



Policy Review on WORKCARESNERGIES

Support Action for the Dissemination of
Synthesised Framework Programme
Research Findings

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Comment

This is the policy review on work and care synergies of the WORCKARESYNERGIES Dissemination Project, an EU Support Action within the FP 7 Framework Programme (2010-2011). More information on the project and its contents can be found on the project homepage, www.workcaresynergies.eu

Vienna, December 2011.

Project Setup and Objectives

WORCKARESYNERGIES was a dissemination project, an EU Support Action within the FP 7 Framework Programme. It was funded by the EC within the Seventh Framework Programme, Theme 8, Socio-economic sciences and humanities (SSH), 8.1 Measures to support dissemination of research results.

In 2010 and 2011, WORKCARESYNERGIES disseminated research findings of previous EU Framework Programme projects in the field of work and care. To do this, seventy seven local information and discussion events were held in Austria, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Italy and Portugal.

This review on work and care synergies gives an *overview of topics* and presents *policy pointers and recommendations* developed from these discussions with policy makers, NGOs, trade unions, labour representatives, regional organisations and services, companies as well as other local actors and interested parties.

More information on the project, its contents and dissemination materials produced throughout the two project years – especially local information materials, summaries of discussion, thematic reports and local policy briefs, the final project publication and overall policy brief as well as various short thematic films (!) – can be found on the project homepage, www.workcaresynergies.eu.

What we disseminated

During two years, we presented relevant research findings from 20 research projects within the EU Framework Programme and initiated their discussion in a local context. Each local dissemination team chose a policy-relevant topic for their country; all dealt with questions of work and care, i.e. how families in different societal frameworks and settings combine their work with child- and eldercare related responsibilities.

While the *Scottish team* supported the current local policy debate about fairer deals for parents by contributing to the Scottish Government parenting strategy, the *Danish team* discussed the need of diversity and flexibility of work-care policies and gender equal conditions for participating in paid work, caring activities and unpaid work in politics and organisations. The *Polish team* discussed values and behaviour of members of different social groups, especially problems faced by women elites. The *British team* examined and illustrated the impact of labour market transitions across generations, comparing younger and older workers, as well as labour market transitions around family formation. Two *Austrian teams* discussed traditional role models and how to balance childcare, work and professional career, as well as the quality of work and life in times of economic crisis. They looked into how to balance interests over the life course and strengths and limitations of options from the perspective of individual, the state or the market. The *Hungarian team* supported the debate on the reform of family and employment policies to create incentives for increasing the extremely low labour market participation of mothers with young children. The *Portuguese team* discussed how to shape work care orientations for gender equality in private and public contexts, with a special focus on childcare services and the promotion of gender equality on labour markets. The *Italian team* disseminated in Italy where the debate about conciliation is not yet really part of political and daily public discourse. Therefore, the team aimed at having an effect on civil society's actors (instead of politicians), including students, their educators as well as non-profit and private organisations.

Work-Care Tensions (Austria)

Attainment or lack of reconciliation of work and family life is not only determined by its most obvious cornerstones: job flexibility and the sharing of household and care responsibilities within the family. A large variety of other, mostly interrelated factors have strong influence on the actual work-care situation, by limiting or increasing parents' (and especially mothers') decision and action spaces. Such factors were found to be

- prevailing traditional (such as "man goes out to work, women looks after household and children") or new (such as "partners share work and care") role models,
- local and societal attitudes,
- social networks and structures,
- availability of external childcare facilities, after school services and learning support,
- but also the parent's level of education and life style
- as well as job offers and parents' actual working times.

A discussion exclusively for men brought interesting results: Not unexpectedly, the views of men and women differ significantly. Men often clearly have other (mainly more traditional) perceptions of the work and care situation than women; quite frequently, fathers feel less concerned or do not see a (care) problem at all. Location and level of parental education, but also the existence of family-supportive measures (by companies, local communities, counties or the state) increase or decrease the chances of reconciliation for fathers and mothers.

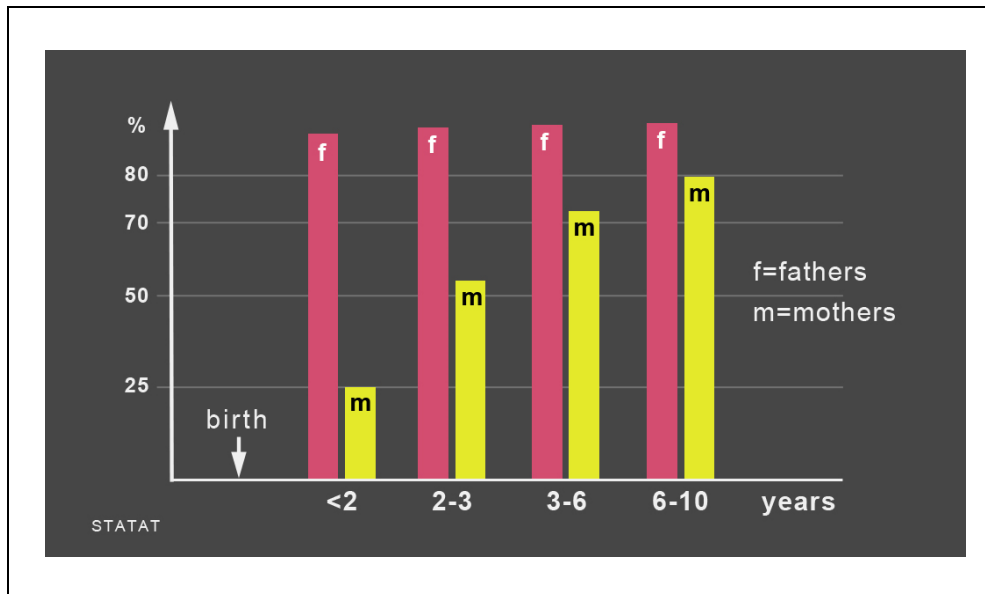
Yet, in general, young men and women seem to follow new, modern role models, women have changed their labour market behaviour and mothers and fathers seem to have new expectations concerning job and family. Nevertheless, in every-day life, it is still mothers (in both Austria and other EU countries) that bear the main responsibility to combine work and family duties. Why? Family life, especially once children have arrived, seems to be governed by traditional rules and expectations (retraditionalisation), with gendered income situations furthering such behaviour ("man earns more, woman stays at home"). The equal sharing of tasks observed in young couples/partnerships quickly disappears and traditional role models resurface.

It has also been shown that parents' (original) agreements on how to handle their work-care situation – who works or cares to what extent – as well as mothers' and fathers' attitudes and expectations about their partner's involvement change over time and need repeated family discussion and adjustment.

In Austria, the situation is the following: Although women have rapidly gained ground in education and employment, parenting for mothers still means a reduction of working hours. Fathers, however, continue to work full time in most cases. On the other hand, more and

more mothers are soon back in business. Every fourth mother with children under two and every second mother with children between two and three years is economically active. More than 70% of mothers of children of kindergarten age and even close to 80% of mothers of children of primary school age have a job.

Chart 1: Work involvement of fathers and mothers in Austria



Source: IHS, based on STATAT (LFS 2009).

Male identity vs. sharing family responsibility: While (most) men see their identity dominantly determined by their jobs, relation to colleagues and status within their firm, they assume that women are interested in family life first, with job and career coming second only. For them, the sharing and division of domestic tasks between partners is therefore often a(n unwanted) re-definition of their social identity and responsibilities – to be avoided if possible.

With changing role models and higher female expectations about male involvement in household and caring tasks (many) men show a marked fear of professional/male recognition failure due to such involvement. On the other hand, they see women as reluctant to give up their dominant position within families. Nevertheless, balancing work and family tasks has also become an issue for (younger) men, who often struggle to find their “new” place within the family but also in working life and especially in front of their (male) colleagues.

The public promotion of new male (and female) role models can support such new-orientation (e.g. in TV-spots, public campaigns, movies) but may also hinder family-friendly orientations: What role models do media actually communicate? How do successful men or women look like? How do they combine work and family life, especially with children (if any)?

On the other hand, men do not have the same undisturbed life-long working careers as before. Will fathers, grandfathers or sons be able to use such breaks in a family-relevant way? Which policies could support such family-supportive behaviour?

Provide family support in multiple and flexible ways: Legal regulations and both state and local help are important elements of family support. In many cases, they are the basis for work-family reconciliation, reduce poverty and ensure social participation and security (especially for children and women). Since families nowadays exist in many and changing forms and varieties, such support has to be provided in multiple and flexible ways, so that families can profit (most) from selecting arrangements best fitted to them and their choice of life style.

It is also important to inform families (especially women) about the (often negative long term) effects of choices they take for the benefit for their children and family. They have to realise that long parental leave periods (as e.g. still common in Austria) and later (precarious or) low part-time employment has a negative impact on their future income, career opportunities and old age security.

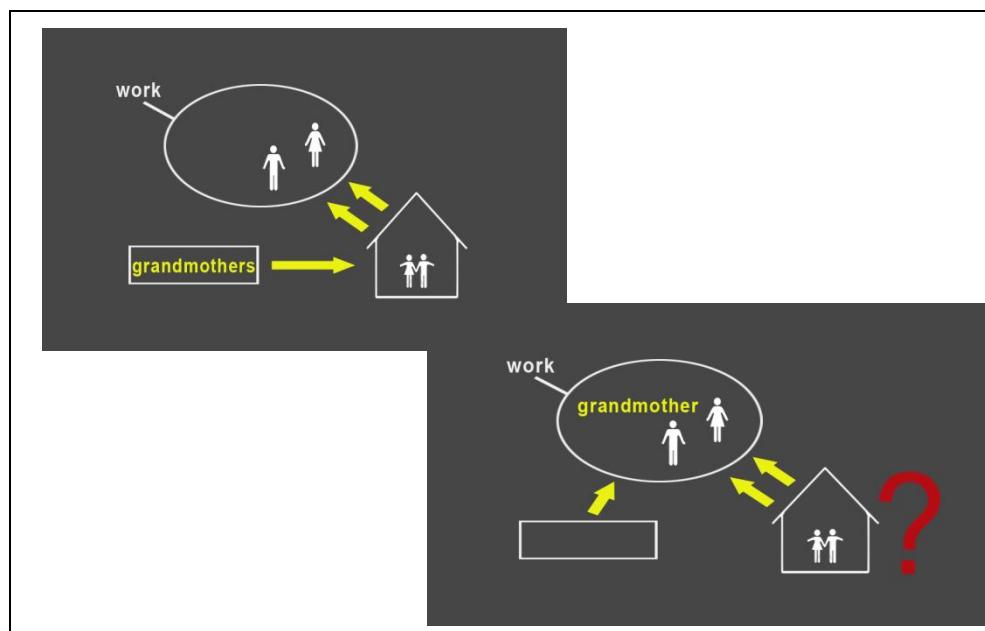
How to combine two different worlds? In the discussions it became obvious that the “worlds” of work and family life seem to function according to very different rules and regulations – which make a satisfying reconciliation of both worlds rather difficult. In general, parents are expected to show increasing flexibility and dedication in both fields: For work, this is expressed in the common occurrence of long working days, regular overtime, high expectations of labour mobility, permanent availability, frequent changes of job (within and between companies), long commuting times, erratic working hours, etc.

