



# Rethinking Gender, Work and Care in a New Europe

*Theorising Markets and Societies in the  
Post-Postsocialist Era*

*Edited by Triin Roosalu  
and Dirk Hofäcker*



# Rethinking Gender, Work and Care in a New Europe

*Also by Triin Roosalu*

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# Rethinking Gender, Work and Care in a New Europe

Theorizing Markets and Societies in the  
Post-Postsocialist Era

Edited by

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# Foreword

Modern comparative research in the social sciences has shown that under the increasing influence of globalization, life courses of individuals in modern societies – be they young, middle-aged or old – have undergone substantial changes in recent decades (see, for example, Blossfeld et al., 2005, 2006a, b; Blossfeld & Hofmeister, 2006; Blossfeld et al., 2011). The post-communist or post-socialist societies of Eastern Europe have been among those that have experienced these changes in a most drastic form. In the early 1990s, during the transition from state socialism to a free market economy, these societies were faced with a fundamental change of their economic and political order. The exposure of their industries to worldwide competition led to major restructuring demands. Labour markets in Eastern European countries, therefore, frequently experienced a ‘transition shock’ in which they underwent a prolonged crisis that lasted about a decade. In more recent years, however, some Eastern European societies have been successful in mastering the transition crises and show declining unemployment and rising economic growth rates.

One social group that has been particularly affected by these changes in Eastern European societies has been women. Unlike in many Western European societies, women in the socialist societies of Eastern Europe were employed full-time for decades, following the idea of gender equality and full employment among both sexes. High labour market integration of women was supported by a broad array of family policies – particularly the provision of external childcare – that helped them engage in both work and family, even though this double integration was often perceived as a double burden. These conditions, however, have changed dramatically since the 1990s. This phase of transformation often led to a decline in previously oversized public service sector employment that previously had accounted for much of women’s employment during the socialist period. At the same time, unemployment issues and shrinking of social provision made it to the top of the political agenda, leaving little room for sufficient family policy engagement.

This edited collection is one of the first publications to provide a systematic and up-to-date overview of the employment trends and their underlying institutional transitions across a broad range of Eastern European societies. It brings together contributions from various Eastern and Western European academic scholars who participated in the activities of the European Social Research Network ‘TransEurope’, funded by the European Science Foundation. This broad range of authors with first-hand country expertise allows the book to sketch developmental trends across Eastern Europe as a whole,

while at the same time also highlighting notable cross-national differences and country-specific peculiarities.

The book thus might serve as both a comprehensive state-of-the-art report about women's employment in Eastern Europe and an excellent basis for evidence-based discussions about the future of women's employment in Eastern Europe as well as the future of what has previously been described as the post-socialist model. I thus wish this book a broad readership and subsequently a fruitful debate.

Hans-Peter Blossfeld  
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# European Science Foundation

The European Science Foundation (ESF) is an independent, non-governmental organization, the members of which are 80 national funding agencies, research-performing agencies, academies and learned societies from 30 countries.

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# Acknowledgements

This book was born out of our belief that there is something to be learned from the experience of post-socialist countries, and that these lessons can be applied to the study of more long-established democratic countries. Much can be learned from the way gender works in the post-socialist labour markets, as their experience in the area of dual-career families with outsourced care appears to be something that many social scientists, politicians and parents in Western countries currently consider worth emulating. This subject has hitherto not received as much serious attention as it deserves. This is not just with regard to the countries that are, or were, different, but also the countries where these policies worked. The fact that they and their people tried to hang on to the best that their otherwise limited systems offered suggests that they were worth keeping. These countries can serve as an example.

This idea was supported by the European Science Foundation's TransEurope Research Network project 'Transnationalisation and Changing Life Course Inequality in Europe' network, and we are grateful for the trust of the project board, especially Professors Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Melinda Mills. We are happy to have made a start with this book, and we hope to continue with these topics – alongside other colleagues who dedicate their work to unpacking post-socialist pasts and presents, discussing matters of work and care. We thank all these colleagues for their inspiration.

When we first started preparing this book, the contributing authors gathered for a European Science Foundation-supported TransEurope seminar 'Women's employment in an enlarged Europe: Current developments and their socio-political background' in Tallinn, Estonia, in 2011, to discuss the topics and present their first ideas for the book. This initial core team has been enlarged over the process of preparing the book, to cover the relevant topics that were not covered and the country contexts that were necessary to give the full picture of the whole Europe, with some bias towards post-socialist countries and contexts. We thank all the authors for their most welcome and excellent contributions to this volume.

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# Introduction

# 1

## Investigating Women's De-labouring in Post-socialist European Labour Markets: Research Agenda and Theoretical Challenges

*Triin Roosalu and Dirk Hofäcker*

### **The challenge: Exploring the particular situation of women in post-socialist labour markets**

With regard to their life courses and employment trajectories, women in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries represent a special case within contemporary Europe. Throughout most of the previous decades, employment of both genders was high, actively supported by state family policies and comprehensive work–family reconciliation measures that especially targeted relieving women from motherhood-related care duties. However, the Eastern European system transformation of the 1990s led to a considerable labour market crisis as well as a notable decline of investment in social and family policies (see Blossfeld and Hofmeister, 2006; Blossfeld et al., 2006). At present, the still comparatively low wages and social security levels in these countries, as well as women's high educational level, frequently motivate women to seek employment, while labour markets remain unstable and there is only modest support for work–family reconciliation through external institutions.

Given the rising importance of Eastern European countries in current and, furthermore, future EU development, there is an urgent need to reconstruct the recent dynamic developments in women's work and care and their socio-political determinants in these societies. Considering their specific cultural, economic and historical development throughout the last decades, it can be assumed that the trends and determinants of women's labour market trajectories in CEE countries differ significantly from those in other European countries, which have frequently formed the basis for established theories in social and labour market research. From a scientific angle, this raises the

question of whether ‘standard’ theoretical approaches and empirical evidence, mostly elaborated on the basis of recent Western European evidence, can be transferred to the analysis of Eastern European countries.

Against this background, this book seeks to elaborate the extent to which similar theoretical explanations may be applied to understand labour market behaviour and trajectories in Western and Eastern Europe. We will show that there are, indeed, reasons why it is appropriate to compare the two seemingly quite different situations in the societal and labour market developments in Eastern and Western Europe using established theoretical approaches. Yet, simultaneously, we seek to elaborate whether additional country-specific factors need to be considered to understand the peculiarities of Eastern European countries. We suggest that, while the theories developed in the context of stable Western capitalist countries may to some extent also explain developments in Eastern European countries, considering such differences would enable us to understand why, in some cases, they do not.

Theoretically, we suggest a broader socio-historical perspective by relating the (de-)development (Meurs and Ranasinghe, 2003) of the value of female labour power in Eastern Europe during the last decades to the historical changes in US (and other Western) labour markets after World War II, as described by Ruth Milkman’s pivotal study on the US (Milkman, 1987). Milkman shows in her book how the influx of women into the labour market, and especially into higher-paying men’s jobs, during the war, due to labour shortages, was reversed quite quickly after the war, even though it was not always the preference of those women who had gained a better footing in the labour market. Milkman argues that management practices are the main reason, while these were not rational from the point of view of capitalist firms. Nevertheless, in most Western countries affected by that war experience the gender pay gap is today smaller than it used to be – thanks to gradual developments towards gender mainstreaming and equal treatment policies and ideologies, supported by new generations of women struggling to achieve greater public and occupational powers. We suggest that it is possible, considering the current developments in Eastern European countries, and despite the short-term devaluing of female labour power, that slow but steady developments towards gender egalitarianism may take place over time.

Indeed, there appear to be various similarities between the patterns described by Milkman for the post-war US and the situation of women in post-socialist countries nowadays. Under communism, the publicly promoted aim of full employment led to the rapid inclusion of women into national labour forces. Unlike in many other Western societies at the same time, women’s life courses were marked by continuous full-time employment, with only short and temporary interruptions around the birth of a child. This pattern was backed up by state-provided support measures, ranging from financial support for families with children to the provision

of early full-time childcare services that helped families to externalize a significant part of their childcare and childrearing duties. Even though, quantitatively speaking, employment figures for men and women in Eastern European countries converged over time, there remained notable qualitative gender differences. Sectorally, women's employment largely remained concentrated in public sector employment, particularly in educational and administrative services, while men were more often found in broader parts of the economy, though particularly in the production sector. Furthermore, hierarchical differences remained, as men were more often found in leading managerial positions where women persistently remained under-represented. A particular feature of the Eastern European system of gender relations was that, despite their comprehensive engagement into employment, women remained primarily responsible for household and child-related tasks in the family. As a consequence, women frequently perceived their situation as being characterized by a 'double burden' (Moen, 1989; Molyneux, 1995). That was probably very much the case in the cohort studied by Milkman – the overall setting of war, and the need for women in the labour market because of it, made it necessary for women to take care of children as well as work. However, after the war, the true heroes returned – women were normalized again as homemakers, to provide jobs for the young soldiers who had less experience or efficiency. There were a few pockets of industry where women managed to stay working, but even there the specificity of their experience was played out vis-à-vis that of men.

The situation for post-socialist women changed equally dramatically during the transition of Eastern European countries from centrally planned central economies to liberalized market societies. These changes impacted on women's employment in a twofold way. On the one hand, strong rationalization demands in the oversized public sector particularly affected women's previously safe anchorage in the labour market. At the same time, the necessity to reduce public expenditure led to significant cutbacks in the previously generous support measures for women's employment, particularly with regard to the provision of public care services. As a consequence of this bipolar erosion of their labour market situation – from both the demand and the supply side – women's employment declined significantly after the transition, largely against the will of Eastern European women, who wanted to protect their labour market anchorage and/or needed to financially support their families in economically volatile times. However, the picture here is also not that straightforward, as there are claims that to some extent it is the women rather than the men in post-socialist countries who can be considered the winners in the transition (Fodor, 2004). Against the background of both men and women losing their previous secure jobs and finding that their occupational qualifications were no longer useful, women might, indeed, have been more successful in the aftermath of the changes



to the extent that these societies had to move from the agriculture and industry-led economies to service sector-led economies. Women who had previously been employed in the service sector were more likely to find new opportunities in the changed system, while men from manufacturing often found their employer organizations discontinued and their skills devalued. While there is no doubt that more men than women established businesses, either from scratch or by privatizing branches of previously publicly owned sectors, it has also been shown that, though many of these businesses were successful, a great many of them were the result of a lack of other job opportunities rather than being driven by the pull factors of attractive business opportunities (Saar and Unt, 2008). However, women who became managers did not become equal to men – instead, they compared their success with other women who remained in lower positions (Weiner, 2007).

It would probably be possible to find many similarities between the situation of women in post-World War II Western countries and that of women in post-Soviet Eastern countries. Framing ‘socialism’ as ‘war’ is probably not the fairest way to celebrate achievements in terms of women’s labour market participation and education. However, the speed with which society was eager to let these values go, while women were not that eager to go back to the kitchen, seems quite telling, even if one considers the first short spell of traditionalism that all these countries experienced after the shock of ‘war’. There is a tendency not to notice eager attempts in these countries to combine traditional roles with more egalitarian values. However, the analyses in this volume show clearly that both aspects need to be well tended; de-familiarization is not an answer but a choice.

The question of returning to the slow development towards gender egalitarian goals in society, as well as in the workplace, is yet to mature in Western Europe or in post-socialist Europe. How far are the countries from these goals? How are women doing in the labour market, and why? This book provides some answers, bearing in mind that the changes began relatively recently. It is already possible to see that the answers are not straightforward and remain context-specific despite generally similar wider developments – such as globalization, as analysed a decade ago (Blossfeld and Hofmeister, 2006) – since the shocks, as well as other effects, are cushioned or intensified by the local set of institutions.

The aim of this book is, on the one hand, to describe these processes from a cross-national perspective and to analyse their social outcomes. On the other hand, it seeks to investigate how far existing theories about women’s employment are able to provide a sufficient explanation for these highly dynamic developments.

The book approaches these questions by adopting a broad comparative approach as well as a multi-topical perspective, considering different, already prominent theoretical approaches developed on the basis of studying Western countries.

## **The organization of this volume**

### **Empirical basis: Inclusion of countries**

While the issues of female labour force participation and gender differences in domains of work and care are numerous, books like ours, which tackle the issues and specificities of female labour market participation in CEE countries from an empirical as well as a theoretical angle, are scarce. There are some more general accounts, mostly from the earlier phases of the transition,<sup>1</sup> that discuss these questions. There are also more recent works in which a small number of post-socialist countries are included in general discussions to highlight as representative examples,<sup>2</sup> and others which consider a larger number of countries, engaging in larger-scale quantitative or qualitative comparisons.<sup>3</sup>

Our book combines the benefits of both approaches, in that each country considered will be thoroughly discussed as a single case, while, in addition, the countries will be looked at from the comparative perspective when compared with other selected countries.

However, while in other comparative case-study books the single chapters often follow a very standardized template so as to discuss one specific isolated feature of women's labour market behaviour, ours does not. This enables our book to provide a simultaneous overview of a wider range of topics relevant to the understanding of women's labour market participation and their mutual interrelations.

Our approach thus has two clear advantages. First, it is a one-stop shop for those looking for literature on theoretical issues, themes and current debates on women's labour market participation in general. Second, those who would benefit from having easy access to data and trends on female labour market participation in post-socialist systems are equipped with the information in one single volume. In addition, the book provides a synthetic overview of theoretical debates and outlines a potential future research agenda for an often still under-researched group of European countries.

In comparative chapters of this volume, the authors cover the largest possible group of EU member countries that data availability allows. For more thorough comparisons and case studies, smaller selections of countries are chosen. The selection of countries is guided by the aim of arriving at a better understanding of how gendered labour markets work in the variety of post-socialist societies in the common European labour market. In doing this, we build on the typology of post-communist political economies (Bohle and Greskovits, 2007, 2012), according to which the capitalist regimes that emerged in the CEE countries after the end of state socialism range from 'neoliberal', as characterized by the Baltic States (represented here by Estonia), via the 'embedded neoliberal regime' of the Viségrad countries (represented here by Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) to the 'neo-corporatist' regime of Slovenia. In addition, we analyse the cases

of Bulgaria and Romania, which have been among the latest members to join the EU, and compare the situation evolving in these countries with the other, 'pre-classified' societal contexts. We assume that the size of the countries, as well as the extent of their agricultural sector, makes them more difficult to classify as purely neoliberal, like the small Baltic countries, but, overall, the developments that have taken place there have been even more neoliberal in their context. Following the classification of Ellu Saar and Odd Bjorn Ure (2013), we propose looking at these countries via the lens of the typology of the institutional arrangements specific to these countries.

The book provides an extensive comparative overview of the post-socialist European countries, engaging in four kinds of analytical techniques, ranging from large quantitative cross-country designs to in-depth case studies: (1) comparing and classifying all European countries, both Eastern and Western, looking for similarities in difference; (2) comparing CEE countries with each other, looking for differences in similarity; (3) closely comparing selected CEE countries with selected Western countries displaying some similarities (Poland vs. Italy, Estonia vs. Norway) and differences (Germany, Bulgaria, France and Hungary) and (4) presenting in-depth case studies of selected CEE countries.

By deliberately following a theoretically driven selection of country cases exhibiting both similarities and differences, the book avoids the frequent error of over-generalizing across all 'post-socialist' societies, but, instead, is able to better reflect the multiplicity of pathways along which CEE countries have developed.

The volume originates from a renowned European Science Foundation (ESF)-funded international network of life-course scholars – the Research Networking Programme 'TransEurope: Transnationalisation and Changing Life Course Inequality in Europe'. Virtually all the authors of the book are dedicated experts, themselves originating from the nations studied. This allows the authors to provide well-informed, deep insights into the single-country cases, among them cases that have often been neglected in earlier works on Europe even when Eastern European countries have been included, such as the Baltic country Estonia, or Bulgaria and Romania.

### **Topics to be covered: Thematic approaches**

In addition to empirical cross-national variations, the book takes into account various perspectives on women's employment in Eastern Europe, considering four wider themes in the research of labour markets: institutional and normative foundations; the degree of labour market participation; problems and potentials of work–family reconciliation; and patterns of social and occupational mobility. These themes comprise the main topics covered by current gendered labour market discussions. We can also say that our thematic choice covers the main life-course phases of contemporary women. However, in the course of developing the thematic accounts in the book,

the authors often compare men and women, parents and those without children, families with one versus two children and so on. Therefore, even though the book sets out to explore gender, it does not only shed light on women's experiences in various contexts; we can also learn about men, their views, and their participation in care and work.

The first part of the book focuses on the normative and institutional foundations of the Eastern European model of work and care, by delineating trends in both family policies and their normative underpinnings. Key questions in this part include: How has transformation affected the previously dominant ideology of 'gender equality' in Eastern European countries? What are the commonly shared beliefs and values underlying individual life-course and employment decisions? And to what extent are these specific norms and values reflected in contemporary family policies and the discourses evolving around them? This part thus concentrates on a comparative approach to explore the specific cultural context conditions of post-socialist countries against the background of other Western European contexts.

The second topical area of the book turns from the foundations of the Eastern European models to the investigation of actual labour market participation of women in Eastern Europe and its dynamic development since the transformation. Key questions in this part include: How has women's employment in Eastern European countries developed throughout the post-transition period? Have women been able to maintain their strong representation within the labour market, acquired throughout the socialist period? The part includes chapters providing comparative analysis as well as those giving specific insights into selected country cases (Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic and Slovenia).

The third theme of the book focuses on the intersection between family and women's work, that is, the question of how far and by what means Eastern European women manage to reconcile paid work and family life under changing economic and institutional conditions. Key questions in this part include: How have changes in employment impacted on women's private family decisions? Are Eastern European countries moving towards a Central European model of 'tough choices' between work and parenthood, or do Eastern European women employ specific strategies to mediate this potential conflict? What childcare policies have been implemented, and how is the culture of care affecting women's labour market outcomes? The part provides a comparative overview and concentrates on examples based on specific country cases of the comparative background (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Estonia).

Following the overview of women's quantitative labour market integration in the previous part(s), in this section, the discussion will revolve around more 'qualitative' aspects, that is, women's status within the labour market, their labour market mobility, and their means of protecting their interests. Some of the key questions in this part are: Have women been able

to safeguard their interests via collective representation? Or has economic turmoil deprived them of their safe anchorage in employment? How large are gender wage gaps in post-socialist countries? How much, and how efficiently, are women participating in lifelong learning and education? What are their chances of both downward and upward occupational mobility? What gendered aspects have emerged with regard to experience in collective negotiations and industrial relations? This part provides a comparative overview across post-socialist countries and illustrates the theoretical issues in the cases of individual countries (Poland, Estonia).

## Chapter synopsis

### Institutions: Values and discourses

The first part of the book begins with a consideration of the most recent changes in the institutional framework governing work and family decisions in Eastern European countries. *Sonja Blum* presents an overview of major trends in family policies across both Eastern and Western European countries. Throughout the last decades, multiple analytical typologies have tried to identify specific ‘worlds of welfare’ (Esping-Andersen, 1990) or, more recently, welfare reform (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010). Blum shows that, despite the fact that in terms of their historical legacy Eastern European countries share a number of unique characteristics as compared with many Western countries, there is no unique ‘Eastern European cluster’ in terms of family policies. Eastern European countries display very heterogeneous foci, ranging from de-familializing to re-familializing approaches. At the same time, the variety of family policy trends in Eastern Europe cannot be sufficiently described by subsuming them under regime categories developed for the Western world, such as the classic differentiation of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In order to understand trends in family policies in contemporary Europe – and in Eastern Europe in particular – Blum calls, instead, for more dynamic considerations that take into account changes over time, that go beyond classical geographical boundaries and put the emphasis on analytical accuracy rather than taking the bait of ‘catchiness’.

