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## Child Care: Toward What Kind of “Social Europe”?

### Abstract

*Child care is central to contemporary welfare state redesign. The emergence of the dual-earner family challenges states to take on new responsibilities as families can no longer provide full-time care, nor can they afford to rely exclusively on markets. There are, however, different ways of addressing the care deficit, and each holds different implications for equality. This article examines the three dominant alternatives being pursued in Western European countries, arguing that each establishes a different “horizon of legitimate expectations.” Welfare state redesign no longer takes place exclusively within national boundaries, however. The struggle to build a “social Europe” is engaging member states in reflexive practices, opening them to new and different ideas. The article thus concludes by examining which, if any, of the competing models of care provision has come to define “best practice” for Europe and what this tells us about the emergent contours of social Europe.*

This article examines the changing and variable mix of child care arrangements within the European Union. The first section argues that child care is central to contemporary welfare state redesign. The “defamilialization” of care, resulting from women’s rising labor force participation rate, is one of the “new” developments generating demands for states to take on new responsibilities, as families cannot rely exclusively on markets to meet these needs. As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted, “In many

countries, the education and care of young children is shifting from the private to the public domain, with much attention to the complementary roles of family and early childhood education and care institutions in young children's early development and learning" (OECD 2001a, 9). There are, however, different ways of addressing the care deficit, and each holds different implications for equality in general and for gender equality in particular. In Europe, there are three rival models: the "third way" design,<sup>1</sup> inspiring child care policy reforms in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; the neofamilialist turn taken in Finland and France; and the egalitarian horizons of Danish and Swedish child care policy. Each approximates one of Nancy Fraser's (1997) alternatives to the male breadwinner model that formed the postwar norm.<sup>2</sup> These are examined later in this article.

Globalization is altering the environment in which states make choices, however, especially in Europe. Although national politics still matters, the struggle to build a "social Europe" is engaging member states in reflexive practices, opening them to new and different ideas for welfare state redesign. This article accordingly examines the way in which early childhood education and care (ECEC) now forms part of the agenda for a social Europe. Initially brought onto the agenda as part of the European Union's (EU) growing interest in gender equality, child care has become part of the post-Delors employment strategy. Like the European Monetary Union, the employment strategy utilizes a new method of governance, "open method coordination" (OMC), in which European guidelines and benchmarks play a critical role.<sup>3</sup> We ask which of the competing models of care provision, if any, has come to define "best practice" for Europe and what does this tell us about the contours of social Europe?

### On the Agenda: Child Care and Welfare State Redesign

During the 1980s and 1990s, considerable attention was focused on the politics of welfare state retrenchment, driven by globalization, the demographics of aging, and the shift to postindustrialism.<sup>4</sup> Yet the pressures driving retrenchment are only part of the broader process of welfare state redesign. New patterns of risk are emerging, and states are being pressed to take on new responsibilities in response. The provision of extrafamilial care is one of these. Concerns about access to and the quality of care both speak for some form of public role. Welfare state redesign at the dawn of the twenty-first century therefore includes the reconfiguration of public and private responsibility for the financing and provision of child care (Jenson and Sineau 2001; Michel and Mahon 2002).

The forces behind the defamilialization of care constitute an important set of pressures leading states to assume new responsibilities. Changes in labor markets (notably, women's rising labor force participation rates) and in families (rising rates of divorce, separation, and single parenthood) are undermining the male breadwinner family norm that formed one of the core assumptions of postwar welfare regimes across the OECD. It thus can no longer be assumed that care—for young children as well as for the frail elderly, the sick, and the disabled—will be provided as an unpaid labor of love by women within the private realm of the family. The need for new care arrangements is also underscored by the way defamilialization intersects with debates about the shift to a postindustrial economy. There is a growing chorus of experts arguing that early childhood education and care are necessary to lay the foundation for subsequent life-long skill acquisition, a requisite for effective participation in the emergent knowledge-based economy and society. As the authors of an influential Canadian study put it, "The entrants to the workforce of 2025 will be born next year. From this generation will come a key factor in determining the wealth base of Ontario. . . . Brain development in the period from conception to six years sets a base for learning, behaviour and health over the life cycle. Ensuring that all our future citizens are able to develop their full potential has to be a high priority for everyone" (McCain and Mustard 1999, 2). In addition, policies that support nonfamilial care can be seen as critical to a postindustrial full-employment strategy. The time-pressed dual-earner (or single parent) family needs to be seen as a potential source of demand for job-rich personal and social services (Esping-Andersen 1999). Such families find it difficult to avoid substituting external sourcing for self-provision, and they are more likely to have the disposable income to purchase at least some of these services. Policies that support the development of nonparental child care thus can come to form an important component of an effective postindustrial employment strategy.

Families cannot rely solely on markets to deliver the quality and quantity of care required, however. Some form of public support is needed, especially financial support. States can use regulation and the provision of training to address issues of quality, and they can help remove information barriers to the effective functioning of a market in child care spaces. Such policies will mean little, however, if the question of cost is ignored. Child care provided on the black market by untrained child minders strains the budgets of lower income families. Even for many middle-income families, quality child care is beyond reach without some form of subsidy. In this context, the latter may turn to the import of nannies from third world coun-

tries (Arat-Koc 1989; Hondagneu-Soletto 2000). As the OECD noted, “While early childhood education and care may be funded by a combination of sources, there is a need for substantial government investment to support a sustainable system of quality, accessible services” (OECD 2001a, 11).

For all of these reasons, public child care policies form an integral component of welfare state redesign. As in the past, however, there are different blueprints—or, as Marshall put it, “designs for community living” (Marshall 1963, 109)—reflecting different understandings of what is both desirable and possible.<sup>5</sup> In this context it is important to consider which alternative models are on offer and probe their ethical-normative foundations. In North America, attention has focused on the neoliberal challenge to the ideals that inspired post-war institutional designs, whereas in Europe, three other models enjoy greater currency: the neofamilial, the “third way,” and the egalitarian models.

The neofamilialist model, while seeking to modernize, draws on conservative views of gender difference. It shares with neoliberalism an emphasis on choice, but here choice is understood as women’s right to choose between a temporary housewife-mother role and labor force participation, rather than as choice among different forms of nonparental care.<sup>6</sup> Thus neofamilialists advocate public support for child care leaves, with a marked preference for longer-term (three- to four-year) leave packages. In this respect, the neofamilial model approximates Fraser’s caregiver parity model. As we shall see, this model falls short not only when it comes to gender equality but also with regard to class and even racial-ethnic equality.

The third way model embraces a form of gender equality that differentiates it from the “new familialism”—a conservative response to women’s rising labor force participation rates. Whereas the latter seek solutions that permit elements of the older “gender difference” model to survive, third way advocates favor a gender sameness view in which gender equality comes to be defined largely in terms of policies designed to enable women to (re-)enter the labor market. In this sense, they seek to universalize the breadwinner model. As Fraser argues, however, rather than addressing the unequal distribution of the care work that remains within the home, third way advocates largely focus on public support for nonparental child care. Publicly funded parental leave, with the right to return to one’s job, is acceptable—but only in the form of relatively short-term leave (six to twelve months) to prevent the devaluation of women’s human capital.

The third way’s interpretation of a post-male breadwinner gender order has to be seen as part of its broader effort to adapt social

democracy to postindustrial conditions. That is, third way advocates argue that welfare state redesign necessarily includes a “normative recalibration” (Ferrera et al. 2000, 74–75). At the root of this is the belief that postindustrialism has rendered equality in the here and now no longer feasible due to the stubborn (and growing) productivity gap that exists between the goods-producing and service sectors. Net job growth will have to occur in the latter sector, and politicians have to choose between equality and employment.<sup>7</sup> In this context, departures from equality can be justified to the extent that they are designed to improve the lot of the worst off. Core workers should thus be induced to accept some deregulation of labor markets, including greater wage dispersion, in the interests of promoting job growth for the less skilled (Ferrera et al. 2000, 74). Many of these jobs are likely to be unstable nonstandard jobs—part time, temporary, or self-employment—usually offering low wages and limited fringe benefits. Unlike neoliberals, however, third way advocates see a role for governments and the social partners in mitigating the impact.<sup>8</sup>

Third way advocates also justify the abandonment of equality in the here and now in favor of policies promoting equality over the life cycle. Here Schumpeter’s poverty bus metaphor is invoked. In other words, the emphasis shifts to policies that enable those who are in low wage jobs today—women, immigrants, youth—to get off the poverty bus in the future (Esping-Andersen 1999, 182). Thus for third way advocates,

In knowledge-intensive economies . . . the equality that matters has to do with those resources which allow people to “keep pace” and cope with change. This means focusing on how effectively (and equitably) such resources are delivered by high quality education, health care and social services and how successfully opportunities for mobility provide escape routes from permanent entrapment in conditions of disadvantage. (Ferrera *et al.*, 2000:75)

From a third way perspective, public support for early childhood education is “good” because it helps children ultimately leave the bus—or avoid boarding it altogether. Second, child care subsidies can be targeted at the working poor as a way of inducing people to accept low-wage employment. The Blair government’s Working Families Tax Credit is a good example of the kind of child care policy sanctioned by this logic.<sup>9</sup> Nonparental child care can also be treated as one of those low-waged postindustrial occupations whose expansion government policies should encourage to absorb the low skilled.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, there is little need to upgrade skills, from un-

trained child minders to preschool teachers with postsecondary education.