Family life (but also leisure time), on the other hand, is characterised by high expectations of “fun”, the need to fulfil important children’s needs and wishes (to compensate for rather long daily absences), yet small core families and working parents, limited opening hours and closing days of childcare facilities, long school holidays, ... and (not least) the currently common and strong propensity to consume which seems to have become an important driving force in everybody’s life.

Reconciliation of work and family yet seems to be possible if all involved parties contribute: the state by financial and care support as well as the public communication of modern role models; employers with family-friendly work time arrangements, qualified part time and parental leave offers for both men and women; (child)care facilities by offering work-related opening hours and flexible uptake of care; local key players and mediators by supporting modern role models and new (non-traditional) initiatives; and families themselves – through social networks and intergenerational support within the family itself. In this context it is important to realise that higher female employment results in fewer grandmothers being

available. Thus, the provision of (more) external services (e.g. childcare, after school care, old age care) becomes a necessary precondition for reconciliation.

Chart 2: Working grandmothers cannot support young families



Source: IHS

Gender Wage Gaps reproduce traditional behaviour: Income disparities (gender wage gaps) tend to perpetuate traditional role models: When children are born, partners usually revert to the male breadwinner and female caretaker model – because the father’s income is usually higher, and mothers earn less (often much less so that they cannot sustain the family) and are commonly thought of as natural carers. This initial allocation of paid and unpaid work continues throughout most women’s lives – even if to a lesser extent in later family phases. It usually has a negative impact on women’s career plans and careers, actual and life time incomes and their social security coverage, especially in old age.

Attention should also be drawn to the fact that behavioural patterns observed within families are subject to intergenerational transfer, influencing girls’ and boys’ (i.e. future parents’) expectations of how to construct and later manage their own work and family life. Thus, the road towards (more) gender equality lies not only in the labour market or in social policies, but also in relationships lived within households.

In addition, it seems that unattainable reconciliation (or the expectation of such) results in declining fertility rates – fewer children planned and even fewer realised. This should raise the discussion about the value of children and families for society, as well as give way to a reconsideration of public attitudes – which are often perceived as quite “unfriendly”.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

- With new family compositions and labour market conditions, reconciliation of family and work requires **flexibility** on all sides, employers, employees, state, local communities and families. If all work together, a WIN-WIN situation can be realised. Both, men and women need support to attain reconciliation. With the ageing of the population, such reconciliation comprises not only support in **childcare but also in elder care**.
- A high female activity rate has positive effects for a country's economy, especially when labour is scarce. **Reconciliation for both men and women** can be supported by qualified part time arrangements, flexible but secure employment forms as well as time-wise compromises (e.g. flexi-time, time banks). Such arrangements also profit employers in terms of well-motivated, dedicated, flexible, long-term staff.
- Yet, with **women mostly balancing work and family**/household needs, it is them that currently need support most, such as flexible work and leave arrangements, external childcare options and wage compensation. Yet, in the **long run**, governments should work towards and promote more equal sharing of work, household and childcare tasks between the partners – the only way to ensure equal social inclusion, participation and (old age) security for both, men and women, mothers and fathers.
- If (working) **grandmothers** cannot support families anymore, more (affordable and good quality) infrastructure is needed. This concerns regular childcare as well as family support services.
- **Reduce income disparities** (gender wage gaps) between men and women to avoid the automatic reproduction of traditional role models. With the concept of **flexicurity** a key aspect of modern European policy, one also has to ensure flexibility and security for **men and women**, not flexibility and security for men but flexibility without security for women.
- Although young people in general express a wish to found families and have children, a change of heart seems observable once they grow older: Is the (planned) **childlessness** of young couples/partners what they see as their optimal family situation?
- Do not underestimate the **impact of modern media** on the younger generation: Role models (e.g. on TV, YouTube or in commercials) influence their real life decisions.
- Implementations of new initiatives (e.g. father's leave) must be carefully **monitored**. Sometime concepts do not fit local business needs or are socially not (yet) acceptable.

Social Quality in Work and Care (Scotland, UK)

The Scottish team at the University of Aberdeen organised a series of dissemination events with the local dissemination theme “Social Quality in work and care”. The local discussions supported the current local policy debate on reducing the inequality between men and women in paid and unpaid work and the need to provide larger public support for families with children. They contributed to the development of the Scottish Government’s new “Parenting Strategy” about which discussions are continuing into 2012.

After producing dissemination material and having a first round of discussion, the team decided to concentrate on fatherhood and care provided by fathers. On the event at the Work Foundation, London in February 2011 the team discussed the proposition by the government for flexible paternity leave by dividing the 52 weeks maternity leave between fathers and mothers so that parents could take the leave separately or together to take effect in 2015.

A further event in Paris looked at the main strategies for combining work and care among full time working parents in different European countries. Four strategies were identified: *shiftworking* (parents work on different shifts); *flexible work* (one or both parents take on flexible jobs); *reliance on formal care* (publicly or privately provided); *reliance on informal care* from relatives, friends and neighbours. The balance of these strategies depends upon the social policy context. These ideas were presented at a forum for British family policies held in Paris in November, 2011. One of the conclusions was that increasing involvement of women in the workforce puts greater burdens on them since they are still mainly responsible for childcare as well.

Another event involved a keynote address by Claire Wallace to the Community Work and Family Conference in Tampere in May 2011 where the argument was made that the quality of life of parents in Europe, as measured by the Social Quality model, depends upon the gender roles and gender role culture of the country

Two more events were held in Scotland: Events on “Policy for Working Parents with Young Children” were held in November and December in Edinburgh and Aberdeen with a screening of the film “Dummies”, a humorous look at the problems and dilemmas faced by modern fathers. A blog was developed for the Work Foundation, where Professor Wallace discussed findings from the local discussion with NGOs and policy makers. A deliberative forum involved discussing these issues with NGOs, parliamentarians and others in Scotland.

The discussion on fathers and care provided by fathers centred around the following two main issues:

Flexible Working and Fatherhood

- Paternity leave and fathers' involvement in family life more generally are high on the political agenda. The important role that fathers do and should play in child-rearing is being increasingly recognised. Yet, paternity leave cannot be considered in isolation from other, more general elements of family policy and employment policy.
- While trade unions in Scotland have reacted favourably to the announcement and the Confederation of British Industries has given it a cautious welcome, the reaction of small businesses has been hostile. Yet, their reaction seems to be more based on a traditional view of the role of fathers than on the burden of implementing the regulation.

Paternity Leave or Shared Care?

- While fathers (in Scotland) are now entitled to two weeks paid paternity leave, a proposed reform would enable parents to divide the 52 weeks maternity leave between them, however they wished to take leave together.
- The aim of the proposed policy seems to be to:
 - enable fathers to play a larger role in childcare while their children are very young;
 - make it more acceptable for men to take on a caring role;
 - reduce the burden of childcare on women;
 - enable women to return to work sooner thus reducing the negative impact of maternity leave on women's careers;
 - benefit children who will be able to develop stronger bonds with their fathers.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

The local and international dissemination and discussion of the new role of fathers related to childcare came to the following conclusions

- If a government wishes to introduce a **paternity leave scheme that will encourage fathers** to take up the leave and become more involved in childcare, then: (1) A period of leave of more than two weeks should be **reserved** just for fathers – take it or lose it; (2) Paternity leave should be well **compensated**; (3) Fathers should not be able to take paternity leave at the same time as mothers are on maternity leave; (4) The Government needs to **promote** the importance of men being involved in childcare and encourage employers to support men in taking paternity leave.
- If a government wishes to promote **fathers being more involved** in childcare more generally it also needs to (1) enforce **shorter working hours** to stop a long hours culture among fathers and enable them to participate in family life; (2) amend legislation

on entitlement to **flexible working** so that employers have to justify refusing requests and provide incentives for employers to introduce family friendly policies; (3) **compensate** parental leave for parents with children under five and a proportion of it should be ring-fenced for fathers.

- If a government wishes to enable mothers and fathers to have paid employment and **share care**, it also needs to (1) progress measures to promote **gender equity** in the labour market and especially to reduce the gender pay gap; (2) ensure that working parents have access to high quality affordable and flexible **childcare**, including after school and holiday care for school aged children.

Citizenship, flexibility and diversity in work-care relations (Denmark)

During the local events we presented research on how family policy and policies that promote flexibility influence the strategies of conciliation work and care in the households. In order to give broad picture of the policy supporting parents in combining work and family we present a family policy typology developed by Boje and Ejrnæs based on a cluster analysis of EU Member States. The cluster analysis includes 21 EU Member States – excluded are Cyprus, Malta, Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovak Republic, and Ireland due to insufficient data.

Figure 1 Family Policy Regimes among the EU Member States

Work-care Regime	Countries	Key Features
Extensive Family Policy	Sweden , Denmark, Belgium, France	High level childcare 0 -3 years, with generous payment of parental leave. High proportion women working part-time
Short leave, Part –time	The UK, the Netherlands	Short period of poorly paid parental leave. Medium provision of public childcare for 0 – 3 year olds and high proportion of mothers working part-time.
Long Leave, Part-time	Germany, Austria, Luxembourg	Long period of relatively well–paid parental leave followed by mothers who do return to the labour market working part-time.
Family Care	Estonia, Slovenia, Spain, Latvia, Greece, Italy, Portugal	Period parental leave varies but badly paid. Mothers generally withdraw from the labour market and do not return when their children are older.
Extended Parental Leave	Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Finland	Very long period of parental leave with women returning to full-time employment when they have exhausted their entitlement to leave. Finland deviates from the other countries in this group because it has a greater provision of public care for children aged 0-3 and more women working part-time.

Here, we will only focus on the characteristics of cluster 1, the main policy instruments (childcare, parental leave, working time regulation) and strategies used by mothers in reconciling work, care and household obligations. For more info, refer to Danish policy brief in <http://workcaresynergies.eu/reports/>

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 characterised by a pro-natalistic family policy (France and Belgium). The cluster is characterised by a high level of childcare take-up among children aged 0-3 years combined

with comprehensive rights to parental leave, which is generously paid during most of the parental leave period. The level of spending on family policy is high. These countries are in the breadwinner-typology classified as modified or weak breadwinner countries. In all four countries there is a strong drive towards 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. Mothers with children aged 0 to 5 in France and Belgium have employment rates lower than in Scandinavia. For French women the decline in rates of employment is especially pronounced among mothers with two or more children. A relatively high proportion of women in all four countries are in part-time employment. The majority of women in part-time jobs are, however, working long part-time, i.e. more than 25 hours a week.

The Danish discussion: The extensive family policy model, which includes Denmark, has some obvious advantages. Here we just mention some:

- It enables women to return to work after a one year's leave with few negative career consequences.
- The comprehensive childcare service in Denmark prevents mothers from taking up involuntary part-time work in order to reconcile work and family. Most part-time work among mothers in Denmark is taken up voluntarily and for shorter periods and is characterised by a heavy care-load.
- It reduces the gender gap in men's and women's income over the life course.
- High quality of day-care facilities with highly educated and professional care workers seems to give children equal life chances and strengthen societal cohesion.
- It enables Danish women to be able to more easily combine motherhood and a continuous labour market career compared to most other European countries.
- It has positive effects on the fertility rate which in Denmark is higher than in most other European countries.
- It increases parents' options of combining work and care responsibilities and makes the work-family relations less constrained than we find in several other European countries.