*Triin Roosalu, Marion Pajumets and Leeni Hansson* complement the overview of patterns in European family policies by an analysis of academic discourse about them. Using the example of discourse on paternity leave in Norway and Estonia, the authors show that it is not only family policies themselves that may differ between Eastern and Western European countries, but also the ways in which they are framed. Norwegian academics regard such schemes as measures that widen parents’ options, backed up by flexible working arrangements. Their Estonian counterparts more often have an opposite perception of them, that is, as restricting choice. Given the absence of flexible labour market options, such schemes may thus increase

work–family conflicts rather than fostering reconciliation between the two spheres.

*Jan Van Bavel and Joanna Róžańska-Putek* shift the perspective from the structural conditions of women's employment decisions to their interplay with prevalent norms. Their starting point is the puzzle of low second birth rates in CEE despite comparatively low levels of childlessness. Earlier approaches had linked low fertility rates to rising levels of uncertainty in increasingly competitive labour markets (Blossfeld et al., 2005). The authors argue that this analytical perspective is undoubtedly fruitful, but in order to understand the peculiar situation in Eastern Europe it needs to be linked to norms and values. Based on data from the third round of the European Social Survey (ESS), the authors show that this pattern may be explained as the result of the interplay between high levels of structural uncertainty and a high cultural value of parenthood in these societies. While the latter promotes the birth of at least one child, economic uncertainty frequently prevents parents in Eastern Europe from enlarging the family.

### **Employment patterns**

The second part of the book, on employment patterns, starts with an overview of employment trends in Europe by *Ursula Bazant*. As with family policies, results indicate that there appears to be no unique pattern among European countries regarding women's employment. Even though women can be considered as the main losers from system change, their employment has taken very different pathways, depending on nation-specific political choices.

*Réka Geambaşu* complements this overview with a detailed insight into women's employment in Romania and Hungary. She shows that, although employment levels in both countries appear similar, these are due to substantially different trend developments: while women's employment has risen in Hungary, it has declined in Romania. This difference may be traced back, on the one hand, to the selective crowding out of low-skilled and rural Romanian women in a generally shrinking labour market. On the other hand, Geambaşu argues that a mere consideration of such human capital effects may not provide a sufficient explanation of country-specific developments in Romania and Hungary, but that vulnerability theory – which not only focuses on women's losses in the labour markets but connects their development in employment to more general trends in the political sphere and in private life – may provide a more comprehensive explanation.

*Lenka Formánková, Blanka Plasová and Jiří Vyhlídal's* contribution shifts the focus from structural conditions to the interplay between cultural norms and family policies governing women's employment decisions. In the Czech Republic, existing family policies – particularly extended parental leave and deficiencies in care institutions for small children – serve to preserve a conservative model of gender relations. As the authors show, this mutual

reinforcement between norms and policies has increasingly detrimental effects, reflected, for example, in increased levels of work–family conflict as well as higher risks of economic deprivation among families.

The chapter by *Tatiana Bajuk Senčar* is unique in so far as it looks in particular at women in a comparatively sheltered part of the labour market, namely the Slovenian retail sector. Yet, as evidence from narrative interviews indicates, even here women's labour market situation appears to have deteriorated. Liberalized working hours and increases in workload seem to have had a particularly negative impact on women's ability to reconcile work and family tasks. Notably, despite obvious deteriorations in working conditions, women in the Slovenian retail sector have remained rather passive and adaptive, a trend that may be traced back to the fear of losing one's income in an economy in which both partner's income and employment conditions have become highly volatile. These results again call for an 'embedding' of individual labour market decisions and behaviour not only in micro-level explanations, but also in the wider socio-economic context of post-socialist transformation societies.

### **Reconciling work and care**

*Jana Javornik's* contribution opens the third main topical field of the book, namely the question of how women are able to reconcile family and work demands. Comparing evidence from a total of eight Eastern European countries, Javornik investigates to what extent existing care and leave policies can account for observed differences in patterns of mothers' employment. Javornik first identifies three different orientations of policies in the countries analysed, ranging from explicit de-familializing to explicitly familializing social policy logics. These differences in policies not only impact on the aggregate level of employment in the countries studied, but also affect the structure of inequalities in women's employment. Particularly in countries with deficiencies in childcare provision for children below the age of three, lower-educated women apparently forego employment, given its high opportunity costs. The great international heterogeneity in the link between family policies and maternal employment again challenges the idea of one unique pattern of 'Eastern European' exceptionalism; in fact, Javornik argues that, as compared with their Eastern European counterparts, 'mothers with small children across industrialized countries essentially face the same challenges in managing often competing demands'.

*Jan Rasmus Riebling, Rumiana Stoilova and Dirk Hofäcker* shift the focus from women's employment to the division of paid and unpaid work within couples. Much of the earlier literature on the gendered division of labour on this issue had focused on the importance of structural conditions, such as individual resources, educational homogamy and so on. In contrast, Riebling, Stoilova and Hofäcker take a more culturally oriented perspective when aiming to identify whether it is individual role perceptions or alignment with

existing societal norms that drives the division of paid and unpaid labour. Their comparison of the cases of Bulgaria, Germany, France and Hungary using data from the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) suggests that it is gendered role expectations in particular that influence the division of paid and unpaid work, a finding that could similarly be replicated for both Eastern and Western European countries. Their results suggest that, despite considerable differences between institutional regimes in Eastern and Western Europe, in both it is still primarily a general gender mechanism that determines the division of labour between the sexes.

*Anna Matysiak and Daniele Vignoli* reverse the analytical perspective on the work–family nexus when analysing how employment influences the decisions of Italian and Polish women to become mothers and to have a second child. Their findings show that, despite numerous similarities between the two countries in terms of values, family policy designs and fertility regimes, women’s employment in Italy appears to represent a much stronger barrier to fertility than in Poland. The authors suggest that this result may be explained by stronger determination of Polish women to remain employed, both for financial reasons and to avoid a mere housewife role. To them, employment is thus seen as a welcome opportunity to diversify their roles as mothers and employees. Matysiak and Vignoli suggest that this marked difference between two – at first sight – seemingly similar countries may be interpreted as arising from historical legacies that differ between Western and Eastern European countries.

### **Occupational mobility and quality of work**

*Triin Roosalu and Kadri Täht* opens the part on social and occupational mobility. The two authors take a career-oriented perspective when analysing how child-related care breaks impact on the occupational trajectories of mothers in Estonia. Their results indicate that after taking a career break for a period of six months or more, parental leave in fact decreases women’s chances of being upwardly or downwardly mobile, while shorter career breaks apparently foster more lateral developments. This result suggests that frequent generalizations derived from Western European countries, assuming that long periods of parental leave tend to disadvantage women, may not always prove applicable in Eastern European contexts. Both authors also highlight the possibility that longer and shorter career breaks in Estonia may be due to very different reasons, a result that calls for the introduction of more flexibility in the existing leave system.

*Martina Mysíková’s* chapter turns the focus to gender earnings inequality in CEE countries opens the part on social and occupational mobility. Her comparison of Eastern (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic) and Western European cases (Germany and Austria) points to differences in the degree of earnings inequality between the two groups of regimes. Yet, this ‘bird’s eye perspective’ hides notable differences in the patterns



of social inequality within the countries. While, for example, in Hungary, female education impacted strongly on earnings inequality, its influence was significantly smaller in the other CEE countries and in Western Europe. In other cases, such as the Czech Republic, the presence of children proved to be a major determinant of the income differences between couples. These results once again argue against too short-sighted an interpretation of inter-regime differences, and highlight a more careful consideration of intra-regime variation.

*Eve-Liis Roosmaa and Kadri Aavik* focus on the role of education as one important precondition of gendered differences in social and occupational mobility. Their international comparison of gender gaps in participation in adult learning shows that in the majority of countries, women's participation rates in formal education exceed those of men, with gender differences declining as formal original education increases. A somewhat different picture, however, emerges when non-formal education is considered: in countries with strong initial differences in educational attainment, men's participation rates tend to exceed those of women among the lower-educated, whereas the reverse was true for the higher-educated. In their interpretation of these results, both authors stress that the observed differences need to be understood against the background of more general institutional characteristics of the countries studied, particularly the gendered mechanisms that shape the participation of individuals in educational measures.

*Ellu Saar and Jelena Helemäe* round out the discussion on gendered patterns of educational mobility with an analysis of the link between educational attainment and occupational outcomes in Estonia. They show that, despite the fact that Estonian girls have a better chance of obtaining higher educational degrees, they are often still faced with a 'glass ceiling' in terms of occupational attainment in later life. A consideration of trends over time, however, suggests that gender gaps in return to education have declined for the post-Soviet cohort as compared with those born and educated in communist times. Their results highlight that findings for social and occupational mobility may be strongly time-dependent and thus of limited temporal validity, given the dynamic changes in Eastern European labour markets, educational and occupational systems, and societal patterns as a whole.

The final contribution, by *Ślawomira Kamińska-Berezowska*, the fourth in this volume that relies on qualitative investigation (the others were Bajuk-Senčar; Roosalu, Pajumets and Hansson; and Roosmaa and Aavik), explores the viewpoint of representatives of Polish women's organizations. The issues attended to here are presented as women's problems in terms of labour market participation, but hardly any viable solutions are offered or even recognized by the women's organizations. Despite some actions and campaigns, many of the problems are naturalized, and potential options such as cooperation between women's organizations and trade unions are

not even considered. As such, Kamińska-Berezowska sees the problem in a gender-essential, male-norm-centred approach to work, and also analytical and theoretical androcentrism that causes women to be seen – and see themselves – as outsiders deviating from the male norm. Similarly to Roosmaa and Aavik, she suggests that the theoretical models relied on in everyday life as well as in academic studies need to be more gender-sensitive.

## Conclusions and outlook

What may be learned from these results for women's situations in Eastern European countries and the ability of existing mainstream theories to explain them? Even though the multiple topics addressed in this volume and the large variation in countries analysed prevent overly generalized conclusions, there are at least four major inferences that can be drawn from its results.

*First*, the contributions of this volume suggest that none of the fields analysed here – family institutional backgrounds, employment, work–family reconciliation, or social or occupational mobility – show any signs of one homogeneous Eastern European pattern that differentiates this group of countries from their Western counterparts. In some cases, Eastern European countries may indeed differ from their Western European counterparts, but it may be necessary to look for intra-group differences, that is, to differentiate patterns or singular cases within Eastern European countries. In other cases, even the demarcation line between Eastern and Western Europe may not be a solid one. The synopsis of family policies by Sonja Blum in this book (Chapter 2), indeed, shows that there are several overlaps between Eastern and Western European countries in the design of their family policies, and that a too-simplistic 'catchy' differentiation of East versus West does not provide a sufficiently clear picture of reality. Researchers comparing Eastern European countries among themselves, as well as comparing them with other European countries, will thus need to consider country-specific differences in thorough detail in order to arrive at sustainable conclusions that go beyond intuitive geographical typologies.

*Second*, our results show that when explaining behavioural patterns of women in Eastern European countries, it may at times be possible to apply existing theories initially developed for Western European countries: Javornik, for example, shows that the basic logic of the behaviour of women in relation to work–family reconciliation measures shows notable similarities between Eastern and Western European countries. In a similar way, Riebling et al. find that it is still primarily traditionally attributed gender roles that influence the gendered division of labour within couples, whether in Eastern or Western European countries. Van Bavel and Różańska-Putek present an example in which existing theories cannot be directly applied but require some modifications when they show that the peculiar Eastern

European pattern of low childlessness and low fertility may not be explained by labour market insecurity alone (as has previously been the case in research on Western European countries). Instead, one needs to consider its interplay with regional norms about parenthood to arrive at an explanation of why parenthood is often sought after while the foundation of larger families is usually foregone.

*Third*, there are cases when mainstream theoretical approaches are insufficient to explain women's behavioural patterns in Eastern Europe, and new theoretical insights are needed. A good example within this book is Geambasu's comparison of Hungary and Romania, which indicates that vulnerability theory needs more attention when explaining differential outcomes in women's employment in the two countries. Another worthwhile example is the approach by Roosmaa and Aavik, which shows that women's considerably higher level of human capital in terms of education and training does not translate directly into career prospects or pay leverage. Instead, they show how training and education may become feminized, in that men do not want to be associated with participation in training. Maybe, then, in some cases, access to non-formal education as such is considered even by women themselves as something to compensate them for their low career chances rather than to enhance them.

*Fourth*, there is some evidence that since (some) Western European countries are indeed lagging behind (some) Eastern European countries in terms of women's historical inclusion in labour, together with their high education as well as long and rather generous career breaks for childcare, Eastern countries could be used as a test for current, so-called new ideas. For example, as Roosalu and Täht show, currently popular suggestions to introduce periods of one year's childcare leave for women in countries where this is not now available may give more universal protection to mothers, but may also hinder their career chances. Perhaps, although this is not considered in the chapter, this could lead to discrimination against young women when hiring, as all mothers can be expected to take this leave. Therefore, the conditions under which these suggestions might be successful and useful need to be better considered – such as, for example, by widely mainstreaming paternal leave and making a childcare break a 'risk' in the case of male employees as well. The arguments presented so far by scholars in favour of paternity leave, as discussed by Roosalu, Pajumets and Hansson, do not consider these more concrete aspects, but point more generally to a more egalitarian labour market. These details, then, need to be kept in mind when new policies are developed across Europe.

*Finally*, it seems that, at least at present, findings on Eastern European countries are often still highly ephemeral, given the high dynamics of structural and cultural changes in these countries. As Saar and Helemäe show in the illustration of patterns of occupational return to education, explanations may need to be updated when looking at younger cohorts of women (and men) who have grown up and were educated under different context

conditions. Further studies that consider the variability of results between countries as well as over time will be urgently needed to keep track of the continuing changes in women's employment in one of the pivotal areas of contemporary Europe.

It still remains to be seen when we will be able to state that the 'war' is indeed over. Following the account by David Ost (2009), we can certainly agree that post-socialism is past, in that societies are no longer dealing with problems originating in the era of socialism, but with problems from the post-socialist period. In this new, post-postsocialist Europe it is, Stark (1996) put it, not on the ruins, but with the ruins, of communism that the countries must build themselves. To understand when that 'after-war period' will be over, perhaps one additional indicator should be added here: when gender equality in care and at work can be considered a common project for different social groups, and when noticeable steps are taken in that direction. So far, it is sufficient to say of Western as well as Eastern European countries what Lister (2009) said about the gender-excellent Nordic countries: the glass is half empty, even though half is still there.

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# **Part I**

## **Family Policies, Norms and Discourses**

# 2

## Family Policies in Post-Socialist Welfare States: Where Are They Located in the European Worlds of Welfare?

*Sonja Blum*

### Introduction

The situation for women and men in the labour market differs everywhere in Europe, but the *nature* and the *extent* of these differences vary significantly between countries – for example, with regard to employment rates, gender-related wage differentials and working hours. First and foremost, these variations have been traced back to country-specific laws and regulations in the fields of labour markets, and social and family policies (Pfarr, 2002: 32). The option to combine paid work and family life has been identified as the primary determinant of women’s labour market participation. This chapter studies these variations across Europe<sup>1</sup> with regard to family policies and tries to identify trends in recent years. Its particular focus is on family policies in the post-socialist welfare states of Central and Eastern Europe.

With regard to female employment, the most important family policy instruments are leave policies and institutional childcare. Daly and Rake (2004: 51) argue: ‘the two measures most telling of how public policies treat care are parental leave, as distinct from maternity, and public childcare facilities’. During the last decade, these two measures have been high on political agendas across Europe, and questions of ‘reconciliation’ and work–family balance have gained importance – for example, against the background of demographic changes and shortages of skilled workers. This can also be seen in countries where family policies have traditionally been directed towards the traditional family and a male breadwinner and female carer model (for example Germany).

However, the post-socialist welfare states have come from very different starting points. They repeatedly reached fundamental junctures and

experienced dramatic institutional shifts: before World War II the Central European countries, in particular, were based on a conservative Bismarckian model. Following an employment-centred, universal welfare provision during the socialist era, the restructuring since the 1990s has included both path-dependent and path-shifting decisions. Case studies have shown that *all* former communist countries – to differing degrees – quit the path of de-familialization and ‘tried to reintroduce the traditional familization regime [...] as they move back toward the path of re-familization’ (Saxonberg and Sirovatka, 2006: 186). Esping-Andersen (1999: 45) states that a familialistic welfare regime is ‘one that assigns a maximum of welfare obligations to the household’, while de-familialistic policies lessen individuals’ reliance on the family and support women’s employment.<sup>2</sup> Some countries implemented implicit negative re-familialization (through welfare state retrenchment and market-liberal policies), and others explicit positive re-familialization (through policies supporting women to leave the labour market to raise their children).

For a long time family policies were neglected within comparative welfare state research, which instead focused on social policies covering traditional social risks, such as pensions or unemployment. Since the first decade of the new millennium, however, this situation has changed in two respects: first, comparative analyses of family policy developments have increased (for example Gauthier, 2002; Bahle, 2008; Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008); and second, and connectedly, family policies – in particular questions of work–family balance, parental leave and childcare services – have gained importance on the political agendas for action in many countries. This increased importance is in many places connected with the need for a reorientation or modernization of traditional policies in this field and, as a result, far-reaching policy changes have been observed (for example Ahrens et al., 2010; Mätzke and Ostner, 2010a).

Against this background of far-reaching changes, it is striking that attempts at identifying family policy typologies seem to have rather *declined* during recent years. This might apparently run counter to the increased importance of family policies, but can be explained by several developments. Among other things, it could be argued that the first decade of the new millennium has been marked by a general deconstruction of welfare state typologies: following the typology-immanent criticisms of the 1990s – which especially concerned Esping-Andersen’s (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* – many criticisms of the 2000s challenged typologies as such. On the other hand, classifications are valuable for comparative research – to summarize similarities and differences between countries, to produce hypotheses and add to theory building, or to provide a basis for selecting cases to be studied in more detail.

However, what makes us sceptical about using existing family policy typologies is the timeliness of far-reaching family policy reforms. In the face



of ongoing welfare state changes and the Eastern enlargement of the EU, comparative welfare state research has been preoccupied with recording, and possibly explaining, developments prior to systematizing them. In a similar way, Mätzke and Ostner (2010b: 468) argue that the focus has shifted from identifying ‘worlds of welfare’ to identifying ‘worlds of welfare reform’. Welfare state typologies (and even more the notion of ‘regimes’) always involved *stability*, which has been largely absent, particularly since the new millennium. Nonetheless, this (to a large extent legitimate) scepticism has not restrained comparative welfare state research from excessively *using* existing family policy typologies to account for case selection or to diagnose the family policy situation of countries, for example.

In this chapter, existing family policy typologies will be compared with recent trends of public family policies in Europe. The aim is *not* to build a new typology, but, rather, to assess the current *fit* of existing typologies for displaying family policy variations across countries. The chapter specifically looks at the Central and Eastern European (CEE) welfare states and their positions within the European ‘worlds of welfare’ regarding family policies. Attention is also paid to family policy changes after the financial and economic crisis. The chapter follows the question of how the still under-researched CEE welfare states – which are often treated as uniform (Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008: 115) – fit into the traditional ‘worlds of welfare’. Do they share specific characteristics – in this case, in terms of family policies – that distinguish them from the other European welfare states?

To answer these questions, the chapter is structured in the following way. The second section reviews the most important welfare state typologies, which are often applied to family policies, but have also been criticized for neglecting this field. The main specific family policy typologies are then discussed. The third section summarizes three hypotheses on where to place the CEE countries within these ‘worlds of welfare’. In the fourth section, recent developments and trends in family policy expenditure and childcare policies (that is, leave regulations and childcare services) are considered. These developments are contrasted with the prevalent typologies of the respective countries. In the fifth section, the results are summarized and some general conclusions drawn.

## **Welfare state and family policy typologies**

Until the 1980s, comparative welfare state research developed its basic concepts and became increasingly differentiated as a discipline, for example by Marshall’s (1950) work on the expansion from citizens’ rights to social rights, or, each on the development of the welfare state, Flora and Heidenheimer’s (1982) qualitative-historical approaches and Wilensky’s (1975) quantitative comparisons. With Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s (1990) publication of *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, the approach of clustering

welfare states in order to facilitate systematic comparisons was established as the predominant strand of research.