Third way advocates thus envision a more positive role for the public sector than neoliberalism and a more egalitarian gender contract than modern conservatives. At the same time, they accept that growing labor market inequality is a necessary feature of a dynamic postindustrial economy. In the name of social inclusion, they accept policies that support the formation of a market for personal and social services as low wage, low skill jobs (Levitas 1998). With this comes the growth of nonstandard (though not necessarily precarious) employment—part time, temporary work, self-employment—and women hold a disproportionate share of such jobs. Blindness to the link between persistent gender inequality in the distribution of nonstandard employment and women’s continued primary responsibility to provide care, is consistent with their acceptance of the (partial) masculinization of women, while balking at the “feminization” of men.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, they share with their conservative counterparts an acceptance of a one and one half earner model (Lewis 2001).<sup>12</sup>

As we shall see, both the neofamilialist and third way models have their advocates within Europe, and each figures in the remodeling plans of certain member states. Yet they are not the only possible alternatives. Just as third way advocates challenged neoliberalism’s claim that there is no alternative, so, too, can the argument that in the postindustrial era it is impossible to combine job growth, equality, and a sound fiscal policy be challenged.<sup>13</sup>

The argument for accepting greater inequality in the here and now rests on Baumol’s hypothesized “cost-disease,” which assumes a systematic and growing productivity gap between the goods-producing sector, where productivity gains mean fewer workers are required to produce more, and the service sector, where most of the new jobs are being generated. This ignores the contribution of the service sector to productivity and lower costs in the goods-producing sector. It also assumes that with some exceptions, there are limited opportunities for productivity gains in the service sector. Not only is there room to enhance service productivity through more extensive and effective use of information technologies. Productivity gains can be achieved through the application of strategies that recognize the particular nature of service production, as Herzenberg et al. (1998) have so cogently argued. The key point here is that such strategies can be used to enhance performance in the social services, including care work, and thus provide the material basis for rising wages in this sector, too.

It may be economically feasible to achieve a more egalitarian

socioeconomic order than the third way admits, but it will only be possible politically if the accepted “design for community living” hews to a radical vision of equality such as that which inspires Fraser’s universal caregiver model. The latter aims to make it desirable and possible for men and women to provide care and to participate in the labor market. As Nancy Fraser has argued,

The trick is to imagine a social world in which citizens’ lives integrate wage earning, caregiving, community activism, political participation, and involvement in the associational life of civil society—while also leaving time for some fun. *This world is not likely to come into being in the immediate future, but it is the only imaginable postindustrial world that promises true gender equity. And unless we are guided by this vision now, we will never get any closer to achieving it.* (Fraser 1997, 62; emphasis added)

Such an approach agrees with the third way that equality in the here and now may be utopian today, but it develops the Marshallian view of citizenship,<sup>14</sup> the insight that such utopias must not be abandoned for they establish a horizon of legitimate expectations needed to animate the struggle to realize equality in the longer run. In other words, collective endorsement of a utopian egalitarian blueprint is important precisely because it can inspire and support the very forces needed to sustain the drive to achieve it.

A child care policy inspired by an egalitarian blueprint might incorporate the following features:

1. Parental leave structured to actively foster an equitable sharing of domestic child care between fathers and mothers;
2. Provision of universally accessible, affordable, nonparental care services;
3. Children have a right to early childhood education and care, whether or not their parents are working or involved in some form of training;
4. Care is provided by skilled providers and the value of such skills is recognized through equitable wages and good working conditions;
5. Provision is made for democratic control, including parental and community voice.

As we shall see, this kind of vision has inspired certain actors within the European Union. Nor is it an impossible utopia for postindustrial societies. Although two member states (Finland and France) appear to have exchanged this blueprint for a neofamilialist one, two others (Denmark and Sweden) continue to be guided by it.

### European Responses to Defamilialization: Three Blueprints in Practice

Pressure for the (partial) defamilialization of child care<sup>15</sup> began earlier in some European countries than in others, but it is now being felt in all, albeit unevenly. Thus countries like Finland, Denmark, and Sweden began an accelerated move toward the dual-earner family form in the 1960s and 1970s, and women's labor force participation rates in these countries remain the highest in the European Union (64.4 percent, 71.6 percent, and 71.0 percent, respectively, in 2000).<sup>16</sup> Now, however, most northwestern EU member states are not far behind. By 2000, women's labor force participation rates had reached 64.6 percent in the United Kingdom, 63.7 percent in the Netherlands, 59.4 percent in Austria, 57.9 percent in Germany, 55.3 percent in France, 54 percent in Ireland, 51.5 percent in Belgium, and 50.3 percent in Luxembourg.<sup>17</sup> With the exception of Portugal (60.3 percent), women's labor force participation rates in the member states to the south remain substantially lower: Greece, 40.9 percent; Spain, 40.3 percent; and Italy, 39.6 percent. Even here, however, the trend is for participation rates to rise, and this is especially marked among women in their prime child-bearing years.<sup>18</sup>

In this section, I examine the child care policies of three groups of countries, each following one of the blueprints for welfare state redesign sketched: the neofamilial, third way, and egalitarian models. I begin with Finland and France, who abandoned the egalitarian design conceived in the 1960s and 1970s for a neofamilial blueprint. I then turn to the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, two countries that are pioneering a third way trajectory. Finally, I look at steps taken by Denmark and Sweden, which have hewed to an egalitarian design.

#### *From Egalitarian Ideals to the New Familialism: Finland and France*

Developments in France and Finland reflect a move away from earlier attempts to institutionalize child care as a right of social citizenship, pertinent to achieving both equality of the sexes and equal opportunities for children, toward the new familialism (Jenson and Sineau 2001b, 259). In both Finland and France, "the 1970s emphasis on building up publicly funded collective child care provisions has been eroded by a relative consensus on the necessity of developing cash benefits, framed as a means of ensuring 'parental choice', as well as addressing what was presented as a budgetary 'fatality'" (Heinen and de Koenigswater 2001, 172). "Choice" has a dual meaning in this model: choice between (temporary) homemaker status and paid employment, and choice among different forms of nonparental care.



Each of these has significance for class, gender, and racial-ethnic equality.

As in Fraser's caregiver parity model, neofamilialist strategies provide support for those who choose to stay at home, and not only those who choose to work. A key feature of this model therefore is a child home care allowance that enables parents to stay at home for up to three years after the birth of a child.<sup>19</sup> The Finnish allowance was introduced in 1986 as part of a compromise package combining the care allowance for those who wished to stay home with a guarantee of the right of a child to a place in municipal child care for those who wanted it. Like other child home care allowances, it is based on the less generous flat-rate principle, rather than income replacement.<sup>20</sup> Eligibility was restricted in 1995 by deducting the allowance from unemployment insurance—which eliminated most of the father care givers.<sup>21</sup> In combination with the economic crisis, the new policy has visibly affected women's labor force participation. Thus the labor force participation rates of mothers with children under age twelve fell from 76 percent in 1985 to 53 percent in 1991 (Salmi 2000). Although Finnish municipalities are still obliged to provide a child care place for those who want it, 60 percent of Finnish two-year-olds are cared for at home, normally by their mothers. A similar allowance was introduced in France in the mid-1980s for families with three or more children.<sup>22</sup> Like the Finnish allowance it was a flat-rate allowance, well below the minimum wage. In 1994 the program was revised, making it available after birth or adoption of a second child. It was also now possible to keep the allowance while working part-time (Jenson and Sineau 2001b, 105).

The second way "choice" is transforming the 1970s citizenship ideal in these countries is through the opening up of new, lower-quality jobs in child care. Here France has led the way. In 1986 new legislation was introduced, offering to cover the social security costs for parents hiring a nanny as well as a tax credit to reduce the actual salary cost to parents (Jenson and Sineau 2001a, 102). In 1994, the program was extended to families with children aged three to six, and new incentives were offered to choose family home care.<sup>23</sup> In Finland, too, parents can request a private child care allowance to cover some of the costs of nonparental care in the home or offered by a private day care center.<sup>24</sup>

Both policies break with the egalitarian ideals of the 1970s. The child home care allowances deal with the pressure for defamilialization by making the choice of "temporary homemaker" status attractive, at least for some. Though the language is often gender-neutral, the underlying philosophy is clearly one of gender difference: "Mothers perform a large part of all unpaid care work, work that profits

the entire society. For the sake of equity, it is therefore necessary to provide individual remuneration and social security during this phase” (Schattovits 2000, 15). The effect is to reinforce gender inequality in the labor market. The allowances reinforce employers’ views that women will be absent for sustained periods, and this affects recruitment choices and wages, not to mention the career development prospects of those whose human capital has been devalued by relatively long spells of absence from the labor market (Salmi 2000). Yet such allowances do not affect all women equally. As the OECD noted, “Mothers with lower levels of education, who have worked in less skilled occupations are most likely to take these low-paid leaves, which may further marginalise them from the labour market. In some cases, children are not allowed to attend public early childhood education and care during the leave period which raises equity concerns” (OECD 2001a, 33).