However, in the discussions at the local meetings we discovered that the sustainability of the Danish model is threatened. The flexibility and generosity in the Danish welfare model is declining due to lower income compensation in periods outside employment, longer working hours for both women and men, and cuts in educated personal in the public institutions providing care services for children. In our discussion with political parties, trade unions and researchers these concerns about the sustainability of the Danish model were often mentioned and much debated.

Based on these discussions we have been able to conclude some important trends in the recent development in the labour market and thereby in work-family relations in Denmark:

- There is a growing political demand for an increase in the labour supply, either by an increase in the weekly working hours or by a prolongation of the time for retirement – both demands are raised due to the ageing societies and the risk of labour shortage in the future,
- the local authorities have been forced to make severe budget cuts on different types of services provided for children and other dependent citizens as a result of the financial crisis, and finally
- A reduced flexibility in both work-care relations and generally in labour market relations has been registered due to the growing unemployment and as a consequence of reduced generosity in social benefits and social service provision.

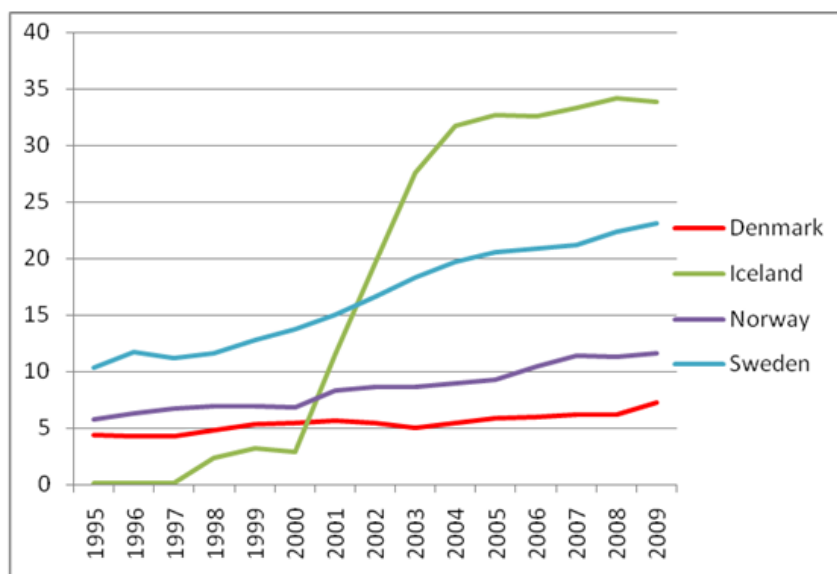
These tendencies will challenge both welfare and family policies in several respects:

- An increase in the weekly working time for employees or a postponement of the retirement age will put more pressure on working parents, especially the mothers' ability to manage work and family responsibilities and it will increase the demand for affordable childcare facilities.
- The cuts on childcare service provision will reduce the quality of the services in terms of staff-child ratio and opening hours. This will in turn make it more difficult for the families to reconcile family and working life. The cutbacks on childcare service will also deteriorate the professional care workers' working conditions and reduce the time they can spend with the children.
- The budget cuts will have negative consequences for gender equality. They will increase the burden of care obligations placed on women in the family and reduce the status of professional care workers in the public sphere – which will also primarily concern women. In this respect, women are hurt twice by the financial crisis – both in relation to the workload in the family and to the working conditions in the labour market.
- This development might in the end imply that children feel a twofold stress-strain. In the family the children will experience stressed parents who struggle with growing demands from the labour market, while the children in the daycare situation will be confronted with stressed care workers due to deteriorated working conditions and less time for children. Especially for the most vulnerable children, a declining quality of childcare service will have a severe negative impact on their future life possibilities.

Mothers' and Fathers' take-up of Parental Leave in the Nordic Countries: Another crucial discussion in the Danish debate concerns how to develop more equal conditions for fathers' and mothers' participation in caring activities for their children. Despite the fact that Denmark has one of the highest rates of labour market participation among women, women are still the main providers of care work within the family. Numerous findings from Scandinavian and

European research show that in general, family policy has a significant impact on women's involvement in paid work and caring activities but does not radically change fathers' involvement in paid work nor care, unless there is a specific legislation to support fathers' involvement. It is remarkable that Denmark is the only Nordic country that does not have a period of the total parental leave reserved for the father. This clearly has implications for fathers' take-up of parental leave, which is shown in the figure below. Among the Nordic countries the fathers' proportion of the total parental leave is lower in Denmark than in any of the other Scandinavian countries.

Percentage of the total period of parental leave taken by the father



Source: The Nordic council

If we compare the proportion of the total parental leave taken up by the fathers we find very different patterns in the Nordic countries. Danish men only take 7% of the whole leave. This proportion has been more or less stable over time during the last 15 years. This contrasts the pattern in Sweden where fathers take up nearly 25 per cent of the total parental leave and especially in Iceland where fathers take more than one-third of the total leave.

In 2001 a leave scheme was introduced in Iceland which reserved three months out of the total nine months leave period to the father. This led to a dramatic increase in the leave take-up among Icelandic fathers. Today they take up about 33% of the total leave period. This indicates that a change in the leave legislation might create rapid change in fathers' care pattern. In Denmark the newly elected government is considering a proposal of reserving a three months period of the total parental leave for fathers which might significantly improve the fathers' involvement in caring obligations in most families with small children.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

Labour market

- Better possibility regulating working hours over the life course – e.g. the possibility to shift between part-time work and full-time work in periods with heavy caring obligations.
- Male dominated private companies must be encouraged through financial incentives to introduce family-friendly policies, and men and women ought to be supported in sharing the entitlement for parental leave more equally.

Leave policy

- More flexible parental leave, part-time leave, more options for postponing the take-up of leave until children have reached the age of eight (to take leave when the children change from crèche to pre-school, school etc)
- More days left for caring for the children when they are sick
- An extended period of leave reserved specifically for the fathers

Childcare provision

- Extension of opening hours and elimination of closing days on normal weekdays – which in turn demands the provision of more educated staff.
- Improved staff/child ratios in day-care centres, especially when there is a high proportion of ethnic minorities among the children
- Closer corporation between professional childcare workers, parents and other family members in providing the care service

Quality of Work and Life and Work-Life Balance across the Life Course (Austria)

We differentiated key results according to respective target groups (child- or eldercare)

Childcare and employment:

The aspects mapped by the other Austrian team partly coincide with the following points of discussion. The emphasis placed by the WU team expands the results of the IHS team by two more aspects: First, we asked the next generation about their ideas regarding their future Work-Life Balance and their expectations towards work and life in general. Second, the discussion also touched upon new challenges and requirements in the current world of work and their general consequences for the possibilities available to parents and other working people with caring responsibilities.

Children rely on their parents or other people caring for them in terms of time and content. They need security, clear (time) structures and binding agreements. However, parents often cannot live up to these expectations in times of rapidly changing demands in their jobs. Therefore, also employers and companies are called to show flexibility and consideration for this situation. Because parents are existentially dependent on the job market, they might react by adjusting their private issues to fit the demands of their workplace and not the other way round. Research results and everyday experiences of the participants in the discussion corroborate the theory that women tend to be flexible for their families and children, whereas men show more flexibility regarding their jobs.

Altered time demands towards employees often impact on the „dissolving boundaries of employment and private lives“. Individuals therefore need to set their own limits in an independent and clear way. Especially highly qualified people are prone to experiencing this lack of externally set time limits and increasing self-control in the form of enhanced self-responsibility and feelings of guilt incidental to this situation. The self-responsibility and self-control that may be witnessed here are part of a process full of contradictions. On the one hand, people identify much more with their work, targets and results, which may foster intrinsic motivation and self-realisation. On the other hand, the negative consequences of missed targets and failures also include a perceived personal culpability, in turn leading to strains and stress (e.g. fear of failure). Perception of time, time management and time conflicts are on the rise and create the challenge of balancing employment and private life. This particularly concerns employees with caring responsibilities, especially at a certain stage of life (the so-called *rush hour of life*), in which job market integration and career development are crucial to personal development and the accumulation of insurance time for social security, as well as for personality development, identity and social integration.

Only if the discretionary competence does not remain within the responsibility of employers only, they are in a position to exploit their flexibility for the benefit of a better Work-Life Balance. They need to decide themselves completely, or at least to some part, when (they are able) to complete tasks and reach certain goals. What is of crucial importance here is the regulation of working hours and discretionary competence.

Children who grow up in egalitarian households where both parents share the responsibility of managing the household, childcare and employment to equal parts experience the division of labour in a positive way. It would be interesting here to conduct a comprehensive survey on the perceptions children have of different lifestyles and their long-term consequences.

Collective times such as school days, opening hours of institutions and holidays rarely concord with each other. The duration of school holidays exceeds the amount of holidays both parents may take by far, rendering individual strategies necessary. On one side, people recur more or less perforce to the support of their social networks, the grandparents or relatives, acquaintances and neighbours. On the other side, it is very common for parents to take turns caring. They frequently take their holidays separately which reduces the amount of family time spent together.

Demands put on childcare and education vary greatly according to the respective stages. For example, there may be a lack of places – or at least, of approved high quality places – in childcare for toddlers, while coverage for the period from kindergarten until the start of school improves (also because holiday times are much better covered). During the school period, bottlenecks may appear in different respects: children often need learning assistance, and provision of lunches or afternoon care are not the least all-encompassing and responding to the quality demands and requirements of parents and children.

Controversies of the discussion concern the implications of changing priorities in family and social policies: What would a shift from financial benefits (e.g. childcare allowance, attendance allowance) to more non-pecuniary benefits entail? Could we afford both on a high level? In general, expansion of infrastructure was welcomed, as supply also creates demand and may change people's attitudes on the long run.

Elderly care and employment:

Claims to non-pecuniary benefits are frequently considered important, as compared to the comparably well-developed transfer payments (e.g. on the basis of attendance allowance). The question of to what extent and if caring relatives – mostly women – should be guaranteed better financial security and receive compensation for a loss of earnings due to caring activities remained controversial. The proponents of financial benefits for private care argue that they acknowledge and value the work in a stronger way and provide long-term financial hedge and social protection for the carers. Opponents see the problem of direct

payment for private care largely in the fact that mainly women provide these financially not lucrative services. These payments could reinforce gendered responsibilities for unpaid household work; consequentially, differences in payment on the formal job market would also change more slowly.

Strong agreement was found regarding the necessity of expanding the supply of professional support for caring relatives. More support is needed in the form of ambulant care, visiting services, consultation, care leave models and possibilities for carers to go on holiday or take time off. However, it was put into question if the disposition to stronger public support in Austria is already comprehensively embedded in society. In the countryside, for example, the predominant opinion regarding tasks the family should assume sees the relatives in charge of care for the parents. It is a very common strategy to manage the pressure by society individually. Especially in the rural areas, accepting external help is often considered disgraceful. The experts and some of the people concerned in the discussion round, however, are largely convinced that relatives are in need of professional support for care, assistance to psychological self-help and relief of the strains on health that this physically and emotionally demanding task entails. Public awareness for this issue should be strengthened.

