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2. Work and family life in Europe: employment patterns of working parents across welfare states

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of female employment has been one of the most important trends in the labour markets of all Western European countries in recent decades. The traditional single-earner family is disappearing and the number of dual-earner families is growing, not only in Western Europe but also in the United States (Waite and Nielsen, 2001). In 2003, the number of dual-earner couples averaged 66 per cent across the EU member states. However, European countries differ in terms of the pace and timing of this trend. In the Nordic countries, the new member state from Eastern Europe, and Portugal, around two-thirds of couples are dual-earners, whereas in Southern Europe, for example Spain, Malta, Italy and Greece, the share of dual-earner couples is around 50 per cent or lower (Aliaga, 2005). The growth of dual-earner families has been particularly strong among couples with children; only Germany, Italy and Belgium are exceptions in this respect (Franco and Winqvist, 2002). The growth of dual-earner families has challenged the traditional breadwinner model, which has served as a basis for Western European welfare states in particular, and for the way the labour market is organised. Career paths in organisations tacitly imply workers who are 'free' of care tasks. In this respect, Moen and Sweet speak of 'the outdated structure of work and occupational career paths' (2003:18). The recent rise of the dual-earner family therefore has important implications for the structure of welfare states and for the organisation of work.

The rise of dual earners has not, however, implied that a new, dominant model is appearing in Europe. On the contrary, when examining the hours spent on paid labour by couples with children, it becomes clear that working

parents vary in their employment pattern, that is in the division of paid work. In some countries the one-and-a-half earner model is popular among couples with children, while in others parents more often opt for the pattern in which both have a full-time job. In this chapter we consider how to explain these differences in the employment patterns of working parents across countries. Countries within Europe differ in the work-life policies they offer to working parents, in the degree to which two incomes are necessary to sustain a family, and in the cultural and societal norms and values regarding gender roles and caring for children. Assuming that the availability of work-life policies plays a role in the strategies working parents choose when combining paid work and care for children, we discuss differences and similarities in the institutional context of European countries and describe the public policies in various welfare states. Our consideration of the kinds of strategies available for combining work and family life is viewed primarily from the employment patterns couples use.

What kind of employment patterns do we find in European countries today? In section 2 we survey the various employment patterns of working parents and in section 3 discuss the choices they make in order to match their working life with their care tasks. We discuss the options working parents have to manipulate and adjust their working and private lives. The fourth section examines several aspects of the institutional context in which working parents make their decisions. We conclude this chapter with a discussion of our findings.

2. EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS OF WORKING PARENTS ACROSS EUROPE

When considering the labour market participation rate of women and men across Europe, we find the highest activity rates among women in the Scandinavian countries (see Table 2.1). In Sweden and Denmark, 76 per cent of the female population between the ages of 15 and 64 are active in the labour market. The lowest female activity rates are found in Italy (48 per cent). There has been a decline in the female activity rates in Eastern Europe since the transition to the market economy in 1990 and they are now more similar to those in the West. In 2002, female activity rates in Eastern Europe varied between 53 per cent in Hungary and 63 per cent in Slovenia and the Czech Republic. All over Europe, the activity rates of women are still lower than those of men, including in the Nordic countries, although the differences there are small.

Table 2.1 Activity rates (% of population aged 15-64) by gender, 2003

| | Men | Women | Total |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <i>Northern Europe</i> | | | |
| Denmark | 83.8 | 75.1 | 79.5 |
| Finland | 76.8 | 72.2 | 74.5 |
| Sweden | 79.2 | 75.4 | 77.3 |
| <i>Western Europe</i> | | | |
| Austria | 80.0 | 65.6 | 72.7 |
| Belgium | 72.9 | 56.9 | 64.9 |
| France | 75.0 | 63.1 | 69.0 |
| Germany | 78.2 | 64.6 | 71.5 |
| Ireland | 79.1 | 58.4 | 68.8 |
| Luxembourg | 77.0* | 52.7* | 65.0* |
| Netherlands | 83.9 | 68.5 | 76.3 |
| United Kingdom | 82.7 | 68.3 | 75.6 |
| <i>Southern Europe</i> | | | |
| Greece | 77.2 | 51.1 | 63.9 |
| Italy | 74.7 | 48.3 | 61.5 |
| Portugal | 78.8 | 65.6 | 72.1 |
| Spain | 79.7 | 54.8 | 67.3 |
| <i>Eastern Europe</i> | | | |
| Bulgaria | 65.4 | 56.5 | 60.9 |
| Czech Republic | 78.0 | 62.5 | 70.2 |
| Hungary | 67.6 | 53.9 | 60.6 |
| Poland | 70.0 | 58.0 | 63.9 |
| Romania | 69.3 | 55.3 | 62.2 |
| Slovenia | 72.0 | 62.1 | 67.1 |
| Slovak Republic | 76.7 | 63.5 | 70.0 |
| EU 25 | 77.4 | 61.2 | 69.3 |

Notes: * Figures of 2002.

Source: Employment in Europe, 2004.

What kind of family models do we find in different welfare state regimes when it comes to the division of paid work? Table 2.2 shows the different employment patterns of couples with a child under 12 aged 20-49 where at least one partner has a job. Table 2.3 offers additional information about couples' actual and preferred division of paid work. When comparing countries, it becomes clear from Table 2.2 that the single-earner family is most prevalent in Italy, Spain, Greece and Hungary. In those countries

between about half of couples with a child under 12 are single-earner families.

