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Searching for welfare, work and gender equality

Working Paper no 59

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Searching for welfare, work and gender equality

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Abstract:

The paper describes to which extent European welfare states support an individual adult worker model and how the current policy should be assessed in terms of gender equality. Although a more individual design of welfare policies is clearly recognizable, the paper also illustrates the large gap between the implicit assumptions of the adult worker model and the actual reality of most European Member States. Only a few countries, with the Nordic countries as the most well-known examples, have developed a system of child care arrangements that seems to be based on the assumption that fathers and mothers will both be fully engaged in the labour market. Others countries have invested in policies which allow for large interruption in labour force participation or which allow the combination of work and care by introducing part-time working hours. Overall the actual policy design does not indicate a high profile of gender equality. Perhaps the most challenging problem of the current redesign of the welfare state is that family support policies can only to a certain extent be redesigned in accordance with employment policies. Although some women participate on an equal footing with men, the ‘dual earner, gender specialized, family model’, which is geared towards greater, but not full equality, seems more feasible.

JEL codes:

J13, J16, J22, H31, I38

Key words:

Labour force participation, gender equality, government policy, fiscal policy, child care

Searching for welfare, work and gender equality

Welfare is not just a natural given, but also the result of deliberate action. According to Nasar (2011) this insight marks the beginning of economics as a scientific endeavour. The future is more than a whim of the gods; with the right institutions and correct kind of control, welfare can be realized. It is therefore the task of economics to find an answer to all kinds of economic disasters - from hyperinflation to recession - and so generate stability and prosperity. This ‘grand pursuit’ mainly focuses on the material side of welfare: full employment, economic growth and stable prices. At the same time, there is broad consensus that the concept of “welfare” must be defined broadly and also covers a fair distribution of income and equal rights.

The rise of the modern welfare state fits in with this way of thinking. The welfare state cushions the financial setbacks that result when economic growth slows down, or individuals are struck by adversity. At the same time the welfare state provides equal access to education and health care. As a result, welfare states do not only exist to relieve poverty, but also to provide insurance and to smooth consumption over the life cycle. Barr describes both purposes as the ‘Robin Hood’ and the ‘piggy bank’ function of the welfare state. The Robin Hood function is covered by “a series of institutions that provide poverty relief, redistribute income and wealth, and reduce social exclusion”. The piggy bank function is covered by “a series of institutions that provide insurance and offer a mechanism for redistribution over the life cycle” (Barr 2002: 1). The argument that the welfare state has a piggy bank function that is additional to and separate from poverty relief is important. By providing income transfers in case of unemployment and old age for example, and by organizing health care and education, the resulting gains to wellbeing are enormous, covering the entire population. At the same time it has to be underlined that the structure and the scale of the welfare state are not static over time or between countries. The ‘configuration’ changes, not only because of new insights in (the trade-off between) efficiency and equity, but also because of a changing socio-economic reality, such as structural economic change, increased mobility, ageing, changing gender roles and changing perceptions of equality.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges of the modern welfare state is to adapt to a system in which the point of reference is no longer the breadwinner family model with its gendered division of work and care, but rather a more individualized model in which it is presumed that both men and women are active at the labour market. The latter development is often referred to as the rise of the ‘adult worker model’, as it is presumed that each adult

participates in the labour market according to his or her abilities (Lewis 2001; Lewis and Giullari 2005). The rise of the adult worker model has large implications for the structure of the welfare state, because it implies a change in the organization of paid and unpaid care and the presumed 'natural' gender order. Within the breadwinner family model paid work and unpaid care are strictly divided between the two adult family members, but at the same time united within the nuclear family. Within that particular model, the purpose of the welfare state is to facilitate the social division of work, by actively encouraging the feasibility of the breadwinner family. In contrast, within the adult worker model, paid and unpaid work are combined and performed by a single person: the economically independent citizen (m/f) who is responsible for the care of children or other family members in addition to being self-supporting. The welfare state that matches the adult worker model not only compensates its citizens for the loss of income, but also supports them in their attempt to gain full employment and facilitates them in combining paid and unpaid work.

A different employment model thus translates into a different configuration of the welfare state. In a breadwinner family model there is no need for parental leave or child care services; in an adult worker model social assistance for lone mothers or a breadwinner allowance for the depending partner are not appropriate. The changing patterns of work therefore demand a different social security system, a different collection of risks that have to be covered, different notions of solidarity and a different embedding of individual and collective responsibilities. Recalibrating the welfare state in accordance with changing reality is, however, a complicated business. More concrete: the adult worker model is more easily introduced in labour market policy than in the configuration of the welfare state. This may be due to intrinsic difficulties in organizing long term and large scale transitions, to budgetary constraints, or to conflicting interest and conflicting visions on the welfare state and the role of the family. In fact, although policies seem to encourage a more equal role for men and women, a more accurate characterization of the current developments might be the rise of the 'dual earner, gender specialized, family model'. This term, coined by Daly, indicates that the actual developments do not suggest an unequivocal move to an individualized adult worker model, but rather seek a middle way between the family and the individual. Daly (2011: 2). "This makes for complexity and even ambiguity in policy, a manifestation of which is that reform within countries involves concurrent moves in several directions".

In this paper we will describe the current state of affair in welfare state policy and the search for welfare, work and gender equality. The changing patterns of labour force

participation within the EU and the rise of a more individualized adult worker model (2) will be the starting point. Against this background the tax regime has to be recalibrated (3.1), new welfare state arrangements have to be introduced, such as parental leave and child care services (3.2), and working hours have to be individualized (3.3). The logic and internal consistency of these changes will then be discussed, together with the implications for gender equality (4), after which the paper will end with the most important conclusions (5).

2. Changing patterns of labour force participation

Within the full breadwinner family model, wealth and welfare implied the non labour force participation of married women. This conviction was actively supported by rules and legislation, for example by breadwinner perks in the tax system, unequal social security entitlements, exclusionary measures for women in pension schemes etc. (Janssens 1998; Land 1980; Lewis 1992). The breadwinner family model, however, no longer serves as a normative framework. Rather the emphasis is on more equal labour force participation of men and women, although the actual working hours may still differ. In effect, in western European Member State especially since the 1980's, there is a strong growth in female labour supply, inspired by higher levels of education, demographic change, the rise of the service economy and increased wage levels (Goldin 2006).

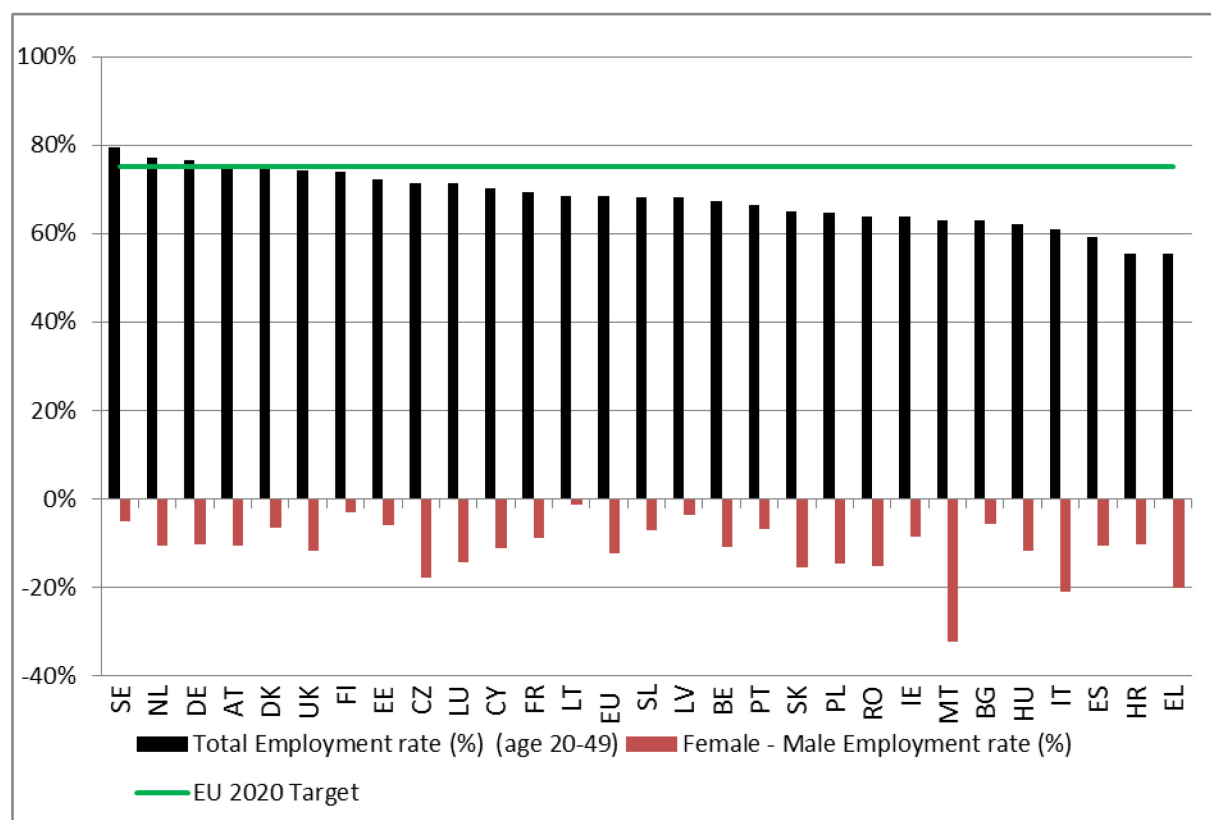
In Central and Easter Europe, since the second world war, there has been a strong emphasis on the dual earner model, implying high male and female labour force participation. To a certain extent it could be stated that the adult worker model had already been introduced in the Central and Eastern European Member States – given the emphasis on paid work for both men and women. At the point of transition, the female participation rate was 80% in Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and around 70% per cent in Poland, Hungary and Romania (Pascall and Lewis 2004: 375). At the same time, the socio-economic reality of men and women before the transition indicated the complexities of a model that emphasized the importance of paid work while at the same time neglecting the importance of (unpaid) care. In these instances, work did not necessary imply wealth and welfare, or gender equality. Since the 1990's, after entering the European Union, the specific history still has an impact on the welfare state configuration and the policies targeted at paid and unpaid work.