Politics is therefore called to launch offensive awareness-raising campaigns: Even though care frequently happens within the family, that is, in private, it does not mean that it represents an issue which is to be solved privately. The state and the economy are also responsible for the well-being of all parties involved, both the care recipients and the people who work and care. Public responsibility for care should increase much more than is currently the case. Political decisions regarding the “care crisis” can draw on a large number of current developments in economy and society to support their arguments: Employees face increased mobility demands, and demands for continuous (full-time) employment biographies are being made to both women and men, requiring them to remain in employment longer than ever before. What is therefore necessary is a distribution of the charges in order to diminish the load individuals have to bear and to create room for alternative forms of emotional and psychological support. Offers for professional help could dramatically increase the freedom of choice for relatives regarding their involvement in care and could thus contribute to diminishing the pressure on all parties involved.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

The results clearly present the potential gap between the ideal and reality. The traditional division of labour between the sexes is largely regarded as outdated now, but still, realising an equal distribution of workloads and thereby raising the chances for a successful WLB are dependent on gender: Women are flexible regarding family life and are often required to adapt their lives and interests to the demands of childcare and elderly care. Men, on the other hand, are mostly flexible in their jobs (mobility) and career development.

The order of priorities in the areas of work and private life therefore differs for men and women, even if the job is given a prominent position by both. Apart from sex, also age, education and profession as well as regional and social origin and a potential migration background play a role. Furthermore, lifestyles, career plans and job wishes as well as job and working time offers also matter. What is needed is more support for private care of adults and a greater choice of (consultation-) centres (ambulant care), and new innovative forms of living (e.g. as shown in the film "In Certain Cases" by the example of a multiple-generation house in Burgenland). Area-wide coverage is still lacking, probably as a result of federalism which produced numerous differences, amongst others regarding the areas of responsibility of the Austrian provinces. Offers made and measures taken should mirror the variety of individual needs and desires according to life stages (diversity).

Values and norms do not change overnight, and changes in structural offers (e.g. high-quality kindergartens and organic, sustainably produced food) may trigger a gradual change in the attitudes towards care, so more and more people might start to question the dominant model of private, predominantly female elderly care and consider alternatives. This also regards childcare, which is still mainly provided by mothers, fathers and grandparents (mostly grandmothers).

Values and norms do not influence institutions in a certain determined way. It is rather a process of mutual accommodation. Therefore, politics neither can nor should use the traditional values of a certain society regarding childcare and elderly care as an excuse. The potential of changing values through adequate infrastructural measures and actions for reducing inequality on the job market should be exploited. Until the present day, the comparably generous transfer payments for childcare in Austria often trigger a female exit from the job market for the duration of a few years. Even highly qualified women leave their jobs in order to care for their children. Among the long-term consequences this entails feature difficulties to re-enter the job market, lower qualified part-time employment as a frequent reconciliation strategy, and a lack of security both in financial terms and in terms of the social legislation (especially in retirement).

In Austria, there are only few organisations offering psycho-social assistance to carers. Those involved in care work largely see the necessity for aid and assistance as limited to those who are being cared for. However, experts are convinced that it should be okay for family carers to also accept assistance. In the discussion it has been taken into question whether outreach work – like it exists in streetwork – could be an option regarding the provision of assistance for caring relatives.

Family policies, working time flexibility and social cohesion (Hungary)

We discussed in detail the incidence and main characteristics of part-time work in Hungary, what factors have the strongest effect on someone taking up a part-time job, how being in part-time employment positively affects the perception of the work-family conflict, as well as how the part-time employment of a mother affects the risk of poverty of her child. We also explored factors responsible for low participation rates in such working arrangements in Hungary – both on the demand and supply side.

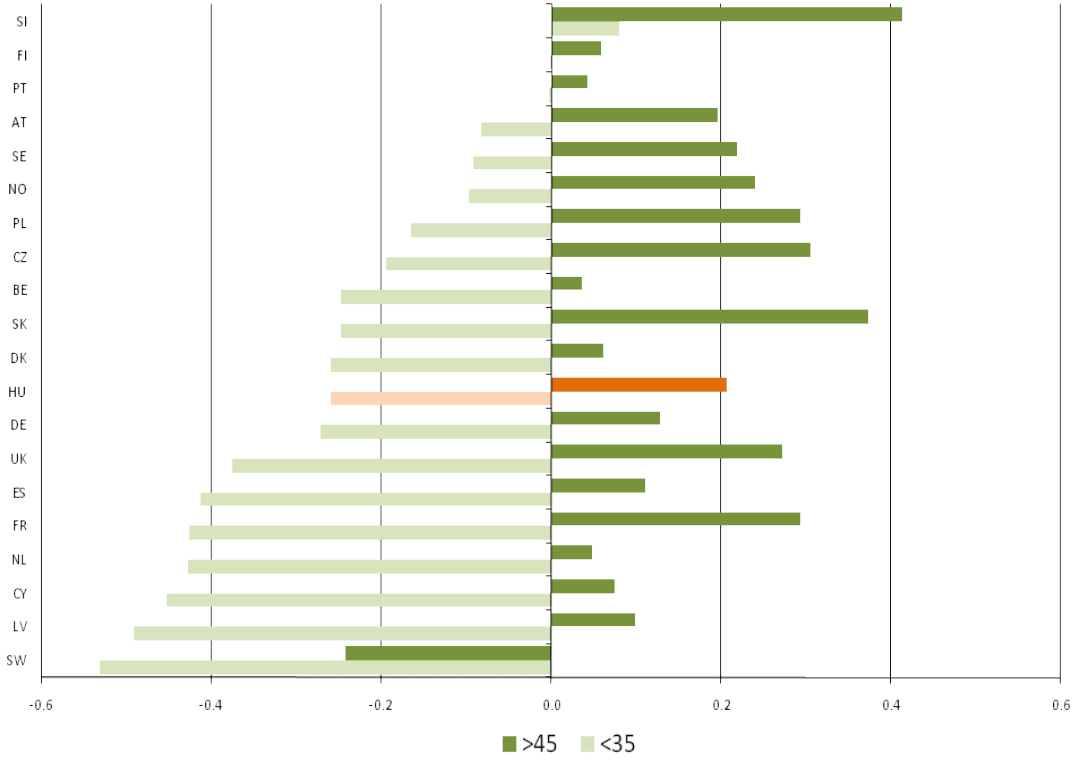
As to the role of childcare facilities and policy impact, we presented main WORKCARE results that (1) show how cash benefits and childcare have an effect on the labour supply of mothers with young children, not only in aggregate, but also by the level of education and (2) that not only total expenditure on family benefits is important, but also the design matters. In Hungary, spending more on childcare instead of cash benefits would benefit mainly those with secondary education, but also low educated parents. Highly educated parents have more resources to cope with the situation when the child needs care, while they also are less responsive to financial incentives.

Part-time work is likely to improve work-life balance: Being in part-time work helps women to deal with their work-life imbalance. Results suggest that *ceteris paribus* while reported work-family conflict increases with worked hours and women experience more intense conflicts, differences by gender are significantly and considerably smaller at lower numbers of hours spent at the workplace. Research results also suggest that part-time jobs are able to reduce the work-life imbalance experienced by European women and therefore they might be seen as effective policy tools in reconciling work and family duties. No similar effect was observed for men.

Part-time employment of mothers also affects the risk of poverty of all members of her household, including children. Thus, part-time work promotes social cohesion not only by attracting inactive people to the labour market, but also by increasing (household) income and reducing the risk of poverty. Yet, in countries where such jobs are scarce, like in most of the Central and Eastern European countries, including Hungary, the effect is less significant.

Part-time jobs provide low earnings – this is the main factor that bottlenecks the spread of these work arrangements in Hungary (and the same might hold for other Central and Eastern European countries). In addition, recent research results show that the incidence of the part-time jobs is highest among those already having an income from the welfare state, mainly in the form of pensions or childcare allowance.

Chart 1 The effect of worked hours on the perceived work-family conflict among women in the European Union (estimated regression coefficients)



Source: Gábos (2009), using the ISSP 2002 wave.

These findings can be interpreted in both absolute and relative terms. First, the wages related to part-time work are low in nominal terms, which cannot guarantee a reasonable standard of living for families. This leads to the situation in which if a second earner were in the household, he or she would prefer to rake up a full-time job instead of a part-time one. As a consequence, income from a part-time job cannot be seen as an effective tool of avoiding poverty, which provides disincentives for mothers to pick up such jobs. On the other hand, their level is also low compared to the cash benefits (including family allowance, maternal benefits, unemployment benefit, social assistance, etc.), which again provides a strong disincentive for part-time employment. Being the main reason, it may overcome the positive effects of policy initiatives on demand side (law regulation, wage subsidies, etc.).

Part-time work is associated with high fixed cost both on demand and supply side. Part-time jobs are often not available in the vicinity of the settlement or cannot be reached due to poor transport infrastructure. Employers are not always interested in creating part-time jobs instead of full-time jobs.

While the above mentioned factors are a widely shared understanding of the driving factors behind the low incidence of the part-time employment, the effectiveness of the new

legislation in force since January 2011 can also be questioned to some extent. The new policy tool ensures a 7 percentage points reduction in the wage-related employer's contribution if the mother returning during the maternal leave period is employed part-time by her workplace. This measure replaced a similar, but more general regulation, which was not conditioned on the part-time employment.

The attitudes and social norms widely shared by the members of the Hungarian society are supportive for mothers staying at home until the age of three of the child, although some changes have been registered in this respect during the last few decades. However, when employment is supported, a part-time arrangement is preferred instead of full-time, when the well-being of the child and of the mother is considered. According to some views expressed at the event, policy initiatives should reflect on these norms, while others claim that, in effect, policies contributed to spreading such norms in the society.

The role of the public sector is also considered as important, depending on whether it should take the lead in promoting part-time jobs or not. Also, a repeated concern about part-time jobs, which was raised at this event as well, is their precariousness and their possible negative effects on women's careers.

Availability and affordability of public childcare are the main problems in Hungary: In an EU comparative frame, drawing country-level conclusions, day care services are more likely to help increase participation for mothers with primary education, while cash transfers have a strong negative effect on their probability of employment, at least in the Central and Eastern European Member States, including Hungary. By contrast, higher educated mothers are less discouraged by cash transfers than their less educated peers and are practically not affected by the availability of day care services – except in transition countries. Highly educated parents have more resources to cope with the situation when the child needs care, while they are also less responsive to financial incentives. Furthermore, the conversion of cash transfers into day care provision would yield the highest rise in employment rates among mothers with secondary education, where both effects are strong, and especially so in the Central and Eastern European region, including Hungary.

One of the main points here is whether and at what age the child should participate in childcare – an issue which was also raised at the Budapest discussions. Some participants highlighted that this much depends not only on the relationship between the quality of parental and institutional childcare, but also on the needs of the child.

The availability and the affordability of public childcare are the main problems in Hungary. The supply lags far behind the demand and is a real obstacle for increasing the labour market participation of mothers with young children. While the public service is free of charge (except the food), affordability turns into a real problem when private arrangements are

considered. Some forms of such services, like family crèches, are extremely costly, since they need to cover all the costs from fees collected exclusively from families.