### **Traditional worlds of welfare**

The innovation of Esping-Andersen's seminal work was to overcome the customary approach of comparing welfare states by their aggregate social spending. He argued that it is not sufficient to know *how much* welfare states spend, but *for what, how and why*. To answer the first and second questions, he analysed social policies in 18 countries and using the three indicators of de-commodification,<sup>3</sup> social stratification, and the interplay of state, market and family in social provision. In this way, Esping-Andersen arrived at the well-known typology of the liberal, the conservative and the social-democratic welfare state regime. In reality there will mainly be hybrid forms, but these three ideal types are characterized as follows. Liberal welfare states show low levels of de-commodification, means testing and primacy of the market. Conservative welfare states distinguish themselves by medium de-commodification, earnings-related and status-preserving social security systems, subsidiarity and promotion of traditional family structures. Social-democratic welfare states are marked by high de-commodification, generous and universal benefits, plus a strong focus on solidarity and gender equality.

Despite its being a milestone and making an essential contribution to comparative welfare state research, there have been a range of criticisms of Esping-Andersen's approach and conclusions. Three important sub-categories of these criticisms can be differentiated<sup>4</sup>: *space, time* and *indicators* (see Schubert et al., 2009). On the *spatial* dimension, one important criticism was that, apart from Italy, the Southern European countries are neglected. While Esping-Andersen seems to assign them into the corporatist-conservative model (for example by a common Catholic imprint and strong familialism), others have argued for the existence of a specific Southern (Ferrera, 1996) or Mediterranean welfare regime (see Arts and Gelissen, 2002: 142). Outside Europe, Castles (1998), for example, criticized the placing of Australia and New Zealand within the liberal model and instead argued for the existence of a specific Antipodean model, characterized by high thresholds for means-tested benefits. More generally speaking, Esping-Andersen included 18 countries in his analysis: 13 European, and 11 of them EU member states today. What this means is that when using this typology today, there are a lot of blind spots on the map of European welfare systems. This is particularly the case since the Eastern enlargement of the EU, with the post-socialist welfare systems still often under-represented, in comparative research.

With regard to developments over *time*, welfare state research has delineated the mid-1970s as the end of the welfare state's 'golden age', and from then on identified fundamental changes, namely retrenchment, re-commodification and recalibration<sup>5</sup> (Pierson, 2001). Since the mid-1990s,

these developments have been linked to the question of what the consequences are over time for individual welfare states and, in comparison, for European welfare states. At the national level, debates have ranged from path-dependency of (different) welfare policies on the one hand, to system changes on the other (for example Clasen, 2005; Ebbinghaus, 2005). In comparative research, some researchers diagnose welfare state convergence, while others discern path-dependency/stability or even divergence of welfare systems (Seeleib-Kaiser, 1999; Alber and Standing, 2000; Starke et al., 2008). Esping-Andersen's (and other) typologies are criticized for being static concepts, which do not provide for these dynamics.

With regard to Esping-Andersen's *indicators*, the most important is the so-called feminist criticism, which is that, generally, gender-specific problems of welfare states and the family's role in welfare provision are neglected, and specifically the de-commodification index is 'gender-blind' (for example Orloff, 1993; O'Connor, 1996). Consequently, alternative typologies<sup>6</sup> were developed which focus on these aspects (for example Sainsbury, 1999; Daly and Lewis, 2000). In a famous typology, Lewis and Ostner (1994), looking at mothers' employment, individual social security for women, and public care services for children and the elderly, identified three groups of countries: strong, moderate and weak male breadwinner models. Their grouping differs substantially from Esping-Andersen's: for example, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands are all considered strong breadwinner models, while France and Belgium are classified as moderate, and Sweden as a weak breadwinner model. In another typology, Korpi (2000) studies the degree to which gender equality is supported or constrained by different institutions, and arrives at three categories (see Hiilamo, 2002: 152): general family support models (for example Germany, France) aim to strengthen the man's breadwinning position, for example through family cash and tax benefits; in market-oriented models (for example the US), family policies are undeveloped and the division of family/waged work is market-regulated; dual-earner support models (for example Sweden, Finland) strengthen the labour market participation of both parents, for example through public care services or paid parental leave for parents of small children.

### **Traditional family policy systems**

Against the background of these criticisms of Esping-Andersen's 'three worlds' and novel typologies (for example the male breadwinner models), it is debatable to what extent typologies can be developed and be valid for welfare systems in general. It often seems more adequate to construct country groups for different policy areas. So, the question is: what do the typologies of 'European family policy systems' look like? It has been shown how clusters differ according to the indicators used (Bazant and Schubert, 2009). This also becomes apparent in the numerous attempts to construct family policy models for systematic comparisons, which will now be looked at in more detail.

In an early typology, Kameran and Kahn (1978) examined family policy-making styles and identified three models: explicit and comprehensive (for example Sweden, France, Hungary), sectoral (for example Austria, Germany, Poland) and implicit and reluctant (for example the UK, the US). Gauthier (1996), in her historical analysis of family policy traditions in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries, identified four groups: the pro-egalitarian model (for example Sweden, Denmark), which fosters parallel reconciliation of family and paid employment for both parents by high state support and liberal attitudes towards different family forms; the pro-family/pro-natalist model (for example France), which focuses on demographic policies and subsequent reconciliation for mothers (for example through childcare, birth benefits); the pro-traditional model (for example Germany) which is characterized by moderate state support for families and private welfare provision in accordance with the subsidiarity principle; and the pro-family, but not interventionist, model (for example the UK), which provides means-tested, limited support.

Later, in her 2002 study, Gauthier analyses family policy trends in 22 OECD countries using two indicators: cash benefits and support for working parents, meaning duration and payment of maternity leave and parental leave (see also Gornick et al., 1997). Her specific interest lies in convergence, that is, in whether, since the 1970s, the countries' family policies have become more similar, and whether there have been any changes in country clusters. As a starting point and reference period, she identifies clusters in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Table 2.1).

Interestingly, from her quantitative analysis, Gauthier finds that these clusters only developed from the mid-1980s to the end of the 1990s, and they were not identifiable in the 1970s (Gauthier, 2002: 466). This finding contests the so-called 'frozen landscape scenario', as it shows the change of welfare states and corresponding typologies. It gives another good reason to assume that the landscape of European family policy systems has changed again since then.

Szelewa and Polakowski (2008) made an interesting sub-classification of the CEE countries. They identified four different clusters: explicit familialism (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia), implicit familialism (Poland), female mobilizing (Estonia, Latvia) and comprehensive support (Hungary, Lithuania). This distinction was based on a comparison of four dimensions using a fuzzy set ideal types approach: extensiveness of childcare services, quality of childcare services, generosity of parental leave, and its universality (Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008: 118). The four clusters are characterized as follows: countries with explicit familialism support the traditional family model by longer leaves and parental leave payments, while childcare rates are low; countries with implicit familialism do not offer support via either leave or childcare, which locates care in the family; female-mobilizing countries show a high quantity and quality of childcare, while

Table 2.1 European family policy systems, circa 1990

Policy regime	Overall characteristics	Cash support	Support for working parents	Countries
Social-Democratic	Universal state support, high commitment to gender equality	Medium-level cash benefits, high-level other benefits	High-level support to both parents, long leave and extensive childcare facilities	Denmark Finland Norway Sweden
Conservative	Employment-related state supports, driven by more traditional gender view	Medium- to high-level cash support	Medium-level support, long leave and limited childcare facilities	Austria Belgium France Germany Ireland Luxembourg Netherlands
Southern European	High occupational fragmentation, mix of universal and private benefits	Low-level cash support	Low-level support	Greece Italy Portugal Spain
Liberal	Low-level, need-oriented support and market forces	Low-level, need-oriented support	Low-level support with strong private sector	UK Switzerland

Source: Adapted with minor modifications from Gauthier (2002: 453).

leaves are not generous; and finally, countries with comprehensive support for families offer diverse policies, for example long and generous leaves as well as childcare facilities, so that families have more choice. This study by Szelewa and Polakowski (2008: 116) is also interesting because the fuzzy set approach explicitly 'allows for tracing the dynamics of change through the years'. For example, they found Polish childcare policies to be quite constant in their 'implicit familialism' between 1989 and 2004, whereas the Czech Republic changed from 'female mobilizing' towards 'explicit familialism'.

We can conclude that well-founded and useful typologies for family policy systems exist, but that country groupings differ. The Nordic countries seem to 'make the strongest case' (Hiilamo, 2002: 143) and to end up in the same cluster no matter which dimension is examined. At the other end of the scale, the post-socialist welfare systems are hardly ever structurally integrated into comparative studies, and when they are, they tend to spread over

all groups. Furthermore, all family policy typologies share a common weakness: the problem of not all EU member states being covered always remains. Also, in terms of the method, additional countries or clusters cannot simply be put 'to an existing cluster analysis without re-assessing the overall ratio of the individual elements' (Schubert et al., 2009: 15). Furthermore, the older typologies in particular, as they are static models, are unlikely to show a realistic picture of European family policy systems today, after EU enlargement and the sometimes path-breaking family policy changes that have been observed.

Against this background, most overlaps of country clustering exist in what could be called a 'geographical typology': the Nordic (Denmark, Finland, Sweden), the conservative or continental (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands), the liberal (Ireland, Malta, the UK), the Southern/Mediterranean (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) and the post-socialist cluster (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia). This 'geographical grouping' – give or take a few variations – is most often used in comparative family policy research, for example to make and account for country choices. This might well be related to its also being a very *catchy* cluster, which can be easily spotted on a map of Europe. However, it could be questioned whether it is also the most *dependable* typology.

### **Three hypotheses on the CEE welfare states**

Within the context of welfare state and family policy typologies, the status of the CEE countries is of special importance for several reasons. As traditional typologies were developed mainly during the 1990s, the CEE countries are typically not included. When they joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, this further contested traditional welfare state typologies and raised new questions. Three different hypotheses on the CEE countries' status within the 'worlds of welfare' can be set out as follows (see also Blum et al., 2010: 6–8).

First, some scholars have argued that the CEE countries constitute a welfare regime of their own, building up on the common heritage of the socialist welfare state. For example, Tausz (2009: 258) strengthens this path-dependency argument in her case study of the Hungarian welfare state: 'If we choose Esping-Andersen's welfare regimes as the starting point of our argument, the Hungarian welfare system cannot be compared with the neo-liberal, the conservative or the social democratic welfare regime neither can be the former state-socialist countries; it is an anti-model or a hybrid model.' Similarly, Trumm and Ainsaar (2009: 154) identify policy heritage when analysing Estonia: 'The legacy of the "state-socialist welfare traditions" has made a remarkable imprint on the current social policy systems.' For example, elements such as an extended childcare infrastructure or employer contributions to fund social spending have often 'survived' from

the state-socialist welfare system, which was based on full employment. It is unclear, however, whether the state-socialist heritage, which is an obvious commonality of the CEE welfare systems, is really sufficient to identify a discrete 'world of welfare'.

Second, other scholars – most prominently, Esping-Andersen (1996) – have argued that the peculiarities of the post-socialist welfare systems are a transitory phenomenon and that they will ultimately open out into one of the 'three worlds of welfare capitalism': the liberal, the conservative or the social-democratic. Indeed, several studies conducted during the 1990s found Eastern European welfare states developing in the direction of a liberal or residual regime type (for example Standing, 1996; Ferge, 2001), characterized by a mix of social insurances, social assistance and privatization. International organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD have contributed to this liberal spin of post-socialist welfare state transformations. However, country studies show that these organizations' influence varied considerably between countries. While, for example, the World Bank heavily influenced pension reforms in Latvia (Rajevska, 2009) and in Slovakia (Wientzek and Meyer, 2009), no similar influence was discernible in Estonia. Rather, the transformation of the Estonian welfare state was heavily affected by its geographical position and its regular exchanges with Scandinavian experts. As a result, 'Nordic welfare traditions were employed in the several legislative regulations' (Trumm and Ainsaar, 2009: 154) in Estonian social policy, for example in the field of healthcare. Other countries resorted to their conservative-corporatist traditions from before World War II, for example the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia. When studying the Slovenian welfare system, Kolarič et al. (2009: 444) state that 'both Bismarckian principles, the contributory principle and the equity principle, were introduced into the social protection systems'. Obviously, the liberal, conservative and social-democratic categories (or their variations) are regularly used to *describe* CEE welfare states. It is doubtful, however, whether this means that these countries have actually converted into the three worlds of welfare. Rather, hybrid forms are identified most frequently and, as Ripka and Mareš (2009: 116) reason when studying the Czech welfare state, liberal, conservative and social-democratic elements are mixed together, though to differing extents.

Against this background, the third hypothesis on the classification of the CEE welfare states is one of prevailing heterogeneities: if these countries *neither* constitute a common post-socialist regime *nor* fit into Esping-Andersen's three worlds of welfare capitalism, then they should be sub-divided further and possibly be 'packed together' with countries from other geographical regions. For example, Aidukaite (2004) distinguishes between a post-Soviet and an Eastern Central European type. However, even within these sub-types, differences are immense, as Brusis (1999: 80–81) shows in a comparative study on Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary: 'The results of the reforms carried out in the four countries [...] are hybrid

institutional arrangements, which represent the compromises between liberal-residual and conservative-corporatist welfare concepts.' Notwithstanding the fact that his description again resorts to Esping-Andersen's categories, the phenomenon of disturbing variety within one cluster is also well known from the other worlds of welfare, such as, for example, the conservative or the Southern European one. Therefore, while heterogeneity could be the buzzword of the third hypothesis on the CEE countries, the extent to which scholars still see the possibility of identifying meaningful sub-clusters, and the extent to which they identify 'diversity beyond existing categories', differs (Bazant and Schubert, 2009).

## **Family policy trends**

In this section, current trends of family policies across Europe are analysed and checked against the traditional country clustering. Initially, in the first sub-section, data on family spending in cash benefits and services will be discussed to get an overall picture on family policies in the EU countries. The second section focuses on childcare policies, that is, parental leave and childcare services in the EU member states.

### **Family spending**

Figure 2.1 shows the functional expenditure for families as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010; that is, how much of GDP is spent on support, in cash or in kind, in connection with pregnancy, childbirth, bringing up children and caring for other family members. Family policy expenditure ranges from only 0.79 per cent of GDP in Poland, through 1.22 per cent in Malta and 1.24 per cent in the Netherlands, to 3.97 per cent in Luxembourg and 4.01 per cent in Denmark. Somewhat below the EU-27 average of 2.26 per cent of GDP are countries such as Belgium and Lithuania; somewhat above the average are countries such as Estonia, France and Hungary. While some results do not come as a surprise – for example, the under-financed welfare states of Southern and Eastern Europe lagging behind and Nordic Denmark taking the lead – the data as a percentage of GDP overall show no intuitive order in terms of 'worlds of welfare'. If, for example, the 27 countries are divided into three equal groups<sup>7</sup> – with high, medium and low social spending for families – one finds Southern, CEE, liberal and even conservative welfare states in the large first group of low spenders (Poland, Malta, the Netherlands, Italy, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Latvia, Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece, the UK). The group of medium spenders, however, contains Bulgaria, Cyprus, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia and Hungary as representatives from 'rudimentary' welfare states, along with Belgium and France. The group of 'big spenders' is less surprising, including countries from the conservative and Nordic welfare model only (Austria, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Denmark) (Figure 2.1).



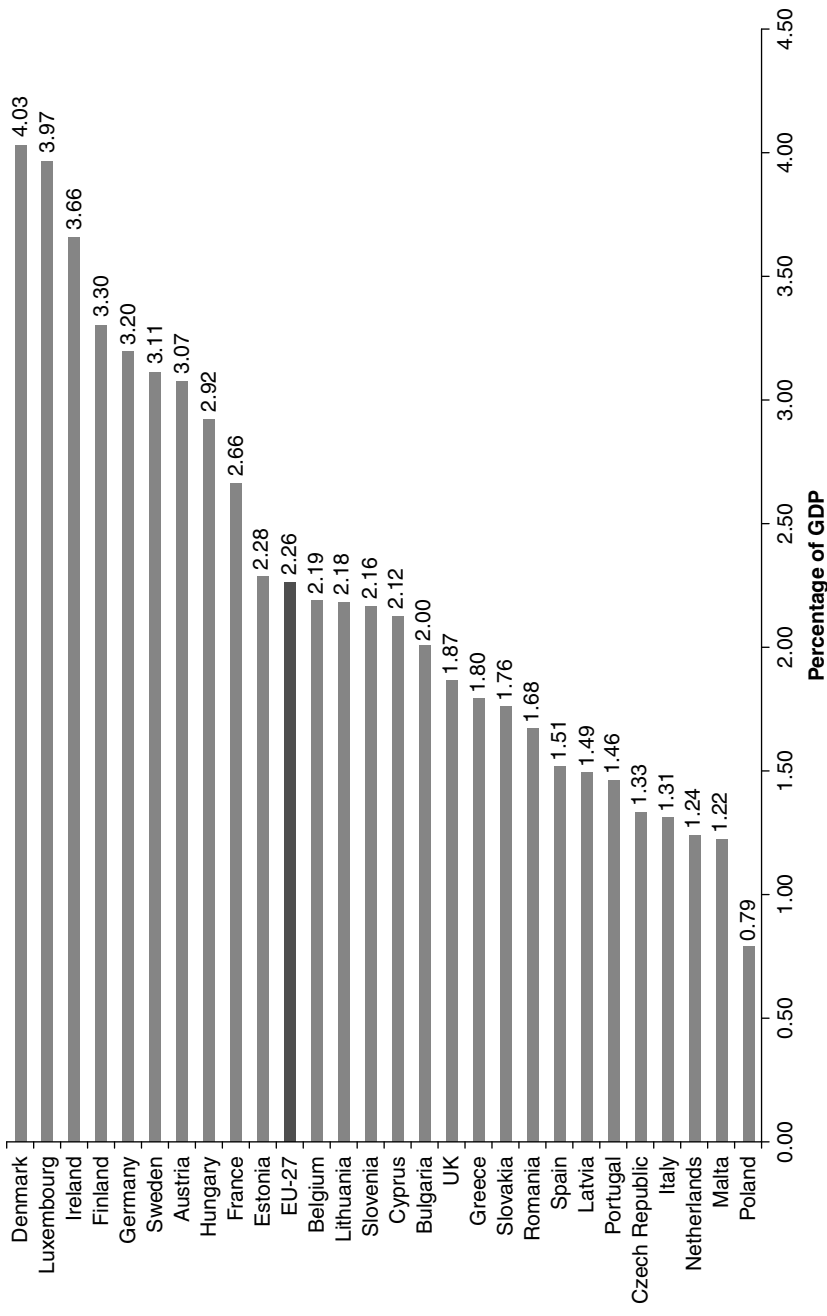


Figure 2.1 Functional expenditure for families in the EU-27 in 2010, as a percentage of GDP  
Source: Eurostat.

Obviously, it matters not only *how much* countries spend on family policies, but also *on what*. The OECD Family Database<sup>8</sup> gives information on the family spending proportions of cash benefits (for example family allowances), services (for example childcare) and tax breaks for families (for example tax reductions for children). The 2009 data show that most countries spend more on cash benefits than on services or tax benefits. Of the EU countries, 14 fall below the OECD average of spending 0.94 per cent of GDP on services. This is particularly noticeable for those countries that, overall, spend a lot on family policies – that is, Luxembourg (0.53 per cent of GDP on family services), Ireland (0.82 per cent), Germany (0.89 per cent) and Austria (0.57 per cent). These countries obviously have different policy preferences from Denmark (2.27 per cent), France (1.76 per cent), Finland (1.62 per cent) and Sweden (2.17 per cent), all of which spend particularly highly on family services. Of those post-socialist welfare states that are in the OECD – Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – all but Hungary (1.16 per cent) show lower spending than the OECD average on services, though, of course, to varying extents. Only a few European countries spend significant parts of their family policy expenditures via taxes (France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic) (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 shows the functional expenditures for families and children in 2007 and 2010. In contrast to Figure 2.1, they are measured here in Euros per inhabitant, since the GDPs have been subject to above-average upturns and downturns in recent years. These data can thus give a first – but, of course, only broad and preliminary – impression of family policy reactions to the crisis, showing whether there has been retrenchment or expansion in spending. Overall, the EU-27 spent slightly more in 2010 than they did in 2007. Of the 27 member states, only seven reduced their family spending per inhabitant between 2007 and 2010: Romania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK.