Especially at the level of the European Union the individualised adult worker model has become an important reference model, both for social and economic reasons. Within the European Employment Strategy, growing female participation is favoured as a means to

promote gender equality and social inclusion, as well as to increase economic competitiveness and to broaden the tax base of the European welfare states. For this reason, the Lisbon council of 2000 has set targets for the overall employment rate of 70% and a female employment rate of 60% by 2010. In 2010 the European Commission adopted a five-year strategy for promoting equality between women and men in Europe. The strategy aims in particular to make better use of women's potential, thereby contributing to the EU's overall economic and social goals. According to the Commission, getting more women in to the labour market helps counterbalance the effects of a shrinking working-age population, thereby reducing the strain on public finances and social protection systems, widening the human capital base and raising competitiveness. The emphasis on increasing the participation rate has been continued in the Europe 2020 strategy, although the specific emphasis on increasing the female participation rate and on promoting gender equality has disappeared: the aim is simply to reach an overall employment rate of 75 per cent (20-64 years) by 2020 (EC 2010).

The current state of affairs is summarized in Figure 1, which provides data for 2012 on the overall employment rate, in combination with the gender gap in employment. From the figure it appears that among the EU Member States Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Denmark have already met the 2020 target of 75 per cent, with the United Kingdom and Finland close behind. Low employment rates are recorded in the Southern Member States (Italy, Spain and Greece) and some of the Eastern Member States (Bulgaria, Hungary and Croatia). Presumably these low scores are partly the result of the current economic crisis, yet also more structural aspects seem to play a role as these countries also indicate a relatively low participation rate (see table A1 for more details). Figure 1 also demonstrates that in all countries the female employment rate is lower than the male. Although the relation is not perfect, countries with a small gender employment gap are likely to have a higher overall employment rate, whereas countries with a lower employment rate are likely to record relative large gender gaps, indicating that the difference between the employment rates of men is smaller than that of women.

Figure 1: Total Employment rate (20-64), Female-Male Employment rate (2012), and EU 2020 target, 2012



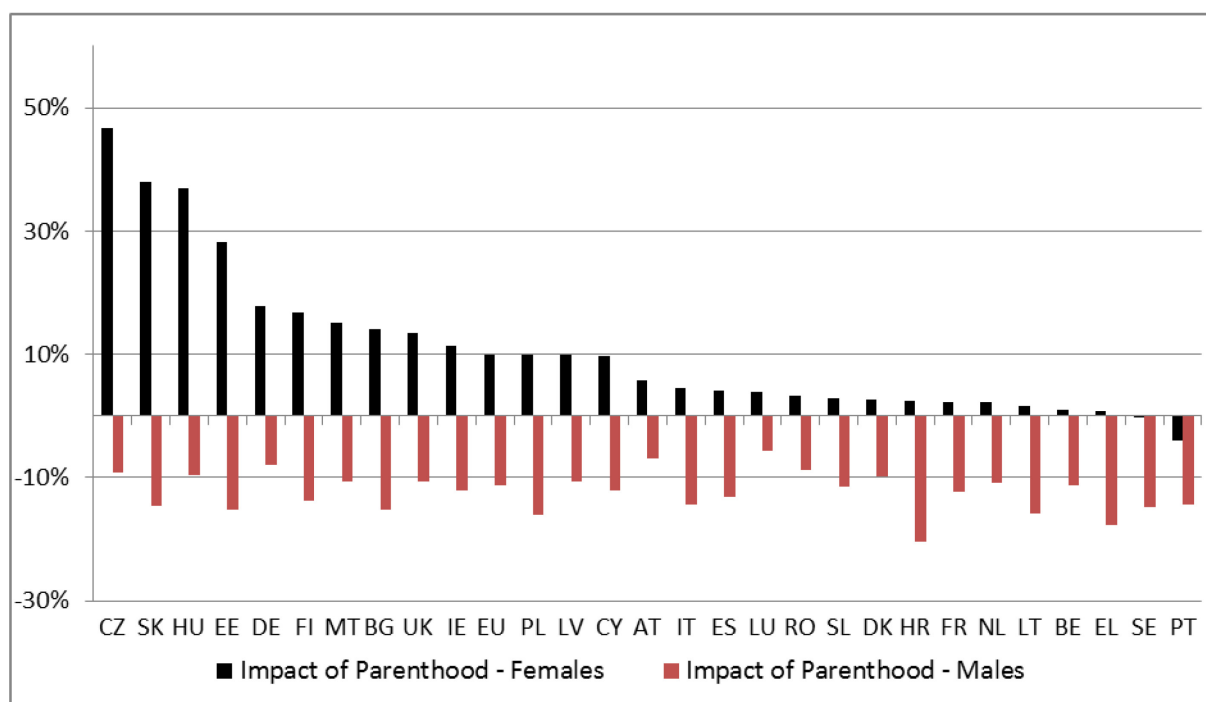
Source: Eurostat: LFS

The participate rates of figure 1 are calculated in head counts, implying that the participation rate is not corrected for non-full-time working hours. The proportion of the EU-28 workforce in the age group 20–64 years reporting that their main job was part-time has been steadily increasing from approximately 15% in 2002 to almost 19% by 2012. By far the highest proportion of part-time workers in 2012 was found in the Netherlands (46.2%), followed by the Denmark, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom and Sweden, where part-time work accounted in each case for almost a quarter of those in employment. By contrast, part-time employment is relatively uncommon in Bulgaria (2.2% of employment) and Slovakia (3.9%) (see also section 3.3 of this paper and Table A5). The incidence of part-time work differs significantly between men and women. According to the Labour Force Survey of 2012, just under one third (31.9%) of women aged 15–64 employed in the EU-28 worked on a part-time basis in 2012, compared to 8.4% of men. More than three quarters (76.9%) of all women

employed in the Netherlands worked on a part-time basis in 2012, by far the highest rate among the EU Member States.

An important reason for the different labour market behaviour of men and women is of course the different impact of parenthood. Whereas men with children tend to work more than men without children, the opposite is true for women: women without children have higher employment rates than women with children. The different impact is illustrated in Figure 2, which compares the difference in employment rates of men and women without the presence of any children and with the presence of a child aged 0-6 within the age group 20-49. It appears that all countries indicate the same pattern: the impact of parenthood is positive for men (translating into a negative score in figure 2), but negative for women (translating in a positive score in figure 2), with the single exception of Portugal. However, figure 2 also displays large differences. Whereas the impact of parenthood on the employment behaviour of men is rather similar in all Member States and hovers around minus 10 percentage points, for women the impact differs considerably. The highest figures are found in the Czech Republic (46,6 percentage points), Slovakia (38 percentage points) and Hungary (37 percentage points). In Slovenia, Denmark, Croatia, France, Netherlands, Lithuania, Belgium and Greece, the on the other hand, the difference is rather small (below 3 percentage points). Portugal is the only country where women are more employed after having children; the employment impact of parenthood on women is minus 4.1 percentage points here. Figure 2 also points out that the typical gendered division of labour in which men have the primary responsibility to earn and women to care is still valid in most EU Member States. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary are the three countries where women are most affected by parenthood, but practically all countries still follow to some extent this general pattern.

Figure 2. Employment impact of parenthood for women and men aged 20-49, 2012



Source: Eurostat: LFS

Summarizing this section, it seems fair to state that there is still a large gap between the EU goal of (more or less) equal employment rates of men and women and the actual employment patterns within the EU Member States. At the level of the European Union this (familiar) conclusion is translated into a continuous appeal to Member States to promote female employment. Several documents underline the importance of further measures in this respect, emphasizing the importance to assist in care responsibilities either by investing in services or by facilitating the combination of work and care. For example the EU Strategy on Gender Equality assesses the current state of affairs as follows: “The impact of parenthood on labour market participation is still very different for women and men in the EU today because women continue to shoulder a disproportionate part of the responsibilities involved in running a family. Many women feel that they still have to choose between a career and their children. Current demographic trends also mean that women and men increasingly have to care for dependants other than children over indefinite periods of time. Member States, which have put reconciliation policies in place, are seeing high numbers of both women and men in work and relatively sustainable birth rates. The EU has made recent progress in improving the overall framework for a better work/life balance. The Commission will strive for further

progress in this area, paying particular attention to the availability of affordable high-quality care” (EC 2010: 4-5). This brings us to the issue of the welfare state policies and whether there is indeed a change in focus from facilitating the breadwinner family model to investing and supporting the adult worker model.

3. Welfare state policies

Recalibrating the welfare state along the lines of the adult worker model is not an easy task. Change may be frustrated because of lack of support of the adult worker model, vested interest, lack of political strength, lack of budgetary resources (particularly in the aftermath of the recent financial and economic crisis), or divergent visions on the role of the family. In this section we will cover three important policy domains in which the transition towards the adult worker model might materialize: the tax system, the family policy (parental leave and child care) and the organisation of work and working hours. Taken together these domains should provide important evidence of the envisaged transition towards the adult working model – taking into account the gender specific division of paid and unpaid work within the traditional breadwinner model. The structure of the subsections is identical: first we cover the importance of the issue in a more theoretical way, next the related EU policy is summarized whereas the final part provides an overview of the current state of affairs in the different EU Member States.

3.1 Tax system

Taxes are an important element of the welfare state. In theory, the two main goals of levying taxes are the same as the goals for public expenditures: to promote the public interest in equity and efficiency (Tresch, 2008:36). In practice, the actual tax system will depend on perceptions about the proper role of the government, the economic situation and the overall belief system with regard to welfare, work and fairness. Stotsky (1997) refers in this respect to tax systems as reflecting ‘a tapestry of decisions’. These decisions “have been influenced by a variety of factors, including social attitudes about the respective roles of men and women. As a result, many tax system exhibit gender bias - they treat men and women differently in ways that can negatively affect their decisions on whether and how much to work, their personal consumption habits, and their overall tax liabilities” (Stotsky 1997: 30).

Gender bias can be explicit and implicit. Explicit forms are specific provisions in the law that treat men and women differently, e.g. specific tax brackets for married women or specific breadwinner allowances for married men. Implicit forms are provisions in the law that, because of the different societal role of men and women, have different implications for men and women. Over the last decades, the explicit bias has generally been removed from current tax codes (Bettio and Verashchagina 2013). Yet implicit gender bias is still widespread. This refers in particular to the secondary earner bias and the unpaid work bias.

The secondary earner bias is the result of a tax system with some progressivity and some jointness. Bettio and Verashchagina (2013: 173) provide the following example, covering a married couple-and-child household. “(I)nitially she stays at the home to look after the child while he works full time and earns €30,000 per year. Subsequently, she enters the labour market and earns €15,000 per year. Now consider a pure income splitting system and a two-rates tax schedule, respectively 15% up to €15,000 and 30% on higher incomes. In a pure splitting system, partners are treated as if each earns a half share of the combined income within each tax bracket. This is equivalent to multiplying the individual rate schedule by 2. Under this system a 15% tax rate would be imposed between €0 and €30,000 and a 30% rate above €30,000. The combined liability for the two spouses is now down to €9,000, as in individual taxation, but each of them contributes €4,500 despite the fact that she earns one half of what he does. Income splitting can be adjusted in order to reduce the secondary earner bias. For example, the individual tax rate may be multiplied by 1.7 instead of 2. This clearly lowers the incidence of the secondary earner bias, but it does not remove it”. In this example the secondary earned bias is the result of joint taxation. Yet, even in individualized tax system there may be a negative fiscal incentive for the secondary earner, if the fiscal system grants a non-working spouse allowance. If this allowance is lost when the secondary earner enters the labour market, this can be interpreted as an additional tax on the dual earner family (see for more details: Bettio and Verashchagina 2013).