Table 2.2 *Employment patterns of couples aged 20-49 in households with a child under 12 in 2003, percentage of couples with at least one partner in work*

| | Male FT Female not working | Male FT Female FT | Male FT Female PT |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Northern Europe</i> | | | |
| Finland | 25 | 60 | 8 |
| <i>Western Europe</i> | | | |
| Austria | 27 | 36 | 33 |
| Belgium | 26 | 41 | 27 |
| France | 30 | 47 | 17 |
| Germany | 37 | 22 | 35 |
| Luxembourg | 42 | 30 | 25 |
| Netherlands | 26 | 12 | 55 |
| UK | 29 | 27 | 39 |
| <i>Southern Europe</i> | | | |
| Greece | 47 | 44 | 6 |
| Italy | 50 | 32 | 14 |
| Portugal | 22 | 67 | 7 |
| Spain | 48 | 40 | 9 |
| <i>Eastern Europe</i> | | | |
| Czech Republic | 44 | 50 | 4 |
| Estonia | 37 | 52 | 4 |
| Latvia | 31 | 53 | 7 |
| Lithuania | 17 | 60 | 11 |
| Hungary | 47 | 44 | 3 |
| Poland | 35 | 46 | 9 |
| Slovenia | 13 | 80 | (1) |
| Slovakia | 36 | 57 | 2 |

Notes:

FT = working full-time, that is 30 or more hours a week
 PT = working part-time, that is fewer than 30 hours a week
 () reliability uncertain

Source: Eurostat: European Labour Force Survey, 2003.

In Slovenia and Portugal, in contrast, for the majority of these couples both partners have a full-time job. In the Netherlands the one-and-a-half earner family, in which the father has a full-time job and the mother a part-time job, is the most popular model. Table 2.2 shows that 55 per cent of Dutch couples are in fact one-and-a-half earners. Other countries with a relatively large proportion of one-and-a-half earners are the United Kingdom (39 per cent of couples), Germany (35 per cent), and Austria and Belgium (33 and 27 per cent of couples). In Southern and Eastern Europe, very few couples have opted for this working time pattern. Mothers in these countries either have a full-time job or are not employed.

Table 2.3 *Actual and preferred employment patterns of couples with a child under 6 in various European countries, 1998*

| | Man FT/ woman FT | Man FT/ woman PT | Man FT/ woman not employed | Other |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Northern Europe</i> | | | | |
| Finland | | | | |
| Actual | 49.3 | 6.4 | 32.8 | 11.5 |
| Preferred | 80.3 | 8.6 | 10.2 | 0.8 |
| Sweden | | | | |
| Actual | 51.1 | 13.3 | 24.9 | 10.7 |
| Preferred | 66.8 | 22.2 | 6.6 | 4.4 |
| <i>Western Europe</i> | | | | |
| Austria | | | | |
| Actual | 19.1 | 28.2 | 48.1 | 4.5 |
| Preferred | 35.6 | 39.9 | 3.9 | 20.7 |
| Belgium | | | | |
| Actual | 46.0 | 19.4 | 27.3 | 7.3 |
| Preferred | 54.8 | 28.8 | 13.4 | 3.0 |
| France | | | | |
| Actual | 38.8 | 14.4 | 38.3 | 8.4 |
| Preferred | 52.4 | 21.9 | 14.1 | 11.7 |
| Germany | | | | |
| Actual | 15.7 | 23.1 | 52.3 | 8.9 |
| Preferred | 32.0 | 42.9 | 5.7 | 19.4 |
| Ireland | | | | |
| Actual | 30.8 | 18.7 | 37.0 | 13.5 |
| Preferred | 31.1 | 42.3 | 8.1 | 18.5 |
| Luxembourg | | | | |
| Actual | 23.5 | 27.0 | 49.1 | 0.4 |

| | Man FT/ woman FT | Man FT/ woman PT | Man FT/ woman not employed | Other |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Preferred | 27.5 | 29.9 | 12.4 | 30.2 |
| Netherlands | | | | |
| Actual | 4.8 | 54.8 | 33.7 | 6.7 |
| Preferred | 5.6 | 69.9 | 10.7 | 13.8 |
| UK | | | | |
| Actual | 24.9 | 31.9 | 32.8 | 10.4 |
| Preferred | 21.3 | 41.8 | 13.3 | 23.6 |
| <i>Southern Europe</i> | | | | |
| Greece | | | | |
| Actual | 42.2 | 7.9 | 36.1 | 13.8 |
| Preferred | 65.6 | 10.6 | 9.4 | 14.4 |
| Italy | | | | |
| Actual | 34.9 | 11.8 | 43.3 | 10.0 |
| Preferred | 50.4 | 27.7 | 10.7 | 11.2 |
| Portugal | | | | |
| Actual | 74.5 | 4.7 | 18.7 | 2.2 |
| Preferred | 84.4 | 8.0 | 4.0 | 3.6 |
| Spain | | | | |
| Actual | 25.6 | 6.3 | 56.9 | 11.2 |
| Preferred | 59.7 | 11.6 | 19.7 | 9.0 |

Source: Employment Outlook, 2001; based on 'Employment Options of the Future Survey 1998'.

Alternative models, for instance, in which the female partner has a full-time job and the male partner works part-time, rarely occur. Another very uncommon pattern across all the selected countries is the one in which both partners have a part-time job (Aliaga, 2005; Franco and Winqvist, 2002).

The data in Table 2.3 for couples with young children (under 6) shows that in Sweden and Finland approximately half of the couples combine two full-time jobs. These countries are exceeded only by Portugal, where 75 per cent of couples with a child under 6 combine two full-time jobs. Unfortunately, former socialist countries are not included in this table. The contrast with the Netherlands is striking. Only 5 per cent of Dutch couples with a young child both work full-time. Germany and Austria also have few parents with a child under 6 who both work full-time (16 and 19 per cent respectively). In all other European countries, the proportion of couples who both work full-time is substantially higher. Whereas in Germany and Austria the single-earner model is the most common, Dutch parents seem to prefer the one-and-a-half earner model. When considering employment pattern

preferences, the Netherlands stands out, with a majority of couples preferring the one-and-a-half earner model (70 per cent) and very few couples preferring both parents to be employed full-time. In the Nordic countries and in southern Europe, a majority of couples with young children prefer to both work full-time. In central Western European countries one-third or half of couples prefer this model, the exceptions being the Netherlands (5 per cent) but also the United Kingdom, with 21 per cent of couples showing this preference. In all the European countries listed in Table 2.3, a minority of couples prefer the traditional breadwinner model, with a full-time working father and a mother who stays at home.