### **Work–family balance: Developments in parental leave and childcare services**

During the last decade, work–family balance has probably been the most important topic on the family policy agenda for action across Europe. First and foremost, this concerns the areas of parental leave regulations, on the one hand, and childcare services, on the other.

#### *Parental leave*

While ‘parental leave’ is often used as an umbrella term, there are actually different forms of care-related leave, the most important of which in this context are maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave (see, also for the definitions, Moss, 2013: 2). Maternity leave is mainly a healthcare

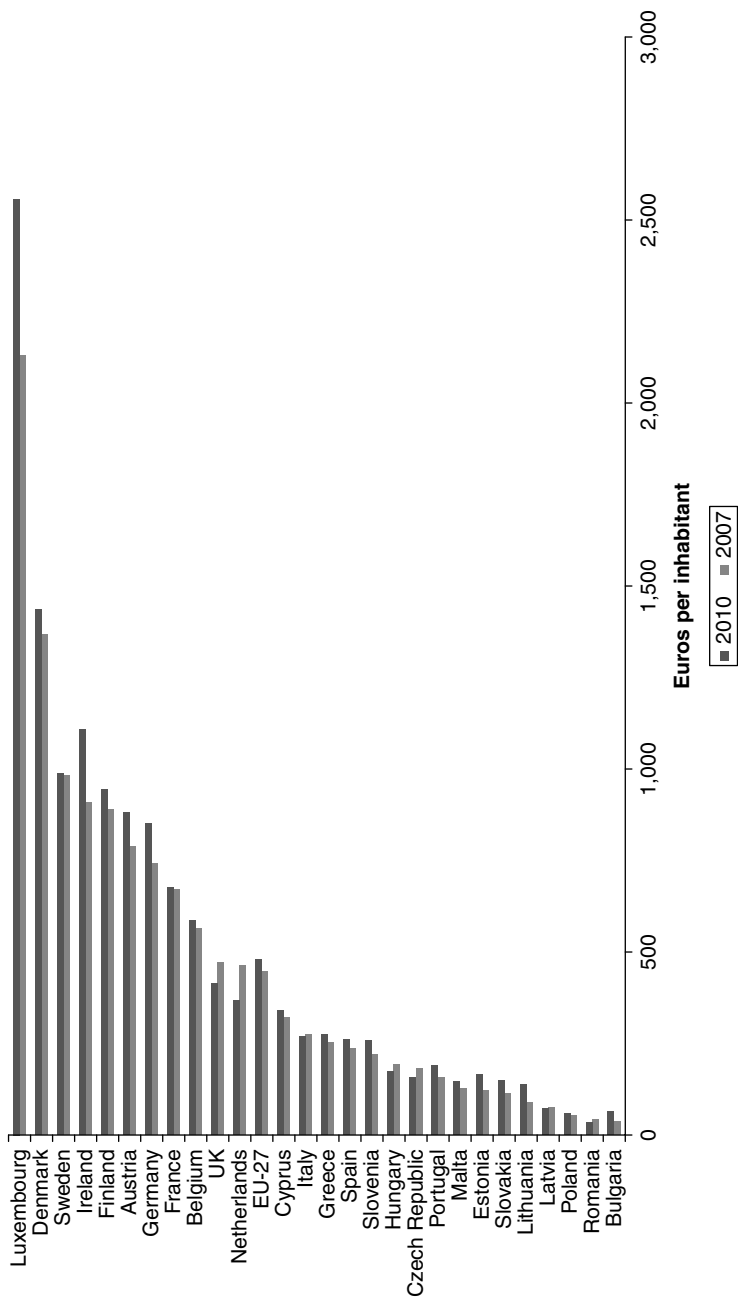


Figure 2.2 Expenditures for families in Euros per inhabitant,\* 2007 and 2010

Note: \* at constant 2000 prices.

Source: Eurostat, ESSPROS.

measure, generally available to mothers only before, during and after childbirth. Paternity leave is generally available to fathers only and is usually to be taken around the birth of the child. Parental leave is generally available equally to mothers and fathers, but its exact design differs widely across countries, for example in length, payment and eligibility criteria. Sometimes both parents have an individual right to a certain amount of leave; sometimes it is an individual right that can be transferred to the other parent; and sometimes it is a 'family right' that parents can share (Moss, 2013: 2). Concerning gender equality implications, 12 months (and not significantly more) is seen as a kind of 'optimal' parental leave length (Ciccia and Verloo, 2012: 516). Furthermore, for fathers to take up leave, it needs to be well paid (that is, income dependent or quite a high flat rate) and at best accompanied by non-transferable leave periods for either partner (see Ray et al., 2010).

Table 2.2 gives an overview of parental leave in EU countries. It is mainly based on the 'International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research' of June 2013.<sup>9</sup> The five countries<sup>10</sup> that were not included therein were added in from the 'European Alliance for Families' website. As the table shows, there are a number of countries that only offer very long and low-paid or – in the case of Greece and Spain – even unpaid leave. These countries are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece (public sector), Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Spain. Except for France, they are all either Southern or Eastern European countries. These policies could be described as (positively) familializing, as they set regulational, and often also financial, incentives for comparatively long 'baby breaks', particularly for mothers.

Then there are a few countries that offer long and low-paid or unpaid leave as a possible option, but short and well-paid leave is also available. This is the case in Austria, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Romania and Sweden. These cases also reflect the successive restructuring of parental leave. For example, in Germany, Austria and Romania, originally only long and low-paid leave options were available, which were then accompanied by the short and well-paid variants that also set special incentives for fathers (see Blum, 2012) (Table 2.2).

The other countries do not offer such long leave options, but only shorter variants of up to 14.9 months (Denmark). They differ, however, in terms of payment. Well-paid short leave options are available in Denmark, Finland, Portugal and Slovenia. The other countries offer only low-paid short leaves (Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands) or – in the case of Cyprus, Greece (private sector), Ireland, Malta and the UK – unpaid short leave.

Regarding the position of the post-socialist welfare states, we can see that of the seven countries covered in Moss (2013), no fewer than five fall into the somewhat re-familializing group of countries with long and low-paid leaves. This fits with Robila's (2012: 35) statement that after the fall of communism, the focus often shifted to 'providing cash benefits and expanding

Table 2.2 Overview of parental leave in EU countries, 2013

	Max. length in months	Length of paid/ length of well-paid leave	Individual/ family entitlement	Special incentive for father to take leave
Austria	24	24/12	Family	Bonus payment
Belgium	8	8/x	Individual	
Bulgaria	24	24/x	Family	
Cyprus	3	x	Individual	
Czech Republic	36	36/24	Individual	
Denmark	14.9	10.7/10.7	Family	
Estonia	36	36/14.3	Family	
Finland	6.1	6.1/6.1	Family	
France	36	36/x	Family	
Germany	36	12/12	Family	2 months bonus
Greece	8 (private sector)	x	Individual	
	24 (public sector)	x	Individual	
Hungary	36	36/24	Family	
Ireland	8.3	x	Individual	
Italy	10	10/x	Individual	1 month bonus
Latvia	18	12/12	Individual	
Lithuania	36	24/24	Family	
Luxembourg	12	12/x	Individual	
Malta	4 (private sector)	x	Individual	
	12 (public sector)	x	Individual	
Netherlands	12	12/x	Individual	
Poland	36	36/x	Family	
Portugal	12	12/6	Family + Individual	1 bonus month
Romania	24	24/12	Family	
Slovakia	36	36/x	Family	
Slovenia	8.6	8.6/8.6	Family	
Spain	36	x	Individual	
Sweden	36	15.9/13	Family + Individual	Bonus
UK	8.4	x	Individual	

Source: Moss (2013) *European Alliance for Families* (now: European Platform for Investing in Children; accessible via: [http://europa.eu/epic/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/epic/index_en.htm)).

parental leave, encouraging women to stay at home'. This often went hand in hand with closing down childcare facilities (see below). A different policy is pursued in Estonia, where there is a long low-paid leave option, but also a short well-paid variant of 14.3 months, and in Slovenia, where parental leave is 8.4 months and well paid.

Regarding trends in parental leave policies during recent years, one that has already been referred to is the introduction of short and well-paid leave, often with special incentives for fathers (that is, bonus months). Such variants were introduced in Germany (2007), Austria (2010) and Romania (2011). It seems that cutbacks in leave payments have been introduced in recent years as a reaction to the financial and economic crisis: this was the case in 2011 in the Czech Republic, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia and Spain (see Moss, 2012). In both the Czech Republic and Slovenia, the level of leave payments was reduced, explicitly referring to the crisis and the level of public debts (Blum et al., 2014).

### *Childcare services*

In the field of childcare services, joint targets for the EU member states have been set at the 2000 Lisbon Council and specified at the 2002 Barcelona Council, and hence named the 'Barcelona targets'. These targets require that member states should remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive to provide childcare for at least 90 per cent of children between the age of three and the mandatory school age and at least 33 per cent of children under the age of three by 2010.

In their 2009 publication, Plantenga and Remery studied childcare provision achievements in EU countries and the extent to which the Barcelona targets were followed. As data from 2006 was used, possible crisis impacts are not reflected. They found that while the Nordic countries, Belgium, France and also post-socialist Slovenia have a high level of availability and are directing their efforts towards enhancement, the UK, the Netherlands and Germany 'are clearly moving towards a fuller coverage of childcare services' (Plantenga and Remery, 2009: 58). Germany set a concrete and ambitious aim to reach a childcare rate of 35 per cent for under-three-year-olds by 2013. For Luxembourg, Portugal, Italy and Spain, Plantenga and Remery discovered expansionary trends as well, though at a more moderate pace; and this is also the case for Greece and Austria (from low starting points). For Cyprus, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Malta, they describe developments as 'extremely limited – perhaps virtually non-existent' (Plantenga and Remery, 2009: 59). Finally, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria<sup>11</sup> and Romania experienced major downward trends during the 1990s, and they differ in the extent to which they are striving for re-expansion. For example, while strong efforts to increase childcare are discernible in Hungary, in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Slovakia policies remain in line with female carer norms. Thus, there is an overall

Table 2.3 Provision of childcare services for children under three years (as a percentage of the age group)

	2005	2009	2011
EU 27			30
Belgium	42	33	39
Bulgaria		8	7
Czech Republic	2	3	5
Denmark	73	73	74
Germany	16	19	24
Estonia	12	25	19
Ireland	20	20	21
Greece	7	11	19
Spain	39	36	39
France	32	41	44
Italy	25	25	26
Cyprus	19	22	23
Latvia	18	15	15
Lithuania	11	10	7
Luxembourg	32	34	44
Hungary	7	7	8
Malta	5	8	11
Netherlands	40	49	52
Austria	4	9	14
Poland	2	2	3
Portugal	30	36	35
Romania		5	2
Slovenia	24	31	37
Slovakia	3	3	4
Finland	27	27	26
Sweden	53	63	51
UK	29	35	35

Source: Eurostat.

trend of de-familialization through childcare expansion, from which a number of countries have to be excluded – among them many CEE countries.

Looking at Table 2.3, it should be noted that no distinction is made here between part-time and full-time childcare places. The Eurostat data differentiate between those children visiting the facility for between 1 and 29 hours per week and those visiting it for 30 hours or more (only the latter being compatible with full-time employment, as long as no other childcare forms are used or the parents work shifts). While the respective country differences have been described in detail here, we need to point out that some countries (such as Denmark, Estonia, Portugal and Slovenia) show very high proportions of full-time childcare, while others (such as Austria, Ireland and the Netherlands) exhibit higher part-time rates.

The developments over time (Table 2.3) and Plantega and Remery's analysis of 2006 data are similar in some respects and different in others. Childcare supply for children under the age of three decreased between 2009 and 2011 in Lithuania, Romania and especially Sweden and Estonia. Significant increases in childcare services between 2009 and 2011, on the other hand, can be seen in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Austria and Slovenia. In terms of geographical patterns, one can see that childcare has been only slightly expanded or even reduced in Southern and Eastern European countries, those hit particularly hard by the crisis. On the other hand, expansion has been quite significant in the continental, conservative welfare states, which were lagging behind and seem to have provided the resources to invest in this area in times of crisis. Again, however, there are exceptions, for example with Slovenia significantly increasing its childcare services during recent years, while in Nordic Sweden decreases can be seen.

## Conclusions

In this final section, results from the last two sections will be summarized with a specific perspective on the welfare states of CEE. Afterwards, some conclusions for family policy research in general, and the latency of cross-national typologies in particular, will be drawn.

### **Family policy in CEE welfare states: A regime of their own?**

The developments in the CEE countries are marked by huge variety, which may be seen as larger than that of other traditional 'worlds of welfare' (although the post-socialist group is also the largest group). Starting with the results on family spending, five of the post-socialist welfare states joined the group of 'low spenders' on families and children (Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia). However, five CEE countries were also among the medium spenders: Bulgaria, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia and Hungary. No CEE country was in the smaller group of the 'big spenders'. Between 2007 and 2010, four of the CEE countries reduced their family expenditures per inhabitant (Romania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Hungary), while the others increased it. Overall, childcare infrastructure in the post-socialist countries has been marked by major cutbacks during the 1990s. Regarding the provision of childcare services, the CEE countries as a group clearly lag behind, with seven countries showing particularly low rates in 2011 of less than 10 per cent for under-threes (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia). Latvia (15 per cent) and Estonia (19 per cent) show a somewhat higher provision, while Slovenia clearly stands out with 35 per cent.

To sum up, Figure 2.3 differentiates the post-socialist welfare states against the background of their childcare policies. Countries here are identified as having either somewhat positive de-familializing, somewhat mixed or





Figure 2.3 Childcare policies in post-socialist welfare states

somewhat (re-)familializing childcare policies. Of course, one might discuss the grouping of individual countries, and the boundaries are not that clear, but some general characteristics can be recognized. Countries were identified as having somewhat positive de-familializing childcare policies if they exhibited both comparatively high childcare rates for under-threes (that is, more than 15 per cent) and short, well-paid leave. This was the case for Estonia, Latvia and particularly Slovenia. For example, Trumm and Ainsaar (2009: 154) have described how the ‘relatively developed system of child care’ remains a characteristic of the Estonian welfare system (Figure 2.3).

Second, there is a group of four countries that show mixed characteristics. These countries have low childcare rates for under-three-year-olds, while their leave systems differ. In the case of Romania, a short and well-paid leave variant has also been available since 2011 (next to a long, low-paid one). The Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania exhibit comparatively long but well-paid leave options. This also corresponds with the fact that these countries

of the mixed group all show higher family spending as a percentage of GDP than the members of the next group (see the results on family spending).

Third, childcare policies in Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia seem to be somewhat (re-)familializing. All three countries show very low childcare rates for children below the age of three. For instance, Siemieńska and Domaradzka (2009: 391) describe the drastic process of childcare reduction in Poland, which is currently only starting to be tackled with re-expansionary efforts: 'Between 1990 and 2003, the number of places in nurseries decreased by 75 per cent.' In addition, all three countries have long and low-paid parental leaves.

Referring back to the three hypotheses on the status of the CEE welfare states, which were discussed in the third section, the family policy trends in this group of countries give some indication of their plausibility. The first hypothesis – that is, the common heritage of post-socialist welfare states as the dominant characteristic – must be rejected, at least with regard to family policies, because of the evident diversity within this group of countries. The second hypothesis – that is, the CEE countries ultimately opening out into Esping-Andersen's three worlds of welfare capitalism – is a little more tricky. Indeed, these countries' welfare systems are in transition, and they are marked by 'liberal', 'conservative' and/or 'social-democratic' elements. However, these elements cannot be clearly divided; they are identifiable within individual countries and often combined with other, for example 'post-socialist', elements. Therefore, the third hypothesis seems most plausible: the overwhelming picture is one of diversity, which cannot be captured by the traditional clusters, that is, the three worlds or the 'geographical grouping'.

It is doubtful whether it is possible to construe a new stable typology, though – at least, not yet. While comparative welfare state research in general has shifted its focus from identifying 'worlds of welfare' to identifying 'worlds of welfare reform' (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010b: 468), this is particularly the case for the CEE countries: they are certainly in a transitory period, reform processes are continuing and, as Szelewa and Polakowski (2008: 12) found in their comparative study of childcare policies, 'The policies are marked by many qualitative and quantitative changes. [...] Accordingly, in the initial period of transition the policies can be characterized by many shifts, resulting from various adjustments and "trial and error" strategies.' However, in a later phase they also see the beginning of consolidation, in which policy changes are less rapid and overall policies more stabilized. Against this background, family policies in the CEE countries might be more settled in the near future and it might again be possible to identify clusters, which are helpful and reliable for comparative family policy analysis – at least for a certain period of time. The data reviewed in this chapter, as well as recent research (for example Inglot et al., 2011; Blum et al., 2014), suggest that this landscape of CEE family policies will again look very different once

the reforms since the financial and economic crisis have been taken into account, in terms of both policy design and country comparison.

### **The latency of cross-national typologies**

This chapter matched the ‘geographical grouping’, most often used in comparative family policy analyses, with the major trends of state family policies across Europe. Looking at family policy spending and childcare policies – as well as recent trends in these areas – could give an idea about which of the ‘three hypotheses’ on the CEE countries in the European worlds of welfare seems most plausible. It could also give a first view on whether the typing needs careful reconsideration. Against this background, several things became evident.

Altogether, family policy trends in some countries (for example Germany) come as a surprise in terms of their traditional typing, while others seem to fit. There are some trends, discernible in several countries across Europe (for example work–life balance, active fathering, tightening of eligibility criteria), which point to convergence and possibly undermine country clustering. Regarding specific groupings, the Nordic and the Mediterranean ones seem to fit best: predominantly, family policy trends in these countries can be summarized as de-familializing and re-familializing, respectively. Nevertheless, some developments warrant attention: re-familializing policies have been introduced in the Nordic countries in addition to de-familializing ones (Finland especially stands out in this regard). At the same time, Mediterranean welfare systems show instances of de-familialization and focus to some extent on work–life balance and the expansion of care services. Changes among continental and liberal countries, however, and their lack of conformity with traditional typing, are more far-reaching. Finally, trends among post-socialist countries are so heterogeneous that locating them in one cluster turns out to be quite implausible. Furthermore, family policy change in reaction to the financial and economic crisis may leave a new long-term imprint, characterized, for example, by a retrenchment of cash benefits for families or the increased use of means testing. However, these crisis reactions have only just begun to be systematically analysed (see for example Eurofound 2015).

What do these results mean for the family policy typologies needed to categorize and systematize this huge plurality for comparative research? A full answer to this question should range from ‘not losing sight of regional differences’ to ‘including measures of subjective welfare’ (Bazant and Schubert, 2009: 533). However, three points should be emphasized here. First, a reliable family policy typology cannot be ‘carved in stone’, but must pay attention to dynamics, policy changes and, consequently, changing country positions or clusters. This requires data that are encompassing in terms of the countries included as well as longitudinal. The first relates to the problem that the welfare systems and family policies of several EU countries are significantly

under-researched, especially when they have one or several of the following characteristics: being a younger member state, being small, and not being in the OECD. This concerns Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta and Romania in particular, but also, for example, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Portugal, which have been less included in cross-national projects and networks (Hantrais, 2009: 55). Second, even for the countries where family policies are comparatively well researched, there is a lack of information over time that would guarantee comparability.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, country clustering should not just be based on 'catchiness': sometimes, it seems, 'geographical groupings' are adhered to because they seem more easily understandable than putting Sweden, Austria, Ireland, Italy and Hungary, for example, into one cluster. Nevertheless, depending on the indicator in focus, they might end up exactly there. These three points – paying attention to changes, encompassing country selection and not taking the bait of 'catchiness' – are keystones to building a more current and more reliable family policy typology.

