coverage of children (%) in 1990-2007, by age

Category	Nursery facilities[1]	Children in nurseries (%)	Preschool facilities	Children in preschools (%)	
		<3		3-5	6
1990/1	1 412	4.2	25 873	29.5	95.2
1995/6	591	2.3	20 618	27.2	97.3
2000/1	428	2.1	18 003	32.7	97.2
2006/7	371	2.3	17 329	44.6	97.4

Source: GUS 2000 and 2007a

1: There are also 'nursery sections' attached to pre-schools: 96 in 1995, 168 in 2000, 130 in 2005, and 125 in 2006 (GUS 2007a), the column on children in nurseries includes these facilities.

One of the factors behind the low use of services is affordability. Fees are the main source of financing childcare and the estimated[20] cost of a place in nursery as proportion of net minimum wage is 24-35 percent in a public and 120-200 percent in a non-public facility; while as a proportion of net average wage this is 10-14 percent and 46-79 percent, respectively. The cost of preschool care as a proportion of minimum wage is 24 percent for a public and 24-100 percent for a non-public service; while as a proportion of average wage it is about 10 percent and 10-40 percent, respectively[21]. Therefore, services are expensive to low earners and when children are very young. Although parents have a right to up to five hours of free preschool education per child between three and five years of age (Dz. U. z 1996), this is not widely used because of low awareness, prioritising children who use services on a paid-full-day basis, and the right of refusal by preschool administrators when facilities are full (przedszkola.edu.pl). Thus, limited access to services suggest that making a choice between care and participation in the labour market is restricted, especially for low income mothers.

These structural factors are relevant to the interpretation of attitudinal surveys. On the one hand the majority of Poles (70 percent) think that the state is responsible for families and the provision of affordable care facilities is important to reconciliation (41 percent) (CBOS 2006). On the other

[20] Based on a survey of advertisements of fees (excluding registration and charges for extra-curricular activities) relative to minimum and average wage (MPiPS and GUS websites) accessed 18.03.2008.

[21] Some privatised / non-public facilities charge low fees due subsidies based on continuation of standards.

hand, there is a split between the support for traditional breadwinner (42 percent) and a partnership (38 percent) family model (CBOS 2000) and a preference for care of young children by mothers at home (36 percent until the age of three, and 22 percent until mandatory school age), while fathers play a marginal role (CBOS 1998). These findings indicate that family care solutions are favoured. However, a recent study of inactive women suggests that only 3 percent believe that women with children should not work (MPiPS 2006). High costs, diminished number of facilities, inflexibility in opening times and quality[22], and the weak labour market position of women all modify the preference for home care. Indeed, about 22 percent of women availing of parental leave decide to shorten it when other forms of care became available (MPiPS 2006) and parents indicate that the work-family conflict can be minimised by convenient location, lower fees, or flexible opening times (Muczynski and Zynel 2007).

The problem of insufficient childcare provision has entered the political debate, although attention to the issue has been uneven and policy developments modest. The Family Policy Project (PPR 2007) for 2007-2014 developed by the conservative-populist government (in power 2005-07) and in-part continued by the current centrist-liberal administration, together with Poland's participation in the Lisbon Strategy through the Employment and Social Inclusion processes, as well as the use of the European Social Fund (ESF) have all contributed to the visibility of childcare issues. Policy documents relate the limited availability of services to social exclusion, inequality in educational opportunities of children, labour market difficulties of women, and low levels of fertility. Nevertheless, policy proposals have not been consistent.

There has been some progress in developing alternative preschools in rural areas, functioning several times per week for several hours per day and encouraging parental involvement. By the end of March 2008 about 800 such preschools have been set up, funded largely from the ESF and benefiting more than ten thousand children (MEN 2008). Although positive, these results have been modest in covering less than one percent of children in the three to five age category and addressing the goals of social inclusion and equalising educational opportunities, rather than improving work and family reconciliation. The inadequacy of policy effort in childcare provision has come to the fore within the OMC process. In December 2007 the European Commission issued a 'point to watch' to Poland on the provision of childcare, to which the Polish side responded with further plans to increase access to alternative preschools. To make their establishment easier, the Ministry of Education has reduced the formal requirements (e.g. on space and accommodation), keeping their educational function unchanged (based on MEN 2008). In addition, a tax-deduction for employing a nanny is being considered (ZDS PRM 2008). But, these reforms do not promise a sudden improvement in the provision of services. They pave the way for private and market solutions to care without pledging public involvement and are thus unlikely to bridge the gap between national levels and EU targets in the near future.