The OECD (2001) has mapped trends in employment patterns of couples with a child under 6, looking at developments between 1984 and 1999 in Western and Southern Europe. Between 1984 and 1999, the proportion of single-earner couples fell considerably in all countries. In Western Europe this was accompanied by the rise of the one-and-a-half earner model, while in Southern Europe we more often see an increase in couples in which both partners have a full-time job. For 1999, the OECD also has data on Poland: 36 per cent of Polish couples with a young child both work full-time, for 6 per cent of couples the father has a full-time job and the mother works part-time, and 40 per cent are traditional single-earner couples. These figures are, in fact, similar to figures from Greece or Italy.

To summarise, the employment patterns of working parents differ between countries. In countries such as Sweden, Finland, Slovenia, Lithuania and Portugal, most working parents both work full-time and even more prefer to do so. In other countries, the proportion of single earners is much larger or couples opt for an employment pattern in which the father works full-time and the mother part-time. How can we explain these differences in employment patterns between and within countries? The following section discusses why parents make these choices.

3. CHOICES OF WORKING PARENTS AND THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Why do parents make the choices they do when it comes to the division of paid work? To answer this question, we must consider two perspectives: first, the institutional context of the country, as far as relevant for work-family issues; and secondly, individual and household characteristics. Institutional contexts are discussed in the following section. If we look at individual and household characteristics and try to explain why people act as they do, we must bear two general assumptions in mind concerning human behaviour: people – or couples – need an income and people in general do not want to

deviate too much from what is considered 'normal behaviour' in the group of which they consider themselves a member. Given these two assumptions, parents will consider the pros and cons of various family models and choose a certain strategy to combine work and family life. It is important to note, however, that a chosen strategy does not always coincide with the preferences of parents. It is likely that some institutional conditions, such as the absence of affordable childcare, restrict parents' choices. As a result, the working patterns of parents are not always a free choice. Considering whether a certain choice reflects preferences is different from considering through which mechanisms strategies for combining work and family life come about. This latter question is addressed here.

Given these general, theoretically formulated behavioural goals (the need for income and for social approval or belonging), what reasons underlie parents' choices when searching for strategies to combine work and family life? We can distinguish four possible reasons working parents could give for choosing a certain pattern in the division of paid work in order to meet their need for income and social approval. The four reasons concern human capital, the economic necessity of two incomes, the availability of work-family provisions, such as childcare facilities, and norms and values concerning work and family. Let us first consider the pattern of where parents have a full-time job and outsource much of the care of their children, at least during working hours. This option is most likely to occur in countries in which two incomes are necessary to sustain a family and where outsourcing care or taking up leave arrangements is not too complicated because sufficient and affordable provisions are available. Furthermore, when parents' working hours and the opening hours of childcare facilities coincide or informal care is available, and when it is considered normal practice for parents of young children to have a full-time job, more parents are likely to opt for this model. The human capital of both parents is an important determinant at the household level. Both parents are more likely to have a full-time job when both are highly educated, which makes it relatively 'expensive' not to use their own human capital as efficiently as possible.

The one-and-a-half earner model is more likely to occur when one of the partners is better educated than the other and/or has a better paying job. This model is also more likely when the cost of living does not require two full-time incomes, when work-family provisions are complicated and expensive to use, and when the prevalent ideology of the country or social class is that parents should care for their children themselves. The single-earner model will be dominant when one or both parents are relatively low educated, when two incomes are not needed or when the lack of a second income is compensated by the national tax system; when the use of supportive facilities

is complicated and expensive; and when parents caring for children at home is the dominant norm within a country or social class.

Some of the factors that affect the decisions of working parents when it comes to combining work and care – such as the economic necessity of two incomes and the availability of such work-family provisions as childcare and leave arrangements – are related to the institutional context of a country. The influence of norms and values is also related to the institutional context to a certain extent, but may also be experienced as an individual preference. What is considered acceptable in society can be internalised as people's own norms or values. Human capital, on the other hand, is a factor at household level. The relevance or weight of the human capital argument in choosing a specific working pattern varies in the different institutional contexts. For instance, it may be that two highly educated partners are more likely to choose to both work full-time, even though they live in a country in which work-family arrangements are almost non-existent or where two incomes are not really needed and where parents (mostly mothers) are assumed to provide most of the actual care and upbringing of their children themselves. An institutional context of this kind can explain why highly educated couples in particular work as dual full-time earners. Other incentives reduce the cost of the dual full-time income model, as the cost arises from the institutional structure, such as ambition and challenging and attractive jobs. Moreover, a supportive workplace that makes it easier to combine work and family life is important in this respect. Employers can support a work-family combination in different ways, for example by offering flexible working patterns, by providing childcare options or by offering leave arrangements (den Dulk, 2001). In addition, a workplace culture that encourages employees to actually use such arrangements and offers support for workers with family responsibilities makes it more likely that parents will stay in full-time employment after the birth of a child. Chapter 3 of this book discusses the workplace context. The rest of this chapter focuses on the role of the national context, that is the level and nature of public work-family policies, the cultural norms and values regarding parenthood and gender relations, and the need for two incomes to sustain a family.

4. THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

As mentioned earlier, the employment patterns of working parents are not only the result of the individual preferences of households; these patterns are also very much shaped by the institutional context. In order to discuss various institutional constraints that affect the employment patterns of working parents across Europe, we will make a distinction between different welfare

state regimes as a general framework and starting point. Within welfare state regimes, the roles played by the market, the state and the family differ in the provision of welfare. Based on the typology of Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) and following Blossfeld and Drobnič (2001), we distinguish between five welfare state regimes as a framework for discussing the differences and similarities in institutional contexts that affect the choices of working parents: the social democratic welfare state regime, the liberal regime, the conservative regime, the Mediterranean regime and the post-communist regime. Work-family policies, the prevalence of part-time work, and gender ideologies correspond to various types of welfare state regimes. We first discuss work-family policies that support dual-earner families in the various regimes. This is followed by a description of labour market conditions, in particular part-time work and the economic context. The discussion then turns to cultural attitudes towards gender roles. We realise that there are no pure welfare state regimes and that some countries are difficult to classify. Nevertheless, the classification refers to the dominant character of the welfare package in a country and provides a useful starting point for examining country differences and similarities.

