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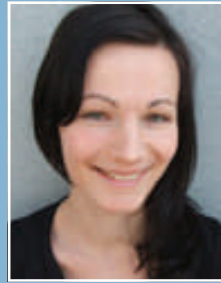
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WORKCARE

**Social quality and
changing relationships
between work, care and
welfare in Europe**



Orientations to Work and Care

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Orientations to work and care and their relation to mothers' employment patterns

The processes in the formation of *orientations to work and care* are strongly embedded in the wider socio-economic conditions. Therefore, such orientations vary largely across the EU-27. But how are they grouped across European societies and in which countries do behaviours align with attitudes?

These are the main research questions that we addressed in a cross-country comparative analysis of people's *orientations to work and care*. Using European survey data, the report looks at common trends and patterns in orientations to work and care.

First, we mapped the distribution of orientations to work and care, attitudes and preferences across the EU-27 and formed country-clusters along these lines.

Second, we investigated the potential of women's attitudes for explaining their work-care behaviour.

Findings from multilevel analyses suggest that mothers' employment behaviours do indeed frequently align with their stated attitudes toward gender roles and childcare. Interestingly, however, such attitude-behaviour relations appear to be stronger in some countries than in others.

We provide a new overall picture of Europe in terms of orientations to work and care and of work-care behaviour. The report provides structured knowledge about the role of attitudinal factors for understanding different work-care combination models across Europe.

If you want to know more, look at the WORKCARE website (see below) where the report is published in full.

WORKCARE on the internet
<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/nec/workcare/>

Cross-national differences in orientations to work and care

Based on a gender role index three country-groups emerge: *egalitarian* (Nordic countries, Belgium and the Netherlands), *intermediary* (Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Portugal and the UK) and *traditional* (Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary and Poland).

When women's care role is at stake (asking respondents whether or not mothers of small children should work full-time), attitudes strongly vary across countries. With regard to the general importance attached to work and family, we find more convergence across Europe.

Across Europe, women position themselves in a more modern stance than men. However, there are also strong variations according to education, social strata and the country context.

The relationship between attitudes and behaviour in mothers' employment

Mothers' attitudes show a significant relation with their employment behaviour: If a woman agrees that '*A man's job is to earn money while the woman's job is to look after the home and family*', she is more likely to be non-employed. This is also true for mothers who believe that '*a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works*'.

Attitude-behaviour relations in women's work and care decisions are reciprocal. On the one hand, mothers with more favourable views on maternal employment and non-parental care *self-select* into full-time employment. On the other hand, working mothers develop more favourable attitudes to maternal employment over time (adaptation).

The higher the education of the woman and thus the higher her income potential, the greater the impact of her care attitude tends to be. Lower educated women, by contrast, seem to be more constrained in their work-care options.

The results suggest that there are important variations in orientations to work and care and in work-care behaviours across Europe that can pose a challenge for social and labour market policies.

On average, Northern European women tend to be more egalitarian than Central, Eastern and Southern European women. These differences result from contextual differences in the institutional and economic framework as well as the socio-historical development of gender role norms and care cultures (value of professional versus parental care).

Orientations to work and care clearly are shaped by people's work situation and domestic circumstances as well as by the characteristics of available work and care options. From this perspective, attitude-behaviour congruence *cannot* be taken to indicate 'genuine choice' between different work-care options. Work-care options and behaviours are often severely constrained – especially in less affluent countries and among the groups of lower socio-economic status within all European countries.

There are insufficiencies in the supply and in the quality of care facilities for children under three years of age in several EU countries (in Southern and Eastern Europe more than in Northern Europe). Moreover, in many countries mothers are not convinced of the quality and the value of formal care as compared to parental care.

The policy mix may need to take a different form in different regions of Europe in order to successfully enhance the level of choice between different work-care options.