These policies also favor the growth of labor market flexibility through the expansion of low-wage, part-time employment for women. As Jenson and Sineau note, a new model has emerged in which “some women would work part time and care for their own children part time. Other women would be employed to care for the children of women who were working full or part time” (Jenson and Sineau 2001a, 106). Rather than supporting the expansion of secure, reasonably skilled jobs in the public (or para-public) sector, subsidies for nonparental care in the home (the child’s or the providers’) support the expansion of low-wage, low-skill work for women. There has been a substantial growth in part-time employment in France to 32 percent—though it remains relatively low (17 percent) in Finland (Heinen and de Koenigswater 2001). In Finland, however, two-fifths of women under age thirty are in temporary jobs. This might be dismissed by third way advocates as a tolerable “inequality in the here and now” because it affects youth of both sexes. The rate, however, is higher for women than for men, and though the latter seem to turn temporary into permanent jobs as they enter their thirties, this is much less true for women (Salmi 2000).

Part of the explanation for breaking with the egalitarian path of the 1970s clearly has to do with the fiscal and economic crisis that hit France in the 1980s and Finland in the early 1990s. Child care provided by stay-at-home parents or by child minders is cheaper than care provided by professionals in crèches and age-integrated child care centers. As Martin et al. point out, “Institutional care is considered too costly compared to family-based child care, mainly because of the higher quality of services required in terms of facilities, number of qualified employees and higher wages. The job of employees in the home and of child minders are precarious, low paid,

of limited duration, most often part time, with flexible hours and few prospects” (Martin et al. 1998, 154). Yet economic circumstances do not dictate policy: There are different blueprints for welfare state redesign, and as we shall see, some countries have held to the egalitarian model despite economic pressures. Politics matters and an important part of the explanation for moving toward a neofamilialist model is the political effectiveness of pro-family forces.<sup>25</sup>

*A Third Way View of Child Care: The Netherlands and the United Kingdom*

Whereas Finland, France, and Belgium had earlier moved toward the egalitarian model, neither (liberal) Britain nor the (conservative) Netherlands did much to support the development of non-parental child care until the 1990s. The struggle had barely gotten off the ground in the United Kingdom before Thatcher’s victory put a neo-liberal chill on the very idea of public support for child care (Randall 2002). Pressures for the defamilialization of child care began to mount in the 1960s and 1970s, but it was only with the election of Blair’s government that public policy began actively to encourage the provision of child care, establishing the goal of a preschool place for all three-year-olds by 2004.<sup>26</sup> The Netherlands had once been known for its generous support for the male breadwinner family (Sainsbury 1996), and defamilialization pressures here remained low throughout the 1970s.<sup>27</sup> The crisis of the early 1980s triggered a major process of institutional redesign, which involved a precocious experiment with third way activation strategy. The new strategy had marked gender implications, taking at least a half step toward the universal breadwinner model.

Set within a discursive frame of reconciliation, part-time work plays an important role in the Dutch employment strategy.<sup>28</sup> For some, like the Dutch Equal Opportunities Council, the ideal is that both fathers and mothers will participate in the labor market less than the old standard forty-hour week and will share responsibility for unpaid work (Plantenga et al. 1999, 103). Ferrera et al. in fact suggest that the Netherlands is on the way to achieving such a model:

A new model of employment relations is in the making whereby both men and women share working time, which enables them to keep enough time for catering after their families. If part-time work is recognised as a normal job, supported by access to basic social security and allows normal career development and basic economic independence . . . part time jobs can generate gender equality and active security of working families. (Ferrera et al. 2000, 49)

Steps have indeed been taken to increase the attractiveness of part-time work in the Netherlands.<sup>29</sup> Yet only 15 percent of Dutch men and 7 percent of fathers of younger children work part-time (Kremer 2001), and the gap in normal weekly working hours of men and women remains high.<sup>30</sup> As Plantenga et al. admit, “The once strict division of labour between breadwinner and care-provider has been transformed in the space of a few decades into a one-and-a-half earner model, with women emphatically in the role of secondary earner” (Plantenga et al. 1999, 102). Women’s employment pattern in the United Kingdom matches that of the Netherlands. Both countries stand out not only for the high rate of part-time employment, especially among women,<sup>31</sup> but also for the high rates of short-term employment.<sup>32</sup>

Child care arrangements cannot be seen as the cause behind the move toward the one-and-a-half earner solution, but they certainly contribute. In the United Kingdom, policy instruments, such as the Working Family Tax Credit, which only require parents to work sixteen hours a week or more, reinforce this pattern, “making (short part-time) work pay”—just as the Dutch “flexicurity accords” do. In both countries, moreover, preschool programs are normally offered on a part-time basis so that parents have to turn to relatives, child minders, and play groups—or work part-time, with schedules adjusted to fit preschool hours. The Blair government’s plans to increase the supply of child care places in fact assumes that each place can be used by three children because “parental choice and work patterns mean that many parents use facilities part time or not at all” (OECD 2000, 11). In other words, mothers’ (short) part-time working pattern is taken as a given. Moreover, little is being done to support the development of quality nonparental care for under-age-threes in either country. Play groups and informal arrangements remain the norm.<sup>33</sup>

Just as the third way seeks to promote diversity and choice by affording more of a role to markets than postwar social democracy, so, too, do the British and Dutch child care policies. In both, parents pay a substantial share of the costs—averaging at 44 percent in the Netherlands and between 30 and 60 percent of the costs in the United Kingdom (OECD 2001a, Table 3.4). In both, moreover, governments have exhibited a preference for demand-side incentives via tax relief for parents and/or companies.<sup>34</sup> To improve the functioning of local child care markets, the U.K. government is supporting the development of information services.<sup>35</sup> The Blair government has committed a substantial amount for child care (1998–2003) through the Early Years Partnerships,<sup>36</sup> but it explicitly eschewed a role in provision (OECD 2000, 22).<sup>37</sup> This approach does little to

overcome class inequality in access. As the OECD noted, “Despite the availability of fee subsidies, affordability is cited as a major barrier to access to non-school ECEC services in countries [which rely primarily on them], including the UK, the Netherlands and the US, leading to a lower percent of low income families enrolled than higher income families” (OECD 2001a, 92).

Of course, while the third way accepts a growing inequality on the labor market, it is prepared to mitigate the effects by increased targeting of social policies and “social investment” in children at risk of boarding the poverty bus of their own accord in the future. This is visible in the child care policies of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The Blair government’s Working Parents Tax Credit, the value of which declines as income rises, is one such measure. Its Sure Start program aims at preventing poverty in the future by investing in enriched ECEC for children in low-income families.<sup>38</sup> Like Sure Start (and the U.S. Head Start program on which it is modeled), the Dutch have integrated extra funds for quality ECEC into their national policy for big cities, aimed at enhancing social infrastructure in areas with a higher proportion of low-income and at-risk families. The idea here is that targeting low-income areas, often with a higher concentration of immigrants and visible minorities, avoids the stigma associated with means-tested programs. It shares this feature with the recourse to tax credits (working parents) rather than the older means-tested transfers.

Finally, the demand-side orientation of Dutch and British child care policy does little to support the development of high-quality supply—provided by qualified providers at decent wages. In the Netherlands, child care workers are “not always perceived as professionals and they are not accorded a high status by society,” and this is especially the case for those providing care for under-age-threes (OECD 1999a, 21). This is also the case in the United Kingdom, although there have been some marginal improvements. Thus the enactment of minimum wage legislation is expected to benefit the lowest-paid child care workers. The United Kingdom nevertheless remains behind the Netherlands when it comes to associated social benefits (OECD 2000, 19). The Blair government has also set up an Early Years National Training Organisation “to improve the knowledge and skill of workers in each sector” (OECD, 2000: 28). At the same time, inclusion of key child care providers in the jobs-training program for unemployed eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds has given rise to concern about the quality of training on offer (Beddows-Wilkinson 1999).<sup>39</sup>

The child care policy trajectory being followed by Britain and the Netherlands thus goes some way toward addressing the pressure to

deal with the defamilialization of care. Like the neofamilialist model, however, it does so in a way that may be more women-friendly but is hardly egalitarian in gender or class terms. As Plantenga et al. note, “A gender-friendly working-time regime . . . does not imply gender-equal working times” and a marked gender gap in paid working time exists for both countries. Their child care policies are consistent with the institutionalization of the one-and-a-half earner model. The choice of policy instruments, focused on the demand side, does little to encourage the development of a high-quality child care infrastructure, offering good jobs to those who provide care. Nor does it do much to counteract inequality in market power, though enrichment programs for designated areas may improve access for the very worst off.