4.1 Public Policies and the Employment Patterns of Working Parents

4.1.1 The social democratic welfare state regime: the Nordic countries

In the social democratic regime, dual earners are supported by an elaborate system of public work-family policies that make the combination of work and family life easier to manage. Universal services, such as a substantial public day-care system, support the combination of work and family life. In addition, the tax system is individualised. The state is the main provider of welfare; private provisions are almost non-existent. In this welfare state regime, the state also plays an important role as an employer, especially within the service sector. Women in particular work in public services to a large extent. Within Europe, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland come nearest to this particular welfare state regime. In Sweden, for instance, working parents are entitled to a place in publicly funded childcare services for children from one to twelve years. During the first year of the child's life, parents can take paid parental leave to stay home and care for their child themselves. In fact, Sweden was the first country in Europe to introduce parental leave for both mothers and fathers. As early as 1974, working parents had the right to take paid parental leave and to return to the same job or a similar position in the workplace. Nowadays, parental leave is 60 weeks per child, paid at 80 per cent of normal earnings. Parents can divide the leave between them but each parent has a right to his or her own two months (8 weeks) of leave (the 'daddy and mummy quota'). The special 'daddy' months

aim to encourage fathers to take leave, thereby stimulating the equal division of care duties between men and women (Rostgaard, 2002). Norway has also introduced a fathers' quota for parental leave. In Denmark, in contrast, special leave for fathers is restricted to two weeks' paternity leave, and as of 2002 there has been no specific fathers' quota for parental leave (see Table 2.4). Finland, too, has no specific fathers' quota for parental leave. However, since 2003, Finnish fathers can extend their paternity leave with two additional weeks if they take up the last two weeks of parental leave. In all the Scandinavian countries, however, fathers take less parental leave than mothers.

Table 2.4 Leave arrangements and public childcare in the Nordic countries

| | Maternity leave after birth | Paternity leave after birth | Parental leave | Father's quota parental leave | Percentage of children in formal childcare |
|----|---|---|---|---|--|
| DK | 14 weeks, partly paid (55% APW) ¹ | 2 weeks, partly paid (56% APW) | 32 weeks (55/56% APW) | None | Under 3: 64% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 91% (1998) |
| SF | 9.5-12.5 weeks, partly paid | 1 to 5 weeks ² , partly paid | 26 weeks, until child is 3 care leave | None | Under 3: 22% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 66% (1998) |
| NO | 6 weeks of parental leave | 2 weeks unpaid leave | 42 to 52 weeks, depending on compensation (80/100% of earnings) | 4 weeks, paid at 80/100% of earnings | Under 3: 40% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 80% (1997) |
| SE | 8 weeks of parental leave reserved for mother | 2 weeks, paid at 80% of earnings | 60 weeks (excl. fathers quota) paid at 80% of earnings | 8 weeks, paid at 80% of salary earnings | Under 3: 48% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 80% (1998) |

Notes:

¹ % APW = payment as a percentage of the wage of an average production worker (Rostgaard, 2002).

² 2 weeks are conditional, granted only if fathers also take the two last weeks of parental leave.

Source: Rostgaard, 2002; Deven and Moss, 2002; OECD, 2001.

The extensive support for fathers' rights is particularly striking in Sweden, especially the emphasis on the father-child relationship. This is less the case in Denmark and Norway. However, compared to other European countries,

the emphasis on fatherhood and equal sharing of care duties between men and women is a notable feature of the social democratic welfare state regime (Rostgaard, 2002; see also Brandth and Kvande, 2001; Plantin, Månsson and Kearney, 2003). In their research on fatherhood in Sweden and the United Kingdom, Plantin et al. clearly show that the modern discourse on involved fatherhood is more well-established in Sweden than in the UK, where findings point out differences between the classes in their response towards the new expectations concerning active fatherhood. While British middle class men express a preference for active and more involved fatherhood, working class men are more ambivalent. Although they show a growing involvement in family life, they also express a wish to maintain traditional gender roles. Plantin et al. conclude that the discourse on involved fatherhood is now hegemonic in Sweden. 'It is not possible for fathers to 'talk' another discourse, at least not publicly' (2003:23). In Chapter 12, Fred Deven discusses fathers' parental leave in more detail.

4.1.2 Conservative welfare state regime: Western European countries

Within the conservative welfare state regime, compulsory social insurance and fragmented occupational schemes are important features. Those without an employment relationship have access only to modest social security schemes. In addition, more importance is attached to the family.

Table 2.5 Leave arrangements and childcare provisions in conservative welfare state regimes

| | Maternity leave after birth | Paternity leave after birth | Parental leave | Percentage of children in formal childcare |
|----|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| AT | 8 weeks, fully paid | None | Until child is 2, flat rate payment | Under 3: 4% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 68% (1998) |
| BE | 8-14 weeks, paid at 70% or more | 2 weeks, fully paid | 3 months each parent, flat rate payment | Under 3: 30% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 97% (2000) |
| FR | 10-12 weeks, paid at 70% or more | 3 weeks, fully paid | Until child is 3, flat rate payment (depending on no. of children) | Under 3: 29% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 99% (2000) |
| DE | 8 weeks, fully paid | None | Until child is 3, flat rate payment to some (income related) | Under 3: 10% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 78% (2000) |
| NL | 10-12 weeks, fully paid | 2 days, fully paid | 3 months each parent, unpaid | Under 3: 6% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 98% (1998) |

Source: For childcare OECD, 2001; for leave arrangements Deven and Moss, 2002.