Another indirect bias can be labeled as the paid work bias. McCaffery (2008) explains the incomplete transition towards individualised taxation by the argument that most people feel that one-earner families are treated ‘unfairly’ under individualized taxation and have to be compensated somehow by tax allowances or tax breaks. This is based on the *couples neutrality* principle which is fairly dominant. This principle states that a two-earner couple with the same combined earnings as a one-earner couple should pay the same amount in taxes. If the tax schedule is progressive, however, the latter pays more under individual

taxation. At the same time, the couples neutrality principle assumes that within one-earner families the ‘non-earner’ is truly inactive, i.e. does not produce goods or services of use to the household. Yet, as McCafferty states, the ‘stay at home’ spouse and parent is providing tremendously valuable services, including child rearing and home care. The critical point is that “income” tax systems ignore imputed income; tax only falls on monetary income. Looked at another way, the dual earner couple has incurred child care costs to earn their income, which the one earner couple has not. Thus the norm of ‘child care neutrality’ could (simply) mean a general deduction for paid child care from the income tax (McCafferty 2008), indicating that both couples have earned their income under the same ‘child care neutral’ conditions, or rather the same ‘ability to pay’ (viz. Nelson 1996).

A similar argument is made by Stiglitz et al (2009) in their report on the “Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress”. Under the heading of ‘classical GDP issues’ they point to the importance of economic household activity. To illustrate this point they suggest to compare the income earned by a one earner household with two children to the income earned within a dual earner household in which both parent work full time for the same global pay. According to Stiglitz et al., most income measures treat these two households as if they have identical living standards, but obviously they don’t, as the dual earner family must pay for “all the shopping, cooking, cleaning and child care out of pocket” (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 35). In short: focusing on market production provides a biased picture of living standards in general and provides biased tax systems in particular.

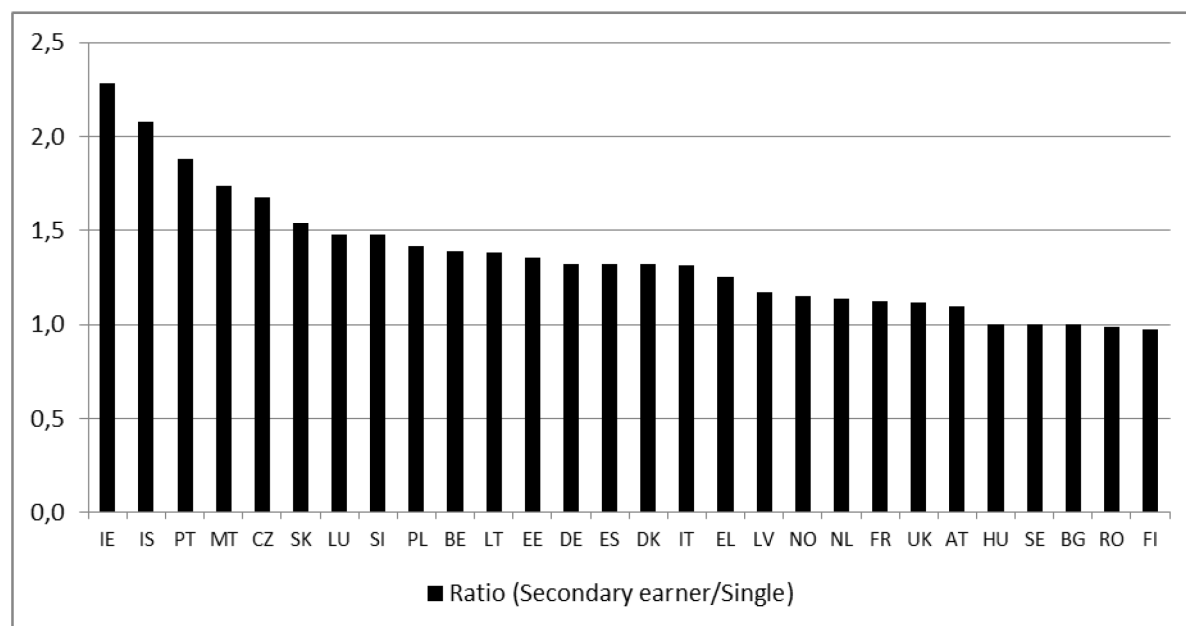
Within the EU, the tax system is seen as an important policy tool to increase the level of employment. In fact, the 1984 report of the European Commission (EC 1985) was one of the first official documents to disclose that European tax systems discouraged female labour market participation. The document puts particular blame on joint systems of taxation which manifestly favoured the traditional division of labour between a male primary earner and a female homemaker or secondary earner. Most countries now have introduced individual rather than joint taxation, yet elements of jointness are still present in the tax system of France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal. In addition, the presence of other features in the tax systems, such as deductions for one-earner households, might still translate in a biased incentive structure (Bettio and Verashchagina 2013).

In empirical research the METR and the AETR are often used as indicators to scale the different EU Member States on their fiscal incentives towards participation. The METR refers

to the marginal effective tax rate and indicates the tax burden on an incremental increase in income. The higher the value of the METR, the weaker the incentive to increase working hours. The same formula can be used for larger increments and, in particular, for transition from no paid work to gainful employment at specified levels of earnings. In this case, the measure is called Average Effective Tax Rate (AETR) (Carone et al. 2004, p.10). When the transition is from inactivity to work, the AETR is also known as 'Participation Tax'. It shows the amount of additional taxes and lost benefits relative to gross earnings for a person who has just entered or re-entered work. Again the higher the AETR the lower the incentive to participate in paid work (see also Bettio and Verashchagina 2013: 180)

Following the approach of Jaumotte (2003) we use the ratio of the AETR corresponding to a secondary earner in a household with two children and the net average tax rate accruing to a single person with the same level of income. Choosing the specific ratio as an indicator makes it possible to discern the extent of the relative disincentive of becoming employed that secondary earners face compared to equal-earning singles. The ratio is calculated for a family with two children of which the primary earner has an income of 100% of average earnings and the secondary earns 67% of average earnings. In the case of equal fiscal treatment of secondary earners and singles with the same level of income the calculated ratio should be equal to one.

Figure 3: Fiscal (dis)incentives for secondary earners at 67% of average earnings (2011)



Source: European Commission (2013); OECD (2013), and OECD (2011)

The results, summarized in figure 3, seems to indicate, however, that in most countries the ratio is higher than 1, although a few countries score indeed ‘neutral’ in this respect: Hungary, Sweden, Bulgaria, Romania, and Finland. Norway, The Netherlands, France, UK and Austria indicate a relative minor disincentive effect with a score of 1.1. The highest score among the EU Member States are to be found in Ireland (2.3), Portugal (1.9) and Malta (1.7) (see for more details table A2). Figure 3 also indicates that the AETR scores for countries with joint taxation systems (France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal) are on average indeed higher than the rest; the (unweighted) average ratio for countries with joint taxation is 1.4, compared to 1.3 for the other countries (see table A2). This is in line with expected discriminatory treatment of secondary earners in these systems, although the differences are not very large.

The overall outcome seems to be in line with the outcomes of Jaumotte (2003), covering the situation in 2000-2001, although the relative ranking differs. When interpreting the data it should be kept in mind that the ranking is only based on the two-child-dual earner family in which ‘he’ earns 100% of average earnings, while ‘she’ earns 67%; the result might differ for higher income categories for example and for different (more equal) income constellations. McCaffery (2008) refers in this respect to the dazzling complexity of the tax and transfer system: the ‘fog of tax’ is not likely to result in very consistent effects.

Summarizing these results, it appears that the tax systems of most member states still feature rules and practices that discourage secondary earners either to participate at all or to increase the number of working hours. In addition, the child care costs could be interpreted as an implicit tax on the secondary earner, which in most member states is not fully recognized. This brings us to the issue of the care infrastructure and the nature and scope of family policy.

3.2 Family policy

The vision of the welfare state as providing income security by way of taxes and benefits is rather traditional. Especially within the context of the changing labour market behaviour of women, the welfare state has been redesigned as focusing not only on income transfers, but also on providing (public) services. Within this context, the concept of new social risks has been introduced. According to Bonoli (2005), new social risks relate to the social economic transformations that have brought the post-industrial society into existence: the tertiarization of employment and the massive entry of women into the labour force. New social risks (NSR) therefore include – among others - reconciling work and family life, single parenthood and having a frail relative. These new social risks are not to be solved by risk sharing or income reallocation, but rather by investing in a certain social infrastructure, which provides (single) parents with the opportunities to reconcile work and family life. This also implies that the function of the welfare state shifts from a rather passive instrument aiming at income maintenance in case of non-participation, towards a more active instrument aiming at investing in and facilitating citizens towards full labour force participation. Within the context of this paper, the focus will be on two important strands of family policy: parental leave and services.

Parental leave

Entitlements to job-protected leave for parents are, according to Kamerman and Moss (2009:1) “a necessary part of the tool-kit for running a modern state”. After an early start in Germany in 1883, the ILO adopted the first Maternity Protection Convention in 1919, specifying a right to paid maternity leave of 12 weeks. The main focus is here on the protection of the health of the mother and the newborn infant. Gradually, this right to paid maternity leave was implemented across most industrialised countries (Neyer, 2003; Bennet and Taylor, 2006). Especially since the 1970, parental leave entitlements have been

significantly expanded. The focus here is to enable working parents to spend time on caring for their young children. In line with this, parental leave is available for both parents, usually following on from maternity leave. In addition to parental leave, against the background of increasing dual earner families, other forms of leave have emerged like paternity leave, targeted towards fathers, and leave to care for sick children or relatives.

From an economic point of view, leave legislation has firstly been studied from the perspective of the health and well-being of mothers and the new-born child (Ruhm, 2000) and - slightly later - from the perspective of the fertility rate (Gauthier, 2007, Lalive and Zweimuller, 2009). With the introduction of extensive leave legislation, more and more research focuses on the impact of leave (or rather the take up of leave) on of labour force participation (both in rates and in hours worked), on the relative wage rate and on the share of women in high-level occupations.