## Notes

1. Since it is the aim of this chapter to analyse family policies in *Europe* and to be quite encompassing in terms of country inclusion, it seemed most plausible to include all EU countries, even if interesting cases such as Norway and Switzerland are then excluded. Due to the time of writing, the chapter focuses on EU-27 (Croatia is not yet included).
2. Furthermore, one can distinguish between positive and negative de-/re-familialization (see Ostner, 2003), that is, whether these incentives are given by granting additional benefits/services or by not providing them/cutting them back.
3. De-commodification describes the 'extent to which individuals and families can maintain a normal and socially acceptable standard of living regardless of their market performance' (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 86), for example through benefits in the case of unemployment, old age or parenthood.
4. These three partly intersecting dimensions are arguably the most relevant, although further points have been criticized, for example that Esping-Andersen mixes up 'ideal types' and 'real types' and it remains unclear whether differences are of a conceptual or an empirical nature (Kohl, 1993).
5. Whereas retrenchment describes cutbacks and cost-containment in welfare benefits, re-commodification denotes efforts to reverse the de-commodification elements described above. Recalibration, on the other hand, characterizes qualitative restructuring of welfare policies, which seek to make the welfare state more consistent with contemporary goals and challenges (Pierson, 2001).
6. While these typologies developed by the feminist strand of welfare state research pay more attention to the family's role in welfare provision and to family policy, they can be differentiated from explicit family policy typologies, although the borders between them are fluid.
7. If one does so, the group of 'low spenders' ranges from those countries spending from 0.79 per cent (Poland) to 1.87 per cent of their GDP on families and children, the group of 'medium spenders' up to 2.95 per cent and the group of 'big spenders' up to 4.03 per cent (Denmark).

8. Accessible via: <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>, date accessed 5 June 2015.
9. This annual review is edited by the 'International Network on Leave Policies and Research', founded in 2004 and including experts from 35 countries, most of them European. The 2013 review is available at: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/Leavenetwork/Annual\\_reviews/2013\\_complete.6june.pdf](http://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/Leavenetwork/Annual_reviews/2013_complete.6june.pdf), date accessed 5 June 2015.
10. These were Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta and Romania.
11. As Stoilova (2009: 72) points out, family policy priorities in Bulgaria are nonetheless much more directed at public childcare facilities than at childcare allowances, which are the lowest in the EU.
12. MISSOC (EU Mutual Information System on Social Protection) is updated every year and provides a good empirical basis on basic features. Between 1994 and 2004, comparative research was also enhanced by the European Observatory on National Family Policies. It merged into the Observatory on the Social Situation and Demography in 2004, 'thereby reinforcing the importance of the demographic dimension and reducing the visibility of family policies' (Hantrais, 2009: 48).

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# 3

## Experts' Arguments for Paternity Leave: Social-Democratic and Post-Socialist Frames Compared

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### Introduction

Family policies and parental leave arrangements are part of the wider welfare ideology of a country, reflecting the understanding of the division of responsibilities between the state, the market, an individual and the family. We compared the discussions concerning parental roles, and in particular the role of the father, in the family with small children, as presented in articles by researchers from two countries – Estonia and Norway. We do acknowledge that women differ in their preferences towards work and caring (see Hakim, 2004), as do men, and we wanted to reveal here whether the academic discourses leave enough space for different choices to be considered within the given institutional frameworks.

By choosing a comparative approach, we were able to reveal the extent to which systematic differences or similarities exist in the way that paternity leave, and more generally gender, is being done (West and Zimmerman, 1987) across the two welfare systems, the social-democratic and the post-socialist. We hoped to provoke thought on the similarities in the ways researchers deal with universal family policy issues, as well as the dissimilarities shaped by country-specific histories, ideologies and cultural norms.

### Critical framing analysis

Our starting point was an acknowledgement that the purpose of paternity leave is socially constructed. Paternity leave may be seen as a solution to a number of different social problems. According to Bacchi (1999), a policy problem does not exist *per se*, but is constructed by those who are looking for a solution – in this case, by the social scientists in Norway and Estonia who are researching issues around paternity leave.

We were concerned with the framing of paternity leave by social scientists, who have the opportunity to look at the society from outside, but who actually share the social environment of that society. As Ahl (2002: 60) put it, 'people draw upon available discourses in their reality construction [...]. The people producing the different discourses [...] make choices, but not all choices are available to all people at all times. Some things are not "thinkable" in some cultures, whereas other things come more easily to mind.' Even though the scientists are part of their international research communities through their academic writings, it is difficult to imagine them freeing themselves from the impact of their culture of origin on their agenda-setting. We agree with Ahl, who, following Foucault, sees public conversation or discourses as 'practices which systematically form the object of which they speak' (Ahl, 2002: 57). Thus, taken the split identity of the researchers between their home society and academic culture, as well as their important role as public intellectuals, it is most interesting to find out whether or not the academics of these different countries frame paternity leave in a similar manner.

We claim that revealing the academic discourses or framings of paternity leave helps us to better understand not only the transformation from socialist to post-socialist gender ideology, but also the functioning of the social-democratic welfare state (see Esping-Andersen, 1990; Pfau-Effinger, 2012) and embedding a neoliberal market economy (see Bohle and Greskovits, 2007).

## **The background: Paternity leave in Estonia and Norway**

Family policies and parental leave arrangements are part of a wider welfare ideology reflecting the understanding in a country of the division of responsibilities between the state, the market, an individual and the family. There have been various attempts to classify different family policy systems according to gender regimes, levels of state support and aims of policies (for more detail, see Esping-Andersen, 1990; Gauthier, 1996). Norway, like other Nordic countries, belongs to the group of countries characterized by a pro-galitarian model; that is, men and women are treated as equal breadwinners and equal carers. Their family policies are not only family-friendly but also focused on individual rights and gender equality.

### **Norwegian system**

In Norway a three-month paid maternity leave was introduced in 1956 (Gupta et al., 2008). Prior to 1970, women's labour market participation was relatively low in Norway. Besides its underdeveloped childcare system, Norway differed from other Nordic countries in that it had fewer policies directed towards supporting the mother's entry into the labour market (Sainsbury, 2001). Second, the Norwegian model showed a stronger

influence of family obligations and motherhood than the Scandinavian model in general (Leira, 1992). From the 1970s onwards, female employment rates increased, but it was characteristic for Norwegian women to work part-time. In the 1970s, as well as improving the position of women in the labour market, sharing domestic responsibilities became an issue discussed in relation to equal opportunities for women and men.

New policy measures were also introduced to facilitate greater gender equality in the private sphere. In 1977, Norway introduced an 18-week parental leave of which fathers could use up to 12 of the 18 weeks, provided that the mother returned to work (Naz, 2007). In 1993, Norway was also the first country to introduce a four-week quota exclusively reserved for the father, and this was increased to six weeks in 2006 (Naz, 2007).

In 2013, Norwegian parents were entitled to 47 weeks' leave with full pay, or 57 weeks with 80 per cent pay. Mothers must take at least three weeks before and six weeks after the birth. Twelve weeks of the leave period are reserved exclusively for the father – the rest is gender-neutral leave that can be shared between the parents (Nilsen, 2013). However, in Norway, the majority of fathers use the paternity leave quota, but their take-up of gender-neutral parental leave remains very low. Thus, today, the question of how to encourage fathers to share the gender-neutral parental leave with mothers, and how to promote fathers' involvement in childcare, still occupies an important place in public debates in Norway.

### **Estonian system**

While Norway's family policy represents a pro-egalitarian model, Estonian family policy has been mainly pro-natalist. Until 1991, while the country was incorporated into the Soviet Union, Estonia had to follow the Soviet family policy. Soviet ideology and legislation stated that parenthood was equalized with motherhood, and fathers were not expected to participate in childrearing (Rotkirch and Temkina, 1997). The active employment of women with young children was facilitated by a system of subsidized childcare institutions. In 1970, working mothers were entitled to paid childcare leave until the child was one year old, and only in 1990 was the right to take childcare leave extended to fathers (Ainsaar, 2001; Karu, 2011).

Compared with the Nordic countries, the changes in the Estonian family ideology were somewhat controversial. During the pro-independence movement of the late 1980s and in the political rhetoric of the early 1990s, the idea of restoring the traditional male breadwinner family model was widespread (Narusk, 1992). However, the 'mothers-back-home' ideology was quite short-lived, as in the majority of families both incomes were badly needed. As a result, the primary focus of the family policies of the early 1990s was on income support, aimed at reducing the cost of children and preventing families with children from falling beneath the poverty line (Ainsaar, 2001).

In Estonia, a dramatic decrease in the number of births was witnessed in the mid-1990s (see Katus et al., 2007). The total fertility rate, which at the end of the 1980s had been at the replacement level, and among the highest in Europe, had dropped to 1.28 per cent by 1998, and new family policy measures were needed to increase the number of births. In the early 2000s, family issues became the subject of increasing concern and government attention. In 2004, the Parental Benefit Act came into force, with a mother's statutory right to receive the benefit for at least the first six months. When the child was six months old, the parents had the right to decide who would use the benefit for the next six months. Although parental benefit was available to both mothers and fathers, in 2004 fathers made up fewer than 1 per cent of all parental benefit receivers.

In 2008, an amendment was made to the Act stating that the benefit would be paid until the child was 18 months old, so only the second half of the 36 months of parental leave introduced in 1989 remains very lowly remunerated. For the first 70 days after the birth of the baby, the leave and benefits were intended to be exclusively for the mother, and then the parents could decide who would use the parental leave and receive the benefit. The latest statistics show that the proportion of fathers among parental benefit receivers is slightly increasing; in August 2009 it was about 8 per cent (ENSIB, 2009), and since then it has remained stable through to April 2015, when it was 7.5 per cent (ENSIB, 2015). Thus, we could say that, although the Parental Benefit Act emphasizes the equal role of both parents in bringing up children, it has not been translated into action or managed to significantly change the traditional gender role attitudes, and so the seemingly gender-neutral policy helps to perpetuate gender inequality. The new fatherhood models are not easily accepted by Estonian society (Karu, 2011; Biin et al., 2013).

We can conclude that Norway has been quite stable over time, insisting on the greater role of fathers in caring in order to make mothers more competitive in the labour market. Estonia, as a post-socialist country, has become more traditional in this respect, and parenting is being given other purposes, such as nation building and ethnic sustainability. It is worth mentioning here that this area is part of the social agenda that is not subject to decision-making at the EU level, so the country-level intellectual debate is one of the major contributions. The question, therefore, is how compatible the previous policies and practices, introduced and implied under state socialism, have been with the demands and challenges posed for Estonia by the neoliberal market economy (see Blossfeld and Hofmeister, 2006), to which Norway has been exposed for a longer period. Given the need to quickly respond to changing internal, as well as external, conditions, and the universal nature of the matters under consideration, the countries in question have been and will be shaped in a rather similar way. Our aim was to understand how the cultural background of the institutions that have been

formed allowed quite similar outcomes in terms of parental leave and public childcare provision: was it because of similar value systems, despite the differences, that the different settings produced similar outcomes? This may also shed some light on the future directions of the countries: is Estonian post-socialism closer to social-democratic Norway, or should it remain in the ‘embedded neoliberalism’ (Bohle and Greskovits, 2007) cluster, with more market orientation and choice, and less protection and care by the state?

## Sample and methods

The sample consists of eight Norwegian papers written in English and four Estonian texts, two of which are research reports and two academic articles. To cite the selected papers throughout the text, we have introduced acronyms for the papers, referring to the Norwegian papers as NO1–NO8<sup>1</sup> and the Estonian papers as EE1–EE4.<sup>2</sup> The Estonian texts are in Estonian, except Turk’s report (EE4), which is in English. We included in the analysis all academic texts published from 1998 to 2009 that met the following criteria. First, paternity leave had to be a central topic, if not the only one. Second, the text analysed the situation either in Estonia or in Norway. Finally, we only included academic texts and excluded work written by civil servants.

We included texts that concentrate on men’s use of parental leave (that is, a period that can be shared between the parents the way each couple prefers) as well as those focusing on the fathers’ quota, that is, a period of paid leave assigned to fathers only, and that cannot be used by mothers. The ‘use or lose’ principle means that a family does not have to decide that the father will stay home for those months, but if he does not, the benefit of those months will be lost for that family.

The four discourses or framings of paternity leave presented below were not predefined before the analysis; they emerged from the data. The initial analysis revealed that researchers from different countries largely appreciate fathers taking leave for the same reasons. We examined the popularity of each of the four main discourses in its respective national sample. Our second analytical step was to conduct a more qualitative observation, which, as we demonstrate below, brings out more subtle differences between the Norwegian and Estonian authors’ pro-paternity leave discourses.

The analysis was conducted using the qualitative research software NVivo 8.

## Framings of paternity leave

In general, Estonian and Norwegian researchers value paternity leave for the same reasons. ‘Gender equality’, ‘choice and flexibility’ and ‘father–child relationship’ were the top three frames in both national sub-samples; ‘strong

family' was fourth in the Norwegian and fifth in the Estonian sub-sample. However, fathers' leave taking was occasionally also valued for less prevalent, more country-specific reasons. For example, Estonian researchers, as representatives of a country of only 1.3 million people, linked the more equal share of infant care between parents to a hope for an 'increase in the birth rate'. Thus, Turk (EE4: 4) begins her report with references to the risk of dying out as a nation, and Pajumets (EE2: 49, 63) both begins and ends her pro-paternity leave article by referring to large-scale social and political problems in the coming years due to an ageing population.

As for the specificities of the Norwegian texts, Ellingsæter (NO5), for example, emphasizes 'children's right to home care by their parents', and advocates fathers' leave taking as a means to this end. Although fascinating, culture-specific framings of paternity leave were poorly represented in the national samples and in the material as a whole, and we therefore concentrate the analysis on the four more popular ones.

### **Gender equality**

Paternity leave is valued most as an instrument, and also for providing evidence of gender equality in a society. Equality between men and women is especially prevalent in the discursive preferences of the Norwegian authors, who apply it roughly twice as often as their Estonian counterparts.

Compared with the Norwegians, the Estonian researchers seldom use this term; some avoid it completely, preferring euphemisms such as 'more equal division of household chores between spouses' (EE3: 66). It seems that, for Estonian authors, the term might be loaded by the gender equality rhetoric of the previous era. Gender equality was hardly a reality in Soviet Estonia; while women were, indeed, working for pay, and usually on a full-time basis, they also carried the household workload without the help of men, even if they were supported by public, affordable kindergartens. Soviet ideology did not expect husbands and fathers to take part in childrearing or daily chores at home. In addition, women were underrepresented among the decision-makers in Soviet Union. Hence, the workplace was the primary source of self-respect and masculinity for men under socialism. However, as Watson (1993: 484–485) points out, the bulk of men were probably unsatisfied, or even emasculated, under the Soviet regime, by their inability to exercise real power and initiative in the socialist public domain controlled by state and party (Pajumets, 2012).

The Norwegian authors, who were free of that heritage, often used gender equality as an opening discourse in their articles. Lappegård (NO7: 139–140) is rather typical in this sense by starting with the sentence: 'Norwegian family policy has been oriented towards promoting equalization between parents, with regard to both practical parenting (childcare) and economic parenting (breadwinning).' In this paper, the author voices certainty about gender equality belonging in the historical core of family policy in Norway,

thus hinting that any further equalization would just be logically more of the same and hence was not to be questioned.

Second, the Norwegians also attribute prominence to gender equality by linking it to a more comprehensive equality ideal. The logic seems to go: if you are for 'social justice' (NO5: 50), 'providing a safety net for the poorest' (NO8: 363), you are certainly for equality between men and women, for those values are inseparable. The Estonian authors, on the contrary, are rather hesitant about putting gender equality together with leftist ideals. Nor do they apply talk of the 'long tradition where the state draws up rules and regulations and norms intended to have a levelling and equalising effect' (NO2: 254), which is quite a standard practice among their Norwegian colleagues.

The Estonians who favour gender equality prefer to legitimize it by first listing its practical uses. For example, in the following excerpt, Karu and her co-authors (EE1: 72) value fathers' leave taking, first, because it would provide both parents with a long-awaited change in their tiring daily routines:

men stay at home to get a break from routine work life, and women welcome it as a chance of variety and a way out of sitting at home tending a child. It means breaking up and redistributing gendered patterns of behaviour. In a sense it implies equalization. Parents have to have equal opportunities that will be achieved by abandoning the hitherto prevailing divisions.

(EE1)

This illustrates that only after this common-sense reasoning about fathers' leave taking can the rather discrete application of 'equalization' enter the arguments of the Estonian authors. Thus, gender equality ideology is veiled in a more prosaic argument. The Estonian authors might think that their audience is not receptive to talk of gender equality.

A final difference between the two national sub-samples that we would like to discuss here has to do with who is represented as the primary beneficiary of gender equality. Several Norwegian researchers seem to value fathers' leave taking mostly as a means of strengthening women's foothold in professional spheres. Duvander and her colleagues, for example, associate fathers' uptake of parental leave with 'gender equality in the couple as it allows the woman to return to work faster, and signals a shared responsibility for children' and with 'enhancing the reconciliation of work and family life, especially for women' (NO4: 2), and Ellingsæter (NO5: 54), emphasizes 'facilitating continuous employment among mothers'.

Although the Estonians agree with the Norwegian researchers in valuing 'men's and women's more equal opportunities in the labour market' (EE1: 73), they generally try to stay balanced by emphasizing the benefits that men as well as women receive from taking parental leave. The Estonians

even employ a minor discourse focusing on 'men's extending welfare while taking a break from work life'. Pajumets (EE2: 62), for example, sees the professional life of Estonian men as too often extremely stressful, to the extent of endangering their health, and wonders why only few of them use paternity leave as a means of having a 'rather exceptional both legal and economically protected chance to withdraw from work for a while.' Turk also sees paternity leave as an opportunity to 'experience the stress free, relaxing living arrangement' (EE4: 44).

The implication of prioritizing the equal position of women in the labour market, which is especially salient in the Norwegian texts, is that women are in need of a change. Men, too, have to change, by taking more responsibility at home during the short period when a baby is born, but this is often presented as a prerequisite of women's change, not a freestanding value in itself. The core problem for Norwegian researchers seems to lie in femininity as it is often practised in contemporary Norway. Traditional femininity is being actively devalued in the articles on paternity leave by Norwegian authors. The norm for mothers seems to be a full-time career-centred way of living, equivalent to the typical masculine practice. For the Norwegian researchers, in particular, women catching up professionally with men seems to be so important that it leaves little room for accepting women's alternative lifestyle preferences (see, for example Hakim, 2004). In the Estonian sample, too, women's alternative lifestyle preferences have been given little attention, with just one recognition that 'women have differing priorities and not all of them desire active participation in the labour market' (EE1: 40).

### **Father-child relationship**

An early bond between children and their fathers is a value that every single researcher, regardless of nationality, refers to. Although far from being the most frequent, it is the most widely represented value in the sample, in second place in the Estonian texts and third in the Norwegian texts.

There are some interesting differences in how the Estonians and Norwegians present this framing of paternity leave. The Estonians are clearly worried about the little contact that children have with their fathers, and, rather emotionally, declare that Estonian children are in considerable need of more involved and nurturing fathering (EE1; EE2). Toming quotes andrologists and psychologists who link the active presence of the father to the children's quality of life as adults:

Nobody can replace father, especially his positive impact to child's cognitive development in the first years of life. A child, whose development has been supported by active father, has advantages in evolving his or her inner qualities. The child will gain a positive view of him- or herself that



will be accompanied by self-confidence, high morality, mental and social efficiency.

(Poolamets et al., 2000, cited in EE3: 67–68)

At the same time as explanations of the worth of the father–child bond to children’s welfare, some Estonian researchers present it as a means of improving the quality of life of fathers. Staying at home, they maintain, ‘contributes to men’s emotional and personal development’ (EE1: 72) and is ‘an opportunity to get closer to the child, gaining strength as an adult, the possibility to see the child’s development’ (EE4: 44). Although ‘granting the special rights for fathers’ (NO3: 186), ‘the expansion of fathers’ social rights to care’ (NO8: 363) and ‘exclusive right of fathers’ (NO7: 156) are popular slogans among the Norwegian researchers, they do not dedicate much space in their papers to explaining the benefits of paternity leave to either men or infants, let alone invest these arguments with the emotions that are clearly present in the Estonian texts.