In contrast to the social democratic regime, social policy is less individualised. The conservative regime does not treat women and men as equal. Whereas men are seen as workers, women are seen primarily as wives and mothers. Because the traditional family is emphasised and not the labour market participation of all citizens, childcare and/or parental leave facilities are less well-developed and the female labour market participation rate is relatively low compared to social democratic countries. Within Europe, Germany most closely resembles this type of welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Because the male breadwinner's wages are protected by income guarantees in these countries, 'this welfare state regime tends to preserve the male breadwinner family model' (Blossveld and Drobnič, 2001:42). In Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands (the latter until 2001), tax provisions favour the traditional single-earner breadwinner family. In Scandinavia and Southern Europe, there are no tax disincentives to a wife's employment (Esping-Andersen, 1999:65).

France and Belgium are ambiguous cases within this cluster of conservative welfare states. Both countries have extensive childcare and pre-school facilities. In other conservative countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, the parental provision of care is emphasised much more (Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996). Table 2.5 provides an overview of statutory parental leave arrangements and the percentage of children enrolled in formal childcare facilities. Compared to the Nordic countries, financial compensation of parental leave is lower or non-existent, and the percentage of children under three in formal childcare is smaller, although France and Belgium are exceptions in this regard.

4.1.3 The Mediterranean welfare state regimes: Southern Europe

South European countries have very few public provisions, but on the other hand they do not support the breadwinner family model by having tax disincentives to women's paid employment as in the conservative regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1999). However, the family is seen as the main provider of welfare and parental leave arrangements, and there is relatively little provision made for childcare (see Table 2.6).

4.1.4 The liberal welfare state regime: the United Kingdom

In the liberal welfare state regime, means-tested assistance and modest social security schemes predominate. Great confidence is placed in market forces and the market's self-regulating capacity. The state functions only as a last resort. Whereas the social democratic welfare state regime treats men and women as equals and the conservative regime treats them as different, the liberal welfare state regime treats men and women as equals and makes no attempt to take women's heavier burden of care into account (Plantenga and

van Doorne-Huiskes, 1993). Childcare and parental leave facilities are seen as responsibilities of the individual and not of the government. In the liberal welfare state, people are supposed to acquire services in the market; however, commercial services such as childcare are very expensive and inaccessible for low-income families. Because liberal welfare state regimes only have a limited system of breadwinner facilities, however, the labour market participation rate of women is still quite high. Within Europe, the United Kingdom comes nearest to this model (see Table 2.7).

Table 2.6 *Leave arrangements and childcare provisions in Mediterranean welfare state regimes*

| | Maternity leave after birth | Paternity leave after birth | Parental leave | Percentage of children in formal childcare |
|----|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| EL | 7-11 weeks, fully paid | None | 3 months each parent, unpaid | Under 3: 3% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 46% (2000) |
| IT | 13 weeks (3 months), paid at 70% or more | None | 10-11 months per family, partly paid below 70% of earnings | Under 3: 6% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 46% (2000) |
| PT | 8.5-13 weeks, fully paid | 1 week, fully paid | 6-24 months each parent, unpaid | Under 3: 12% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 75% (1999) |
| ES | 6-16 weeks, fully paid | 2 days, fully paid | Until child is 3, unpaid | Under 3: 5% Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 84% (2000) |

Notes: For childcare OECD, 2001; for leave arrangements Deven and Moss, 2002.

Table 2.7 *Leave arrangements and childcare provisions in liberal welfare state regimes*

| | Maternity leave after birth | Paternity leave after birth | Parental leave | Percentage of children in formal childcare |
|----|---|-----------------------------|---|--|
| UK | 52 weeks, 6 weeks fully paid, 20 at a flat rate | 2 weeks, flat rate payment | 3 months each parent, unpaid (each parent can take up to a maximum of 4 weeks per year) | Under 3: 34%* Aged 3 to mandatory school age: 60%* (2000) |

Notes: * England only

Source: For childcare OECD, 2001; for leave arrangements Deven and Moss, 2002.

Esping-Andersen argues that markets only rarely act as substitutes for public services or family self-servicing.¹ Only when market services are cheap (because of cheap labour as in the US) does it become worthwhile for a majority of families to outsource care tasks. At the same time, there is a downside: the people who offer cheap services become, and sometimes remain for several generations, the working poor. In Europe, however, the cost of commercial services is high because of the high tax on labour and the relatively egalitarian wage structure. Commercial services, such as private day care, are therefore expensive and inaccessible for a majority of families. Brannen (2000) has analysed the employment patterns of mothers over the past 20 years in the UK. Her analysis shows that most working mothers in the UK work 'short' part-time hours, but that the number of full-time employed mothers working in higher status jobs is slowly rising. Brannen points out the growing polarisation between 'working rich' and 'working poor' families in the UK. The working rich are those families in which both partners are employed full-time in well-paid jobs. These families can afford to hire domestic help or to buy private childcare. In 'working poor' families, one or both parents are unemployed or have lower-status, poorly paid insecure employment. The outsourcing of care by 'working rich' couples generates new service jobs that are going mainly to other women, thereby increasing the growing differentiation in women's employment in the UK (Brannen, 2000; see also Wheelock, 1999).

4.1.5 Former socialist countries: Eastern Europe

The former socialist welfare state regime can be seen as a fifth type of welfare regime. The communist regime was committed to full employment of both men and women. Like the social democratic regime, the former socialist regime is typified by a broad range of public policies that support the combination of paid work and care for children. Under state socialism, women's labour market participation rate was high and the common employment pattern was based on a family model of two full-time earners. 'Work arrangements in these countries could tentatively be described as standard forms of employment, with lifelong, secure, permanent, full-time jobs for both men and women' (Blossfeld and Drobnič, 2001:44). However, the issue of gender equality at home – that is the equal division of household work and care tasks – was not acknowledged or debated. The ideology of gender equality focused only on access to paid work, and women kept the double burden of domestic work besides their paid job. Opinions and values concerning the traditional gender division of work at home scarcely changed (see for example Dijkstra, 1997; Kocourková, 2002).