The labour market impact of leave can be studied from two different angles (Evertsson and Duvander, (2011); Akgündüz and Plantenga, 2013). From a standard (human capital) approach, leave policies imply a subsidy on leisure time, resulting in an increase of the amount of time the mothers (parents) remain at home and as such in a decrease of the overall participation rate. The alternative argument predicts more positive results on the basis of a transaction cost argument: parental leave facilitates the return to the labour market after a period of non-participation, will limit the loss of human capital and will limit the search costs after a period of non-participation. Depending on the starting point, and whether the ‘default’ is uninterrupted or rather interrupted labour force participation leave legislation might therefor either increase or decrease the amount of time mother (parents) spend at home (Klerman and Leibowitz, 1997).

Empirical research seems to indicate that the labour market effects of leave might indeed be positive, but only if the leave is not too extensive. In one of the earlier studies, Ruhm (1998) for example finds evidence that paid parental leave increases the female employment rate. This result is confirmed by Jaumotte (2003) who finds that the female employment rate increases in response to leave legislation. Yet the positive effects diminish as leave duration increases. Jaumotte (2003: 93): “Taking parental leave for an extended period of time may deteriorate labour market skills, and damage future career paths and earnings. Beyond 20 weeks, the marginal effect of additional parental leave on female participation appears to become negative”. The results of Hegewish and Gornick (2011) seem a bit more nuanced: Job-protective schemes increase the labor force participation of women,

almost irrespective of the length of leave; long leaves may lead to wage penalties however, although the results indicated a marked variation across countries. In a recent study, Akgündüz and Plantenga (2013) also find an increase in participation rates that diminishes with length and generosity of leave schemes. Thirty weeks of parental leave is estimated to decrease the share of women in high-level occupations by 1.5% and to lower the wages by more than 7%. In short, from a purely labour market perspective there is a rather strong case for maternal and parental leave for approximately 6 months. Beyond that level, leave may have an adverse effect on the return rate, have a negative impact on wages and the extent of vertical segregation (Mandel and Semyonov 2005).

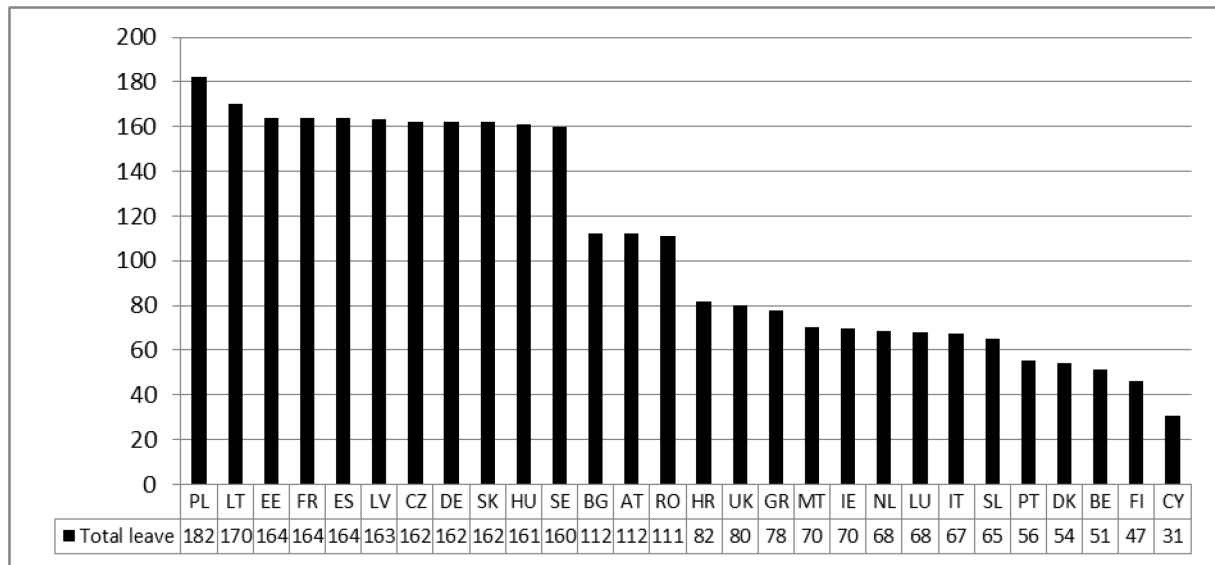
At the level of the EU, in June 1996, a directive of the European Council has been adapted which obliges member states to introduce legislation on parental leave that will enable parents to care full-time for their child over a period of three months. In principle this refers to an individual, non-transferable entitlement. This directive ensures that a certain minimum standard is guaranteed within the member states. In 2010 the European Council decided that the individual entitlement will be extended to four months. In order to stimulate a more equal take up of leave by men and women, and as such promote equal opportunities, at least one of the four months will have to be non-transferable. Moreover, the Directive states that Member States and/or social partners have to take measures to ensure that workers, when returning from parental leave, may request changes to their working hours and/or patterns for a set period of time. Employers should consider and respond to such requests, taking into account both employers' and workers' needs. The new Directive had to be implemented in 2012 at the latest (CEU 2010).

Over and above the European Directive, there is a broad range of national regulations with EU Member States differing as to duration, replacement ratios, flexibility and entitlement. The duration, for example, ranges from three months in some countries, to the period until the child's third birthday in others. Regarding the replacement ratios, in some countries the leave is unpaid, whereas in others leave takers are compensated with lump sum transfers or with transfers dependent on their former income. In addition to differences in length and level of payment, parental leave can be organised along family or individual lines. If the former is used as the basis, parents can decide who will make use of the parental leave allocated to the family. If both parents have an individual, non-transferable entitlement to parental leave, then both can claim a certain period of leave. If one parent does not take advantage of this entitlement the right expires. Especially in the Central and Eastern European Member States the parental

leave is often framed as a family right (see for more details on leave entitlements Plantenga and Remery 2005; Fagan and Hebson 2006; Moss 2012; see also Ray et al. 2010 for more details on the extent to which policy designs are gender egalitarian).

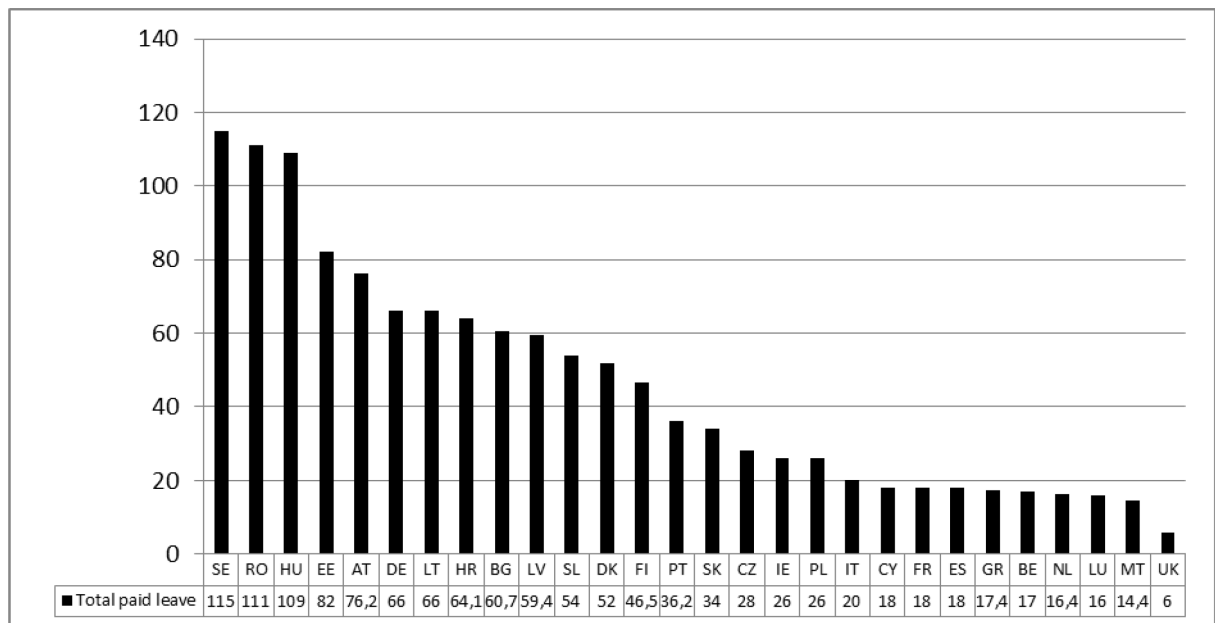
Figure 4 and 5 illustrate the large diversity in leave legislation (see table A3 for more details). If all the leave entitlements (maternity, paternity and parental) per household are added, and the countries are ranked solely on the length of the entitlements, then 11 countries appear to provide leave entitlements for more than 160 weeks: Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, France, Spain, Latvia, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary and Sweden. Yet, as this indicator does not take into account the actual payment level, the practical impact of leave legislation in the life of working parents may be overrated. Therefore figure 5 compares national policies on the basis of an indicator in which the length of the leave entitlements is weighted by the payment level. This indicator gives the number of weeks of maternity, paternity and parental leave with benefits replacing at least two thirds of salary. On the basis of this indicator, three countries indicate an effective leave of more than 100 weeks: Sweden, Romania and Hungary. At the lower end of the ranking there is Netherlands, Luxembourg, Malta and the UK with a score of 16 weeks or below. On the basis of this indicator, Czech Republic, Ireland and Poland seem to indicate the theoretical optimum (at least from an employment point of view) by provide 28-26 weeks of effective leave.

Figure 4: Total leave entitlement in weeks, 2012



Source: see table A3

Figure 5: Total effective leave entitlement (benefits at least 2/3 of salary) in weeks, 2012



Source: see table A3

The actual scores in figure 4 and 5 seem to indicate that the actual design of the leave policy is inspired by more (or: other) considerations than just the female labour supply. Raising the

fertility rate might be one argument, protected family life another. More in general it seems that the equal opportunities aspect of parental leaves should not be overstated. The fact that leave regulations imply by definition distance from the labour market and instead facilitate (care) time makes their regulations sensitive to the risk of reinforcing traditional options relating to care and work (Bruning and Plantenga, 1999; Ray et al., 2010).

Child care services

The next element of family policy refers to child care services. To the extent that care responsibilities constitute a major obstacle to full employment, child care services should be rated as an important element of the adult worker model. According to Pascall and Lewis (2004: 385): “they set limits to care responsibilities for individuals, moderating unpaid care, and giving time for paid work, for carers to earn incomes and pensions”. In most European countries, day care facilities appeared in the second half of the 19th century. Large textile mills for example opened up day care centers to attract and support female workforce (Plantenga, 1993). Churches or private welfare organisations might also be involved in these early initiatives to provide assistance and care for the working poor. During the 19th century there is a growing emphasis on the importance of education of the youngest children; pedagogues like Fröbel introduce the kindergarten which will become a well-integrated part of the educational system. Nurseries, however, or more general child care facilities for the children up to 3 are much more contested and are in general not part of the social infrastructure. It is only since the rise of female labour supply during the last decade of the 20th century that countries start to invest in child care services (Kamerman, 2006).