More promising in terms of state involvement and the potential to lift

[22] Flexibility and quality is an issue; preschools tend to open for 10 hours/ day (7:00-17:00 or 8:00-18:00), posing difficulties for parents with working times spanning beyond opening hours; also facility and staff deficits create overcrowding and prompt shift organisation of care.

some of the care burden from families is the proposal to lower mandatory preschool age from six to five, and the school age from seven to six. The reform has been considered by the previous conservative-populist coalition, but has been abandoned with justifications of insufficient resources and other priorities, but also with an ideological argument that the care of children should be a family matter. A change of government has come with a change of ideology with implementation planned over a six-year period, beginning in September 2009 (MEN 2008). The policy rhetoric is still to improve access to early childhood education and thus diminish educational differences between children from urban and rural areas. This reform, however, may also improve the ability of parents to reconcile work with family as children would begin their compulsory education a year sooner than so far, freeing thus time and money spent on care and facilitating an earlier return to the labour market for mothers who did not return to it after parental leave.

4. MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

The availability of maternity and parental leave can contribute to employment rates (Fagan and Rubery 1997; O'Connor *et al.* 1999), although long leaves have a negative impact on women's pay and career prospects (see Galtry and Callister 2005; OECD 2007), and the lack of incentives for fathers make it a measure mainly for mothers (Bruning and Plantenga 1999). EU laws on time to care include the *Pregnant Workers Directive* (92/85/EEC) with a minimum length of maternity leave of 14 weeks and job protection measures; and the *Framework Agreement on Parental Leave* (96/34/EC) granting individual entitlement to parental leave to men and women for at least three months and job protection. In Poland, in 1989 maternity leave and benefits provided for 16 weeks on the birth of the first child at 100 percent of salary and remained stable until 1999. After this date reforms were implemented by each successive government, with the tendency of the Right to extend the leave thereby reinforcing women's roles as mothers, and the Left to shorten it and thus aiming at quick re-integration into employment. The current administration continues with reforms to eventually grant 26 weeks for the first child and 39 in case of a multiple birth (ZDS PRM 2008). Importantly, these reforms took place outside of the context of the directive as the minimum 14-week core period has always been included well within bounds of existing stipulations. Despite all the changes, maternity leave policy has always assumed women as mothers first and workers second, while the opposite has been true for men. The mother must take at least 14 weeks of the leave, and the rest *may* be transferred to the father, who must apply in writing for the unused portion, and upon agreement from his employer the mother may return to her job. Thus, maternity is unquestionable in its own right, while paternity is conditional on mother's declining a portion of her own leave and the coordination of the respective employment arrangements.

Parental leave and benefits show a similar gender bias as the policy makers have assumed mothers as beneficiaries, and only in 1996 the left-wing government extended them to men. Several years later the legal framing in the Labour Code was aligned with the *Parental Leave Directive* as it evolved from emphasising the rights of

female workers as primary carers and generalising them to men only in the last paragraph (in force until 2003) to phrasing parental rights in a gender neutral way (as of 2004). But, aside from this linguistic change, the regulations have not encouraged paternal involvement. Either of the parents has the right to this leave, which can be taken together for up to three months, but there is no period that is reserved for each of the parents. The leave is unpaid, but subject to a means tested supplement which in 2004 has been set at a low threshold of about 25 percent of an average pay per family member, the benefit level at about 17 percent of an average pay, and contributions to social security schemes are made from the state budget set at flat rate of about 16 percent of average pay (based on MPiPS).[23] As such the system supports low income families rather than compensates workers for lost wages, and is, therefore, unattractive to high income earners more likely to be male.

Consequently, the take-up of parental leave has been far from universal and the declining trend reflects gender and class differences. In the period between 1993 and 2000 there has been a drop in persons taking parental leave from 366,100 to 138,800 and only about 2 percent of fathers use parental leave in comparison with nearly 50 percent of mothers (MPiPS 2006; Kotowska *et al.* 2007), albeit often the leave is not taken in full – just under 40 percent of women do so between two and three years (MPiPS 2006). Furthermore, the use of leave is related to educational and occupational status and to the possibility of claiming the benefit - nearly 70 percent of mothers availing of parental leave draw benefits (Kotowska *et al*. 2007). These trends have been ascribed partially to the decrease in the number of births, but also to the fear of losing employment and low benefits (MPiPS 2006; Kotowska *et al*. 2007).