The second point we would like to make concerns the Norwegian researchers’ tendency to pair the ‘father–child relationship’ discourse with other discourses, such as ‘raising the birth rate’:

When the fathers are given the opportunities for ‘early bonding’ between fathers and children it might affect their attitudes toward childcare and their aspirations for having more children.

(NO4: 4)

or ‘gender equality’:

Hence we can claim that beyond the intention of contributing to the welfare of young children, another aim has been to achieve gender equality by strengthening the ties of men to the family and the ties of women to working life.

(NO3: 186)

There might be two explanations for linking the father–child relationship frame with other discourses. It could mean that Norwegian authors believe that the readers of their papers do not need to be convinced of the advantages both fathers and children would gain from their union, and, thus, there is no need to knock on an open door. Alternatively, researchers from Norway might give this frame so little space because they consider other functions of paternity leave to be more important.

### **Choice and flexibility**

Freedom of choice, options, individuality, negotiations, reflexivity – this vocabulary is very characteristic of the late modern academic research on

paternity leave. These terms form the core of the choice and flexibility discourse that is the second most popular topic in the Norwegian sub-sample and third in the Estonian sub-sample.

Although Norway has had ample time to develop an advanced system of parental leave and Estonia started this process much later, the researchers from both countries agree that the policies in their respective countries are inadequate in terms of the fathers' individual needs for flexibility. To relieve this problem, a reform is proposed in the Estonian texts (see EE1; EE2) that would encourage staying active in the labour market while taking care of a baby and receiving benefit for it:

Conservative division of labour is also maintained by relative stiffness inscribed into the regulation otherwise rather generous. Parental benefit at its current state does not promote combining and parallel progression of professional and family sphere. Instead it suggests separate periods of life for enacting those roles and practicing one of them after the other.

(EE2: 49)

This kind of claim for more flexibility in the parental leave system refers to the Estonian researchers' attitude that men have a special need and, indeed, a right to stay connected with their professional sphere, even when cultivating their nurturing identity. This claim legitimizes conservative career-focused masculinity.

Although the Norwegian parental leave system is well established and advanced compared with its Estonian counterpart, most Norwegian authors criticize the Norwegian welfare state for making the fathers' freedom to take parental leave dependent on the mothers' participation in the labour market:

Even though the parental leave program is intended to promote gender equality, it has a gender-inegalitarian component whereby the father's eligibility for leave is dependent on the mother's work status, but not vice versa.

(NO7: 140)

The Norwegian researchers could have interpreted the fathers' derived right as a resourceful tactic employed by state feminism to strengthen women's foothold in professional life by motivating them to postpone childbirth until they have established themselves in a professional sphere. As can be seen here, although important, undoing femininity, so that it may incorporate the traits commonly associated with masculinity (being active in the labour market, economic self-sufficiency), is not their only agenda.

It is also interesting to compare how the freedom of choice is employed in two national samples when discussing the 'use or lose' fathers' quota. Since 2004, there has been a debate in Estonia about introducing a special

paternity leave month for fathers. Despite valuing fathers' leave taking in general, Estonian researchers, in agreement with Estonian employers and politicians, do not totally welcome this regulation. In some papers, it is presented in a rather discouraging way:

Fathers and employers alike regard daddy month (that would allocate one month of parental leave to fathers) a constraint rather than an opportunity or choice. In some cases there is a risk, this policy could produce strain and conflicts between family members.

(EE1: 72)

While Estonian researchers represent the fathers' quota as endangering individuality and freedom of choice, several Norwegian researchers see no conflict between the ideal of flexibility and the quota's normative nature. Leira (NO8) and Brandth and Kvande (NO2; NO3), assert that the state's prescriptions help fathers in exercising their personal preferences by improving their position in negotiating with reluctant employers:

Individual adaptations are of great importance, and accordingly fathers cannot be 'forced' into staying at home through leave schemes, but strong guidelines can be established for their choices. Fathers need help from the 'state' to set limits and make it legitimate to take leave from work. Thus schemes based on wide flexibility and options become unsuitable as they leave too much of the negotiations to 'father and company'. Conversely, if schemes based on restricted options and 'gentle force' are used, the state becomes an active third party in the negotiations.

(NO2: 201–202)

Elsewhere, the same authors suggest that fathers do not consider the fathers' quota oppressive: 'Very few reply that they did not use the quota because they did not like that it was "forced" upon them. [...] Therefore, we cannot interpret non-use as an objection against being "sent home" on leave' (NO2: 261).

Contrary to some Estonian researchers, who associate state prescriptions with the reduction of liberty, Norwegians interpret this 'gentle force' (NO2: 261) as promoting parents' freedom. The state is portrayed as progressive and liberal for promoting the fathers' quota. Without the state's guidance and support, men are depicted as being in danger of relapsing into more traditional and inflexible divisions of labour. How can these differences between the two sub-samples be explained? For half a century, Norway has seen an uninterrupted and productive cooperation between the state and its citizens in redefining gender roles. Estonia's recent history has been defined by a regime that many Estonians perceived as foreign, obtrusive and antagonistic to peoples needs. Moreover, Soviet ideology, including the gender equality

rhetoric, was in extreme conflict with the daily realities of Soviet subjects. This distorted cultural experience might discourage the top-down regulation of early childcare in the Republic of Estonia.

### **Strong family**

Strengthening the family institution was the fourth most popular framing of paternity leave in the sample, and was slightly more pronounced in the Norwegian texts.

Often the researchers from the two countries agree that professional life has recently attained a priority that often leaves scarce resources for family roles. The Norwegian authors associate this problem with 'the new trends in working life whereby some workplaces are becoming more and more seductive and greedy' (NO2: 251; see also NO3). Pajumets, an Estonian author, likewise criticizes her compatriots' 'values that prioritise material wealth and professional identity' (EE2: 62) and Toming slights the orientation of Estonian society to economic progress 'that results in social tolerance to fathers' withdrawal from their children and homes and [...] submersion into work' (EE3: 65).

To solve the apparent conflict between the dual-career family model and the demand for more family time, the Norwegian authors (NO2; NO3; NO8) again looked for help from the welfare state. As explained above, a compulsory fathers' quota is considered beneficial for securing family-friendly outcomes:

It may be that the paternity quota, with its element of 'force', was exactly what Norwegian fathers needed to be able to spend some weeks in the home with their child.

(NO2: 260)

Interestingly enough, the researchers' concern about diminishing family time makes them favour paternity leave, but does not make them supporters of part-time jobs or the culture of housewives, or househusbands. Equality is to be achieved by universalizing the masculine standard. This implies that the same amount of time needs to be spent in the workplace, that is, full-time jobs, for women to achieve equality with men in their work. Rather powerlessly, the researchers consider the time-squeezed dual-career family to be inevitable these days, and this feeling of inevitability might be explained by the priority that states and researchers put on economic growth – a latent, and, indeed, a masculine, value.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

We see academic research available in a country on policy-relevant issues – paternity leave being one of these – as an influential component for

knowledge-based policy-making. This makes studying discourses so useful in practice.

First of all, we can state that the academic framings in Estonia and Norway on the issue of paternity leave are quite similar, in that the researchers dealing with the same topic broadly share the same views on how the world should be organized. This, in turn, may be reflecting the specificities of the academic sub-group dedicating their attention and research to the question under consideration. The sample of paternity leave researchers may be a self-selected group of people sharing similar education, and working within and contributing to the same set of academic knowledge by reading the same journals and research reports. However, the Norwegian authors might present more overtly normative viewpoints in their writing, perhaps reflecting the different role they see themselves fulfilling as public intellectuals.

In framing paternity leave, the researchers from Estonia and Norway in general see the need to involve the state in securing a proper balance between genders and between family and work.

The role foreseen for the state emerges largely from the somewhat implicit assumption that parents are not continuously available to take care of their child or children, thus introducing the common need to tackle the childcare problem. Previous analysis (Roosalu and Täht, 2010) shows that children in these countries are among those who are more likely to be in full-time care in public childcare institutions. This does show the significant role of the state in arranging formal childcare in these countries, and no real alternative is considered or even mentioned in the current set of papers.

Based on the prominence of different framings, we see that the one stressing the child's best interests being met by being cared for at home by their own parents is rather marginal, and is found only in the Norwegian academic analysis. Showing the importance of fathers for their children might be considered an exception, but it is more concerned with the aim of equal rights for mothers and fathers, and is not looked at from the child's viewpoint. Furthermore, the interests of the child, the mother, the father and the family are assumed to be overlapping – except when, at the abstract level, men's leave taking is considered to increase women's chances in the labour market. Other than that, there is no discussion of the interests in relation to each other, or even in relation to society at large. In general, we see no serious discussion of the long-term consequences (other than gender equality or inequality) of the choices parents make about childcare; nor is 'choice' even outlined in these terms. This is different from the practices and policies in conservative and liberal welfare states, the latter relying on private provision of care (and allowing more divergence in patterns and providers) and the former relying on families as the source of proper care.<sup>3</sup> Even when strengthening the family is seen as a goal, with demands for more flexibility in work arrangements, the gender equality ideal does not really result

in arguing for part-time work or staying out of the labour market. There was no reference in the papers to the need for society to be built around values other than participation in the labour market, which has been more common in Continental Europe's conservative welfare states, for example, the Netherlands (see, for example, Wielers and Raven, 2009). Arguments for a father's temporary leave from the labour market seem to be in line with society's existing commitment to the social norm rather than constructing an alternative and questioning the primacy given to the role of the worker by the state, as well as by the parents themselves. Nevertheless, it should be noted that part-time work is very rare in Estonia (OECD, 2013), while in Norway it is rather widespread among women, especially mothers, but less so among men, and least among fathers. Thus, the effect of these discussions, although similar in content, on these societies may differ, each keeping to its current status quo.

So, we conclude that, while alternatives – and well-grounded alternatives – do exist, for the authors of these papers the dual-career family, with both parents taking care of the children in their early years, is seen as the mainstream ideal, combined with reliable public childcare later to be taken as a given. This kind of hegemonic discourse about the universality of work can be explained by the supremacy of market economy ideals, that is, that the competitive economy needs to grow and – partly because of this – women should contribute comparably with men. However, the authors do not explicitly voice these values of economic competitiveness. Nevertheless, economic growth has a role here, as it could explain some of the aspects that we could not.

The centrality of one's work identity for fathers, and also for mothers, is taken as given, as parents are primarily seen as 'taking a break from the labour market' and 'returning to the labour market', and we were somewhat surprised that this was clearly the case in the Norwegian as well as the Estonian papers. We would have expected this more in the case of Estonia, the country of embedded neoliberalism (see Bohle and Greskovits, 2007), since that would be in line with Karl Polanyi's statement that the fundamental problem with the idea of the self-regulating market is that it is anti-society (see Holmwood, 2000). He claims that it is crucial to understand that labour is not primarily produced for sale, so a welfare state needs to be in place to secure the other dimensions. With extensive welfare states in both Norway and Estonia, in terms of public care for children and parental leave arrangements, the discourse could be more critical of the work-centred life-world, or at least tolerant of the different choices individuals might have in terms of balancing different spheres. What we see, though, is the centrality of work norms in both countries, with choice seen in Norway as being given to families by making fathers take paternity leave and by securing the use of flexible working arrangements, while in Estonia choice is seen as leaving these decisions to be made within the families and the market,

and convincing them that the choice would be beneficial to fathers and the mothers.

To sum up, we posed a question about whether, and how, the founding ideas of the two welfare arrangements differ, and to what extent. Further discussion of the cultural frameworks of the welfare systems would probably clarify the direction in which the post-socialist countries are heading. Some of the differences that we found in the academic framings of paternity leave may reflect the basic differences in the two societies, but they may also be due to differences in how a researcher in a country sees or realizes his or her role in initiating and participating in public discussions of the founding of a welfare state and its gender regime aspects.

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## Notes

1. NO1 (Brandth and Kvande, 1998), NO2 (Brandth and Kvande, 2001), NO3 (Brandth and Kvande, 2002), NO4 (Duvander, Lappegård and Andersson, 2007), NO5 (Ellingsæter, 2007), NO6 (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006), NO7 (Lappegård, 2008) and NO8 (Leira, 1998).
2. EE1 (Karu, Kasearu and Biin, 2007), EE2 (Pajumets, 2007), EE3 (Toming, 2007) and EE4 (Turk, 2009).
3. However, the other aspect of these systems is the low age for starting compulsory schooling (4–5 years, compared with 7 years in Estonia and 6 years in Norway).

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# 4

## Low Second Birth Rates in Eastern and Southern Europe: Interactions between Economic Uncertainty and Norms about Parenthood

*Jan Van Bavel and Joanna Róžańska-Putek*

### Introduction

Opportunities and constraints for young adult people in the labour market are strongly affected by their childrearing responsibilities, which are, in turn, a product of their fertility. Given the unequal gender division of labour in childcare and household chores, this holds for women in particular. At the same time, economic welfare is strongly affected by labour market activity, and economic welfare strongly affects opportunities and constraints for family life, including childrearing. An insight into the relationship between economic uncertainty and childbearing is, therefore, also relevant for understanding labour market dynamics.

Morgan and King (2001) asked the obvious question: ‘Why have children in the 21st century?’ Indeed, from an economic perspective, it is not easy to give reasons of rational choice for having children in the Western world today. Still, even in contexts of unfavourable labour markets and economies in crisis, most adult Europeans have children or wish to have them. They hold positive views about family life and believe that the advantages of childbearing outweigh the costs. As a result, the desire to experience parenthood is found to remain strong among Europeans (Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2006), even in contexts of bad economic and labour market conditions (Billingsley, 2011).

In line with this is the finding that childlessness has not increased as much as had been expected. Although childlessness has been increasing gradually during recent decades in many countries (Sobotka, 2004: chapter 5), it has not been the major driving force behind the emergence of very low fertility in Europe (Billari and Kohler, 2004) – a notable exception is Germany, where low fertility has been clearly linked with high childlessness (Sobotka, 2008:

39). Cross-country fertility differences today are, to a large extent, due to differences in second birth rates and, to a much lower extent, to an increasing rejection of parenthood (Van Bavel and Nitsche, 2013). Apparently, the biological, psychological and social incentives remain strong enough for most people to want at least one child (Kohler et al., 2006; Morgan and Taylor, 2006).

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to our understanding of very low fertility in post-socialist Eastern European countries, as well as in Southern Europe, looking at the period before the revival of fertility in the first decade of the 21st century as well as before the post-2008 period of financial and economic crisis. The theoretical focus is on the interaction between familialistic cultural norms and economic uncertainty. In the cultural dimension, we investigate whether second birth rates are associated with attitudes about the importance of parenthood in order to be considered a full-fledged adult, and how this interacts with economic uncertainty. We pay attention to both objective and subjective measures of economic uncertainty.

The chapter focuses on second birth rates for two interrelated reasons. First, given the limited increase of childlessness, the gap between lowest-low and ordinary low fertility crucially depends on parity progression after the first birth: second birth rates are typically low in the very low-fertility countries of Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe (Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek, 2010). Second, acknowledging that the desire to experience parenthood remains strong (Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2006), we expect that, once the desire to become a parent has been fulfilled, the question about whether or not to have another child may depend more on economic deliberations than the considerations about having a first child did. Economic conditions may be of higher relevance, and people may find it important to acquire more resources than they did for first-time parenthood. Also, the experience of actual parenthood may have made them more conscious of the economic implications of childrearing.

Following Van Bavel and Nitsche (2013), we expect that cultural factors also play an important part in explaining low second birth rates. On the one hand, people who value parenthood may have higher fertility intentions; on the other, they may set higher standards for what is a prerequisite to extend the family size. Furthermore, a traditional familialistic orientation may stimulate the transition to a second birth. In more conservative settings, parents may feel obliged to fulfil the duty of having offspring, and the two-child norm may be more stringent there. In this chapter, the focus is not so much on the direct influence of cultural norms on fertility as on how cultural norms mediate the effect of economic uncertainty.

We are predominantly interested in explaining the extremely low second birth rates in Southern and Eastern Europe observed towards the end of the 20th century (Kohler et al., 2002). Economic conditions have been very

complex there: Southern Europe had the lowest rates of female labour force participation, and Eastern Europe underwent a spectacular socio-political and economic transition at the end of the 20th century. Using the European Social Survey (ESS), we can compare the fertility of people in countries in these regions with the patterns observed in Northern and Western Europe. Such a setting is unique for the analysis of family formation processes, allowing the analysis of fertility patterns in contexts that vary strongly in terms of economy (poor versus rich countries) and cultural orientation towards family life ('strong' versus 'weak' family ties countries, in the terms of Reher, 1998). Our general hypothesis is that the interplay of economic uncertainty and cultural attitudes about the value of parenthood may be part of the explanation of very low fertility in post-socialist countries, as well as in Southern Europe.

### **Lowest-low fertility in strong family areas: Earlier research**

In the second half of the 20th century, fertility rates fell first in Northern and Western Europe, then in the south, and finally, at a particularly rapid pace, in post-socialist countries. Lowest-low fertility (Billari and Kohler, 2004) was first identified in Mediterranean areas that are traditionally characterized by strong family ties (Reher, 1998). The same also happened in Central and Eastern European countries, including countries that were also characterized as familialistic, such as Poland, Lithuania and Slovakia (Kohler et al., 2002; Caltabiano et al., 2009; Goldstein et al., 2009; Billingsley, 2011).

The situation that emerged towards the end of the 20th century has often been perceived as a paradox: exceptionally low fertility occurred predominantly in supposedly 'strong family ties' countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, while fertility was higher in 'weak family ties' countries in North-western Europe. This apparent paradox has been a central issue in studies addressing 'strong family ties' (Livi-Bacci, 2001; Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004), responsible parenthood (Preston, 1986), the increased perceived costs of children (Leibenstein, 1975; Becker, 1981), work-family incompatibility (Chesnais, 1996; Rosina, 2004; Adsera, 2005; Kohler et al., 2006; Del Boca et al., 2008; Kotowska and Matysiak, 2008), and socio-economic changes and uncertainty (Philipov, 2002; Philipov et al., 2006; Kotowska et al., 2008).

Dalla Zuanna and Micheli (2004) and Livi-Bacci (2001) argue that there is not really a paradox. In fact, strong ties within the family of origin have catalysed the postponement of such processes as leaving the parental home, union formation and parenthood. Strong parental support, especially appreciated in times of high unemployment, unstable labour market conditions and high accommodation prices, that is, in times of general economic uncertainty, as well as being appreciated to enable prolonged educational enrolment, may result in the postponement of all kinds of transitions related to independent adult life among younger cohorts. In such settings,

recuperation of births may be difficult (Kohler et al., 2002; Esping-Andersen, 2007). This may be especially true in the transitional period in these societies, when both economic and demographic changes take place before new strategies are worked out to handle work–family dilemmas (Pinnelli, 1995; Billingsley, 2011).

Failure to catch up second births after postponing the transition to parenthood may result from a mixture of external factors, individual preferences and expectations. Parents may withdraw from a subsequent birth for economic reasons, including insufficient income or unstable work conditions. Since childbearing and childrearing pose many challenges after the first child is born, parents may be unwilling to experience all of the hassle again. This may be further exacerbated by the increase in the non-family-related aspirations of parents that has been observed in Central and Eastern Europe in recent decades (Sobotka et al., 2003).

Other trends may be relevant, too. One is the increasing perceived cost of children and responsible parenthood. People from areas where parenthood is highly valued may be particularly prone to think that they do not have the means to secure a high-quality life for their offspring (Micheli and Bernardi, 2003). They may set more preconditions for what is needed to have another child, not only regarding financial means but also, for example, in terms of emotional support or demands on their time. Again, this may contribute to the clash between a wish or need to pursue a professional career, on the one hand, and childrearing responsibilities, on the other. For example, formal childcare may be seen as inappropriate for very young children and full-time employment inappropriate for mothers of pre-school children. Such social norms may influence childbearing decisions, both when they are internalized by parents and in cases when women do not agree with them entirely but feel constrained by the opinions of others and what is generally considered appropriate. As a consequence, women may be confronted with more complex dilemmas than their counterparts from areas where such beliefs are not widespread. This may stop them from having a second child.