According to Jaumotte (2003) there are basically three arguments that justify child care subsidies: where tax and benefits system distort female labour supply; in case of a compressed wage structure; and when imperfections in credit markets are present: “In the first instance, childcare subsidies help reduce the effective tax burden on mothers, whose labour supply is more elastic to the marginal tax rate (...). In the second case, the compressed wage structure raises the wages of carers (who tend to be concentrated at the bottom of the wage distribution) relative to those of mothers and thereby reduces access of mothers to childcare (wages are the main component of childcare costs). The case that imperfections in the credit market justify subsidised childcare is limited to low-income families. Credit market imperfections may prevent women in low-income families from borrowing against future

earnings to finance childcare and break away from welfare dependence (...)” (Jaumotte 2003: 9).

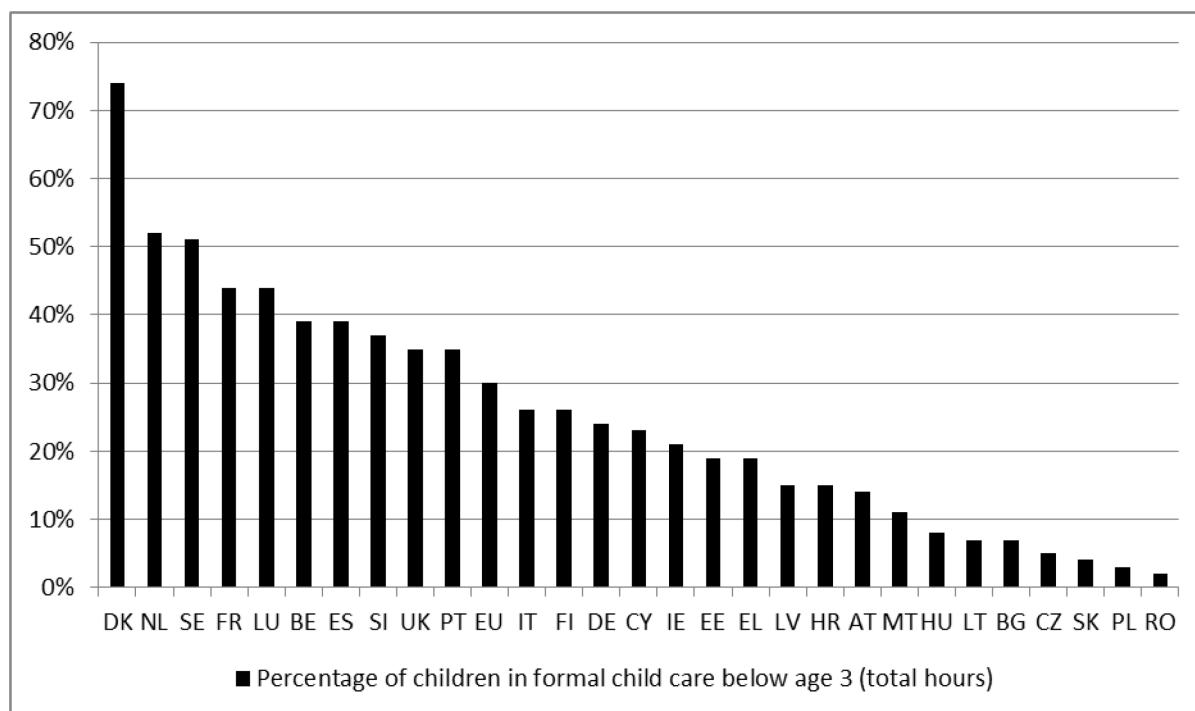
In fact, the labour market effects of child care facilities are rather straightforward and many cross-country studies point out that the availability and affordability of childcare services is positively associated with the participation and employment rate of women (Del Boca, et al., 2009; Jaumotte, 2003; Thévenon, 2013). At the same time, Blau and Currie (2006) provide a survey of the literature on the effects of child care prices on employment, indicating a large variety in elasticities (ranging from 0 to -1). Lowering child care prices might indeed not always translate into higher employment rates but rather crowd out informal care arrangements.

The importance of affordable and accessible quality childcare provision has been recognized by the European Council and the European Union at a rather early stage. In March 1992 the Council of the EU passed a recommendation on childcare to the effect that Member States “should take and/or progressively encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile their occupational, family and upbringing responsibilities arising for the care of children” (CEU, 1992). Ten years later, at the 2002 Barcelona summit, the aims were formulated more explicitly and targets were set with regard to childcare. Confirming the goal of full employment, the European Council agreed that member states should remove disincentives to female labor force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of provisions, to provide childcare by 2010 for at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age.

The Barcelona targets are set within the context of the European Employment Strategy. This means that they should be interpreted as a policy marker; as an important goal to be reached in the near future. However, the targets are not obligatory; there is no sanction on non-compliance. In fact most countries have not yet reached the Barcelona targets; the current state of affairs with regard to the youngest age category is summarized in Figure 6, which provides data on the share of children below the age of 3 which is taken care for in a formal arrangement other than the family as a proportion of all children of the same age group. Formal arrangements in this context cover the following services: pre-school or equivalent, compulsory education, centre-based services outside school hours, a collective crèche or another day-care centre including family day care organised/controlled by a public

or private structure. As such it is the most important indicator to monitor the provision of child care facilities in the different Member States (see also table A4 for further details).

Figure 6: Children using formal care as a of percentage all children (total hours), 2012



Source: Eurostat: EU-SILC

From the figure it appears that for the usage of formal childcare, Denmark scores the highest with 74% of all children in the age category until 3 years making use of formal childcare facilities. The difference between Denmark and the second highest scoring country, the Netherlands (with 52%) is quite significant with a 22% percentage point difference. Looking at the grouping of countries a rather clear pattern emerges. At the higher end of the scale, predominantly Scandinavian and North-European countries are found, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, France and Luxembourg. At the lower end, Eastern European countries can be found: Hungary, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland and Romania all score below 10%. The cross-country diversity further increases when also the hours of child care use are taken into account (see table A4 for details). In several countries, such as the Baltic states, but also in Slovenia, Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, Greece and Portugal, most formal child care services are used for 30 hours or more. In other countries, however, part-time use is more

common. Examples include Austria, Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Ireland and United Kingdom.

Information on the use of childcare facilities is helpful in order to assess the relative importance of this particular element of family policy. It does not, however, answer the question of whether demand is fully met. The actual demand for childcare is influenced by the participation rate of parents (mothers), levels of unemployment, the length of parental leave, the opening hours of schools, and the availability of alternatives such as grandparents and/or other (informal) arrangements. In Finland, for example, the coverage rate of formal arrangements for the youngest age category is, according to Figure 6, 26 per cent, which is well below the Barcelona target of 33 per cent. Yet, childcare facilities are not in short supply. In fact, since 1990, Finnish children under the age of three are guaranteed a municipal childcare place, irrespective of the labour market status of the parents. In 1996, this right is expanded to cover all children under school age. This entitlement complements the home care allowance system which enables the parent to stay at home to care for his/her child with full job security until the child is three years old. Partly due to the popularity of the home care alternative, the supply of public day-care services has met the demand since the turn of the 1990s (Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

The Finnish case is a clear example of a ‘parental choice’ policy, which has become more dominant over the last decade. Also in France, for example, the policy logic is that parents should be able to choose. Letablier (2005): “Mothers who prefer working should be supported in their choice with a set of child care facilities, either in cash or kind, at a reasonable cost and of good quality.(...) But it is assumed also that mothers who prefer caring for their young children should have to opportunity to do so, in terms of labour rights as well as in terms of social rights. (...) the result is a complex and ambiguous mix of measures”. Another example refers to Germany where the debate on parental choice was inspired by the promise made in 2006 by the Grand Coalition government to offer subsidized child-care starting in 2013. The motivation behind this promise was to facilitate the combination of work and family life by bridging the gap between the parental leave entitlement (‘Elterngeld’) which is received until the child is 12-14 months old and the publicly subsidized Kindergartens which are available from the age of 3 (Pauls, 2013; Heineman, 2013). In 2013, partly because of political pressure, and partly because of the foreseen deficit of day care facilities, a child care allowance was introduced to be paid to parents who are not making use of subsidized child care. The argument on the side of the

proponents of the 'Betreuungsgeld' is that the government should respect the choice of parents and provide them with equivalent financial support.

Under the surface of this debate are conflicting perspectives on gender equality, social, cultural integration and regional differences. Creating parental choice is likely to translate in different labour market outcomes for different groups of women, as high-skilled (highly educated) women are most likely to take their child to day-care since they have a higher earning power and their opportunity costs of being a full-time mother are higher. Conversely, low-skilled (less educated) women are more likely to take the monthly payment since their earning power is lower. Furthermore, women from immigrant families may be overrepresented in the latter group. Consequently, the proposed policy might have detrimental effects in the sense that it would hinder the career prospects and future earning power of the already disadvantaged low-skilled and less educated women, while it might also hinder the integration of migrant families which might also lead to additional costs in later stages of education. Whether these negative outcomes will indeed materialize depends on the actual take up of the program, which depends to a large extent on the level of the home care allowance and the availability of alternatives (see also Ellingsaeter 2012; Plantenga and Remery 2009: 60-61).

3.3 Organisation of work and working hours

The final policy domain refers to the organization of work and working hours. Based on the breadwinner model, especially after World War II, working hours in the industrialized countries were largely shaped by the eight-hour workday and 40-hour work week (Bosch et al., 1994; Bosch, 1999; Costa, 2000; Messenger, 2010). Yet, starting in the last decades of the 20th century there is a shift from jobs organised on a relatively permanent and full time basis, towards less standard, flexible and part-time employment. This trends towards more flexibility has been partly inspired by the growing diversity in life styles and the transition towards a more individualized adult worker model. Women especially have expressed their interests in tailor-made working hours matching their personal needs for flexibility (Plantenga, 2004; Merens, 2008).

Studying cross-country differences in working hours from a gender equality perspective, Rubery et al. (1998) refer to the impact of the national working time regime. Differences in working time between men and women arise primarily from the unequal division of paid and unpaid work, but the extent and form that those differences take in the

labour market are moderated or mediated by national working time regimes, defined as “the national set of legal, voluntary and customary regulations which influence working time practice” (Rubery et al 1998: 72). Working time regimes can promote or diminish differences between men and women by limiting or extending fulltime working hours, by promoting or discourage part-time work and by influencing the terms and conditions under which overtime, unsocial hours or atypical employment contracts are undertaken. In practice this means that the focus is on flexibility in working hours and the flexibility in the organisation of working time (Bielenski et al., 2002; Messenger, 2010). Within the context of this paper we will mainly focus on the availability of part-time work.