*Hewing to the Egalitarian Course: Denmark and Sweden*

Both the new familialist and third way responses to defamilialization involve abandonment of the (class and gender) egalitarian ideals that had come to inform the left’s project by the 1970s. At least part of the rationale for this break is that living in a globalized, postindustrial world means facing the trilemma, a trade-off pitting equality against employment and sound fiscal policy. It is, however, still possible to keep equality as a central principle of welfare state redesign, as the Danish and Swedish experiences suggest. It may be argued that these countries have been able to do so because they got an earlier start, which they did—but so did France and Finland. What is impressive is that even in the tougher years, Denmark and Sweden managed not only to maintain what had earlier been achieved but also to come closer to their egalitarian ideal. This happened not as a result of a technocratically conceived plan but rather because the “legitimate expectations” embedded in their citizenship regimes nourished political forces that could be mobilized repeatedly to fight for reforms in the spirit of the universal caregiver model.

The deepening commitment to gender equality in the sharing of care work is clear in the parental leave arrangements for care of infants adopted in both countries. Legislation giving *parents* the right to leave was introduced in Sweden in 1974 and in Denmark a decade later (Bergqvist et al. 1999, 127, Table 7.1).<sup>40</sup> In both countries, the leaves are generously financed, based on the income replacement principle (80–90 percent), which should make it attractive to the often higher-earning fathers. When it became apparent that this was not enough of an incentive,<sup>41</sup> in 1994 the Swedish government allocated one month each exclusively to the father (and one to the mother). In 2002, parental leave was increased by 30 days, to a total of 480 days—with the addition of another daddy month. In 1998, the Danes added two additional weeks of paternity leave (at 100

percent replacement rate), which had the same effect.<sup>42</sup> Although a care allowance similar to the Finnish one was briefly introduced in Sweden in 1994, it was abolished as soon as the social democrats returned to office later that year. Both countries offer incentives for parents to share infant care for the first year, albeit not on a fifty-fifty basis, and both keep the leave period short enough to limit adverse effects on parental income and careers.<sup>43</sup> In this sense, they come closer to the egalitarian view of what it means to reconcile work and family life than do either of the competing blueprints.

Generous but bounded provisions for parental leave are complemented by publicly financed (largely publicly provided) nonparental child care services. As noted, Denmark and Sweden lead the league when it comes to provision of nonparental care for one to threes, and are among the top in terms of preschool provision. The foundations for a universal child care system were laid in more prosperous times—though the Danish system had to withstand an early test, as unemployment soared in the 1970s (Borchorst 2002). Both countries continued to expand during the 1980s and 1990s, however. Concern about unequal access across classes helped fuel the expansion of Swedish child care in the 1980s.<sup>44</sup> In 1995, it became a legal obligation for Swedish municipalities to provide a place for all children over a year old, within “a reasonable time” (i.e., three months) (Bergvist and Nyberg 2002).<sup>45</sup> Denmark, too, made access to publicly financed child care an entitlement for all children from one to five, and all six-year-olds have the legal right to free preschool in both countries.<sup>46</sup> Though parents may have to pay up to one third of the costs in Denmark, fees are based on a sliding scale. In Sweden, parents are normally expected to cover between 10 and 20 percent of the costs. When it became apparent that parental share was beginning to vary substantially across municipalities, moreover, the national government introduced legislation effectively establishing a cap on fees (“maxtax”).

Even more impressive is the move to make early child care a service that is as universally available as education. Thus when Sweden was suddenly confronted with both soaring unemployment and burgeoning deficits in the 1990s, it became apparent that the system offered no guarantees to the children of the unemployed, a disproportionate number of whom were immigrants.<sup>47</sup> The government allocated special funds to ensure that all children of immigrant parents (or living in poor areas) were guaranteed access to 525 hours of ECEC per annum from the age of three.<sup>48</sup> In the debate that ensued, it also became apparent that children of parents who were on leave were also being excluded. As of July 2002, all six-year-olds are guaranteed at least 525 hours and by 2003 all four- and five-year-olds

will be included. In 1991, the Danish government made it explicit that children of the unemployed should not lose their place, and it is now mandatory to offer ECEC to the children of “bilingual” (i.e., immigrant) parents from the age of four.

These moves suggest that although gender equality constitutes an important part of the underlying rationale for Danish and Swedish child care arrangements, access to quality child care is also understood as a right for all children. In fact, from the outset,<sup>49</sup> Danish and Swedish child care policy sought to combine care and education in one system (Borchorst 2002; Lindberg 2002). This orientation was strengthened considerably in Sweden in the latter part of the 1990s when the Ministry of Education and Science assumed jurisdiction over care for the under-threes. The new nationally designed curriculum for preschool centers nicely balances the “child as investment” and “child as a special stage” philosophies of ECEC (OECD 1999b, 18–19). The establishment of an integrated “preschool” system for children from one to six years was feasible because the long-standing emphasis on education and care had led successive national governments to induce local authorities to expand age-integrated center-based care relative to family day care from the 1970s on (Daune-Richard and Mahon 2001; Lindberg 2002).<sup>50</sup>

The structure in Denmark differentiates more sharply between care for one to threes, with nearly half that group in family day care and only 14 percent in the age-integrated facilities that predominate in Sweden. It should, however, be noted that Danish family day care providers are organized by the municipality into networks, which reduces isolation among providers (OECD 2000, 16, 2001a, 85). The majority of three- to six-year-olds are in all-day preschool and one-third are in age-integrated centers. There is no national curriculum as there is in Sweden. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Social Affairs has been working with the National Association of Local Authorities and the National Union of Child and Youth Educators on a quality initiative since 1996, and there have also been efforts to promote closer collaboration between the child care and school systems (OECD 2000, 31). As in Sweden, the new training program for preschool teachers has courses in common with those for elementary school teachers, to facilitate children’s progression from ECEC to school (European Commission Network on Childcare 1996, 33).

What of democratic control over the child care system? The neo-familial and third way blueprints address this by stressing “choice”—between parental care and nonparental and between different forms of care. The Danish and Swedish systems have also evolved so as to permit greater choice and “voice.” Though municipal provision remains the predominant form,<sup>51</sup> there has been an opening to pri-



vate, even commercial provision over the last decade or so, and the Danes have become well known for innovative forms such as their “forest kindergartens,” which embody green values.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, the vast majority of private provision is publicly subsidized, and private providers must follow the same rules as municipal centers. There is also greater room for parental and community voice. The Danish Social Services Act, introduced in the 1990s, moreover, requires municipal child care centers to establish parent boards and establishes the basic parameters of their authority,<sup>53</sup> and in Stockholm, there are numerous experiments with the Reggio-Emilia model of parent and community involvement (OECD 1999a, 29). There are also efforts to give children themselves a say (OECD 2001a).

Decentralization, too, has been framed as a move to democratize by bringing decision making closer to those being served. This is a trend across all countries being examined, though for the most part, insufficient attention has been paid to maintaining/achieving equity while permitting greater diversity.<sup>54</sup> In Sweden, however, when the government shifted to block funding, it also passed the law requiring municipalities to provide places for children who wanted it, without reasonable delay.<sup>55</sup> When it found that some municipalities were charging parents much more than others, it developed strong incentives to encourage the adoption of the maxtax. The Danish system is much more decentralized, but the national government also establishes a ceiling on fees. In both countries, then, greater diversity—and local democracy—have been permitted, without sacrificing national concerns for equity (Jenson and Mahon 2002).

Finally, as the Danish and Swedish systems are built on the principle of universally accessible, quality child care, they have also contributed to the more egalitarian pattern of postindustrial employment growth (Esping-Andersen 1990). This is not to suggest that there are no issues. Thus Danish and Swedish women still take the majority of “parental” leave, despite the daddy quota, and domestic child care still remains primarily—though no longer exclusively—a feminine responsibility. This is reflected in the gender difference in working time and wage levels. Here, too, mothers are more often found in part-time jobs—roughly one-third of Danish women and 37 percent of Swedish women (Daly 2001, 475). The gender gap in working time is substantially lower,<sup>56</sup> however, than it is in the United Kingdom or the Netherlands (Eurostat 1995, 45; Daly 2001, 475). More important, the 1970s feminist ideal of reducing the normal working day for all has not disappeared from the agenda.<sup>57</sup> A gender wage gap remains, but in Denmark and Sweden, for less educated women, it was in the order of 70–75 percent as compared to 45 percent for the United Kingdom.<sup>58</sup> In Sweden, the issue of pay equity remains

very much on the agenda.<sup>59</sup> Thus equality in the here and now has not been attained in these countries either, but it remains very much part of the horizon of legitimate expectations.