The flexibility of public institutions has been largely debated. Some views were expressed that the opening hours of these institutions sometimes did not match the needs of the parents in specific working time regimes. On the other hand, such schedules (before 7 am or after 6 pm) would strongly hamper the well-being of the child.

Innovative and non-standard forms of childcare arrangements were also discussed. In some cases, large companies can afford to run such institutions for their workers, or to buy in individual places in existing private institutions. However, the spread of such arrangements would require policy measures, providing vouchers, e.g. through the cafeteria system.

International best practices should be implemented with a deliberate analysis of local peculiarities only: As a main conclusion of the debate, the Nordic/Scandinavian model is seen as an *ideal type*, a best practice of how a society can adapt to changing societal processes and improve outcomes by adjusting the institutional environment to the key challenges they face. The main question is, however, how and to what extent the Hungarian situation differs from this model characterising in general the Scandinavian countries, even though the public spending on family policy is almost as high as it is in the Nordic Member States. In accordance, one of the main conclusions of the debate was that, while all interested parties should monitor the practices followed by the most successful countries, these cannot and should not be implemented without a deliberate analysis of the local peculiarities. The need for a flexible institutional and benefits system was also raised which would be to a large extent able to reflect on individual settings and would provide a calculable environment for couples to follow their own ways.

The Hungarian society is extremely fragmented. Highly educated parents working in some specific branches of the private sector could afford a Scandinavian way of ensuring work-life balance, while realising their aims in terms of fertility and labour market career. On the other hand, low educated parents with weak or non-existent attachment to the labour market, follow a life pattern that is, in some respects, closer to the developing countries instead of the Hungarian average. Taken more generally, the differences in employment rates and in the number of children by social status are much larger in Hungary than in the Nordic Member States.

The role of fathers is also a topic that is largely discussed in Hungary and similarly by the participants of the dissemination event. Several participants reported on an increased activity of fathers in caring for their children according to their experience, even if this is mostly limited to leisure time activities and, to a much smaller extent, to the household work. On the other hand, even if there is the possibility of fathers staying home with their children in the

period of the parental leave, low wages in general and the wage gap between men and women often cause families to avoid this option for rational reasons.

In Hungary, a burning issue is the future of ongoing projects started within the frame of development programmes supported by the European Social Fund. It is crucial to ensure that the findings of these projects will be processed in a systematic way and that the best practices will be made part of the standard institutional and policy system.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

- Most of all European best practices should be considered when national level interventions are designed, but there is a need to follow them carefully, after a detailed analysis of the local context.
- The policy and institutional system linked to the issue of work-life balance and its main outcomes should be improved by making it as flexible as possible to be adaptable to most individual situations. Planning and implementing family strategies would require flexibility and long-term calculability in all parts of the related policy system: cash benefits, parental leave system, daily childcare services, and employment policies.
- In Hungary, while keeping expenditure at the current level, there is a need to shift resources from cash benefits to services in order to allow parents to combine childcare with their duties at the workplace, and therefore to improve macro level outcomes, like female participation and fertility.
- If increasing the incidence of part-time work among mothers with young children is a policy priority, the supply side also needs to be supported. The main aim should be to
 - (i) find ways making the total income available adequate at household level while choosing such option adequate,
 - (ii) lower the fixed costs of employment (e.g. travel cost),
 - (iii) provide available, affordable and good quality childcare services.
- A key challenge in the field of policy practice is to increase the coverage of the childcare system to reach the disadvantaged as well, by
 - (i) encouraging alternative forms (like family crèches),
 - (ii) extending the existing system, or
 - (iii) providing opportunities via the cafeteria system.
- What will be the future of ongoing projects started within the frame of development programmes supported by the European Social Fund? It is crucial to ensure that the findings of these projects will be processed in a systematic way and that the best practices will be made part of the standard institutional and policy system.

Gender Elites and work-care relations (Poland)

Women's limited access to elites: In modern Poland we still experience the large-scale process of withdrawal of educated women from the labour market, especially at the specific stage of life when they have small children. This is one of the key factors of the low presence of women in social and economic elites. Taking into account later difficulties in reintegration into the labour market and all its consequences (higher unemployment risk, lower wages and pensions, less career opportunities), this withdrawal is a big loss of human as well as economic capital, both from the perspective of society and the individual. While household and family duties require no higher education, the society needs people who invested in their education to stay on the labour market and have a chance to realise their potential.

The presence of women in social elites is also important for shaping the perception of future chances and career paths by boys and girls. It is proven that professional achievements of parents, including mothers, are very important in shaping the ambitions of children. Therefore, while the working mother may have less time for her children, she is an important role model and someone they can be proud of. This also means that young women may learn from her example that a professional career is perfectly accessible for both genders. This type of thinking is crucial for finally overcoming mental barriers faced by many women while planning their educational path.

Individualisation as a best solution: The research shows that in order to plan an effective work & care policy it is crucial to realise that the needs and preferences of individuals in this sphere differ quite strongly. These preferences depend strongly on a person's upbringing and social capital, on career or employment type as well as on the structure of his or her family. One of the biggest mistakes is to impose one model of reconciliation of work and care on every family. It should be underlined that in order to help individuals realise their preferred model of work and family balance, they should be able to choose from different types of support.

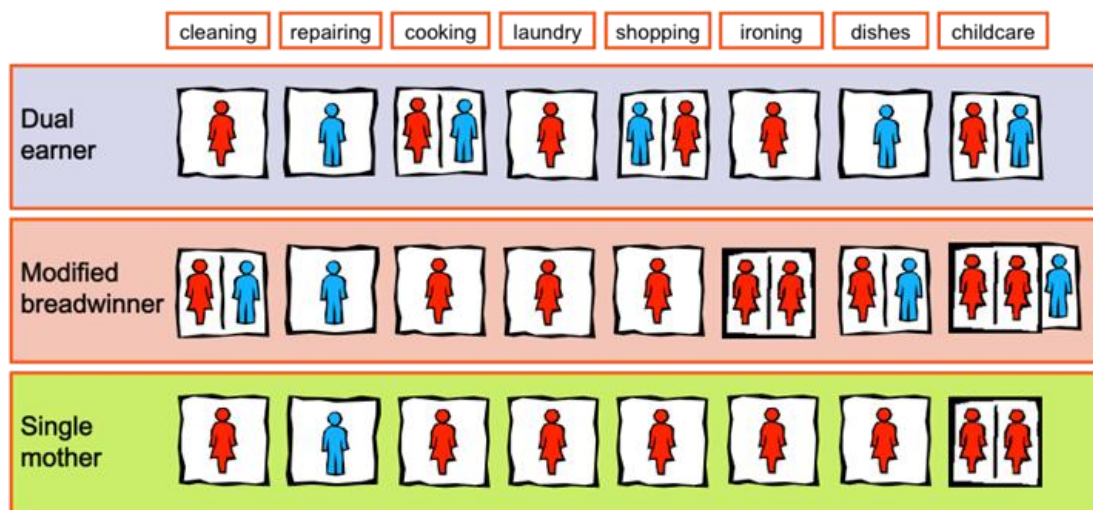
Childcare vs. upbringing: Hiring a babysitter to take care of children at pre-kindergarten age is relatively unpopular. This in turn strongly influences the women's labour market drop-out rate. There is a strong belief (not confirmed by research data) that children under three should be cared for by one family member (preferably mother) to allow bonding and to strengthen their sense of security. It may be argued that the strength of these beliefs stems from the fact that women are afraid of losing their "monopoly" in shaping the personality of their children. This approach is less popular among women belonging to social elites.

One of the main reasons women are expected to resign from their professional career and stay home with children, is the fact that childcare is often mistaken with upbringing. It should be emphasised that children's education, teaching behaviour patterns, and creating

emotional safety does not require the constant presence of parents. Therefore, while education should be primarily the task of parents, they are not the only source of care. Different individuals or institutions may exercise caring responsibilities. It is important to mention that participation of other individuals and entities in childcare does not mean that parents waive responsibility for their children's upbringing.

Partnership and male involvement: To deal with problems of work and care reconciliation, women need their partners' involvement and active participation in caring and domestic tasks which should not only be about "helping" from time to time, but about the real partnership in all aspects of everyday life. As WORKCARE research showed, the sphere of domestic division of tasks is still very traditional in Polish families. Below figure illustrates which tasks are performed by women, which by men, and which by both of them in three types of researched families. If the picture shows two or three women, they are usually female members of the family who help the women in performing said tasks (mother, sister).

Chart 2 Division of household task by gender and type of family



Source: Own elaboration based on WORKCARE 2005 data for Poland.

While analysing above figure it is easy to spot male and female “fields of expertise” – while men are responsible for all the repairing tasks and participate in childcare as well as dishwashing, women seem to be responsible for all the other domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking, laundry, shopping, ironing). This division of tasks shows there are still many responsibilities that should be more equally shared between the partners, in order to create better opportunities for women’s involvement in public life.

Similar results were observed in research conducted among young scientists in Poland (2005). In this group, the same patterns concerning the division of household tasks were revealed, with women reporting that they were doing all or more than half of the work. Only 6% of our female respondents (and 37% of males) declared that they were doing less than

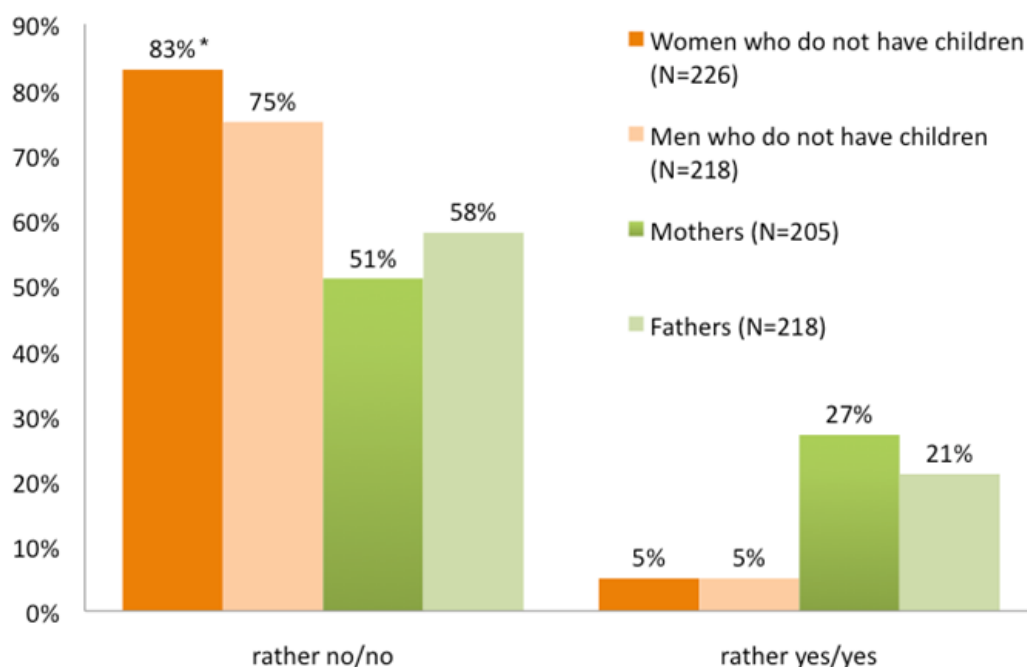
half of the housework. Even less equality can be found among owners of small businesses. In the case of this group 58% of male respondents and only 10% of females declared that they did less than half of the household work.