To enable women to combine work and care for children, childcare services were developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A majority of

children between 3 and 6 years were enrolled in public day care. A little while later, leave arrangements were introduced. In 1969, Hungary was the first central Eastern European country to introduce parental leave (for mothers only) with a relatively high allowance. Instead of using childcare facilities for children under 3 years of age, mothers stayed at home to care for their children. Job security and pension entitlements were ensured. Nowadays, Eastern European countries still provide for long periods of leave, mostly until a child is 3 years of age. Until the 1990s parental leave was mainly intended for mothers, but nowadays fathers are also entitled to it. Unlike the social democratic regime, however, the former socialist countries, except Slovenia, have not introduced leave for fathers (as yet), nor special schemes like the 'daddy quota' to encourage fathers to take leave (Deven and Moss, 2002).

Table 2.8 Leave arrangements and childcare provisions in former socialist countries

| | Maternity leave after birth | Paternity leave after birth | Parental leave | Percentage of children in public childcare |
|----|--|---|---|---|
| CZ | 20-22 weeks, partly paid less than 70% of earnings | None | Until child is 3, flat rate payment | Under 3: 1% (1997) Aged 3-5/6: 85% (1999) |
| HU | 20 weeks, paid at 70% of earnings or more | None | Until child is 3, partly flat rate payment, partly income related | Under 3: 11% (1997) Aged 3-5/6: 87% (1999) |
| PL | 16-20 weeks, fully paid | None | Until child is 2, partly paid less than 70% of earnings | Under 3: 5% (1997) Aged 3-5/6: 50% (1999) |
| SI | 20-22 weeks, paid at 70% of earnings or more | 90 days; 15 days fully paid, 75 days unpaid | 260 days, 100% of earnings | Under 3: 1% (1997) Aged 3-5/6: 70% (1999) |

Source: Leave arrangements Deven and Moss, 2002; childcare UNICEF, 1997, 1999 cited in Kocourková, 2002.

After the transition to the market economy, labour market conditions changed, unemployment increased and living standards dropped. Childcare services declined and greater emphasis was placed on leave arrangements. However, wage compensation during the period of leave decreased during the 1990s. The transition to the market economy was expected to give parents the opportunity to opt for the one-earner model. Although leave arrangements

were extended to give parents the opportunity to stay at home to care for their children, two incomes were still needed to sustain a family. The percentage of children cared for in public childcare services is still large among the 3-6 year age group (50 per cent in Poland and 87 per cent in Hungary) (see Table 2.8). That is due to a decline in available places in childcare, coinciding with the dramatic decline in fertility rates in Eastern Europe (Kocourková, 2002).

4.2 Economic and Labour Market Conditions and the Employment Patterns of Working Parents

There are differences between countries with respect to the availability of part-time jobs and the quality of those jobs. Table 2.9 shows the percentage of men and women in part-time employment across Europe. The Netherlands has the highest percentage of part-timers: 22 per cent of Dutch men and 74 per cent of Dutch women had a part-time job in 2003. Other Western European countries also have high percentages of women working part-time: 44 per cent of British working women work part-time, 39 per cent of Belgian working women and 36 per cent of German working women. A third of working women in Sweden and Denmark have part-time jobs. Finland is an exception to the Northern European employment patterns, with only 18 per cent of women in part-time employment. Part-time jobs are also less common in Southern and Eastern European countries. Southern European countries show female part-time employment levels similar to Finland (17 per cent), while in Eastern Europe part-time work is even less prevalent, with only 3 to 13 per cent of Eastern European women having a part-time job. Recently, some countries have experienced a decline in part-time employment, specifically Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In other countries, the number of part-time jobs has held steady or even increased (MOCHO, 2002).

The majority of part-timers are women, and it is only in the Netherlands that a significant percentage of men have a part-time job (see also Chapter 10 in this book). The number of hours that part-timers work varies from one country to the next. Generally speaking, part-timers in Sweden, France and Italy work longer hours part-time than in the Netherlands, Ireland, the UK, Germany and Spain (Fagan, 2003). The percentage of part-time employment is related, among others things, to working-time regulations and to tax incentives (OECD, 2002). In Southern Europe, part-time employment rates are very low because the trade unions have opposed part-time work for a long time and government measures to stimulate part-time employment have only been introduced very recently. In Greece, for instance, it was not until 1990 that part-time employment contracts were made legal. In the late 1990s, the Greek government introduced measures to promote part-time work as well as

teleworking and home working, but the social security system still discourages part-time work. In Italy, two part-time jobs were more expensive for employers than one full-time contract until a 1996 reform was introduced (Fagan, 2003).

Table 2.9 Part-time employment (% of total employment), by gender, 2003

| | Men | Women |
|--------------------------------|------|-------|
| <i>Northern Europe</i> | | |
| Denmark | 11.6 | 32.6 |
| Finland | 8.7 | 17.7 |
| Sweden | 11.2 | 35.5 |
| <i>Western Europe</i> | | |
| Austria | 5.5 | 37.7 |
| Belgium | 6.4 | 39.1 |
| France | 5.4 | 29.8 |
| Germany | 4.7* | 36.4* |
| Ireland | 6.6 | 30.8 |
| Netherlands | 22.0 | 74.0 |
| UK | 9.9 | 44.0 |
| <i>Southern Europe</i> | | |
| Greece | 2.3 | 7.6 |
| Italy | 3.2 | 17.3 |
| Portugal | 7.3 | 17.0 |
| Spain | 2.6 | 16.8 |
| <i>Central, Eastern Europe</i> | | |
| Bulgaria | 1.9 | 2.6 |
| Czech Republic | 2.3 | 8.5 |
| Hungary | 2.8 | 6.2 |
| Poland | 8.2 | 13.2 |
| Romania | 10.9 | 12.2 |
| Slovenia | 5.1 | 7.5 |
| Slovak Republic | 1.3 | 3.8 |

Notes: * Figures of 1998.

Source: Employment in Europe, 2004.