At the level of the EU, there is no generally binding regulation which entitles employees to part-time work, but Directive 97/81/EC calls upon the member states to ensure equal treatment of full-timers and part-timers unless there are objective reasons to treat them differently. The aim of the Directive is to increase the quality of part-time jobs and to facilitate access to part-time work for men and women in order to prepare for retirement, reconcile professional and family life and take up education and training opportunities to improve skills and career opportunities (CEU 1998). Though it does not entitle all employees to part-time work, several countries have developed national legislation in this respect. In some countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, (the majority of) employees are entitled to work part-time. In other countries, including for example Estonia and Austria, entitlements are limited to employees with care responsibilities (see for an overview Plantenga and Remery, 2010).

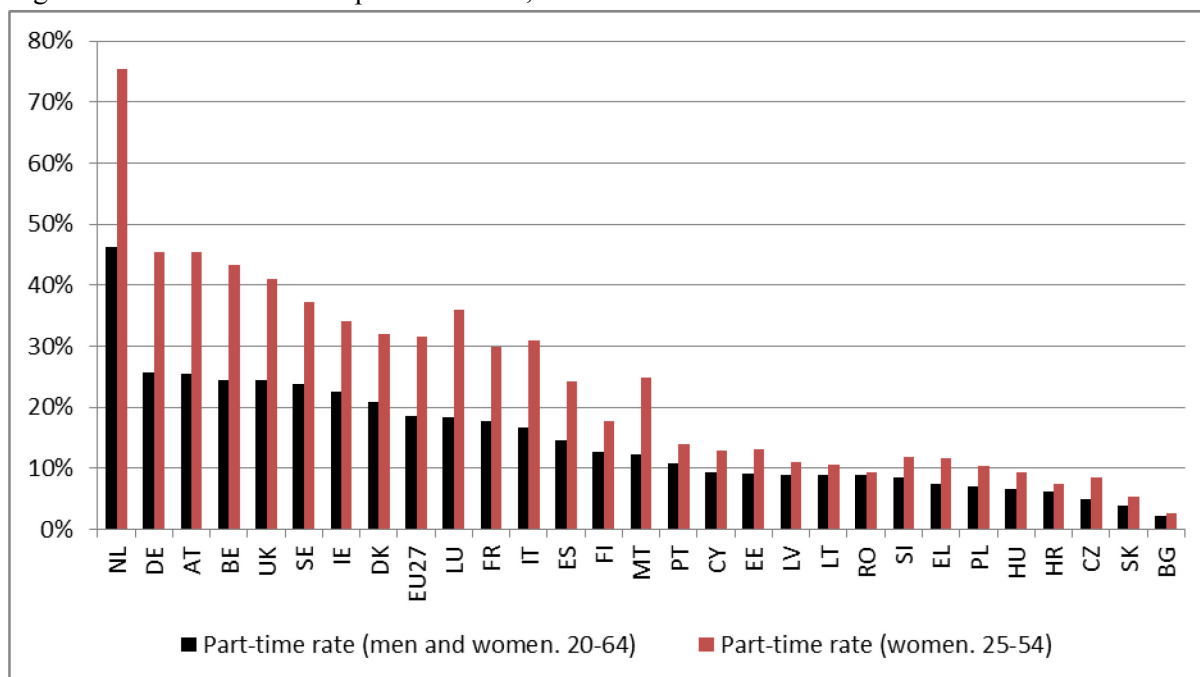
Figure 7 provides data for 2012 on the overall part-time rate (as % of all employees aged 20-64) and the share of the female employees working part-time (as % of all female employees aged 25-54) (see table A5 for further details). The highest part-time rate is found in the Netherlands with an overall score of 46,2% and an amazing 75,4% for women. Germany, Austria, Belgium and the United Kingdom also have relatively high (female) part-time rates. In thirteen, all East or South European countries, the overall part-time rate is less than 10%, with the lowest rates being found in Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Apparently, these labour markets are still rather traditionally organised around a 40-hours working week. The large cross-country differences may be related to different supply and demand factors, like (at the supply side) the fiscal system and the lack of child care services,

or (at the demand side) the economic structure; the demand for part-time employees is likely to increase in a service economy (Jaumotte, 2003).

Figure 7 also illustrates that part-time work is mainly taken up by women; in all countries the female part-time rate is higher than the overall part-time rate. This female dominance creates some uneasiness about the relationship between gender equality and non-standard (part-time) working hours. A high part-time rate might on the one hand be seen as a factor which contributes to a differentiated economy, offering labour market opportunities in periods of care and /or educational responsibilities. Yet, if women engage disproportionately in part-time work (or other non-standard working time arrangement) the result might be enduring gender inequality in terms of income, responsibility and power. This is especially the case when part-time work is involuntary, i.e when employees are not able to find full time work. The share of voluntary part-time work, as summarized in table 8, is therefore an important additional indicator to assess the change in the actual working time regime. Table 8 indicates that in twelve EU Member States the share of voluntary part-time work is (close to) 80% or more. In six countries (Cyprus, Romania, Italy, Spain, Greece and Bulgaria) the share of voluntary part-time work is less than 50%.

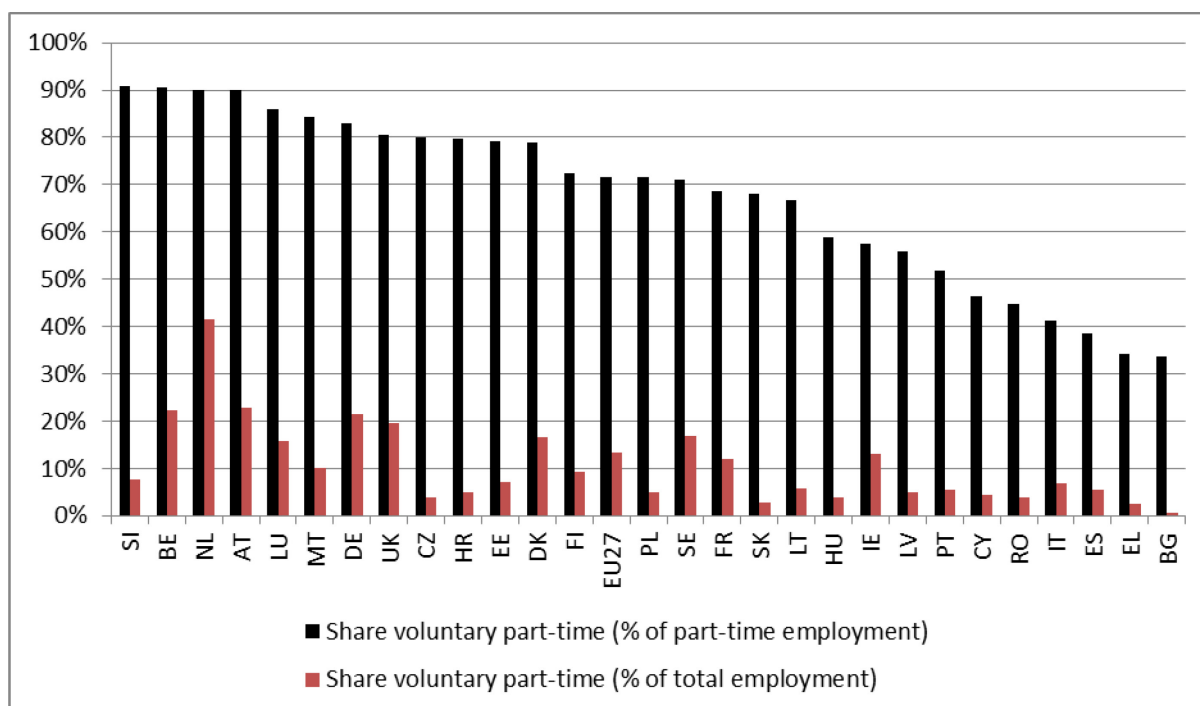
Combining the information of table 7 and 8 seems to suggest a positive relationship between the level of part-time employment and the share of voluntary part-time work. The most clear-cut examples are the Netherlands with the highest part-time level and one of the highest share of voluntary part-time work and Bulgaria with one of the lowest levels of part-time employment and the lowest share of voluntary part-time work. Presumably the institutional context of part-time work plays an important role in this respect. In countries with a relatively high part-time rate, part-time work is more likely to be well regulated and well accepted (Plantenga and Remery 2010).

Figure 7: Overall and female part-time rates, 2012



Source: Eurostat: LFS

Figure 8: Share of voluntary part-time work, 2012



Source: Eurostat: LFS

3.4 Summary

So far, this section has illustrated the changing reality of men and women within the EU member states and – more in particular – the search for welfare state arrangements in line with the more equal role of men and women in the economy. The overview indicates that the level and nature of the welfare state change – including the actual policy design - differs extensively between EU Member States. Some countries rely rather heavily on child care services and seem to have lowered the fiscal disincentives, making labour force participation a feasible option also for young parents. Others countries rely heavily on parental leave, granting young parent (mothers) time to care before re-entering the labour market. Policies are also highly diverse with regard to working time regime. On the basis of the actual part-time rate and an assessment of the part-time preferences, it seems that especially countries in north-west Europe score rather high in that respect; the incidence of part-time working hours is much lower in southern European Member States and in the new Member States.

Despite all differences, the current state of affairs also makes clear that the policy logic of most countries is not based on full individualization and/or complete gender equality in working life. The fiscal regime may still contain elements of ‘jointness’ and/or a non-working spouse allowances, childcare services may be in short supply and/or the actual demand limited by long term parental leave entitlements, and the labour market might still be organised on a full time basis, offering little labour market opportunities in periods of care. In short: the configuration of the welfare state is not completely geared towards the full adult worker model but rather seeks “the middle way between the old dependencies and the new independence” (Daly 2011: 2). This middle way may be explained by the fact that a transition takes time and that reforms have to phase in over a longer period of time. A perhaps more likely explanation is that there is little commitment and/or perceived urgency and/or political support to opt for a full equalization of the role of men and women in paid and unpaid work. The result is – as Daly calls it - a *dual earner, gender specialized, family model*, which is geared towards greater, but not full equality.

This brings us to the final question: how to assess the logic and internal consistency of the different policy options. Do certain new models emerge or is there little evidence for cross national convergence?

4. Towards new models of gender equality?

The transition from the breadwinner to a more individualized adult model implies that the traditional links which “joined men to women, cash to care, income to carers have been fractured” (Pascall and Lewis 2004: 373). Instead new policies have emerged trying to facilitate the more equal roles of men and women. Several authors have tried to analyse the internal consistency of this transition and to map the changing welfare state configuration from an gender equality point of view (Gauthier 2002; Leitner 2003; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Plantenga and Remery 2005; 2009, Meulders and O’Dorchai 2007). A common finding of these analyses is that the actual welfare state findings are rather heterogeneous, do not comply with the standard welfare state typologies (e.g. inspired by the typology of Esping-Andersen), and that the trend does not indicate cross-national convergence. The studies vary, however, in scope, methodology and countries covered.