#### Child Care as a “European” Issue

Until recently, much of the literature on welfare states focused on the national level. The late twentieth century discovery of globalization challenged that, but the debate tends to pit those who argue that globalization is leading to convergence around a neoliberal norm against those who argue that common challenges are not experienced in the same way as a result of cross-national differences in welfare state design. In the European context, the debate sets neofunctionalists, who look to the development of new European capacities as a way of shifting people’s allegiance from the national to the supranational level, against those who see Europe as simply another arena of intergovernmental relations. Neither view is capable of grasping the complex multiscalar mode governance that is emerging within the European Union (De la Porte 2001; Teague 2001). The thickening of a European discursive (and legislative) space in turn opens up the possibility of injecting new ideas and different ways of doing things into national regimes, altering the logic of path dependency.

This insight is beginning to infiltrate the European literature on welfare state redesign. For instance, Ferrera et al. suggest that

while this sequence of institutional experimentation has primarily taken place at the national (in some cases, sub-national) level, an increasingly important role has been played by the supra-national level as a catalyst for learning. . . . EU institutions have been active promoters of change by channelling information and facilitating the exchange of experience but above all, by providing specific incentives and “focusing events and procedures.” (Ferrera et al. 2000, 66–67)

Esping-Andersen, whose earlier work established the main typology of welfare regimes, also seems prepared to acknowledge that the rule of path-dependent change may have to be relaxed, at least for Europe, where learning explicitly takes place in a multi-scalar world: “welfare reform in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will increasingly involve a combination of *domestic learning*, *learning from and with others*, possibly *ahead of failure* in Europe. . . . Moreover, innovative combinations of domestic policy (failure induced) learning and supranational learning (ahead of policy failure) may cause considerable hybridisation in welfare and labour market policy” (Anton Hemerijck in Esping-Andersen et al. 2001, 252).

During the 1970s and the Delors years, the main instruments for introducing European elements into national policy and practice were the enactment of hard laws (e.g., directives and regulations, backed by rulings of the European Court of Justice).<sup>60</sup> In the current period, more emphasis is being placed on soft measures, notably the open method of coordination (OMC). Initially used to secure the convergence in monetary policy considered essential for European Monetary Union, the Lisbon Council extended this to social policy goals (reform of social protection and measures to counteract social exclusion). As De la Porte et al. argue, this method seems well designed for multiscalar governance:

Whereas subsidiarity defines the level of power that is most appropriate for each sphere of action, OMC recognizes the interrelation between different spheres, promoting interaction between different levels of power and spheres of action. Moreover, the principle of subsidiarity is often associated with the principle of proximity. . . while OMC underlines the need to proceed via a widely meshed interactive process, in which the actors—ranging from those at the European to the local level—have to articulate their strategy and actions in a multi-level logic. (De la Porte et al. 2001, 294)

What OMC entails is a combination of the establishment of European guidelines, which involves reaching a consensus on common challenges, objectives, and indicators;<sup>61</sup> the preparation of national action plans (NAPs) through which member states define how they, in conjunction with subnational units and the social partners, are planning to meet these; and peer assessment of the annual reports. This encourages a degree of concertation of national processes of policy reflexivity. Where benchmarks are established, it is also a way of injecting best practices from other systems, thus engendering the formation of hybrid if not identical social policy regimes.

Although directives and OMC refer to important processes through which national regimes are opened to European learning, they say nothing about what is being learned. In other words, what design for community living informs the drive to establish a social Europe, and what are the gender dimensions of this? An analysis of (changing) European views on child care can offer insight here.

Although several member states had begun to deal with the issue of child care arrangements in the 1960s and 1970s, child care appeared as little more than a footnote during Europe's first decade of activism, aimed at moving toward to equality of the sexes in work life. Thus the 1974 Social Action Programme, which helped launch directives concerning equal pay, equal treatment in employment, vo-

cational training, and promotion as well as in social security, simply noted that lack of adequate facilities contributed to inequality between men and women in the labor market (Ross 2001, 180). Over the course of the next decades, however, child care policies came to form part of a series of broader agendas for a social Europe.

Child care became part of the European social agenda during the 1980s. The First Action Programme (1982–1985) for Promoting Equal Opportunity<sup>62</sup> may only have reiterated the link between availability of nonparental child care and equal opportunity initially suggested in the 1974 document, but the second Action Programme, prepared on the eve of Delors's presidency, was prepared to go further, inspired by an egalitarian vision of what it took to reconcile work and family life. In this period, the concept of reconciliation acted as "the bridge concept that allowed the Commission to slide towards new areas whose treaty base was shakier than the solidly grounded Directives of the 1970s. The logic . . . was clear. In order for women and men to be equal in the labour market . . . the indirect, non-market relationships between them had to be reconciled" (Ross 2001, 183–184). The second program explicitly called on member states to improve child care facilities to promote such reconciliation.

Unless they were enshrined in directives, however, such statements could be taken as little more than wishful thinking. Recognizing that a directive on child care was not on at this juncture,<sup>63</sup> the Equal Opportunities Unit established a mechanism to pave the way for future action. In 1986 a new European Commission Network on Childcare was created.<sup>64</sup> With a director committed to an egalitarian vision of care and work not all that different from Fraser's universal caregiver, and encouraged by Delors's determination to create a social Europe, the network began to develop a blueprint for a European child care strategy. The instruments used to enlist support for its vision included the collection and dissemination of comparative information,<sup>65</sup> the formation of links with child care and feminist circles across the member states, and the production of reports connecting child care to the commission's core agenda.

The network did attempt to persuade the commission to develop a framework directive. It envisaged "requiring member states to develop publicly funded services for children up to at least ten years of age, with suggested minimum targets for expansion" (Randall 2000, 355). The targets were modest, however. It sought approval for a goal of public support for 5 to 10 percent of under-threes, preschool for 60–79 percent of three to sixes, and after-school care for 10–15 percent of children age ten to fifteen, to be achieved over a five-year period. Although the Women's Committee of the European Parliament supported this, the commission was not prepared even to go

that far. It did, however, back a recommendation on child care, which was ultimately agreed to by the Council of Ministers in 1992. This recommendation blended the tamer version of the reconciliation discourse that had developed around Article 119 with the network's vision, seeking to transform the very division of care work in the family (Ross 2001,194–195).

The council recommended “that Member States gradually develop and/or encourage measures to enable women and men to reconcile family obligations arising from the care of children and their own employment, education and training.”<sup>66</sup> The vision of child care services underlying the recommendation had much in common with the egalitarian blueprint. It sought affordable ECEC, available in urban and rural areas alike, and greater flexibility to meet different needs, but not at the expense of an overall coherence. A positive work environment for care workers, moreover, was understood to mean establishing systems in which “the training . . . of workers in child care services is commensurate with the great import and social and educational value of their work.” Finally, sharing the democratic ideals of the egalitarian blueprint, the council encouraged child care services to work with parents and local communities.

In 1998 a report on the steps member states had taken to implement the recommendation was filed. The report reaffirmed the “central role” of child care measures in reconciling work and family life. It went on to note, however, that “only some of the Member States are known to have taken initiatives specifically to implement the recommendation” and that none had established the capacity to monitor their national systems. The report, however, went on to document the continued paucity of arrangements for under-threes, children of school age, and families with special needs (e.g., bilingual immigrant children). Nor were member states treating child care as a way of generating good postindustrial jobs: “In spite of growing number of jobs generated by the sector, efforts to re-evaluate the importance of people employed in child care services and in ensuring adequate training remain modest.”<sup>67</sup> To be sure, provision for over-threes had improved and laggards like the United Kingdom and Portugal were poised to launch major efforts to catch up.<sup>68</sup> A general move to decentralization and increased choice—both in line with its emphasis on greater flexibility—might also have been noted.<sup>69</sup>

The report was received in a context that had changed, however. The network had been disbanded in 1996, not long after the Delors presidency came to a close and a backlash against commission activism had set in (Ross 2001). This is not to suggest that child care dropped from the agenda nor that efforts to create a social Europe came to a standstill. High unemployment and concerns about the

political and social repercussions of the European Monetary Union sparked the development of a European employment strategy and efforts to coordinate social policy renewal. Cutting across both is a commitment to gender equality.<sup>70</sup> Thus employment and gender equality were incorporated into the Treaty of Amsterdam as areas for community action.<sup>71</sup> Subsequent council meetings have sought to put them into practice.