The system discourages thus equal sharing of care between families with different socio-economic profiles and between women and men. Consequently, a long and generous leave has not worked well in the socio-economic context of tight labour market conditions and mostly maternal take-up. Leave arrangements *per se* do not lend themselves to straightforward interpretation of either enabling maternal employment or supporting maternal care as regulations prove contradictory. On the one hand the disadvantaged set up and the low level of contributions to the social security system in relation to active workers, proposals to lift employers' requirement of social security contributions for parents returning from leaves, and the promotion of flexible employment (discussed below) all suggests a push for paid work. On the other hand, the loss of benefit upon (even marginal) employment or placing a child in a care facility, the lack of investment in childcare services or in-work benefits, or recent discourse aiming to make a

[23] Regulations of parental leave based on MPiPS website (accessed 18. 03. 2008); benefits and contributory base set at nominal levels and relation to average pay calculated by the author and should be interpreted with caution as the respective levels may not change simultaneously.

better use of parental leave pull parents in the opposite direction.

A more encompassing leave application to fathers may help to ease inequalities, but the extension of leave rights to men has not been unproblematic. For example, the interpretations of leave in relation to fathers have not always been consistent and in many cases men have been denied the leave altogether (PIP 2000; Wichrowska-Janikowska 2000). These difficulties are exacerbated by the lack of incentives for fathers in the form of a reserved period of leave or benefit, and by cultural factors. The low incidence of fathers participating in childcare responsibilities is ascribed to attitudes of employers and employees alike. According to a trade union official, employers do not support men's take-up of parental leave, while co-workers treat such arrangements with ridicule and humour. The problematic policy assumptions in organising maternity, paternity, and parental leaves are also relevant for work organisation, discussed next.

5. FAMILY FRIENDLY ORGANISATION OF WORK

The ability of parents to reconcile work with care is influenced by workplace practices. Working long hours has been associated with a strong family-work conflict, where reduced working time of parents in full- or part-time jobs may ease this tension and increase women's employment (O'Reilly and Fagan 1998; OECD 2007). However, part-time work is problematic because of lower hourly earnings, worse job quality, less access to employment benefits, or limited career prospects (O'Reilly and Fagan 1998; Hurley 2006). EU level regulations in this regard include the *Working Time Directive* (93/104/EC) which has set a 48-hour maximum working week and at least four-week paid annual leave. Although the Directive's main objective was to promote health and safety at work, working time regulations have clear implications for reconciling work and family life. Also, the *Framework Agreement on Part-time Work* (97/81/EC) has aimed to eliminate discrimination against part-time workers.

As mentioned above, the labour market situation in Poland has been difficult, although in the recent years it has improved, especially since 2004, with rising employment and falling unemployment rates (see table 2). But, changes have been more favourable to men and as a result, the proportion of women among the registered unemployed has grown from 51.2 to 58.2 percent between 2002 and 2007 (MPiPS 2008). The average gender pay gap in Poland is not as high as in most EU countries, but at 12 percent (Eurostat LFS) it is still a problem. Similarly, women are not equally represented in positions of power and decision making as they comprise only 35.2 percent of managers (CEC 2008a). Therefore, the position of women in the labour market has improved in absolute terms, but it remains weaker relative to men. In the context of different relationship of women and men with paid and unpaid labour, there is a wide gap between the *de jure* provisions for reconciling work and family life and the *de facto* situation reflecting tensions between the two spheres. For example, 20 percent of women on parental leave cut it short due to work insecurity (MPiPS 2006).