Leitner (2003), for example, focuses on ‘varieties of familialism’. Following up on Esping-Andersen notion of de-familialization, Leitner develops a gender-sensitive theoretical concept of familialism which allows to identify real world variations of familialism. Familialisation is in this respect described as “the extent to which the caring function of the family is promoted” (Leitner 2003: 354). Four ideal types of familialism are distinguished. *Explicit familialism* strengthens the family in caring for children, the handicapped and the elderly, without providing any alternative to family care. Within *optional familialism* services as well as home care policies are provided. Thus, the caring family is strengthened, but at the same time alternatives are offered to (partly) unburden the family from care responsibilities. *Implicit familialism* does not support the caring function of the family, but is not providing an alternative either. This type therefor relies implicitly upon the family. Finally *defamilialism* is characterized by strong de-familialization because of the state or market provision of care services and weak familialisation. The empirical analysis of 15 member states leads to country clusters that differ considerably from the well-known Esping-Andersen typology. A second important conclusion is that countries cluster different for differently care policies. According to Leitner (2003:372): “Both results call for a more differentiated approach in comparative welfare state research”.

Gauthier (2002) specifically addresses the issue of convergence. Given the common challenges of demographic change, reduced government budgets, globalisation and European integration, the question arises whether these common challenges translate into cross-national convergence of family policies. The analyses covers 22 OECD countries for the period of

1970-1999 and focuses on two major components of state support for families: the direct and indirect cash benefits for families and the support for working parents (especially leave entitlements). The analysis confirms that family policies have changed since 1970. There is an increase in the state support for working parents, and a modest increase in the cash support for families. The analysis also indicates however, “that these trends had different levels of magnitude across countries and have consequently increased the divergence across countries. This is especially the case with regard to state support for working parents (Gauthier, 2002: 467). In short: there are common trends, but there is no cross national convergence.

In a more recent overview, covering 28 OECD countries, Thévenon (2011) examines cross-country difference in state support to families, focusing on leave entitlements, cash benefits, and the provision of services. Using a principle component analysis, he identifies five clusters of countries with broadly comparable family policy packages. The Nordic countries (‘substantial help to combine work and family for parents with children under age 3’); Anglo-Saxon countries (‘support for poor families, single parents and households with preschool children’). Southern Europe, Japan, Korea (‘even more limited assistance’); Eastern Europe (‘policies in transition’); Continent Europe (‘moving away from conservatism?’). He explains this variation by referring to different stages of development but also to the fact that family policies are rooted in particular historical and institutional circumstances, for example with regard to fertility, poverty and employment, which influences the actual design. The result is a broad geographical variation of state support to families, with some distinct clustering of countries but also considerable dispersion within each cluster.

Pascall and Lewis (2004) are less focused on an alternative mapping, but rather on assessing the emerging ‘gender regimes’, which they define as the ‘key policy logic of welfare states in relation to gender’ (2004:372), from a gender equality point of view. Essential is that gender regimes are ‘interconnected systems, through which paid work is connected to unpaid work, state services and benefits are delivered to individuals or households, costs are allocated, and time is shared between men and woman in households, as well as between households and employment’ (2004:380). In their view the current gender equality policies have been limited in effect, because they have addressed only part of the system; they mainly focus on women’s individual possibility for labour force participation on an equal footing with men. As a result, there is equal access to education, paid labour, equal wage legislation etc., but the fundamental problem is not addressed: “if gender equality policies are to be more effective in delivering equal treatment, in paid work and welfare, they

need to address the interconnecting element of gender regimes as systems, with a logic of gender equality in care work, income, time and voice as well as in paid employment. This means developing an environment favouring more equal shares between men and women and paid work, care work, income, time and voice, between individuals within households and in paid work and politics”. (Pascall and Lewis 2004: 380). Their assessment of the current state of affairs is therefore rather negative: care work and unpaid care workers are the ‘casualties’ of the incomplete transition.

The gendered consequences may not only be felt at the level of the unpaid work and/or the carers. Several authors refer to what is called the ‘welfare state paradox’. In most research it is implicitly assumed that welfare states have uniform effects on the economic position of women. Yet, this might not be the case as welfare state policies are likely to interact with socio-economic position of women: especially the less educated women seem to benefit, but at the expense of career opportunities of highly educated women. Mandel and Semyonov (2006) have examined this so-called welfare state paradox in more detail. Developed welfare states facilitate women’s access into the labour market, but not into powerful and desirable options. More in particular, countries with an elaborate systems of welfare policies and a large public service sector tend to have high female participation rate, in combination with a low female representation in managerial jobs (see also Mandel and Shalev, 2009; and Hegewish and Gornick, 2011).

The results of Korpi et al. (2013) do not support this conclusion, however. Korpi et al (2013) argue that family policies are multi-dimensional and that the impact of different policies should be assessed on differently situated women and men, taking social-economic (class) differences into account. In the analysis a distinction is made between a traditional-family policy dimension and a dual-earner policy dimension, which can be either market-oriented or earner–carer oriented. The results indicate that earner-carer policies are rather positive in terms of female labour force participation. Earner-carer countries, which covers most of the Nordic European Member States, “employ significantly higher proportions of women with low and medium levels of formal education, without resulting in significant diminution in women’s access to top wages and positions of power” (Korpi et al.,2013: 28).

Summarizing this small overview a broad consensus seems to have emerged that despite the common trends in EU Member states in terms of the rise of a more individualised adult worker model, there is a wide variety in the design of welfare state policies. Although some clusters of countries with broadly comparable family policies can be distinguished, it is

also obvious that national policies are inspired by particular historical and institutional circumstances, with a highly diverse policy landscape as result. There also seems to be a rather broad consensus on the fact that there is little emphasis on gender equality. In fact, gender equality is seldom at the heart of the actual welfare policies. In effect, the actual gender regime is rather the implicit (and perhaps accidental) result of diverse policies packages and therefore not much of a 'regime'. The puzzle becomes even more complex if welfare state features different policy logics, for example inspired by the freedom of choice argument.

In the end the differences may be related to different views on the status of the parent, more in particular the mother. The parent (mother) might either be seen as an employee who needs public support for her caring role. This implies that the policies are targeted towards making work pay, accessible child care services and flexible working hours. The parent (mother) might also be seen as a carer who needs public support in her breadwinner role. This implies a home-care tax allowance and leave entitlements. If the actual policy is inspired by parental choice considerations, the government is apparently not willing to make that choice, as a result of which both options are facilitated, with the likely result that the differences between parents (mothers) will increase.

5. Conclusions

In the Europe 2020 strategy the aim is to reach an overall employment rate of 75%. This policy goal implies a major shift in the thinking about paid and unpaid work, about men and women and the function of the welfare state. The design of the fiscal system used to be inspired by the breadwinner family model, creating huge disincentives for entering the labour market by secondary earners; the emphasis is now on a more individualized scheme, making work pay both for men and women, fathers and mothers. The changing division of work also implies a change in family policy. Within the breadwinner model the policy is on facilitating the specialization between the male breadwinner and the female care taker. Child benefits and/or home care allowances seem the relevant options here. In contrast, within the adult worker model paid and unpaid work are supposed to be combined in a single person. The focus of the welfare state is therefore no longer on specialization, but rather on reconciling different roles and options, by creating a care infrastructure. A more individualized employment model also puts pressure on the organization of work and working time. The breadwinner was based on the 40hours working week; the adult worker model might benefit from more working time flexibility, thereby increasing the labor market options.

Although these policy changes are clearly recognizable, this paper also illustrates the large gap between the implicit assumptions of the adult worker model and the actual reality of most European Member States. Only a few countries, with the Nordic countries as the most well-known examples, have developed a system of child care arrangements that seems to be based on the assumption that fathers and mothers will both be fully engaged in the labour market. Others countries have invested in policies which allow for large interruption in labour force participation or which allow the combination of work and care by introducing part-time working hours. Overall the actual policy design does not indicate a high profile of gender equality.

More in particular the specific welfare state configuration seems to imply a certain reluctance to give up the support of family life. This confirms the conclusions of Daly (2011) with regard to her recent assessment of the claim that European welfare states are in the process of creating an adult worker model. According to Daly there is indeed a strong move towards an individualisation of social policy, promoting a worker role for women, yet this move is tempered through several developments, like the promotion of part-time working hours, the support of family care and the absence of attention for gender equality. The result is a policy that at once familializes and individualizes. Daly (2011: 17): “While enabling people

to be out of employment might seem at odds with the activation and self-sufficiency orientation of policy reform, the fact that both are concurrent emphases of policy betokens complexity”.

Perhaps the most challenging problem of the current redesign of the welfare state is that family support policies can only to a certain extent been redesigned in accordance with employment policies. Whereas fiscal policy and social security policy clearly become more targeted towards increasing the employment rate, care policies are also motivated by different issues, like fertility rate, family values and child well-being. Although policies in these areas may not by definition contradict labour market considerations, it seems likely that some trade-offs exists between facilitating care and stimulating labour supply. In short: policy objectives on participation, gender equality, fertility and family life are not easily compatible. Child development concerns, for example, may translate into a policy targeted at expanding high-quality childcare services, but just as easily translate into a policy favouring extended leave facilities and/or increasing the provision of childcare allowances. Long parental leave facilities, however, or a generous financial incentive structure may not promote female labour supply and may result in large differences in male and female working time patterns. Another complicated matter refers to the issue of parental choice. Parents may differ in their preferences with regard to work and family outcomes and most public policies tend to enhance parental choice. The result may be a complicated mixture of time facilities, financial allowances and services that may not necessarily be very coherent and which may not increase the equality between men and women nor among women.

This also means that the search for welfare, work and gender equality has not yet ended. The basic question remains: how to reconcile the interest of the individual, the market and the state in a way that is both efficient and fair from a social, demographic, economic and gender perspective. The adult worker model makes a strong claim towards an equal role of men and women into the economic process. The current state of affairs within the EU Member States indicates that this model is difficult to realise. Although some women participate on an equal footing with men, the ‘dual earner, gender specialized, family model’ , which is geared towards greater, but not full equality, seems more feasible.