There is a pronounced third way cast to the new employment agenda: “Investing in people and developing an active and dynamic welfare state will be crucial both to Europe’s place in the knowledge economy and for ensuring the emergence of this new economy does not compound existing social problems of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty” (European Commission Staff Working Paper, 2001, 2). In other words, social investment—for example, activation and preventive measures—is to be emphasized over the social consumption orientation of the Keynesian era. Guideline 14 spells this out in concrete terms: each member state is committed not only to reducing taxes in general but to reducing fiscal impediments to job creation for the low skilled and to removing “poverty traps” from social programs. This is to be complemented by making “flexicurity” central to employment and social policies at the European, national, and regional/local levels.<sup>72</sup> Measures supporting the emergence of two-earner (or working single parent) families clearly form part of this agenda.

The employment policy objectives agreed to at the Lisbon Council in March 2000 included the objective of reaching at least 60 percent employment rate among women within a decade.<sup>73</sup> Though this level is well below that achieved by the majority of member states, it does represent a policy challenge not only for Italy, Spain, and Greece but also for Belgium and France. Public support for nonparental child care is clearly understood to form an important part of the solution. Accordingly, child care has been incorporated into the European employment strategy.<sup>74</sup> According to Guideline 18, “Member States and the social partners will design, implement and promote family friendly policies, including affordable, accessible and high quality care services for children and other dependents (including national targets), as well as parental and other leave schemes” (European Commission Staff Working Paper 2001, 107).

No benchmark has yet been established for child care, however.<sup>75</sup> There are those who advocate a third way approach. For example, an expert report to the Belgian president rejects the egalitarian blueprint pioneered by Denmark and Sweden, given the constraints imposed by the monetary union and the hypothesized trilemma of post-industrial growth.<sup>76</sup> Rather, the Dutch solution is seen as the more

“realistic” (Esping-Andersen et al. 2001, 233). In their report to the Portuguese president, Ferrera et al. also reject the Danish/Swedish blueprint for the Dutch (Ferrera et al. 2000, 41).

Although these recommendations fit the third way thrust of European employment policy, other documents suggest the presence of the other contenders’ models. Thus the commission’s assessment of NAPs on employment and social goals for 2001 defines a good package as one that combines “provision of care services with basic adequate leave time (preferably paid) plus a temporary reduction of working time or other flexible working time arrangements for both parents” (European Commission Staff Working Paper 2001, 108). On the surface this seems to favor an egalitarian model, but on closer examination it fudges the distinction between the neofamilialist and egalitarian blueprints. Thus France and Finland, as well as Denmark and Sweden, are cited as good examples. This leaves open important questions, such as how long an adequate leave time is. It also skirts the critical issue of whether and at what level parents are compensated for leave time.<sup>77</sup> It may sanction the reduction of working time for both parents, but says nothing about what might be done to ensure that *both* parents share equally in working time reduction. It is silent on the need for measures to ensure the sharing of leave time itself.<sup>78</sup>

### Conclusions

The parameters of social Europe have yet to be decided. As the child care example suggests, at least three alternatives jostle for support. Does it matter which (if any) of three is chosen? The thrust of my argument is that it does. Although each seeks to address the challenge posed by the defamilialization of child care, only one aims to do so in such a way as to foster (class and gender) equality. As the Swedish and Danish examples suggest, equality is not something that can be achieved overnight but what matters most is the “horizon of legitimate expectations” established in the blueprint for welfare state redesign (Marshall 1963, 108). This sustains those forces that continue to push to achieve it in the here and now. Students of national welfare regimes should not find this surprising (Esping-Andersen 1999, chap. 9). In the past, however, it was domestic visions and the domestic politics that they both developed out of and inspired that were decisive. The formation of a social Europe has not replaced national politics, but European guidelines can affect national outcomes, by shifting the political opportunity structure and/or introducing new discursive elements (De la Porte and Pochet 2001, 48). It thus does matter which vision of a post–male breadwinner world

the European Union embraces. Embedding the universal caregiver model in European benchmarks and guidelines can contribute to the establishment of a new horizon of legitimate expectations, encouraging egalitarian forces in all member states and thus helping shift the balance in their favor.

## NOTES

1. The term “third way” has come to refer to the programmatic response of some left-liberals and social democrats to neoliberalism’s claim to represent the only possible response to contemporary challenges. The policy claims of the Blair, Schroeder, and Clinton governments are often considered exemplars, but earlier reforms in the Netherlands, Denmark and the Antipodes paved the way. The third way has been taken up by scholars such as Giddens (1998), Ferrera et al. (2000) and Esping-Andersen et al. (2001).

2. These are the universal breadwinner model, the caregiver parity model, and the universal caregiver model. See Olson (2002, in this issue) for an interesting engagement with Fraser’s approach.

3. De la Porte and Pochet (2001) provide the most detailed assessment of OMC and its impact available to date. Teague (2002) helps situate OMC as part of an emergent pattern of multilevel governance, which stops short, however, of a fully formed model of European citizenship.

4. See especially Iversen and Wren (1998) and Pierson (1998). Esping-Andersen (1999) takes up the question of the challenges posed to postwar regimes by these forces but shifts attention to the “new” pattern of risks and thus the positive pressures on states.

5. Or, as Olson (2002, this issue) puts it, different welfare regimes “naturalize” distinct visions of society. Both of us examine the underlying ethical-normative foundations of these visions, but we develop the argument somewhat differently. Olson emphasizes the impact of gendered welfare cultures on individual choice, but I will stress the “political culture”—that is, the way the visions embedded in different welfare regimes shape the horizons of (manifest and latent) collective actors by legitimating some claims and marginalizing others.

6. Looking at the Belgian debates, Marquez-Pereira and Payé characterize the new familialism as a blend of equality and difference arguments: “It both accepts women’s right to lead a life, especially a work life, equal to that of men, and seeks to protect women’s right to continue certain traditional activities, such as devoting themselves to child rearing when their children are young” (Marquez-Pereira and Payé 2001, 70).

7. Iversen and Wren (1998) call this the postindustrial “trilemma,” arguing that states can simultaneously pursue two (but not all) of the following goals: employment, equality, and fiscal balance. As a result of financial liberalization, however, policies that lead to growing deficits are all but ruled out by the global financial institutions.

8. Governments would thus replace universal with targeted policies designed to make work pay while the social partners would be induced to



negotiate equivalent hourly wages for part-timers and pro-rated benefits packages.

9. In 1996, the Blair government introduced a Working Families Tax Credit guaranteeing low-income working parents a minimum level of income and an allowance to cover child care costs. In 1999 the level was raised to £70. This policy is reminiscent of the welfare reforms of the Clinton administration. See Levy and Michel 2002.

10. Writers like Esping-Andersen (1999, 103) and Ferrera et al. (2000, 50) see personal and care services as largely low-skilled occupations, externalizing work once done in the private sphere of the home. See Jenson (1989) for a critique of this view.

11. Esping-Andersen et al. consider the feminist demand for a more egalitarian distribution of care work in the home but conclude that it remains largely utopian: “The masculinisation of women’s lives reaches limits if they want children, or prefer part-time employment, regardless of how ‘women friendly’ is policy” (Esping-Andersen et al. 2001, 80).

12. This refers to the model pairing a male full-time earner with a woman working short (twenty hours or less a week) part time.

13. See Mahon (2000) for a more developed version of the argument that follows.

14. As Marshall put it, “Expectations officially recognized as legitimate are not claims that must be met in each case when presented. They become, as it were, details in a design for community living” (Marshall 1963, 109). This insight is developed in the literature advocating a constructivist conception of citizenship. See, inter alia, Jenson and Phillips (1996) and Shaw (2000) for a discussion of this literature.

15. Daly (2000, 487–492) sketches three different patterns of child care provision. The first, in which care is privatized to the family with little to no state support especially for under-age-threes, includes the Mediterranean countries and Ireland. For the others she follows the standard comparative model—Scandinavian social democracies with generous cash benefits, parental leaves, and child care services and the continental model, typified by Austria and Germany, with generous support for parental (maternal) care and child care offered primarily as a part-time education service. She acknowledges, as does Esping-Andersen, that France and Belgium do not fit easily within this scheme. Kautto’s (2002) analysis of the pattern of public investment in social services, however, shows a strong affinity between France and the Nordic countries, especially Finland. I am primarily interested in welfare state redesign—rather than welfare regimes that have as yet to modify their child care arrangements to meet the challenge of defamilialization—so I focus on the three dominant trajectories of change.

16. All figures cited in the text of this paragraph are taken from Esping-Andersen et al. (2001) Table 4.1, p. 204. Labor force participation rates for women aged fifteen to sixty-four years and they include those employed part-time, as well as full-time employees.

17. Though labor force participation rates have risen over the past two decades in all of these, the rise is sharpest in the Netherlands (from 39.7 percent in 1985). For the United Kingdom, from 32 percent of women with

children under age five in 1990 (OECD-UK 2000); Belgium, from 37.2 percent in 1985; Luxembourg, from 40.1 percent in 1985. See Ferrera et al. (2000) Table 3.17. The labor force participation rate of Irish women aged twenty-five to thirty-four rose sharply from 34 percent in 1980 to 71.5 percent in 1999. See OECD 2001a, Figure 2.1 p. 26.