Table 2. Employment, part-time and unemployment rates (15-64) in 1997-2007, by sex

Category	Employment			Unemployment[1]			Part-time			Fixed-term		
	T	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W	T	M	W
1997	58.8	66.2	51.6	11.0	9.3	13.0	9.3	7.1	11.9	5.4	6.1	4.6
2000	55.1	61.2	49.3	16.3	14.6	18.3	9.3	7.0	12.1	5.6	6.4	4.7
2002	51.7	57.0	46.7	19.9	19.2	20.7	9.6	7.3	12.2	15.4	16.3	14.5
2004	51.4	56.8	46.1	19.1	18.5	19.8	9.6	7.1	12.5	22.5	23.6	21.3
2007	57.0	63.6	50.6	9.6	9.0	10.3	8.5	5.8	11.7	28.2	28.4	27.9

Source: Eurostat, LFS annual averages

1: Population 15+

The Polish labour law provides for a range of non-standard employment forms, including fixed-term or part-time work, job sharing, teleworking, shortened week or weekend work. However, these arrangements have played a marginal role in reconciliation. For example, although reforms implemented in 2004 aligned national and EU regulations on part-time work, part time employment rates have not been high (see table 2), and, according to Eurostat data, are even lower for persons between 25 and 49 years of age, where in 2007 only nine percent of women and 3.3 percent of men worked part-time. Of these, nearly a third of women work part-time involuntarily and only 17.3 percent do so because of care responsibilities. This is much lower than the EU27 average of 42.1 percent, or the UK rate where more than 68 percent of women working part-time do so because of care responsibilities. In contrast, fixed-term contracts in Poland have grown rapidly, reaching levels similar to Spain (31.7 percent). As table 2 shows, fixed-term employment has increased from 5.4 percent in 1997 to 28.2 percent in 2007. While this form of contract increases numerical flexibility of employers, it often carries lower security for workers (Auer *et al.* 2001) putting reconciliation into question. For example, in Spain the trend brought about a fall in human capital investment by companies, higher wage pressures and inequality, more difficult access to housing, or the fertility rate decline (CEC 2006). Unsurprisingly, nearly three quarters of fixed-term work in Poland is involuntary (Eurostat LFS).

In terms of other forms of working time flexibility standard working time regulations specified in the Labour Code are eight hours per day and 40 hours per week. But, following Eurostat LFS data, in 2007 the average usual weekly number of hours of full time employees was 42.9 – nearly as high as 43 hours in the UK known for a long-hours working culture.

Considering that in Poland full-time employment is the norm, the pattern of long hours is relevant to most working parents, but especially to men who at 44.7 hours have a working week above the EU27 average of 42.9 hours. Among workers 24-49 years of age, Polish men are also more likely than women to work during weekends, evenings, at night, and engage in shift work. On the one hand, such organisation of work may be interpreted as a constraint on fathers' ability to participate in family life. On the other hand, the unequal division of care work may be the underlying factor in fathers' greater ability to respond to the flexible organisation of working time, as working time flexibility appears to be a prerogative of firms given that less than 30 percent of working women and men aged 25-49 can vary their start or end of the working day for family reasons (Eurostat 2005).

Polish policymakers increasingly consider flexible organisation of work for attaining the balance between employment and care, but the debate supports economic rather than equity goals. Flexible employment is valued for increasing adaptability of companies and lowering their labour cost, and thus improving the labour market situation and facilitating activation of weaker groups. This implies the promotion of employer led flexible jobs linked with precariousness, but such work is still directed at mothers who already may have a tenuous relationship with paid labour. Although the general framing of policy is to support parents in working and family lives, and some ESF-funded programmes encourage a partnership model for sharing duties, the focus is on mothers and their access to flexible employment (e.g. action: 'mom has a right to a part-time job') and the role of fathers goes largely unmentioned. While it is possible that for some mothers part-time employment can improve their socio-economic status, especially if compared with non-employment, the employment impact of parenthood and statistical simulations suggest that motherhood in Poland affects labour market exit less strongly (10.3 percent of mothers leave employment) than in Great Britain (21.3 percent) or Germany (26.5 percent) (CEC 2008b; MPiPS 2008), where the popularity of part-time jobs is much greater, and thus casts doubt on the potential of part-time work to ease the tensions between work and care. Either way, the policy approach remains biased in viewing women as mothers and men as workers and further reinforces the existing gender inequality in the division of paid and unpaid work.