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STATISTICAL ANNEX

Table A1: Employment rate and the employment impact of parenthood, 2012

Year	2012					
GEO/Category	Employment rate (age 20-64)				Employment Impact of Parenthood (age 20-49)	
	Total	Males	Females	Females -Males	Males	Females
AT	75,6	80,9	70,3	-10,6	-6,9	5,8
BE	67,2	72,7	61,7	-11	-11,3	1
BG	63	65,8	60,2	-5,6	-15,3	14,1
CY	70,2	76,1	64,8	-11,3	-12,1	9,8
CZ	71,5	80,2	62,5	-17,7	-9,2	46,6
DE	76,7	81,8	71,5	-10,3	-7,9	17,8
DK	75,4	78,6	72,2	-6,4	-9,9	2,7
EE	72,1	75,2	69,3	-5,9	-15,3	28,1
EL	55,3	65,3	45,2	-20,1	-17,7	0,8
ES	59,3	64,5	54	-10,5	-13,1	4
EU 28	68,4	74,5	62,3	-12,2	-11,3	10
FI	74	75,5	72,5	-3	-13,7	16,7
FR	69,3	73,8	65	-8,8	-12,4	2,3
HR	55,4	60,6	50,2	-10,4	-20,5	2,4
HU	62,1	68,1	56,4	-11,7	-9,6	37
IE	63,7	68,1	59,4	-8,7	-12,1	11,4
IT	61	71,6	50,5	-21,1	-14,3	4,6
LT	68,5	69,1	67,9	-1,2	-15,9	1,6
LU	71,4	78,5	64,1	-14,4	-5,7	3,9
LV	68,1	70	66,4	-3,6	-10,6	9,9
MT	63,1	79	46,8	-32,2	-10,6	15,1
NL	77,2	82,5	71,9	-10,6	-10,9	2,2
PL	64,7	72	57,5	-14,5	-16	10
PT	66,5	69,9	63,1	-6,8	-14,3	-4,1
RO	63,8	71,4	56,3	-15,1	-8,8	3,3
SE	79,4	81,9	76,8	-5,1	-14,8	-0,1
SK	65,1	72,8	57,3	-15,5	-14,6	38
SL	68,3	71,8	64,6	-7,2	-11,4	2,9
UK	74,2	80	68,4	-11,6	-10,7	13,4

Source: Eurostat (2014)

Table A2: Fiscal incentive for secondary workers, 2011 – (sorted by AETR)

Country	Secondary earner (AETR) Primary earner at 100% of AW and 2 children	Single (Net Personal Average Tax)	Ratio (Secondary earner/Single
BE	49,5	35,6	1,4
DK	48,5	36,8	1,3
IS	48,0	23,1	2,1
DE	46,2	34,9	1,3
SI	42,5	28,8	1,5
LV	35,1	29,9	1,2
IT	35,0	26,7	1,3
PL	33,4	23,6	1,4
PT	32,5	17,3	1,9
CZ	31,7	18,9	1,7
NL	30,4	26,8	1,1
LU	30,3	20,5	1,5
AT	30,0	27,3	1,1
SK	29,9	19,4	1,5
HU	29,6	29,5	1,0
NO	29,4	25,6	1,1
FR	29,3	26,1	1,1
IE	29,2	12,8	2,3
LT	27,7	20,0	1,4
RO	27,3	27,6	1,0
UK	24,2	21,7	1,1
EE	24,0	17,7	1,4
ES	23,4	17,7	1,3
FI	22,4	23,1	1,0
SE	22,1	22,1	1,0
MT	21,9	12,6	1,7
BG	21,6	21,6	1,0
EL	21,5	17,2	1,2
Unweighted Average	31,3	23,7	1,4
Unweighted Average without joint taxation countries	30,0	23,1	1,3
Unweighted Average for joint taxation countries (FR, DE, IE, LU, PT)	37,3	26,9	1,4

Source: European Commission (2013); OECD (2013), and OECD (2011)

Table A3. The generosity of leave within EU member states, 2012

	Maternity leave in weeks (Within brackets division between pre- and post-natal leave)	Paid Maternity leave (at least 2/3 of salary)	Paternity leave in weeks	Paid paternity Leave (at least 2/3 of salary), in weeks	Parental Leave in weeks	Paid Parental Leave (at least 2/3 of salary), in weeks	Total leave	Total paid leave
AT	16 (8+8)	16	0	0	Until child reaches 2 yrs	51,5 / 60.2	112	76.2
BE	15 (6+9)	15	2	2	34,4	0	51,4	17
BG	58,6 (6+52,8)	58,6	2,1	2,1	Until child reaches 2 yrs	0	112,1	60,7
CZ	28 6/8+20/2 2	28	0	0	Until child reaches 3 yrs	0	162	28
HR	29,7 (4+14)	29,7	0	0	52	34,4	81,7	64,1
CY	18 (4+14)	18	0	0	13	0	31	18
DK	18 (4+14)	18	2	2	Until child reaches 48 weeks of age	32	54	52
EE	20 (4/10+10 /16)	20	2	0	Until child reaches 3 yrs	62	164	82
FI	17,5	17,5	3	3	26 (excl. home care allowance)	26	46,5	46,5
FR	16 (>2+14)	16	2	2	Until child reaches 3 yrs	0	164	18
DE	14 (6+8)	14	0	0	Until child reaches 3 yrs	52	162	66
GR	42,8 (8+9)	17	0,4	0,4	34,4	0	77,6	17,4
HU	24 (4+20)	24	1	1	Until child reaches 3 yrs	84	161	109
IE	42 (>2+40)	26	0	0	28	0	70	26
IT	20 (>4+16)	20	0	0	47,3	0	67,3	20
LV	18 (6+12)	18	1,4	1,4	Until child reaches 3 yrs	Until child reaches 1 yrs	163,4	59,4

LT	18 (10+8)	18	4	4	Until child reaches 3 yrs	Until child reaches 1 yrs	170	66
LU	16	16	0	0	52	0	68	16
MT	18 (4+14)	14	0,4	0,4	52	0	70,4	14,4
NL	16 (6+10)	16	0,4	0,4	52	0	68,4	16,4
PL	24	24	2	2	156	0	182	26
PT	6,4	6,4	4	4	45,1	25,8	55,5	36,2
RO	18	18	1	1	Until child reaches 2 yrs	92	111	111
SK	34 (6+28)	34	0	0	Until child reaches 3 yrs	0	162	34
SL	15 (4+11)	15	13	2	37	37	65	54
ES	16 (6+10)	16	2	2	Up to 1 yr is protected, but can be taken until the child reaches 3 yrs	0	164	18
SE	2	2	2	2	Until child reaches 3 yrs	111 (390 days at 80% per parent)	160	115
UK	52 (11+41)	6	2	0	26	0	80	6

Total (paid) leave is calculated as the sum of the (paid) maternity, paternity and parental leave per household. In order to avoid double counting, post natal (paid) maternity leave is subtracted from (paid) parental leave entitlements if parental leave entitlements are specified until the child x birthday. In case the pre-natal leave entitlement is not given, it is set at 6 weeks.

Source: Own calculation on the basis of Moss (2013); Gauthier (2014) and OECD (family data base), and the Worldbank (Women Business and the Law), ILO pages as well as national websites of several countries.

Table A4: Percentage of children in formal child care, 2012

	Below age 3			Between age 3 and compulsory schooling age		
	1-29 hours p/w	30 hours of more p/w	Total	1-29 hours p/w	30 hours of more p/w	Total
EU28	15	15	30	37	46	83
BE	19	20	39	32	66	98
BG	0	7	7	2	58	60
CZ	4	1	5	29	45	74
DK	5	69	74	11	87	98
DE	9	15	24	46	44	90
EE	4	15	19	9	83	92
IE	10	11	21	68	14	82
EL	4	15	19	43	32	75
ES	20	19	39	45	41	86
FR	18	26	44	43	52	95
HR	1	14	15	10	41	51
IT	9	17	26	20	75	95
CY	7	16	23	35	38	73
LV	1	14	15	7	66	73
LT	1	6	7	9	56	65
LU	16	28	44	46	27	73
HU	1	7	8	16	59	75
MT	8	3	11	29	44	73
NL	46	6	52	76	13	89
AT	11	3	14	57	28	85
PL	0	3	3	9	34	43
PT	1	34	35	7	74	81
RO	1	1	2	30	11	41
SI	3	34	37	11	81	92
SK	1	3	4	13	62	75
FI	6	20	26	20	57	77
SE	19	32	51	31	64	95
UK	30	5	35	66	27	93

Source: Eurostat: EU-SILC

Table A5: Working hours flexibility, 2012

	Part-time rate (women. 25-54)	Part-time rate (men and women. 20-64)	Share voluntary part-time (% of part-time employment)	Share voluntary part-time (% of total employment)
EU27	31.5	18.6	71.7	13.4
BE	43.3	24.5	90.5	22.2
BG	2.5	2.2	33.6	0.7
CZ	8.5	4.9	80.0	3.9
DK	31.9	20.9	78.9	16.5
DE	45.4	25.7	83.1	21.4
EE	13.0	9.0	79.3	7.1
IE	34.0	22.6	57.6	13.0
EL	11.7	7.5	34.3	2.6
ES	24.3	14.5	38.5	5.6
FR	29.9	17.6	68.6	12.0
HR	7.5	6.2	79.7	4.9
IT	30.9	16.7	41.3	6.9
CY	12.8	9.4	46.5	4.4
LV	10.9	8.8	55.9	4.9
LT	10.6	8.8	66.8	5.9
LU	35.9	18.3	86.0	15.7
HU	9.3	6.6	58.9	3.9
MT	24.8	12.2	84.2	10.2
NL	75.4	46.2	89.9	41.5
AT	45.4	25.4	89.9	22.8
PL	10.3	6.9	71.7	4.9
PT	13.9	10.8	51.7	5.6
RO	9.3	8.8	44.7	3.9
SI	11.8	8.5	90.9	7.7
SK	5.4	3.9	68.2	2.7
FI	17.6	12.7	72.5	9.2
SE	37.2	23.8	71.1	16.9
UK	41.0	24.4	80.4	19.6



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Project Information

Welfare, Wealth and Work for Europe

A European research consortium is working on the analytical foundations for a socio-ecological transition

Abstract

Europe needs change. The financial crisis has exposed long-neglected deficiencies in the present growth path, most visibly in the areas of unemployment and public debt. At the same time, Europe has to cope with new challenges, ranging from globalisation and demographic shifts to new technologies and ecological challenges. Under the title of Welfare, Wealth and Work for Europe – WWWforEurope – a European research consortium is laying the analytical foundation for a new development strategy that will enable a socio-ecological transition to high levels of employment, social inclusion, gender equity and environmental sustainability. The four-year research project within the 7th Framework Programme funded by the European Commission was launched in April 2012. The consortium brings together researchers from 34 scientific institutions in 12 European countries and is coordinated by the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO). The project coordinator is Karl Aiginger, director of WIFO.

For details on WWWforEurope see: www.foreurope.eu

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