18. Thus the employment rate of women twenty-five to thirty-four years of age rose from 49 percent in 1980 to 51 percent in 1999 in Italy and even more dramatically in Spain (from 32.4 percent to 54.1 percent) over the same period. OECD 2001a, Figure 2.1, p. 26.

19. At least two other countries have adopted similar measures. Belgium best matches the French and Finnish cases (Marquez-Pereira and Payé 2001). Other countries forming part of the northwestern conservative regime seem also to be embracing the new familialism. Thus, in July 2000, Austria replaced its two-year parental leave policy with a new child care benefit. It involves a flat-rate cash payment to parents of a child less than four years (436 euros per month) plus individual social security coverage for one carer for pension, health, and accident insurance. A third portion comes in the form of a child care voucher to purchase care for children aged four to school start. Interestingly, Daly ranks Austria with Finland and Belgium in terms of extent and continuity of women's labor force participation. French women enjoy a somewhat lower degree of continuity but have higher labor force participation rates than Belgium (Daly 2000, 500, Figure 10.9).

20. Currently 1,500 Finnish marks per month for the first child under age three, with 500 additional marks for other children under age three and 300 for those over age three. Municipalities can make available as much as 1,000 marks more on a means-tested basis (Korpinen 2000).

21. Between 1993 and 1995, 15–18 percent of the recipients were men. When the new rule was introduced, recipients fell substantially (6,000–7,000), much more than were affected by the 23-percent rate cut the following year (4,000), according to Korpinen (2000, 180).

22. There were actually two bills introduced. The first was conditional on previous labor market attachment, and the second effectively severed this link (Jenson and Sineau 2001b, 100–101).

23. Employed in networks of family *crèches*, the *assistantes* are registered for five years after a visit of a social worker to the home, a medical exam, and a moral investigation. Since 1992, they also have to undergo at least sixty hours of training (Martin et al. 1998, 144).

24. This consists of a basic allowance of 700 Finnish marks per month, with a possible supplement taking it to 800 marks, dependent on income and family size. Here the allowance is paid to the provider as part of her taxable income (OECD 2001b, 12). Only 5 percent of Finnish children are in private nonparental care, however.

25. For an analysis of the political forces shaping the choices in France, see Jenson and Sineau (2001b), Morgan (2002), and Morgan and Zippel (2002); for Belgium see Marquez-Pereira and Payé (2001) and Kremer (2002). With regard to Finland, the OECD report suggests that the Lutheran church and the Mannerheim League have been important in raising the

question of whether “we have gone too far in our search for benign institutions which support the child, while removing some of the duties of the parents in the process” (OECD 2001b, 18).

26. The Blair government announced an ambitious and wide-ranging National Childcare strategy in 1997. The OECD (2000) provides useful details, and Randall (2002) puts the current move in a broader historical perspective.

27. Daly’s data show that women’s labor force participation rates began to rise during the 1980s, from a low of about 35 percent in 1980 to over 50 percent in 1990. They continued to rise in the 1990s, reaching over 60 percent by 1996 (Daly 2000, 473, Table 10.2).

28. According to Visser, Dutch feminists and the trade unions were initially hostile to part-time work. For Visser, “the demand for flexibility and part-time jobs rose as an unintended consequence of the [unions’] campaign for reduced working hours” (Visser 2002, 30). He acknowledges, however, that in the 1980s, women active in the unions embraced part-time work and persuaded the unions to support this. In the 1990s, the Centre-Left and Lib-Lab governments made it an important element of their third way welfare state redesign (Visser 2002, 31–34).

29. In 1993, the legal minimum wage became applicable to part-time workers. In 1996 a new law prohibiting unequal treatment in working hours came into effect (Plantenga et al. 1999, 108). Ferrera et al. note that the “flexicurity” accord included union agreement to abandon opposition to part-time work and negotiate hourly wages at the level enjoyed by full-time workers and taxation policies compensating low-income workers (Ferrera et al. 2000, 49).

30. Dutch women work two-thirds the hours of Dutch men—as compared to an 80 percent average for women in the European Union (Plantenga et al. 1999, 101, Table 1). The British gender gap is about the same (women working 69 percent of the hours of men).

31. In 1993, 55 percent of Dutch women and 46 percent of British women worked part-time (Eurostat 1995, 44). The only other European countries nearing this level are Switzerland and Norway.

32. One-third of Dutch women and nearly one-quarter of British women work less than twenty hours a week (Lewis 2001). Of European countries, only Switzerland come near this (Eurostat 1995, 45).

33. In the Netherlands, over 50 percent of two- to four-year-olds are in municipally subsidized play groups run by private, usually nonprofit groups, offering places for children twice a week for two to three hours at a time. In the United Kingdom, 20 percent of two-year-olds and 55 percent of three-year-olds are in play groups, most of which are run by churches or the voluntary sector (OECD 2001a, Appendix 1). Preschool classes for three- and four-year-olds run for two and a half hours a day.

34. The stimulative measures of the 1990s, which did increase supply, marked a major push to increase supply in the Netherlands focused on tax incentives for employers. Though the government’s share fell from 55 percent in 1989 to 33 percent in 1996 and employers’ share rose from 7 to 25 percent in 1996, parents’ share rose from 35 percent to 42 percent (OECD

1999a, 20). U.K. parents currently pay as much as 93 percent of the cost of nonparental child care for under-threes.

35. The Blair government's child care strategy includes Childcare Information Services, "a resource and referral service in each local authority area to advise parents regarding the quality of childcare and the range of choices available" and a pilot "Childcare Link" that aims to connect data bases and signpost child care information services (OECD 2001a, 21).

36. The Early Years Partnerships bring local education authorities together with other local services (health, social services), employers, trainers, advisors for New Deal for Lone Parents to assess current provisions, draw up annual plans and develop local information services.

37. Of the estimated 1.6 million new child care places it expects to see created by 2004, it anticipates that 80 percent will be provided by play groups and voluntary and private providers (OECD 2001a, 179).

38. Child poverty is high in the United Kingdom (19.8 percent after taxes and transfers versus 11.9 in the OECD (OECD 2001a, appendix). Targeted at low-income areas, Sure Start includes among the bundle of core services to be provided "good quality play, learning and childcare experiences for children" (OECD 2000, 25). There are also Early Excellence Centres, pilot projects that "integrate early years services, high quality early education and childcare for children up to the age of four years, and training for adults, bringing together education, health, adult education and community development" (OECD 2000, 25).

39. Key national child care agencies involved include Kids Club Network, National Private Day Nurseries Association, and the Preschool Learning Alliance (Beddows-Wilkinson 1999, 10)

40. In Denmark, the first few weeks following the birth of a child are reserved for the mother, whereas in Sweden there is no such reservation. Both countries have provision for paternity leave to coincide with maternity leave around the birth of the child "to provide the mother with support during the first few weeks after birth and to give the father an opportunity to establish an early bond with the child" (Bergqvist et al. 1999, 127).

41. In the 1990s, fathers took as little as 4 percent of parental leave in Denmark and between 8 and 11.7 percent in Sweden (Bergqvist et al. 1999, 127, Table 7.3). In Sweden at least, part of the reason that the low share taken by fathers became an issue has to do with the resurgence of feminism in the late 1980s (Mahon 1999). Bergqvist et al. argue, however, that a small but influential group of men—the daddy group—brought this particular issue to the fore in the early 1990s (Bergqvist et al. 1999, 145). Note that in Sweden, it was a "bourgeois" coalition government that introduced the daddy leave provision.

42. The new Liberal-Conservative government, which has made headlines for its anti-immigrant stance, passed a law extending parental leave to twelve months but eliminating the quota for fathers.

43. In 1994 Denmark introduced a new parental leave option, in addition to the basic and generously funded parental leave scheme. Parents have the right to be off work for care of zero–eight-year-old children for at least

eight weeks up to a maximum of thirteen weeks—but twenty-six if taken during the child’s first year. During this period they cannot place their children in the municipal child care system if they are under age three (although there are part-time services for children over age three). The intent was to encourage parents to provide care for children under a year, though older siblings would be affected, hence the provision for part-time ECEC for over age threes. Local authorities are allowed to provide a flat-rate leave allowance, within clearly specified limits. Initially two-thirds of the municipalities did so, but that number quickly fell to one-third (European Commission Network on Childcare 1996, 32).

44. The children of professionals and white-collar workers were disproportionately represented at child care centers in the 1980s (Mahon 1999). As Bergqvist and Nyberg (2002) note, the children of blue-collar workers significantly increased their share as the system expanded.