### **Economic uncertainty and second births: Hypotheses**

We expect that the interplay between economic uncertainty and cultural attitudes about the value of parenthood may be part of the explanation of very low fertility in post-socialist countries, as well as in Southern Europe. In a nutshell, the argument is that a high positive cultural evaluation of parenthood inhibits a significant rise in childlessness. In such a situation, economic uncertainty might result in the postponement of first births rather than the foregoing of parenthood altogether. However, since the position of being a parent, with its attached social status, can be reached without having a second child, economic uncertainty might result in particularly

low second birth rates. Low second birth rates have been found to be the crucial factor behind very low total fertility (Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek, 2010; Billingsley, 2011). We suspect that this is not just a result of the postponement effect (that is, a high age at first childbirth leading to low second birth rates; see Van Bavel and Nitsche, 2013) but also a product of economic insecurity.

Overall, contemporary young Europeans become parents at a later age than the previous generation in the richer, as well as in the poorer, regions of Europe (Billari and Kohler, 2004). This has been linked with generally unfavourable labour market conditions and uncertain economic conditions for the younger generations (Mills and Blossfeld, 2005), even before the recent economic crisis. In the final decades of the 20th century, economic uncertainty was a particularly big issue in Eastern and Southern Europe, and impeded family life there more than elsewhere. Unstable labour markets and economies in transition were hindering the realization of people's family and work plans (Philipov, 2002; Sobotka, 2003; Billingsley, 2011).

In a context of economic uncertainty, most people still want to become parents. They are not willing to stay childless but, rather, prefer to limit the number of offspring (Kohler et al., 2006; Morgan and Taylor, 2006). In a context of uncertainty, family life might be considered as more important than ever, and the advantages are perceived as outweighing the disadvantages (Bernhardt and Goldscheider, 2006). The uncertainty reduction hypothesis (Friedman et al., 1994, 1999), states that a birth may reduce this anxiety and discomfort and result in the reinforcement of the social capital of parents. In spite of the opportunity costs of childbearing, children bring some unique values that may be of interest to contemporary parents, even in times of economic hardship and discontinuity (Philipov, 2002; Philipov et al., 2006). This could explain why economic uncertainty has not resulted in particularly high childlessness.

Looking at the timing and likelihood of second births after the transition to parenthood has occurred, even though there are some indications that the two-child norm may have weakened somewhat during the past decades (Frejka and Ross, 2001; Goldstein et al., 2003; Breton and Prioux, 2005), in most countries people still *intend* to have two children. It is mainly the *realization* of this intention that differs across the continent (Rosina, 2004; Breton and Prioux, 2009; Sobotka, 2009; Billingsley, 2011). The gap between intended and actual fertility has been due to difficulties in combining work and family life (Adsera, 2005; Kohler et al., 2006; Kotowska and Matysiak, 2008; Mishtal, 2009; Voicu et al., 2009). In Southern Europe, in particular, policies have not given much support to women to combine work and childbearing (Rosina, 2004; Del Boca et al., 2008). For the post-communist countries in Eastern Europe, the uncertainty affecting all spheres of life, and the struggle with the consequences of the socio-political transition at

the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, have been cited as fertility-inhibiting factors (Philipov, 2002; Philipov et al., 2006; Kotowska et al., 2008).

Furthermore, we expect that the fertility-inhibiting effect of economic uncertainty at the individual level might be very different in a context of generally bad economic conditions for most of the population compared with the effect of economic uncertainty at the individual level in an economically prosperous context. Economically uncertain people living in a relatively poor area may be more accustomed to such conditions and not limit their childbearing due to perceived economic uncertainty. For example, it has been found that in Eastern Germany job insecurity did not lead to giving up childbearing. In contrast, in Western Germany having a stable job was perceived as a prerequisite for becoming a parent (Bernardi et al., 2008).

Summing up, we are concentrating on second births because we think that economic uncertainty will tend to result in lower parity progression after the first birth, rather than in high childlessness, because the highly valued status of parenthood can be achieved by having just one child. This will be particularly important in countries where becoming a parent is considered very important in order to be considered a full-fledged adult. In these cases, economic uncertainty might particularly translate into lower second birth rates rather than low first birth rates. We will not investigate first birth rates in this chapter. Next, we expect that the negative effect of economic uncertainty on second birth rates will be stronger in prosperous countries than in relatively poor countries (including, notably, post-communist countries). The argument here is that economically uncertain people will perceive their situation as less 'exceptional' in contexts where uncertainty is pervasive, and that their reactions will differ accordingly. Hence, we will investigate how the fertility responses of uncertain people in highly uncertain contexts differ from the responses of uncertain people who live in economically well-off regions.

## **Data and methods**

### **Sample**

We used data from the third round of the European Social Survey (ESS3), with fieldwork carried out in 2006 and 2007, to construct variables related to economic uncertainty, male and female education, and attitudes towards parenthood. The ESS3 is an academically driven, cross-sectional social survey that is rigorously concerned with maximizing data quality, response rates and cross-national equivalence (Jowell et al., 2007). In addition, we included Eurostat economic indicators on the Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) 1 regional level (Róžańska-Putek et al., 2009) as well as on the country level.

A number of ESS3 countries were excluded from the multilevel analysis. For the Ukraine and Russia, there is no NUTS1 classification of regions and, more importantly, we think that these countries differ considerably from the rest in terms of cultural and economic features. Romania and Latvia were excluded because we lacked some of the contextual variables. As a result, we used the national samples from 21 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

We only included people living with an opposite-sex partner, married or unmarried. Since we intended to select only parents who have their children together, we excluded respondents who were divorced or were no longer living with their partner at the time of the survey. We only selected people in the age range from 18 to 45 for both females and males within the couples.

## Methods

We modelled second birth rates by means of discrete time multilevel hazard models (Mills, 2011), and used logistic regression to model the yearly probability of a given couple having a second birth, given that a first child was born (with  $t=0$  the year of birth of that first child) and given that no second child was born yet. If no second child was born by the survey date, the case was right-censored. We applied a discrete time approach since only the year of birth of the child was recorded.

Following Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek (2010), we modelled the baseline hazard as a second-order polynomial function of the number of years since the first birth. The basic setup of the model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{logit}(h_{ijk}(t)) &= \beta_{0jk} + \beta_1 t + \beta_2 t^2 + \mathbf{X}'_{ijk} \beta_3 + \mathbf{Y}'_{ijk} \beta_{4k} + \mathbf{Z}'_j \beta_5 \\ \beta_{0jk} &= \gamma_{00} + (\mathbf{C}'_k \gamma_{01}) + \mathbf{u}_{0k} + v_{0j} \\ \beta_{4k} &= \gamma_{40} + (\mathbf{C}'_k \gamma_{41}) + \mathbf{u}_{4k} \end{aligned}$$

In this model,  $h_{ijk}(t)$  denotes the probability that a second child is born to a couple  $i$  in NUTS1 region  $j$  and country  $k$  in year  $t$ ;  $t$  is the number of years that have elapsed since the first birth;  $\beta_{0jk}$  is the random intercept allowed to vary by country as well as region;  $\beta_3$  refers to the fixed effects of couple-level characteristics.  $\mathbf{X}_{ijk}$  and  $\mathbf{Y}_{ijk}$  represent matrices with couple-level variables: the former having fixed effects only and the latter having random effects that vary by country only. More specifically, matrix  $\mathbf{Y}_{ijk}$  in the current analysis holds the level of education of the woman. From earlier analyses, we know that the effect of this variable on the second birth rate strongly varies by country  $k$ : it tends to be positive in Northern and Western European countries and negative in Eastern and Southern European countries (Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek, 2010).  $\mathbf{Z}_j$  is a vector of regional characteristics and  $\mathbf{C}_k$



of country-level characteristics. In order to estimate the model, we assumed that all random components in the model ( $u_{0k}$ ,  $u_{4k}$  and  $v_{0j}$ ) are normally distributed, with means of 0. No a priori assumptions about the size of their variances and covariances were made.

## Measures

Our models include variables on three levels: the individual, the regional and the country level. For the (sub-national) regional level, we used the Eurostat NUTS1 classification. Róžańska-Putek et al. (2009) explain more about the NUTS1 classification and how it has been implemented in the ESS data. Table 4.1 gives basic descriptive statistics of all variables used.

As to the individual-level variables, we controlled for the age of the wife at the first birth, the marital status of the couple (married or unmarried) and the wife's level of education. Using a variant of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) coding scheme for education, ESS3 distinguishes between seven levels of educational attainment: (0) not completed primary education, (1) primary or first stage of basic, (2) lower secondary or second stage of basic, (3) upper secondary, (4) post-secondary, non-tertiary, (5) first stage of tertiary and (6) second stage of tertiary. We reduced the number of categories to three: low (categories 0 to 2 of the original ESS/ISCED classification), medium (categories 3 and 4) and high (categories 5 and 6) educational attainment.

In terms of economic uncertainty, we distinguished between objective measures at the contextual level (discussed in the next paragraph) and a subjective measure at the individual level. For the individual-level subjective uncertainty, we used an index based on two ESS questions (ESS, 2006). The first question is: 'How worried are you, if at all, that your income in old age will not be adequate enough to cover your later years. Please express your opinion on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means "not worried at all" and 10 means "extremely worried".' The second question is: 'Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?: (1) Living comfortably on present income, (2) Coping on present income, (3) Finding it difficult on present income and (4) Finding it very difficult on present income.' For the construction of our indicator, we counted the responses that indicated worries about income in old age (that is, a score  $\geq 5$ ) and finding it difficult or very difficult on present income. In this way, we obtained an individual-level measure of subjective economic uncertainty, that is, as perceived by the respondents themselves, ranging from 0 (not uncertain) to 2 (very uncertain).

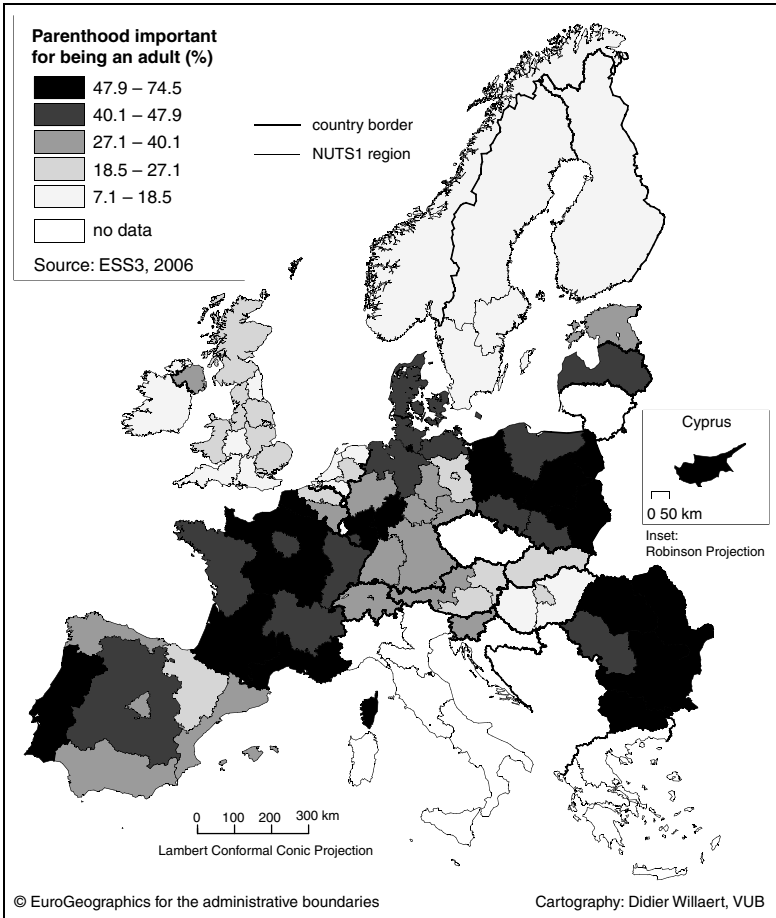
We constructed three contextual variables: two at the sub-national level of NUTS1 regions and one at the country level. Two measures were included to index objective economic conditions, and another contextual measure indexes the cultural salience of parenthood. First, at the country level, as

a measure of objective economic uncertainty, we included a time series of unemployment rates. More specifically, this measure is the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force (that is, the unemployed plus those in employment) as reported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) database of labour market indicators during the year when the first child of the respondent was born. The unemployment rate reflects the percentage of unemployed persons within the entire labour force population, following the International Labour Office definition. This does not include all the non-working people, but restricts this group to only those who are actively looking for a job and are able to start work within two weeks. (In an earlier analysis, we included a measure of unemployment at the regional NUTS1 level, but we could not reconstruct a satisfactory time series at that lower contextual level. Since the country-level time series yield clearer results, and since unemployment rates can fluctuate strongly by year, we chose to work with the country-level time series for this measure rather than with regional-level measures for a single year.)

In order to rank sub-national NUTS1 regions in terms of their general level of economic prosperity, we included regional-level figures of gross domestic product (GDP) in power purchasing standards (PPS) per inhabitant in 2004, obtained from Eurostat. GDP in PPS measures the total income of a country and is constructed in a way that enables direct cross-country comparisons. It takes into account differences in what can be purchased with the same amount of money across Europe and is based on the artificial currency constructed for this indicator.

Next, ESS3 includes the following question about the importance of parenthood: 'To be considered an adult how important is it for a man/woman to have become a father/mother?' Answers could range from 1 to 5: (1) Not at all important, (2) Not important, (3) Neither important nor unimportant, (4) Important and (5) Very important. A split ballot was applied: half of the respondents were asked about women while the other half were asked about men. The results for both groups were approximately the same, with almost half of the respondents indicating that it is not (at all) important to be a parent to be considered an adult, 15 per cent taking a neutral position, and 35 per cent indicating that parenthood is important or very important for being considered to be an adult man or woman.

However, there were very large differences across regions and countries in the answers given by respondents. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of respondents per NUTS1 region indicating that parenthood is important or very important to be considered an adult. The gradient exhibits some geographic order, but with a number of exceptions: respondents in Northern and Western Europe tend to be less likely to indicate that parenthood is important for adulthood than respondents in Southern and Eastern Europe. This holds particularly for Scandinavian respondents, as well as people in



*Figure 4.1* Percentage of people indicating that it is important or very important to be a parent in order to be considered an adult by NUTS1 region

*Source:* ESS3, authors' own calculations.

the UK and Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium, as compared with people in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Portugal and France. Hungary is an exception to the geographic order (with a much lower importance attributed to parenthood compared with neighbouring countries), as is Denmark (with a higher importance than expected from other countries in the north). The Spanish as well as the German regions exhibit considerable variety.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, rather than including country-level averages, we included the percentage of people saying that it is important or very important on the regional NUTS1 level as a contextual variable in our multilevel models (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics of the variables used in the regression analysis

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	%
<i>Dependent variable</i>						
Having at least two children						
0 = no					1846	31.6
1 = yes					3993	68.4
<i>Individual-level characteristics of women</i>						
Age of woman at time of interview	35	5.56	18	45	5839	
Age at first birth	25.65	4.68	14	44	5829	
Year (first) child was born	1997	5.9	1960	2007	5839	
Married?						
0 = no					346	5.9
1 = yes					5493	94.1
Level of education						
Low					1451	25.1
Medium					2711	46.8
High					1628	28.1
Index of subjective economic uncertainty	0.69	0.71	0	2	5839	
<i>Country-level variable</i>						
Unemployment, % of active population in year of first birth	8.1	4.0	1.5	20.0	21	
<i>Regional-level variables (NUTS1)</i>						
Importance of parenthood	34	16.55	7.1	74.5	60	
GDP PPS, in 1000 €, circa 2006	23	9.3	6.6	55.1	60	

## Results

Table 4.2 shows estimates from three multilevel hazard models: Model 1 includes the fixed effects of the individual-level explanatory variables as well as random effects on both contextual levels (that is, the country and the NUTS1 region); Model 2 adds explanatory variables at the contextual levels; and Model 3, finally, adds the cross-level interactions between the individual-level measure of subjective economic uncertainty and the contextual variables.

The results from Model 1 largely confirmed what is known from earlier work about the determinants of second birth rates across Europe. While there is a major effect of age at first childbirth and marital status on the second birth rate (younger and married women having a higher second birth rate than older women in unmarried cohabitation), there is no detectable effect of the calendar year of birth of the first child. More importantly, the effect of education on the second birth rate differs strongly from country

Table 4.2 Multilevel discrete time logistic hazard model for transition to second birth

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	s.e.	p	b	s.e.	p	b	s.e.	p
Intercept	-3.968	0.127	0.000***	-4.048	0.190	0.000***	-4.256	0.210	0.000***
<i>Individual-level variables</i>									
Year of first childbirth	0.005	0.004	0.204	0.007	0.005	0.132	0.008	0.005	0.125
Years elapsed since first birth	0.830	0.025	0.000***	0.952	0.033	0.000***	0.953	0.033	0.000***
Years elapsed... squared	-0.067	0.002	0.000***	-0.077	0.003	0.000***	-0.077	0.003	0.000***
Age of woman at first childbirth	-0.014	0.005	0.005**	-0.013	0.006	0.019*	-0.013	0.006	0.021*
Education of woman (ref. = low)									
medium	-0.034	0.069	0.625	0.047	0.079	0.557	0.048	0.078	0.536
high	0.062	0.088	0.479	0.209	0.084	0.013*	0.206	0.083	0.014*
Married (ref. = unmarried)	0.278	0.089	0.002**	0.286	0.097	0.003**	0.291	0.097	0.003**
Subjective economic uncertainty	0.028	0.028	0.306	0.008	0.035	0.819	0.285	0.127	0.025*
<i>Contextual variables</i>									
Importance of parenthood (NUTS1)				-0.006	0.004	0.118	-0.001	0.004	0.728
GDP per capita (NUTS1)				0.013	0.005	0.009**	0.023	0.006	0.000***
Unemployment rate (country)				-0.009	0.009	0.276	-0.005	0.010	0.660
<i>Cross-level interactions</i>									
Uncertainty × Importance of parenthood							-0.005	0.002	0.035*
Uncertainty × GDP per capita							-0.014	0.005	0.004**
Uncertainty × unemployment rate							-0.010	0.009	0.285
Random effects									
NUTS1 intercept	s.d.		p	s.d.		p	s.d.		p
	0.151		0.019*	0.149		0.101	0.140		0.146
Country									
Intercept	0.251		0.007**	0.162		0.277	0.175		0.210
Medium-educated	0.233		0.000***	0.220		0.024*	0.209		0.038*
Highly educated	0.320		0.000***	0.219		0.247	0.214		0.264

\*p &lt; .05; \*\*p &lt; .01; \*\*\*p &lt; .001.

b: point estimate of the regression parameter; p: probability associated with two-sided t-test; s.e.: standard error; s.d.: standard deviation.

to country. This is indicated by the random slopes for education, which are statistically significant according to the log-likelihood ratio tests performed. Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek (2010) show that the effect of high educational attainment on the second birth rate tends to be positive in countries that exhibit relatively high second birth rates overall (France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, for example; typically countries in Northern or Western Europe); the effect of high levels of education tends to be negative in countries with low second birth rates overall (Poland, Romania, Portugal and Germany, for example; these tend to be countries in the east or south of Europe). As a result of the countervailing positive and negative effects of education, depending on the country, the average fixed effects of education are not significantly different from zero.

Model 1 does not detect an effect of our measure of subjective economic uncertainty, nor does Model 2, which adds the contextual level variables. The effects of the individual-level variables do not change substantially, with one important and illuminating exception: the overall effect of being highly educated, on average across countries, turns statistically significant and positive. Additional analyses (not shown) indicate that this positive effect on education becomes significant after adding the macro-level indicator for the economic situation, more specifically the country-level yearly unemployment rate. So, keeping unemployment constant, highly educated mothers tend to have higher second birth rates than mothers with a lower level of education. This effect remains masked when the economic situation is not taken into account.