6. CONCLUSION

Poland has been classified as an *implicit familialism* model based on residual policies of care and employment (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008) where the withdrawal of state support for working mothers clashes with preferences for a partnership model of family in sharing of paid and unpaid labour (Pascall and Kwak 2005). This paper has confirmed that the post-socialist state bears stronger than before tensions between motherhood and employment and does not provide incentives for fathers to participate in the caring labour. Reconciliation of work and care appears challenging for mothers and fathers alike, but the nature and the extent of the problem differs - men face obstacles to greater participation in family and women in work. As observed by many commentators, the worsening labour market conditions and the curtailment of services in the context of traditional

gender order suggest mothers' retreat from the public to the private sphere, while bearing no impact on the behaviour of fathers. Looking at employment changes in a dynamic perspective suggests that this has not been the case, as the rate of women aged 25-44 has increased between 1970 and 2002, and that for men has declined. Thus, the aggregate fall in employment rates disguises the extent to which it affects different age categories. For women, the fall in employment rates has affected the youngest (15-24) and the oldest (45-65) groups, while the drop in employment for men occurred across all ages (GUS 2004). A static look at data for 2007 (Eurostat LFS) on employment rates of mothers and fathers aged 25-49 proves consistent with international trends, where the presence of children is associated with higher employment rates for men (in percent: 72.6 without children, 83.3 with one child, 86.6 with two, and 83.3 with three or more children) but lower for women (74.1, 69.6, 66.9, and 57.0, respectively). Still, even employment of mothers with three or more children is higher than for the general population of women 15-64 (50.6 percent), and especially of women 50-64 (34.4 percent). These employment trends and the rapid fall of total fertility rates (from 2.06 in 1989 to 1.26 in 2006 – GUS 2007b) indicate thus, that given insufficient state support for defamilialization and the high value of commodification under difficult labour market conditions, women experience difficulties in combining work and care and faced with an 'either-or' choice tend to choose work. Reconciliation remains thus an issue both in terms of the ability of potential parents to choose care, and potential carers (mothers, fathers, and grandparents) to choose work –bearing significant policy implications.

At the EU level, work and family reconciliation policies have been firmly embedded in employment policies, but still conveying combining paid and unpaid work for women, rather than equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men (Lewis 2006). At the national level most positive results have been noted in the areas related to the supply side of labour, including childcare provision and leave entitlements (Rubery 2002). Reforms of the reconciliation of work and family policies can be noted in the UK's investment in childcare, development of leaves and addressing of working hours (Lewis and Campbell 2007), or Germany's overhaul of reconciliation policies to support mothers in employment (Klammer and Letablier 2007). But, in all European countries women remain disadvantaged in employment, while men continue to be disengaged from care work (Pascall and Lewis 2004). The situation in Poland fits these broad trends, however, increasing attention to the problems of social exclusion and demographic change has made family policy more prominent. Is Poland thus moving in a European direction responding to the three areas of EU reconciliation policies?

Participation in the Lisbon Strategy and the ESF resources has proven important and the recent developments in childcare provision attest to a renewed interest of policy makers, but their focus on children over the age of three in under-serviced areas has become an instrument of narrowing the gap between rural and urban areas rather than reconciliation. In terms of policy framing, such instrumentality has several implications. On the one hand, it may benefit implementation, as Poles value education and the obligatory nature of regulations is particularly important where local administrations prioritise other issues. On the other

hand, the goal of reconciliation may go unrealised. In regards to leave arrangements, Poland does not stand out among EU states. Leave reforms have not been, for the most part, required by the EU accession process, but were induced by the changing ideologies of the governing parties. An important EU influence has been the inclusion of fathers in parental leave, albeit the lack of incentives for fathers shows that Poland lags behind several EU countries, i.e. Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, and Sweden (based on Moss and Wall 2007). A more gender equal scenario of sharing the care labour between women and men is thus unlikely. And finally, policy discourse and proposals on labour market reforms highlights women's weaker position in the labour market and the potential of flexible employment to ease their tension of combining work with care. But, reconciliation remains largely a women's issue in practice and policy plans, even in a programme *'Partnership in the family – labour market opportunity for women'* women are responsible for negotiating reconciliation with their partners and potential employers. With part-time jobs, teleworking, or job sharing aimed at mothers, policies appear to serve EU-wide goals of activation and raising fertility rates. But, given the already relatively high maternal full-time employment, such policy approach risks lowering rather than raising the employment status of mothers.

Taken together, modest improvements in the provision of childcare services, the continued treatment of parental leave as a measure directed at mothers and the lack of incentives for fathers, and labour market programmes offering atypical employment arrangements for mothers seem to miss the point, and thus do little for the improvement of reconciliation of work and care for parents or the attainment of greater gender equality in the division of paid and unpaid labour.

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