45. At that time, the requirement only applied to children of parents who were working or studying.

46. At present 87 percent of the municipalities comply—with the more reluctant induced by the national government’s offer to allow them to raise parental fees from 30 to 33 percent of the costs if they did so.

47. In the emphasis on “parents who are working or studying” was interpreted such that the children of unemployed were not given access to child care in over 40 percent of municipalities (OECD 2000).

48. As part of its official commitment to multiculturalism, Sweden offers special bilingual services for immigrant children and parents are encouraged to help their children develop language skills in their native tongue as well as in Swedish. See OECD 1999b, 25–26 for a discussion of the kind of programs developed for areas with high concentrations of immigrants.

49. As in other countries, their systems were initially divided between day nurseries providing “care” for poor mothers who had to work and “kindergartens” offering preschool education services to middle- and upper-class families. When they began to design the foundations of the contemporary system, however, the principles of education and care were combined.

50. Nearly two-thirds of Swedish children age one to six are in such preschools and a further 12 percent are in family day care. The curriculum does not apply to the latter, but the National Agency for Education is responsible for producing guidelines for this sector (OECD 1999b, 14).

51. For the most part, Swedish and Danish child care is publicly financed (though parent fees cover a certain share, higher in Denmark) and publicly provided. About 15 percent of Swedish preschool children are in centers under nonpublic auspices, for the most part parent co-ops. Private, non-profit *puljeordninger* (often parent co-ops) have played an important role. Over the past decade, the government has opened the way for municipalities to contract out to private, including commercial child care providers. Here, too, the numbers are small.

52. They children spend the day in the countryside, for the most part outdoors exploring nature (European Commission Network on Childcare 1996, 33 and 35).

53. These include development of the principles governing the use of the facility, including educational methodology and the principles governing use of the budgetary framework. They also make recommendations about staffing to the local authority (OECD 2000). *Puljingordningen* do not have to establish boards if they are parent co-operatives but if not, the local authorities are to ensure that their contract includes provisions for parent influence.

54. Like the other Nordic countries, local authorities have always enjoyed a prominent role in social service provision and enjoy a substantial tax base. France began to decentralize authority under the socialist government in the 1980s (Jenson and Sineau 2001a, 49). In child care this has meant a much larger role for the local *Caisse d'allocations familiales* (CAFs) (Morgan 2002). The Dutch, too, have devolved responsibility for social services to local authorities but, as in France, have not backed this with a corresponding transfer of fiscal resources (Fargion 2000). Local Early Child Partnerships play an important role in Blair's new child care policy, but there is sense that they have been granted too little autonomy (OECD 2000, 35).

55. The law also contained a quality provision.

56. In 1996, Swedish women worked 84.5 percent of the usual hours worked by men (Plantenga et al. 1999, 101). The gap would be lower still for Denmark given the lower rate of part-time work but a similar tendency to work long part-time.

57. In the 1980s, the Swedish Social Democratic Women's League was almost the only voice calling for the introduction of the six-hour day. In the mid-1990s, however, it was joined by the male-dominated Metalworkers' Union (Mahon 1999, 2001).

58. The wage gap is not much larger in France (68 percent), but it is sizable in countries like Germany and Spain (60 percent) (Esping-Andersen et al. 2001, 78). Esping-Andersen argues that gap for this category of workers is an important indicator as differentials between highly educated men and women tend to be much lower.

59. Both the blue-collar Landsorganisation (LO) and the large white-collar Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (TCO) support pay equity in principle, but the real push for equalization comes from the large and influential public-sector unions within each. See Mahon (1999, 2002) for more detail.

60. For instance, 40 percent of the measures proposed in the 1998 social action program were legally binding directives and regulations. In contrast there were few proposals for legislation in the 1998–2000 social action program (De la Porte and Pochet 2001, 30).

61. Performance indicators permit comparison with the average of the best performers among the European Union, establishing a (dynamic) horizon of action, while policy indicators measure the degrees of effort carried out by individual member states, thus permitting assessment of the extent of the progress made by laggards (De la Porte et al. 2001, 293).

62. The program was prepared by the Equal Opportunities Unit with DG-V. Established in the first wave of activism for a social Europe (1976), it

was strengthened by the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity in 1981 (Ross 2001, 181).

63. In November 1983, the commission prepared a draft directive on parental leave, which proposed that each parent would get a nontransferable three-month leave (Randall 2000, 355). Nothing was done, however, until after the ratification of Maastricht, when the commission gained new leverage over the social partners. In December 1995 the social partners reached a framework agreement that the Council of Ministers incorporated into a directive, making it community law (Ross 2001, 198–203). Note that while the ETUC secured the nontransferability clause, UNICE won on the issue of no minimum remuneration requirements. Daddy leave without a link to income replacement is unlikely to have much significance.

64. In addition to creating the network, the Third Action Programme included New Opportunities for Women (NOW), financed by the European Social Fund. According to Ross, NOW included support for the development of child care facilities and training in the child care area (Ross 2001, 193). In areas receiving structural funds, NOW allowed the commission to support child care provision as well as training (costs of training facilities as well as training for particular child care workers).

65. Thus, for instance, it chided governments for the revealing lack of data on child care, noting that “If something matters to governments, they collect regular information on it, while one of the best ways to ignore a need or problem is to keep it invisible” (cited in Randall 2000, 349).

66. The recommendation focused on four areas: the provision of care for children whose parents are in employment, education, or training or seeking such; special leave arrangements for employed parents; promotion of a positive work environment in care services; and promotion of sharing responsibility for care between men and women. See European Commission (nd).

67. Source is “Equality between Men and Women: Childcare.” <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/ch/c10916.htm>.

68. Provision of nonparental child care varies substantially among member states. For the under-threes, the clear leaders are Denmark (48 percent), Sweden (33 percent), Belgium (30 percent), France (23 percent), and Finland (21 percent). The laggards here include Portugal (12 percent), the Netherlands (8 percent), Italy (6 percent), Greece and Austria (3 percent), and the United Kingdom, Ireland, Spain, West Germany, and Luxembourg (2 percent each). Provision for children aged three until they start school is better, with some countries reaching over 90 percent (notably France, Belgium, and Italy) and even laggards like the United Kingdom and Portugal moving to catch up. In some—the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and West Germany—however, preschool normally is only provided on a part-time basis. See Domsch et al. (1999).

69. Randall (2000) also notes a certain tendency to convergence around increased use of demand-based subsidies, though as we have seen, it is only in a few countries like the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where these are not complemented by supply-side measures.

70. This includes “mainstreaming.” Thus, for instance, member states are enjoined to consider the gender implications of actions proposed under all

four pillars (employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, and equal opportunities) of the employment strategy. This means applying gender impact assessment for each guideline and developing indicators to measure progress toward gender equality for each.

71. Signed in 1997, the treaty, which revised the previous treaties, came into effect in 1999.

72. That is, a combination of the labor market flexibility sought by neo-liberal advisors, with the kind of social security mechanisms that eliminate the precarious character of nonstandard jobs. For more on this, see Ferrera et al. (2000, 49).

73. At Stockholm, the council set an intermediate target of 57 percent.

74. Interestingly enough, the network tried to position child care as part of employment policy in the lead-up to the Essen Council in 1994 (Ross 2001), but the latter failed as a result of the absence of a control process. The OMC was first applied to the monetary union and then extended to employment and, later, social protection and exclusion. At the same time, gender equality became an area for experimentation with mainstreaming.

75. Thus in a communication from the council, it was noted, “The European Council of Lisbon invited the Commission and the Member States to further all aspects of equal opportunities, including reducing occupational segregation and helping to reconcile working and family life, in particular by setting a new benchmark for improved child care provision” (European Commission 2000, 5). Under the rubric of “more and better jobs” a report on the Nice Council suggests, however, that this has yet to be achieved. It called for “a comparative analysis by the Commission, before 2002 on the structural factors likely to encourage participation in the labour market and adjustment to the employment guidelines, in particular when it comes to setting a benchmark on child care provision” (European Commission Staff Working Paper 2001, 7).

76. That report was coauthored by Esping-Andersen, Gallie, Myles, and Hemerijck. To judge from a recent intervention, however, Esping-Andersen still leans to the Nordic model (Esping-Andersen and Sarasa 2002).

77. In the absence of financial compensation, or when levels are relatively low, it is very unlikely that men will be induced to take their share of parental leave.

78. The report noted that places had expanded in a number of countries, including the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, and Spain, and that several that had received specific recommendations—Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Portugal—had responded. The figures reported in Table 11 for Ireland seem particularly impressive—38 percent of zero to threes and 56 percent of threes-school start. Ireland has also indicated its intention to increase child care places by an ambitious 30 percent by 2003 (European Commission Staff Working Paper 2001, 110). Belgium, Greece, France, the United Kingdom, and Portugal included quantitative targets in their NAPs, but several low-coverage countries, including the Netherlands, failed to set quantitative targets. Nor is the question of the *form* of child care provided taken up.



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