

**About Workcare**

Workcare is a research project drawing upon the collaboration of 10 different institutional partners (University of Aberdeen, University of Roskilde, Institute for Advanced Studies Vienna, Economics University Vienna, University of Sussex, London School of Economics, DISPO University of Florence, ISCTE Lisbon, TARKI Hungary, University of Warsaw) and 16 persons.

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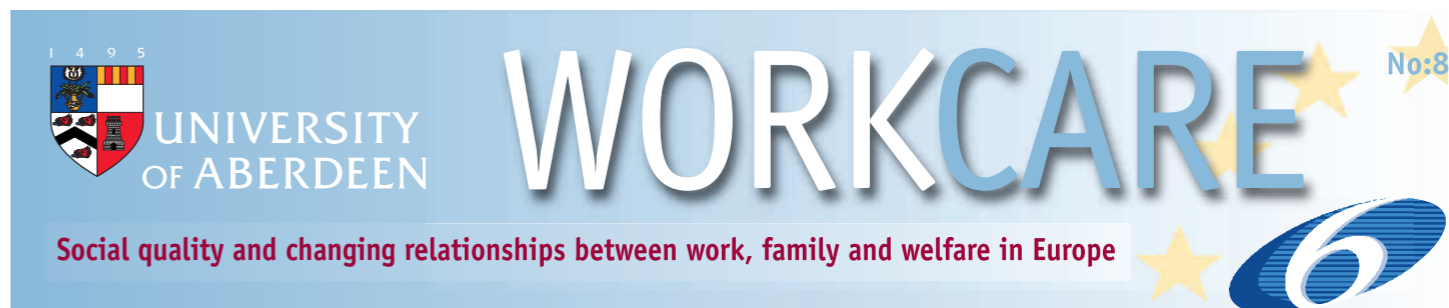
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It runs for three years from October 2006 to September 2009.

The project will last three years. Information can be found on the website:

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/nec/workcare/>

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# Household Transitions between Work and Care

## Do people always get what they want in terms of work and care?

## How do people move backwards and forwards between work and care in their life-course?

These questions were addressed using the European Social Survey, the International Social Survey Programme and the European Community Household Panel, which enabled us to look at the longitudinal perspective. We adopted a "capabilities" model to understand how household might reconcile their wishes and their needs with dominant gender norms.

Normative Gender Regimes: Three countries representing contrasting gender regimes were studied: Denmark, Spain and the UK. A series of questions asked individuals about their own levels of approval or disapproval of non-traditional gender practices, and how they thought others would view these.

### Summary Findings

- There has been limited attention to the importance of attitudinal research on the perceived social stigma associated with maternal employment.
- Individual attitudes were more permissive to non-traditional gender practices than they perceived those held by others in their society.
- Attitudes in Denmark were the most permissive, and in Poland the most conservative.
- British respondents had the highest proportions expressing neutral attitudes to non-traditional gender practices.
- When asked about mothers with small children working full-time there was a core of approximately 30% of British respondents who disapproved of this, which was much higher than in all the other countries.
- Despite more conservative attitudes in general in Poland, there was less stigma associated with mothers with children under 3 working full-time.
- Measures of well-being, capability and economic ease were higher in Denmark than in other countries.
- There was a stronger sense of individuals in the UK having lower recognition for what they did than in other countries.
- Preferences for part-time employment were more widespread than the opportunity to take up part-time employment based on analysis of the ISSP.
- Opportunities for households to combine work and care arrangements were more limited in countries like Spain with the predominance of a strong male breadwinner model than in other countries examined.
- Dual earners with both parents working full-time were more common in Denmark.
- Nevertheless, in all countries there was more diversity within countries than established comparative frameworks have suggested in the past.
- The UK illustrated the impact of a highly flexible labour market with household arrangements being more varied and transition patterns being more eclectic than in many other European countries. Many of these transitions were around part-time employment, and especially short hour part-time jobs.
- The key factors keeping people in employment in all countries examined was being in public sector employment.
- Work poor households commonly moved to a traditional male breadwinner pattern of employment, if they found work.

Looking at household transitions between work and care we were able to combine and compare the activities of both parents. Three types of transitions were studied in the three countries: Denmark, Spain and the UK:

- Integrative transitions: moving from non-employed into part time or full time employment
- Maintenance transitions: staying in work but maybe changing working times
- Exclusionary transitions: falling out of employment

• The impact of welfare policies, or the potential lack of them, were visible in the effect of male unemployment on female activity. In Denmark and the UK women with a non-employed partner were more likely to drop out of employment than was the case in Spain where they were more likely to stay in employment.

• A key issue for understanding the impact of social policies on activity rates is to examine these in terms of joint household decisions, rather than seeing their effect solely in terms of individuals.

**KEY to charts:**

private/perm	public temp	student
private/temp	self-employed	unemployed
public/perm	family worker	inactive