Higher education and work-care relations: The uniquely high explosion of educational aspirations of young people in Poland (higher than in other European countries) and the high percentage of women among graduates at universities require the implementation of some political solutions that take into consideration needs of the general labour market and the development of educational and research sectors (e.g. legal and institutional support for employees in the sectors).

It is necessary to influence women's and men's choices of fields of studies to stimulate women's interest in technical studies and hard sciences. Taking into consideration lack of specialists in those fields in Poland as well as other European Union countries, women should be strongly encouraged to engage in these types of studies.

As the research showed, for people making a career in science, family obligations are not perceived as an important obstacle as long as they do not have children. With children, women more often report the negative effects of family obligations than men.

Chart 3 „Family obligations are obstacles in professional work” (% of respondents who agree and disagree)



Source: „Kariery młodych naukowców” (Careers of Young Scientists), N=871, May-July 2005, face to face interviews. *significant differences (on level .05)

Gender differences are also visible when analysing reasons for not applying for stipends and grants among young scientists. As visible below, women much more often report family reasons behind their lower mobility and application activities than men. In case of men other reasons like lack of time or need to apply play a more important role.

Institutional and mental barriers: The main condition for women's successful progression into the social elites is breaking through institutional and mental barriers that hinder women's life opportunities. Therefore, supporting actions should be developed to empower women and help them fulfil their ambitions and plans. As important is lobbying for the change of cultural patterns, especially those concerning gender roles in the family and the stereotypical division of tasks.

What has to be taken into account when analysing the trajectories of women's careers, is that one of the facilitating factors is the cultural capital of the family (usually measured by education of the parents). This is why it is so important to support educational aspirations of young people and later to allow them to use this capital to both fulfil their own ambitions, and to pass them over to the next generation.

To summarise, it can be stated that the system of values and preferences concerning professional and family life strongly influences women's situation in social elites. Especially the non-stereotypical perception of family roles is an important facilitating factor.

Also very important are individual life strategies influencing the most important life choices, concerning education and employment as well as marriage and family. Attitudes of employers and co-workers, and the presence of a support network (parents, siblings, friends, neighbours, grassroots organisations) that an individual can rely on are crucial for the ability to combine caring responsibilities with work.

Even more important is the support of the partner and his or her engagement in everyday domestic and caring tasks. From the practical point of view, however, all those conditions are not enough if there is no access to care services and other institutional support for the families. The more diverse the forms of support are, the higher will be the quality of life of working parents and the bigger the chances for women's progress, both in social elites and elsewhere.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

What seems to be crucial is the socialisation of girls to the new roles that should start in kindergarten and primary school. The conditions to change the educational system in this way are (among others):

- Revision and systematic screening of school textbooks and other educational materials,
- Special training for teachers and school advisors should be a part of the policy,
- Additional activities should be addressed to girls to diminish their psychological barriers towards atypical careers.

The speakers underlined the importance of creating the mechanisms facilitating women's presence and success in academia:

- Longer period for applying for grants and stipends for those female scientists who already have small children (at present, the period is extended by one year for women who have babies),
- Special grants helping women to update their knowledge and research after coming back after maternal/parental leave),
- Women with small babies participating in workshops, conferences etc. should have the right to get support from the employing institutions to cover the expenses of an additional person who takes care of the child during the events,
- Extended period for the evaluation of scientific accomplishments of mothers/fathers with small children,
- Systematic monitoring criteria of the promotion of men and women by special units in scientific institutions,
- Creation of gender balanced structures of different scientific bodies.

It was also argued that a policy addressed to families of young scientists should be developed, so that young fathers and mothers have opportunities to place children in facilities (day-care centres) organised by scientific institutions or to receive financial support to place the children in other facilities of this kind. The above list includes the main institutional mechanisms which should be developed, but are yet to be modified and adjusted to specific conditions of specific countries.

Family support policy: To avoid the withdrawal of educated women from the labour market we need to support whole families in their caring responsibilities. It should also be stressed that mothers' accomplishments at work and in the public sphere constitute an important pattern to be followed by children in the future. Therefore, for the benefit of the whole society, it is important to enable women to realise their potential to become part of the social and economic elites.

Moreover, while planning public policy solutions, it is crucial to take into account that there are different family models that depend on levels of parents' education and their life experiences, as well as on the availability of services. To achieve this goal it is necessary to develop and strengthen the role of the institutional care-network (e.g. day-care centres, kindergartens) as socialising institutions, taking into account a widespread model of "one

child” families which causes children’s lack of experience in interacting with peers. Also, we should revise the stereotype that the care of a child below three should be in hands of one person as a precondition of his or her emotional development and feeling of security.

Both schools and media should stress that only cooperating partners can solve the problem of a balanced division of obligations in the family. Lifelong learning can also play an important role in changing accepted patterns of family, updating women’s education/skills allowing them and their partners to combine activities in private and public sphere.

Educational policy: The process of socialisation of girls and boys to the new roles has to start in kindergarten and primary school and include several activities like (1) revision and systematic screening of school textbooks and other educational materials, (2) special training for teachers and school advisors, (3) formulation of additional activities for girls to diminish their psychological barriers against atypical careers.

It is necessary to influence women’s and men’s choices of educational paths to promote women’s interest in technical studies and hard sciences taking into consideration the lack of specialists in these fields at universities and research institutions in Poland and in other European Union countries.

Also, the flexible models of work like job-sharing, work contracting, working on demand or telework may be a good solution allowing for easier reconciliation of work and family. On the other hand, it should be remembered that most of the flexible arrangements are less secure and financially attractive for an employee, therefore they should not be recommended unconditionally.

Another aspect of flexibility in the labour market is flexible working hours. Some more specific models are task-oriented working hours (employer delegates tasks but does not require specific working hours) or equivalent working hours (employer agrees to longer working hours on one chosen day while working hours on other days are shorter). Other solutions like individual time accounts (employee individually collects surpluses and deficiencies of his or her working time) or intermittent working time (working hours in a given day are divided into two periods with a break in between which does not count as working time and cannot last longer than five hours) may also allow for easier reconciliation of work and care. Both men and women should have access to those non-standard work schedule options to allow for more choice depending on the type of family and parents career paths.

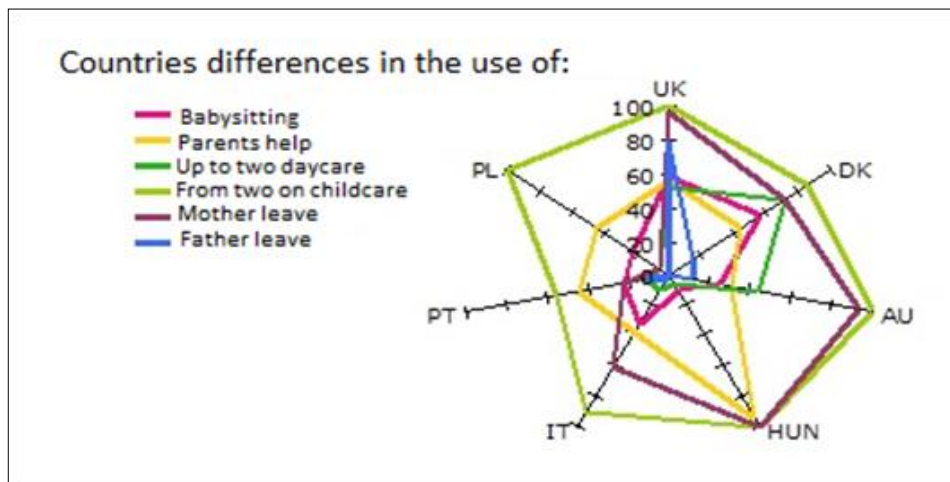
Social care and work-care balance (Italy)

Gender differences among youngsters...: Boys and girls who participated in the discussions clearly seem to know that their future family experience will be influenced by gender contracts – some of them slightly renewed, the most quite traditional – somehow imposed on them by society and which they only partially feel they fit in.

Family models have a great influence, too, either in the form of the models proposed by parents or by the consumer society, while in some cases the responsibility of the male privilege is given especially to mothers. The image of the male breadwinner is still widespread and therefore also the one of the woman staying at home with children (this is true for both boys and for girls, even if a little more for the first ones and with some territorial differences, in the sense that the model is much more present in the South than in the North, with the paradox that women from the South who keep a distance from the model do so in a more radical way). This also implies a wider cultural distance which can be seen in the South between boys and girls of the same age. When we ask boys and girls if these models are binding to them, opinions differ, though, in the sense that some of the girls accept, especially in the South, to subordinate their job involvement to family obligations, given that there is enough time for their personal achievement before having children. Girls from the Centre and the North are rarely keen to accept this trade-off, often because of the family models they grew up in.

...and from Third Sector representatives' perspective: Regarding the Third Sector representatives' perspective on the theme, they often refer to a continuous engagement they have in projects directly or indirectly dealing with work-life balance. Working a lot with students and youngsters in general they have received much positive feedback and evidence of interest. Too often, though, these experiences are in danger of being interrupted – even where they produce positive results – by the lack of financing and a reduced possibility for the public sector to invest in this kind of projects because of recent hard cuts in financing.

“New fathers” and “new mothers”: It clearly emerges that an anti-politics point of view hides the real possibility to see a welfare system which could really help youngsters make the right choices in transition to adulthood. What is really thought is that the State “cannot do much” and even where it could make the difference, costs would be too high on citizens. The perception of a general indifference of politics and politicians for the real lives of citizens does not help in making work-life balance interventions to be perceived as a matter of civil rights, nor in creating a positive relation with local governors – even if the real use of private / public care resources in daily practices is not so different from other countries.

Chart 4 How people in different EU countries use care offers

Source: Workcare reports

Work-life balance challenges are mainly related to time from workers' perspective: Workers mainly frame work-life balance as a problem linked to the “time” factor. Long hours and rigid schedules imposed by the working environment – especially where assembly lines are involved – are the first constraints workers have to face when in need to solve family problems. Part-time work and schedule flexibility are seen as potential solutions. However, they still are too hard to be put in place either because part-time in Italy is still too risky (once obtained, it is often hard to go back to full time), or because schedule flexibility is described as a cost for the company which is often too heavy a burden to carry except for small and informal adjustments workers (put in place between themselves) and for very short times, so that the impact on the company's productivity is very low. It is emphasised that in some cases, though, schedule flexibility, especially regarding the start and finish times, could even turn out to be an advantage for the company and not only a cost.