In some countries, national governments have introduced measures to encourage part-time work as a strategy for combining work and family life, either by improving the position of part-timers or by introducing entitlements to reduce working hours temporarily. For instance, the option of working

part-time temporarily has been incorporated into parental leave schemes in various countries such as Sweden and the Netherlands. More recently, in 2001, Germany introduced the option of working part-time while on parental leave (Fagan, 2003). In Finland, parents have the right to work part-time and to take part-time parental leave until their child reaches the mandatory school age. However, the part-time option is not very popular among Finnish parents, with only 18 per cent of mothers and 4 per cent of fathers taking leave on this basis.

According to Salmi (2000), the loss of income is a major constraint, as well as the strong cultural tradition of working full-time. In the Netherlands, all employees have the right to request a reduction or increase in their working hours. To refuse a request, employers must provide evidence that the change is not possible for serious operational reasons (Beek, van Doorne-Huiskes and Veltman, 2002). Belgium has recently introduced a new time credit scheme to promote part-time work and a better work-life balance (Fagan, 2003).

Table 2.10 Percentage of respondents who agree with the statement: 'Most women have to work these days to support their families'

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| <i>Northern Europe</i> | |
| Norway | 75 |
| Sweden | 92 |
| <i>Western Europe</i> | |
| Austria | 79 |
| Germany (West) | 78 |
| Ireland | 85 |
| Netherlands | 28 |
| UK | 78 |
| <i>Southern Europe</i> | |
| Italy | 60 |
| Spain | 68 |
| <i>Central, Eastern Europe</i> | |
| Bulgaria | 95 |
| Czech Republic | 91 |
| Hungary | 92 |
| Poland | 92 |
| Slovenia | 82 |

Source: ISSP 1994 data (authors' calculation).

The structure of earnings and income distribution may also affect the employment patterns of parents. Income levels and purchasing power, in particular in relation to housing costs in some countries, may create financial pressure to work long hours and to remain in full-time employment after the birth of a child. Wage levels in Eastern Europe are still low compared to Western Europe, and two full-time incomes are needed to maintain a family. Table 2.10 shows the results of the ISSP 1994 survey 'Family and Changing Gender Roles II', in which respondents were asked how much women's incomes contribute to supporting their families. The position of the Netherlands in this table is remarkable: only 28 per cent of Dutch respondents agree with the statement that most women have to work these days to support their families. This relatively low percentage is in line with the dominance of the one-and-a-half earner model in the Netherlands.

The tax system of a country may also offer incentives or disincentives for both partners to remain in employment, whether part-time or full-time. An individualised taxation system generally provides incentives for dual-earner families, while family-based taxation discourages having both partners in employment. Most countries now have individualised taxation systems; in 1999, only Portugal, Poland, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, France and Luxembourg still had family-based systems. However, the effect of family-based relief and benefits is also important, and it is particularly strong in conservative countries (OECD, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1999).

4.3 Norms and Values related to Gender Roles and the Employment Patterns of Working Parents

In attempting to explain the different employment patterns of working parents in Europe, we must go beyond considering public policy and take into account the cultural traditions of the various countries. In some countries, attitudes towards the roles of men and women are more traditional, by which we mean they favour the male breadwinner/female homemaker model. Other countries have a more liberal cultural climate, with more emphasis on gender equality.

Diefenbach (2003) analysed gender role orientation in various OECD countries (using ISSP, 1994 data) based on agreement or disagreement with the statement 'a man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family'. An egalitarian gender role orientation (that is, strong disagreement with the statement) was found in such countries as Sweden, Norway, East Germany and the Netherlands.² Eastern European countries, in contrast, held more traditional views, although in reality the dual full-time earner model is dominant, emphasising that people are not always able to act on their preferences. Countries such as Ireland, Spain, Italy and West

Germany scored in the middle.

Table 2.11 Opinions on gender roles in Europe, 2002

| | Percentage of people agreeing with the statements: | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|--|--------|
| | Family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job | | Women really want a home and children | | Work is the best way for a woman to be an independent person | |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| <i>Northern Europe</i> | | | | | | |
| Norway | 27 | 30 | 22 | 21 | 47 | 44 |
| Sweden | 28 | 25 | 29 | 23 | 64 | 61 |
| <i>Western Europe</i> | | | | | | |
| Germany (West) | 48 | 47 | 26 | 23 | 72 | 83 |
| Ireland | 41 | 37 | 43 | 38 | 60 | 62 |
| Netherlands | 44 | 42 | 28 | 30 | 57 | 57 |
| UK | 39 | 36 | 29 | 24 | 55 | 56 |
| <i>Southern Europe</i> | | | | | | |
| Portugal | 62 | 65 | 61 | 56 | 71 | 82 |
| Spain | 55 | 55 | 45 | 39 | 78 | 83 |
| <i>C.E. Europe</i> | | | | | | |
| Bulgaria | 53 | 50 | 63 | 59 | 70 | 81 |
| Czech Republic | 47 | 44 | 56 | 63 | 58 | 66 |
| Hungary | 52 | 56 | 61 | 62 | 44 | 47 |
| Poland | 45 | 41 | 55 | 48 | 72 | 81 |
| Slovakia | 56 | 51 | 68 | 69 | 55 | 63 |

Source: ISSP 2002 (authors' calculation).

Table 2.11 presents attitudes towards gender roles by examining the responses to statements concerning working women, and more specifically working mothers, based on the ISSP 2002 'Family and changing gender roles III' data. If we look at the first statement – 'all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job' – we can conclude that traditional views prevail in Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia, while the most progressive views are found in Norway and Sweden. The second statement – 'a job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children' – has the most support in Portugal, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, and the least support in Norway, Sweden and Germany. The last statement – 'having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person' – received the most support in Germany, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria and Poland and the least in Norway and Hungary. The majority of former Eastern European countries still hold the most traditional views on gender

roles, comparable with the Southern European countries. However, opinions in the former socialist countries were already much more in line with opinions in Western Europe in 2002 than they were in 1994.