The lack of services directed to families within or near their working environment: Workers are well aware of the costs work-life balance services would represent for their companies, especially since they are small and medium sized companies, but the possibility to create common solutions, even between companies insisting on the same territory could be explored, resulting in a benefit for everyone and more affordable costs. These considerations still seem to prevail over a requirement of good quality services (just among young people). The hard time workers have in synchronizing schedules, energies, even the intensity of duties between fathers and mothers, between husbands and wives represents another important issue. This is a crucial dimension which opens up a not yet well explored scenario, at least at national research level, but which has a lot to do with the issue of quality rather than quantity of time. Working hours are not questioned, but rather the time that is needed every day to go to work and to return home at night. When commuting takes a lot of time it is considered to be something society could work on, mainly by investing in public transport –

and even if everybody knows how hard a time public transport is facing due to recent cuts in funding to local authorities.

Lack of information regarding work-life policies and related rights: The educational issue regarding work-life balance matters is mentioned frequently by all the people participating in the events, since it is frequently underlined how crucial being well aware of the issue is for everyone – workers, employers and also students. Another focus was on the importance of recognising the advantages everyone can utilise under the existing laws and, in a more general sense, of being aware of the positive effects an improvement in the quality of work could have for workers in their private and working life. Making the return from a maternal leave easier and less damaging for female workers – this aspect was well pointed out, also by male workers – could for instance ease a potentially tense situation within the company.

Frail elderly people: care-giving burdens awaiting workers: It is well-known how much easier it is to take a leave to care for a small child as opposed to taking a leave to care for an old parent or other relative, but also how great a challenge this is – and will be in the future – both for female and male workers.

The difficulty to overcome gender inequalities even if the “male breadwinner” model has been overcome: Linked to all this is the fact that all best plans on how to overcome gender inequalities in the daily sharing of domestic duties (which couples agree on when they start living together) vanish once actual work-life tensions arise, which are mainly and mostly linked to the sharing of such duties when both partners work.

The ability to build networks and to work on the edge for those who work on work-life balance issues: Mostly within the Third Sector, the awareness of the need and the opportunity to build cooperative networks between public and private bodies to create more effective interventions together – even in single local areas – is widespread and rooted.

Dealing with work-life balance (even reversed) on the workplace daily, also by working on stereotypes: Third Sector organisations often have the ability to “detect” feelings well before other bodies, and to start working on them. In saying this we refer to some experiences they have put in place to preserve some themes which are not yet being taken into close consideration by public bodies, such as the protection of maternity leaves for self-employed women who are at risk of becoming even more precarious on the labour market than the real “temps” are. The dealing with other people's work-life balance issues by offering services (often care services, such as the ones directed to children or elderly people) thus allowing mothers and fathers, male and female workers to reach a better balance between the different spheres of their lives is also rooted strongly in Third Sector organisations' daily routine. They also deal with work-life balance issues within their organisations, often taking up a sort of “reversed work-life balance perspective” which allows them to safeguard male

professionals in working environments where they are a minority, such as educational services.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

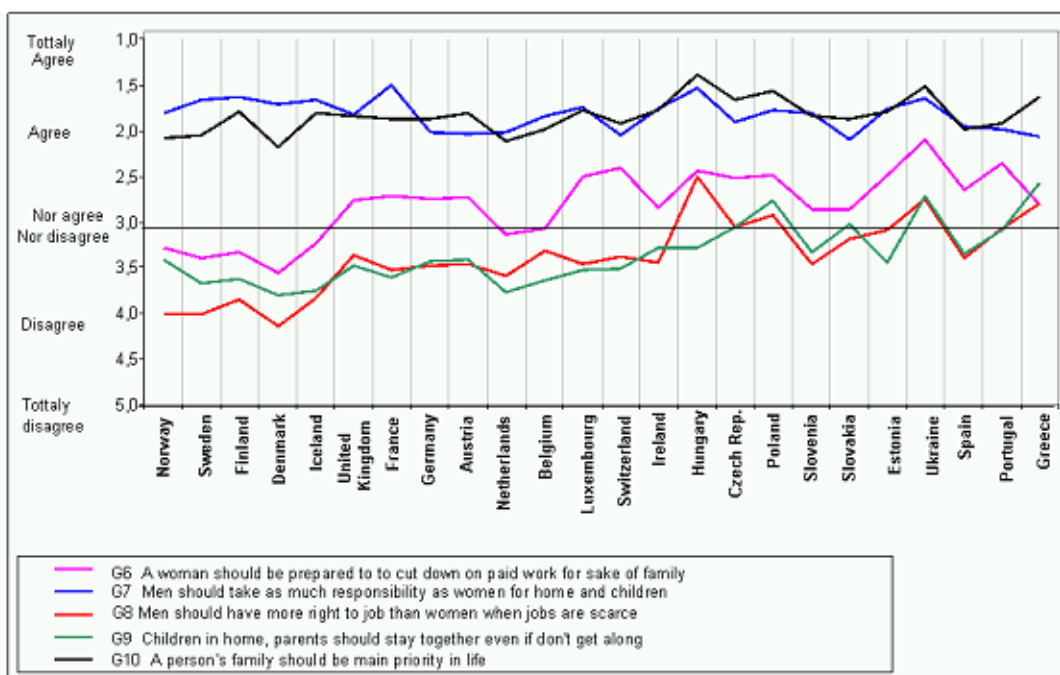
- A specific intervention on youngsters during the last years of secondary schooling is needed and required to be centred on the necessity to change the Italian society's developing model towards more gender and generational equality and a better quality of life for all.
- These interventions cannot be episodic but rather systematic and have to be carried out in collaboration with the teachers, who are the only ones who can connect the debate themes to daily life practices in common sense talk. Small financing to reward projects directly proposed by youngsters on work-life balance issues, as well as public events to recognise them publicly and experiences abroad to visit other European countries to reward students who take up the challenge of facing the matter, should also be put in place.
- Good practices on work-life balance already exist within the Italian labour market, but they are often informal, based on the cooperation among colleagues and between employees and employers. Those should be favoured and helped in emerging through economic support and de-taxation granted to employers who, especially in small and medium size companies, support them and allow them to become structured resources. This could even be done by coordinating them with other companies on the same territory, to overcome the fragmentation the experiences deriving from the Italian law number 53/00 still too often face.
- The assets in terms of experiences, projects, sometimes even small strategies which are put in place within families, within workplaces, on the services market investing on the culture of work-life balance are still too fragmented, and are therefore not in a condition to spread and transfer good practices. Work-life balance is a mainstreaming issue, and this is the reason why it needs a re-qualification of political actions. Moreover, it has to consider all ages of life and not only the central ones.
- We cannot progress in work-life balance without complex policies which really implement an enabling Welfare State. What seems to be a crucial issue is that a wide range of combinational possibilities between caring, leaves and part-time work, and informal ways of caregiving should be awarded with proper public recognition and protection. Everyone and every family needs to be able to combine all these means taking into account the real needs, while no technocratic solution can be considered to be sufficient to improve the country's quality of life and its economic and productive performance.

Mapping work-care orientations for gender equality in private and public contexts (Portugal)

We observe following European Trends in family and childcare support policies: (1) The dual earner family is increasingly seen as the norm in European countries. This causes some stress for families in managing work and care. (2) In countries where there is little childcare provision this causes great strain on families because they have to make a range of arrangements for childcare whilst the parents are at work which can be quite precarious. (3) This means that women have to shoulder double responsibility for employment and domestic care. (4) Fathers are increasingly involved in child-rearing but women still do most of the domestic work.

Emergence of new meanings of the family: Across Europe there is a general consensus and very high agreement on the idea that a person's family should be main priority in life and that men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children.

Chart 5 New meanings of the Family



European Social Survey (2004)

Care policies, children development and parents: Parents are greatly concerned about the cognitive and educational development of children. In many European countries there is a shortage of affordable good quality childcare especially for children under three years. Pre-school and school provision for children over three years is often for short hours and does not meet the needs of parents when both are in paid employment.

Caring in Europe - informal and women-centred: The state of caring in Europe can be characterised by low levels of formal care for all dependents are prevalent across the EU, informal care is the predominant form of care, better care is available for children, less developed are services for older persons, there are negative financial and emotional strains on carers. Across Europe kin and friends provide important support while grandparents provide an important resource in emergencies. In countries without a good provision of affordable childcare, reliance on kin is higher. Families without kin face difficulties. Kin are an important resource for enabling parents' choices, the unavailability of kin makes it more difficult for parents to combine paid employment with care.

Absence of policies - women's consequences: Good childcare provision enables continuity of employment since those countries with the greatest degree of public childcare support are the ones which also have the greatest continuity of employment for men and women over time. By contrast, in those countries with extended childcare leave it is often difficult for women to re-enter the workforce after having had children. Little childcare provision causes great strain on families. Women have to shoulder double responsibility for employment and domestic care; on the other hand, good childcare provision enables continuity of employment for men and women over time.

There is a shortage of affordable good quality childcare especially for children under three. Pre-school and school provision for children over three years is often for short hours and does not meet the needs of parents when both are in paid employment. In the absence of affordable childcare it is generally women who take time out of the labour market, part-time or insecure employment. This is a result of a number of factors including ideologies of care, normative expectations, the attitudes of employers and the gender pay gap ... and has life time consequences for women's economic security and career opportunities.

Workplace and family important for high quality of life: Besides job autonomy and social relations at work, work-life balance support proved to be highly relevant for the quality of life. Work-life balance support proved to be highly relevant for the quality of life. Long working hours, work pressure and job insecurity, on the other hand, negatively influence overall life satisfaction as well as having care responsibilities. Country differences indicate that in a country with more profound social policies and regulations regarding quality of work and life, workers appear to be more satisfied.

Importance of institutional context for quality of life: The quality of family life is strongly related to the quality of the family policies and their flexibility. The greater security of employment, the greater gender equality in both paid and unpaid work, the more extensive state support for family care as typical for the social-democratic welfare states serve to provide a better institutional context for the quality of life than the high material well-being but lower protection and lower equality in the corporatist and the liberal regimes. Countries in

sub-protective and post-socialist regimes tend to combine low living standards with low flexibility of work and low or declining state support.

Fertility and employment - Policies do have effects: Higher fertility rates in some countries are often associated with good childcare provision which enable women to fully participate in the labour market as well as in raising their children. The participation of women in the labour market is not a constraint to a higher fertility rate, on the contrary, it is a factor that seems to enhance it. Though policies, and their combination, differ in different countries they may have the same impact in raising fertility rates.

Positive correlation between mothers' work and fertility rate in Europe: The participation of women in the labour market is not a constraint to a higher fertility rate, on the contrary, it is a factor that seems to enhance it. In countries with long term high fertility rates (Nordic) mothers of young children (up to three years) work full-time. After a leave of one year they go back to work.

Part-time jobs do not solve the fertility problem: Contrary to some expectations, part-time jobs are rarely a solution for working mothers. Across Europe, mothers of children under three years old work full-time. Part-time jobs are not a solution for mothers. In countries with a significant number of mothers in part-time jobs the most common situation is the withdrawal from the labour market (UK, Netherlands, Switzerland). In those countries we find higher percentages of mothers (of children under three years old) outside the labour market than working. In countries with long term high fertility rates (Nordic) mothers of young children (until three) work full-time. After a leave of one year they go back to work.

Labour market and workplaces were highly gendered: As women gain career opportunities they experience more time pressures and the need to find the right balance between work and family life. At the same time there is an enduring gender asymmetry in family care involvement, even in the more egalitarian Nordic countries. In many cases the dominant organisational discourse is that men and women are treated equally and fairly therefore assuming that everyday practices are gender neutral. Yet vertical and horizontal segregation is common. This is often justified on the grounds of gender stereotypes. Working practices based on gendered assumptions undermine not only gender equity but also workplace effectiveness. Yet assumptions about gender are rarely made explicitly and discussed or challenged.

There is growing evidence that working practices based on gendered assumptions undermine not only gender equity but also workplace effectiveness. Persistence of both gender pay gap across Europe (particular acute in Portugal) and gender glass ceiling across European countries.

Flexibility and quality of employment: There is a growing diversification of the legal conditions of employment contracts, their duration and the amount and schedules of working hours. Flexibilisation is 'double edged' as it has the potential to harmonise work and family life and lead to a higher quality of life, and to induce more overtime, a disturbed work-life balance and less quality of life. Flexible work brings more opportunities for achieving a work/life balance but may also be a trap of insecure jobs without career prospects. In the current situation of diversified labour markets, not only the quantity but also the quality of employment has to become a central issue for the European welfare states.

Different kinds of flexibility: We should beware of using too narrow a definition of flexibility (for example: deregulation or counting the numbers of part-time, self-employed and temporary workers) and rather see flexibility in broader terms to include a variety of working arrangements both inside full time or secure jobs as well as outside of them. Therefore:

- Flexibility should be regulated. The de-regulation of labour market protection can lead to an increase in bad forms of flexibility.
- Flexible employment contracts are easily associated with job instability, often resulting in a lack of protection for workers in terms of sick leave, unemployment and family care, among others.
- Guaranteeing that flexibility in work is accompanied by social protection for workers and reinforcing control of employers' abuse of flexibility are two focuses of intervention recognised as essential in promoting quality of work.
- Flexicurity policies often provide flexibility and security for men but only flexibility for women. This has a negative impact on women's access to employment, opportunities for support in re-entry to the labour market and economic and employment security across the life course.

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

- Social policy towards children is a collective responsibility. Children should be seen as the responsibility of the society as a whole rather than just the private responsibility of families.
- Raising well socialised and adequately cared for children is in everyone's interests in terms of ensuring that there are future workers able to take up positions in the knowledge society, creating healthy, contributing citizens, supporting the long-term future of the welfare state and avoiding crime.
- Comprehensive childcare is preferable to other policy solutions for raising children (such as extended child rearing leave) because they enable women to return to full labour market activity with minimum disruption and is not necessarily more expensive than paying women to stay at home.

- Given the importance of cognitive and educational development in an increasingly complex and competitive society, quality, professionalised childcare that can provide educational development tailored to the needs of children of different age groups is preferable to other kinds of care.
- Well-paid flexible parental leave including 'daddy' leave should be available to enable parents to combine their caring responsibilities with paid employment.
- Substitute Care – child minders, nurseries, pre-school classes, school, after school and out of school provision should be affordable, professional, of high quality, adequate to meet the demand from all parents who want to access the services and the opening hours should be compatible with full-time employment and employment demands.
- Governments need to invest in supporting families to enable them to combine their responsibilities for care and ensure that men and women are able to exercise their rights to employment.
- Gender equality in the workplace and labour market must be progressed and, in particular, attention paid to measures to reduce the gender-pay gap.
- Employers must be encouraged to introduce family friendly policies and men and women feel supported in taking their entitlement.
- Demanding from the state legal frameworks and other incentives to promote gender equality and family friendly policies within the organisations and companies.
- Regulation of flexibility so that it takes place within the scope of the official economy and complies with employment regulations.
- Regulation of flexibility in such a way that it is not driven into the black economy.
- Flexicurity is seen as a key aspect of European policy, but these policies must ensure flexibility and security for men and women, not flexibility and security for men and flexibility without security for women.

Labour market transitions in comparative perspective (United Kingdom)

Seminars were organised to address relevant national debates. Given the introduction of the Equality Act (2010) in the UK, the seminar in Brighton examined the impact of this legislation in relation to the findings from a number of EU studies on this issue.

One of the key issues emerging from this workshop was a) the difficulty of obtaining relevant good quality data to address issues of intersectionality and multiple inequalities; b) the emerging pervasiveness of Equality Impact Assessments in public sector organisations.

As public sector cuts were being implemented in the UK the London seminar was held shortly after the Comprehensive Spending Review. At this seminar key issues of the impact of public sector cuts and their consequences for employment in both the public and private sector were discussed with members of the British Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the Trade Union Congress. The session was chaired by Will Hutton a distinguished commentator in this field.

The seminars addressing labour market transitions in later life also focused on issues related to legislative change and the removal of the default retirement age, allowing people to stay on in employment beyond statutory retirement age. These events included both local and international researchers and policy makers. Some of the key themes emerging from these discussions were the consequences of new forms of inequality and their impact on different sections of the population. Policy debates focused on the direction of policy change and on what (if anything) was being done to address these growing inequalities, and the likely effectiveness of these measures. There was a lively and broad representation of a diverse policy community at all of these events.

The key issues for discussion at these events covered the following topics:

- How legislative change was impacting equality across generations
- How legislative change affected different populations and how policy could be developed to effectively address issues of growing inequality
- How new forms of inequality were emerging from economic changes and public sector cuts
- How working hours could be organised to facilitate labour market transitions across the life cycle
- How effective Equality Impact Assessments were in practice
- What were the consequences of working longer and into retirement for different sections of the population
- How can policy support extending working life

- (family-related) income differences (i.e. gender wage gaps) and their effect on the social security of families and esp. old age security of women/mothers
- Childcare responsibilities, job and household: sharing by partners, family networks, the role of grandparents and especially grandmothers
- Short documentary films on how legislative change was impacting equality across generations
- Discussion of research findings and own (local) experiences

Policy Pointers and Recommendations

Education and work transitions: A key finding of this project has been the problem of low skilled individuals getting access to education and training that is relevant for the labour market, in a context where employers are more likely to invest in highly skilled employees. The UK Wolf Review into vocational education and training for 14-19 year-olds reported to the Department of Education in spring 2011. The remit was to review provision and costs, as well as transitions between different levels of qualifications. The challenge looking forward is to ensure those most in need of education and training acquire the skills they need. This will not be made easier by the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Grant to 16-18 year olds from low-income backgrounds in education.

Likewise, the UK government will transfer the costs of providing university education from the state to individual graduates through increased student fees, following the Browne Review of Higher Education funding. This raises challenges about the degree to which people can access higher education, at a time when higher level skills are increasingly important in the labour market.

Care and Employment Transitions: Whilst the rise in maternal employment in the UK has met the Lisbon goals, research identifies significant concerns about the quality and remuneration of paid work that mothers with caring responsibilities are able to access. The UK government has extended and made parental leave more flexible, with higher remuneration, and an extension to fathers; however, there still remains a significant pay penalty for those who interrupt working in order to care for others.

The changing structure of the care economy highlights new demands, not only for early years educational provision through pre-school nurseries, but also the need for a variety of elderly care providers. Key issues for future policy identified by research revolve around flexible working time, leave arrangements and care provision. How can we enable access to flexible good quality employment for both men and women over the life cycle to enable them to synchronise different demands on their time at home and at work? How will we be able to provide good quality and affordable childcare that not only allows parents the ability to work and care, but also provides important advantages to reduce social inequalities? And what

range of care provision will be offered to enable the management of diverse care responsibilities for older people?

Transitions between precarious and secure employment:The Transitional Labour Market approach argues for a balance between flexibility and security. A particular concern is the degree to which precarious and marginal employment leads to secure and high quality work. The *flexicurity* proposals suggest a radical transformation of the relationship between employment protection and benefit entitlements. In return, resources would be allocated to training provision and public sector employment guarantees, in particular for younger people. Research often suggests, however, that there is more flexibility than security in practice, and that models developed from other countries are not easily adopted in countries with very different institutional arrangements.

In the UK the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention Of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 ensures that those on temporary contracts receive the same day-to-day rights as permanent workers. It also means staff on temporary contracts is awarded permanent status after four years. Agency staff has been excluded from this legislation, but the Agency workers directive (AWD) extends provision to this group. Of course, this does not ensure temporary workers end up in secure employment, and policies to assist people in this transition are inevitably required. The Vulnerable worker enforcement forum is an attempt to monitor abuses at work, and ensure compliance to the law.

Transitions between unemployment and employment: Although the UK Coalition government is merging the New Deal programmes into a single welfare to work scheme, there will be significant policy continuity with the last government. The government's approach will be to provide "*help for those who cannot work, training and targeted support for those looking for work, but sanctions for those who turn down reasonable offers of work or training*". The rhetoric of this debate has tended to focus on the sanctions element.

The research reviewed in this project clearly indicates that '*services and sanctions*', of the type proposed by the government, can be effective at getting people into work. However, it is important that the balance of services and sanctions is carefully assessed, as research indicates that services are very important for hard-to-reach groups and the long-term unemployed. These services need a high adviser-to-client ratio to be effective. In addition, if sanctions and requirements are set too high there is danger that disadvantaged individuals will simply leave the scheme to work in the informal economy. The introduction of a Universal Credit in the UK may enhance the attractiveness of low paid work to the unemployed. However, if policy adopts too much of a 'Work First' approach, in which people are pressurised into taking the first job that is offered, this can have a long-term impact on their future earnings and career.

Transitions between employment and retirement: In future there will be an increasing need for people to work into older age. The rise in the State Pension Age from 2018 and the phasing out of the Default Retirement Age of 65 in 2011 is likely to increase the numbers working in their late 60s onwards. However, these policies alone will be insufficient to extend the working life. EU research identifies other areas where progression can be made.

First, enhancing the quality of available jobs for older people would appear to be a productive way of encouraging employment, as indicated by the high levels of employment in Scandinavian countries. Second, possibilities for gradual retirement are a popular prelude to full retirement, although we need to understand much better how this can be deployed to encourage delayed labour market exit. Third, we need to explore policies that can keep older peoples' skills up to date, in a context where employers may be less willing to make investments.

European and national level: At the European level the *European Employment Strategy* (EES) and the *Lisbon Strategy* launched in 2000 set out to achieve high levels of employment and social inclusion by 2010. National targets were set to achieve: i) full employment, ii) improve quality employment and productivity at work, and iii) strengthen social cohesion. The four pillars of the EES were employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities. Member States were required to produce National Action Plans on Employment indicating the policy measures they were introducing to enable them to achieve these targets. The UK has achieved the 2010 numerical targets in terms of levels of labour market participation.

However, looking forward key questions centre on the sustainability of these achievements in an uncertain economic climate. Policy makers need to address :

- the quality of available jobs and
- how these are distributed across the population.

At a European level this is reflected by the *Europe 2020* agenda launched in 2010 that aims to promote '*Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth*'. In addition to raising the employment rate of the working age population to 75% and increasing research and development, it also aims to enhance educational outcomes amongst the population and reduce the numbers in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion by 20 million. Clearly, this raises challenges across the different transitions covered by this project, and the research reviewed in the policy briefing can inform this process.

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Titel: Policy Review on WORKCARESYNERGIES – A Dissemination of Synthesised Framework Programme Research Findings

Policy Review

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