Countries also display differences within the various welfare state regimes, and there are differences between men and women in every country as well. Differences between countries become visible, for example, when investigating whether people in Scandinavia prefer egalitarian gender roles instead of the traditional breadwinner model. A differentiated picture emerges when parents are asked about their ideal model: in Denmark, 63 per cent of parents prefer the equal-sharing model, 28 per cent the model in which women work part-time and 8 per cent the traditional male breadwinner model. In Sweden, 55 per cent would prefer an equal division, 36 per cent the full-time/part-time model and 11 per cent the male breadwinner model. In both countries, men tend to prefer the traditional breadwinner model, while women prefer equal sharing. In Norway, 50 per cent of men prefer the male breadwinner model; when both male and female respondents are included, 16 per cent prefer this model, 26 per cent support the full-time/part-time model and 56 per cent equal sharing (Ellingsæter, 1997, cited in Fine-Davis et al., 2004).

5. DISCUSSION

When considering the employment patterns of working parents in Europe, it becomes evident that a growing number of parents both work. When preferences are also taken into account, it seems that this trend will continue in all European countries. However, there are national differences in the way dual-earner families divide paid work between the two partners. Overall, Western European countries show greater differences than Eastern Europe, although Eastern Europe has become more similar to the West since 1990. In Nordic countries such as Sweden and Finland, most working parents both work full-time and even more prefer to do so. In Eastern Europe, most working parents are also in full-time employment, despite the traditional norms and values concerning gender roles. In conservative countries, mothers are more likely to have a part-time job when they are employed and the percentage of single-earner households is larger than in the social democratic and former socialist countries. In Southern Europe, mothers are either employed full-time or unemployed. Part-time employment is less prevalent in these countries and public provisions for working parents are minimal. The analysis clearly shows that some welfare state regimes offer working parents more provisions than others. In particular, social democratic countries and the post-communist regime offer a higher level of support. However, the case of

Portugal shows that the relationship between the level of work-family policies and employment is not straightforward. A low level of public support does not go hand-in-hand with fewer dual earners in all countries. Portugal is unusual in Southern Europe because of the large percentage of parents who work full-time. This is probably a product of the need to have two incomes to support a family, because the Portuguese have traditional attitudes towards gender roles, similar to Eastern Europe. In fact, only the Nordic countries combine a broad range of work-life policies with a strong gender ideology.

The employment patterns of working parents are shaped both by institutional conditions and household characteristics. Blossfeld and Drobnič (2001) examined the effect of the occupational resources of each partner on the labour market participation of couples in different welfare state regimes. Their analysis shows that, in general, women with better occupational resources, such as higher education and higher potential earnings, are more likely to participate in the labour market. However, the effect of partners' occupational resources on women's paid employment differs across welfare state regimes. In the conservative welfare state regime, Blossfeld and Drobnič found that the occupational resources of the male partner have a negative effect on the employment rates of women: women with a well-paid partner are more likely to work part-time or to withdraw from the labour market altogether. In the social democratic and post-communist welfare state regimes, they found the opposite effect: women in Denmark, Sweden and Hungary married to well-educated men were less likely to leave the labour market than women married to low-educated, low-income men. In the liberal welfare state regimes, no effect was found. That may be due to 'a very fast transition from the family wage economy to the individual wage economy, accompanied by the stagnation or actual decline of wages and the increase of job instability' (2001:380).

The rapid rise of the dual-earner family has posed a challenge to the European welfare state, which was originally based on the male breadwinner/female homemaker model. Within the European Union, it is generally accepted that the sustainability and affordability of modern welfare states require a higher labour force participation rate than most countries have been able to achieve until now. For most countries, specifically those in the conservative and Mediterranean welfare states, this implies increasing the paid working hours of women in general and mothers in particular. To avoid overburdening women, such increases are only realistic when accompanied by better provisions and facilities for families with two working parents in two full-time or substantial part-time jobs. The Nordic countries have something to teach them in this respect.

Blossfeld and Drobnič (2001) state that the number of dual-earner families will increase, but that it will lead to growing inequalities between the classes.

As mentioned earlier, Brannen also points out the growing polarisation between 'working rich' and 'working poor' families in the UK. The cause of this polarisation is the increase in the number of dual-earner couples among well-educated couples and the prevalence of single-earner families among lower-educated couples. Further factors are the redistributive role of the welfare state, tax systems, insurance institutions and family policies. Liberal welfare states are more likely to display this new inequality, which is less so in the social democratic regime because of the equalising effects of state policies. In conservative regimes, single earners are still protected. Following Blossfeld and Drobnič (2001) and Esping-Andersen (1999), one can make the interesting observation that the dual-earner model affords parents protection against poverty.

The increase in the number of dual-earner families in Europe has been accompanied by declining fertility rates. This is particularly the case in countries with fewer public support measures for working parents (see for example Künzler, 2002) and in countries in which the economy is in decline and insecurity is growing on the labour market. This phenomenon is particularly in evidence in Eastern Europe. It underlines the importance of the welfare states' response to the rising number of dual-earner families. It could be argued that within Europe, only the Nordic countries show a modern and more or less proactive approach. All other European countries seem to be lagging behind the trends in family life, their changing employment patterns and their need for affordable provisions and support. Assuming that children are of vital interest to European societies, this is an astonishing fact.

5.1 Future Research

In this chapter we have discussed the employment patterns of working parents at macro level, with our discussion being mainly descriptive in nature. Future research should consider the individual level in relation to the relevant institutional characteristics of countries. To distinguish the effects of institutional constraints on the one hand and of individual characteristics on the other, multi-level analyses are needed. Analysis at micro level of motives and considerations, decisions and the choices of working parents with respect to the integration of work and private life may shed new light on whether working parents are free to choose or are constrained by the institutional context. Considering how diverse the different countries are in this respect, cross-national research is preferable.

NOTES

¹ See Quilgars and Abbott (2000) for the same kind of argument on work and the labour market in the risk society.

² In a way, the results for the Netherlands are a bit of an anomaly; there is a strong belief in gender equality, but the actual division of labour is rather traditional (see also Table 2.3).

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