Turning to the contextual variables added to Model 2: of the two objective measures of the economic situation, only the regional GDP per capita has a statistically significant, positive effect, indicating that second birth rates are higher in richer countries. The effect of the country's unemployment rate is not statistically significant. We also tested the effect of the regional-level unemployment rate as observed in 2006 (results not shown), but this was also not statistically significant. Finally, the percentage of people in the NUTS1 region saying that it is important to be a parent in order to be considered an adult was not found to be related in a statistically significant way to the second birth rates in Model 2.

However, these things changed once we added the cross-level interactions, as in Model 3. Model 3 indicates that individual-level subjective economic uncertainty does indeed affect second birth rates, but it depends on the contextual circumstances. The interactions with GDP per capita and with the attitudes prevailing regionally about the importance of parenthood are both statistically significant. In order to clarify these interaction effects, Figures 4.2 and 4.3 plot the predicted hazard rate during the third year after the birth of the first child by GDP and importance of parenthood, respectively, for people who do not feel economically uncertain ('low', score 0), for those who feel a little bit uncertain ('medium', score 1), and those

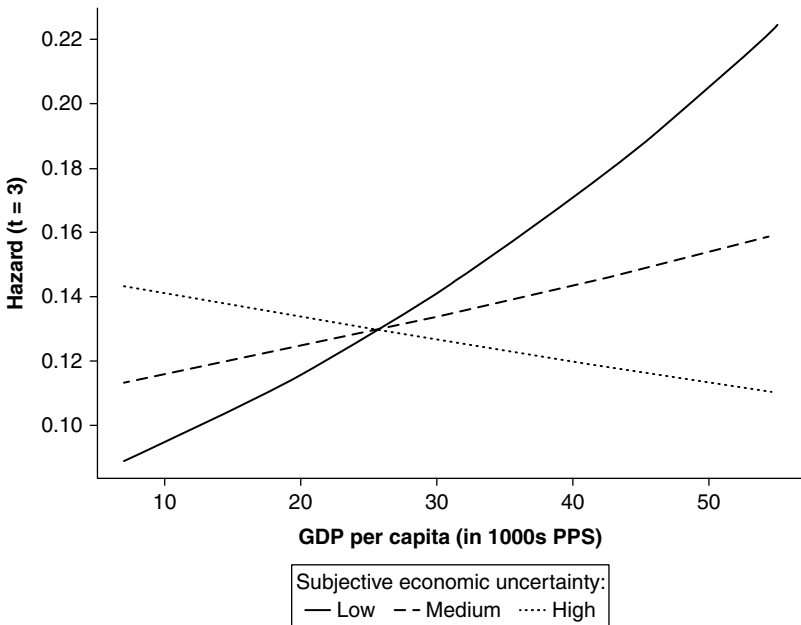


Figure 4.2 Predicted second birth rate by GDP per capita and subjective economic uncertainty\*

Note: \*Predicted hazard rate in the third year after the birth of the first child for medium-educated women who became a mother at age 25 years, all other variables at their mean value.

who feel highly uncertain ('high', score 2); these three groups of subjective uncertainty define the three curves in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Figure 4.2 shows that in regions with a low GDP (in countries like Hungary, Poland, Latvia and Slovakia) or very low GDP (in countries like Romania and Bulgaria), people who feel highly economically uncertain are predicted to have higher second birth rates, if anything, than people who do not feel uncertain or feel slightly uncertain. In contrast, in rich regions (typically in countries like Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden, for example), people who feel uncertain have much lower second birth rates than people who do not feel uncertain.

Figure 4.3 indicates that the importance attached to parenthood regionally does not make a difference to the expected second birth rates of people who do not feel economically uncertain. For those who do feel uncertain, second birth rates are expected to be lower if the percentage in the region of residence saying that it is important to be a parent to be considered an adult is high. Or, looking at the interaction the other way around, in regions that attach a high importance to parenthood, uncertain people have lower second birth rates than people who do not feel uncertain. This is in line with

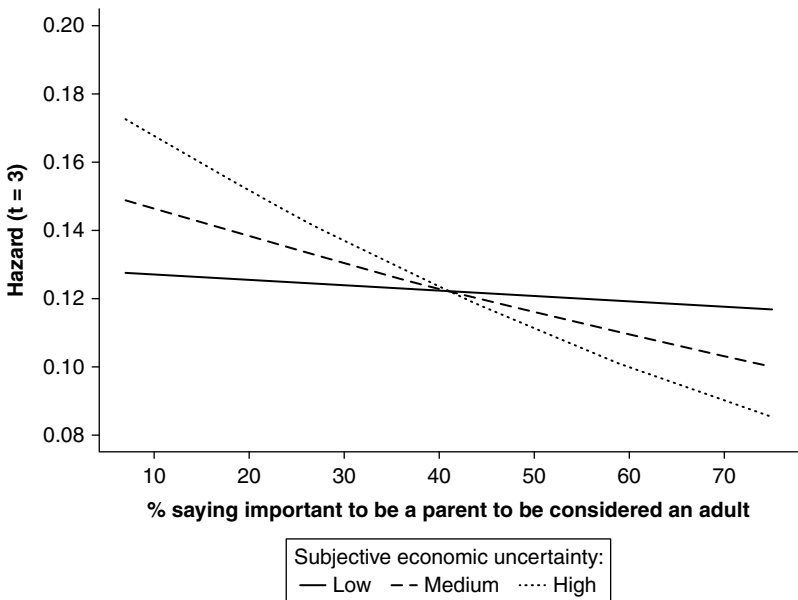


Figure 4.3 Predicted second birth rate by regional percentage who say that it is important to be a parent to be considered an adult, and subjective economic uncertainty\*

Note: \*Predicted hazard rate in the third year after the birth of the first child for medium-educated women who became a mother at age 25 years, all other variables at their mean value.

our expectation that high uncertainty may be particularly translated into low second birth rates rather than low first birth rates in regions that attach high importance to parenthood in order to be considered an adult.

## Conclusions

People's opportunities and constraints in the labour market are strongly affected by their family situation, including their family sizes. This holds true for women especially, who are typically expected to take on the chief responsibility for childcare in most, if not all, regions of Europe. Hence, the quantum of total fertility has important labour market implications for women in particular. In recent decades, second birth rates have marked the difference between low and very low total fertility rates across Europe, and this is one reason why this chapter has focused on second birth rates. Second birth rates have been particularly low in Eastern and Southern European countries.

A second reason why we focused on second birth rates is that the desire to make the transition to parenthood is still widespread, and most people



still become parents. This holds true, in particular, for Eastern and Southern European countries. We therefore expected that, once the desire to become a parent has been met, the question of whether or not to have another child might depend more on economic considerations than the decision to have the first child did. We therefore investigated the impact of economic uncertainty on second birth rates, taking into account an individual-level measure of subjective uncertainty and objective measures of the economic conditions, namely unemployment rates and per capita GDP.

One hypothesis we formulated was that the impact of subjective economic uncertainty depends on how important the status of parenthood is considered to be in order to count as a full-fledged adult. People from areas where parenthood is highly valued may be particularly prone to thinking that they do not have the means to afford more than one child, while at the same time being under pressure to have at least the one child that grants them access to the highly valued status of parenthood. In such a context, acknowledging that uncertainty has not resulted in widespread childlessness, we expected that uncertainty would show up particularly in low second birth rates. We found that subjective uncertainty, as such, does not necessarily lead to low second birth rates. This appeared to be the case only in regions that attach a high value to parenthood, as is the case in Eastern and Southern Europe. The people at risk in our analysis of second birth rates have already reached the highly valued status of parenthood, and when they feel economically uncertain they may keep that status without the financial burden of enlarging the family.

Next, we also expected that the negative effect of economic uncertainty on second birth rates, if any, would be stronger in the prosperous (northern) regions and countries than in the poor (southern and eastern) regions and countries. Our argument was that uncertain people in uncertain contexts will feel less exceptional, feeling less pressure to adapt their behaviour to their personal conditions. Our findings were in line with this hypothesis as well: even if we did not find the negative effect of subjective uncertainty as such, we did find such an effect in prosperous regions: in prosperous regions, uncertain people tend to have lower second birth rates than people who do not feel uncertain. In poor regions, if anything, this appeared to be the other way around.

We also found that a high GDP is associated with higher second birth rates. Surprisingly, we did not find a negative effect of the unemployment rate, as such. Still, unemployment is important in our final analysis of second birth rates, since differences in unemployment, when uncontrolled for in the model, seem to mask the generally positive effect of a high level of education. Keeping unemployment constant, highly educated mothers were found to have higher second birth rates than mothers with lower levels of education. This effect remained masked as long as the economic situation was not taken into account. Or, to put it another way, different levels of

unemployment explain part of the international diversity observed in earlier work (Van Bavel and Róžańska-Putek, 2010) on the effect of a woman's level of education.

Summing up, we found that objective economic prosperity, as far as it is captured by GDP per capita, is associated with higher second birth rates. In terms of subjective measures of economic conditions, we found that it is not so much subjective economic uncertainty that matters for second birth rates, but, rather, either uncertainty in a context where parenthood is highly valued, or uncertainty in a context of generally good economic conditions (implying that the personal situation is assessed as worse than that of most other people in the population).

A number of regions in Eastern and Southern Europe are facing population decline due both to outmigration and to low fertility. Both phenomena are related to poor economic conditions: bad economic conditions do not stimulate a recovery of fertility, while, the other way around, low fertility and outmigration have a negative impact on economic growth. Our analysis implies that investment in education will be important to avoid these regions becoming trapped in long-term negative spirals. Indeed, after controlling for the economic situation, education is positively rather than negatively related to fertility in the analysed countries, while it is known to stimulate the economy as well. This recommendation is in line with the recent finding that fertility may recover in highly developed countries with high levels of education (Myrskylä et al., 2009). Another crucial factor will be making labour force participation and family life compatible for women as well as for men.

## Note

1. Note that in large countries such as Germany, the number of respondents per region can become quite low (the smallest sample is 15 for DE3, Berlin), so the large standard errors should be taken into account when interpreting descriptive statistics at this level. Hence, hypothesis testing for the effects of regional-level variables will be conservative.

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## **Part II**

# **Participation in the Labour Market**

# 5

## Female Employment in Europe

*Ursula Bazant*

### **Introduction**

Family policies cannot be discussed without taking employment, the other side of the work–family equation, into account. Whether one is in favour of it or not, in all European countries childcare is still predominantly a female task, although to a greater extent in some countries than in others, with variations in the degree of public responsibility for childcare and male participation in care. Care duties limit the possibilities for participating in the labour market, as an individual's time is obviously limited and must be split between professional and private needs. Therefore, it is especially interesting to have a look at female employment and the differences between the various countries.

Traditionally, Eastern European countries have placed strong emphasis on the participation of women in the labour market. The Central and Eastern European countries (CEEs) were often considered to be role models by women's organizations and politicians in Western European countries, especially in the conservative welfare states. Nevertheless, this was not always a sign of gender equality and shared responsibility for domestic work, childcare and other unpaid work (for a broader discussion of these topics see, for example, Klenner and Leiber, 2009: 11). In the older member states of the European Union (EU) we see a varied picture, but with a clear North–South divide. Recently, there has been a strong emphasis at the European level to raise female employment rates, especially in the Southern and some 'conservative' countries of the European Union, where female employment rates are still lagging behind male employment rates.

Female employment differs from male employment in many ways. Participation rates are usually below male employment rates, women choose different occupations, and the number of hours worked differs, as do wage and inactivity rates. The following chapter gives an overview of actual employment for the EU before 1 May 2004 (EU-15) and the eight new member states (NMS8) that have joined since the May 2004 expansion, and tries

to identify trends over the last decade. A data overview for employment rates according to specific socio-demographic backgrounds, such as education, is presented. A section is devoted to the employment rates of mothers, to check for interdependencies between the two factors: being a mother and being employed. The EU-15 and NMS8 were chosen as a proxy for 'West' and 'East'. Even though this is clearly only a selection of countries, it was necessary to get meaningful contrasts. This approach allows only limited statements to be made, and thus this chapter can only give a very broad picture. Figures and tables, nevertheless, include as often as possible, and where meaningful, data for the EU-27 and the new member states, Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, to give a complete and up-to-date overview.

## Overview of female employment

The female employment rate in the EU was 65.6 per cent in 2012 (EU-27). It has risen by 5.1 per cent over the last decade, not least because the EU placed strong emphasis on supporting female participation in the labour market (see, for example, Boeri, 2005; Klenner and Hoskova, 2009: 193; Blank and Schulze Buschoff, 2011; Weishaupt and Lack, 2011). However, employment patterns differ significantly between countries, as do female employment rates. Therefore, it is worth looking a little more deeply at the individual-country level, as there are marked differences between countries and regions. While there was a female employment rate of 67.0 per cent in the EU-15 in 2012, rates in individual countries differed markedly, ranging from 47.8 per cent in Malta to 77.9 per cent in Sweden, with many Southern and Eastern European countries at the lower end of the scale and mostly Nordic and Benelux countries at the higher end. The NMS8 had a female employment rate of 65.5 per cent in 2012, the same level as the EU-27. Here, too, there were differences between the countries, ranging from 58.3 per cent in Hungary to 72.0 per cent in Latvia. So, Hungary's rate was comparable to some Southern European countries, while Latvia was in the top five of all 27 countries. Even at this level of analysis, it can be seen that it is not possible to draw a clear line between 'East' and 'West' (Figure 5.1).

Over the last two decades, and in particular since the Lisbon Strategy was established in 2000, raising the employment rates of women has been an explicit target for the EU (see, for example, High Level Group, 2004; European Commission, 2010). In 2012, almost all EU-27 countries showed higher female employment rates than ten years before. Only Romania, Slovakia, Finland and Denmark showed a decrease, and Denmark's decrease was negligible.

Generally, the picture for male employment was more varied, with about half the countries showing a decrease in the male employment rate, and the other half showing an increase. The most pronounced changes were seen in Malta (-2.7 percentage points) and Estonia (+4.6 percentage points) (Figure 5.2).



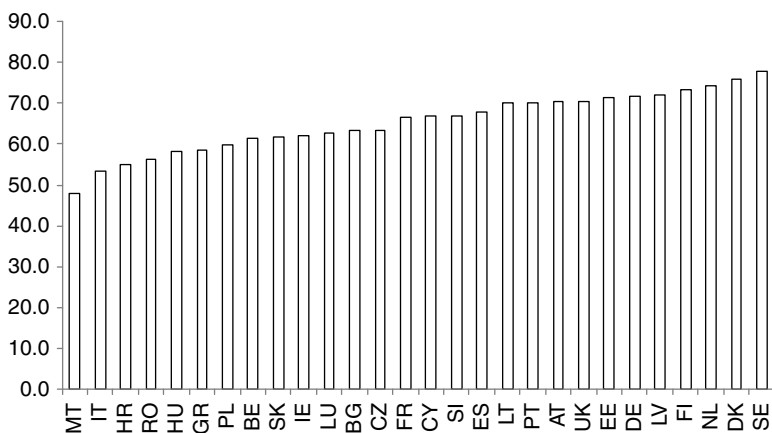


Figure 5.1 Employment rates of women, EU-27 and Croatia, 2012 (%)

Source: Eurostat.

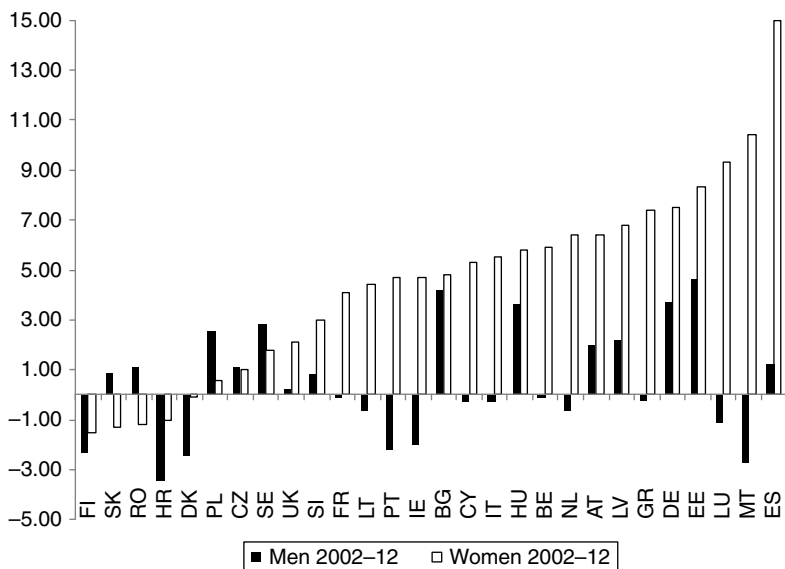


Figure 5.2 Change in employment rates of men and women, EU-27 and Croatia, 2002-2012 (%)

Source: Eurostat.

The difference between the employment rates of men and women reduced in the last decade: the difference was 16.7 percentage points in 2002, and decreased to 12.4 percentage points in 2012. Nevertheless, large differences can still be seen between the countries. Interestingly, the difference between the employment rates for women and men only increased in five countries: four CEE countries (Romania, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia) and Sweden – the latter was surprising. However, the gap in Sweden was only 4.7 percentage points, a comparatively low level as employment rates are high for both men and women.

Overall, employment grew moderately but satisfyingly over the last decade (EU-27: +4.4 percentage points, EU-15: +4.8 percentage points and NMS8: +2.6 percentage points), although there was some drawback in 2009. Since 2002, the increase for women has been much larger in the EU-15 (+11.2 percentage points) than in the NMS8 (+2.6 percentage points), but levels at the start of the period might have played a role here. For men, employment rose in the NMS8 (+2.6 percentage points) but decreased in the EU-15 (–0.3 percentage points).

Another interesting feature was the level of self-employment: men and women tended to have a slightly higher self-employment rate in the NMS8 than in the EU-15. In both the NMS8 and the EU-15, a higher proportion of men than women were self-employed. In some countries the difference between self-employment for men and women was very pronounced (Ireland and Bulgaria), while in others the difference was marginal (Romania and Luxembourg) (Table 5.1).

According to Eurostat figures, almost 85 per cent of employed women in the EU-27 were working in service jobs and only 11.2 per cent in industry. In the NMS8 the trends were the same, but at a different level, with 17.3 per cent of employed women working in industry and 77.6 per cent in services (EU-15: 88.4 per cent in services, 9.6 per cent in industry). For men, the numbers are somewhat different, with 61.4 per cent of employed men working in services and 32.5 per cent working in industry. Therefore, it is worth noting that also the majority of men work in service professions. While industry is still a male-dominated area, services are a wide category, subsuming occupations and professions that are ‘typically male’ and ‘typically female’.

Both men and women were largely concentrated in a few sectors. For women, the most prominent are healthcare and social work, sales and retail, and education. In some countries, manufacturing still plays an important role, too. The proportions of women working in healthcare and social work were particularly high in Scandinavia, and also the Benelux countries and Germany, and this should be looked at in relation to the significance of the public sector for the workforce as a whole in these countries. In most other countries, the proportion of women in most categories was about equal. For men, the picture was clearer, with three clearly dominant occupations: manufacturing, sales and retail, and construction (Table 5.2).

Table 5.1 Self-employment rates of women (% of all employed) and difference from self-employment rates of men (percentage points), 2012

	Women	Difference from men
EU-27	11.6	-7.3
EU-15	9.9	-7.5
NMS8	9.9	-6.6
IE	7.5	-16.8
BG	20.8	-12.4
CY	10.9	-10.6
IT	17.0	-10.4
SK	10.0	-10.0
MT	6.3	-9.9
UK	9.2	-9.1
CZ	13.1	-8.5
GR	29.6	-8.5
FI	7.9	-8.2
BE	11.9	-8.0
EE	5.2	-7.2
SI	14.5	-7.2
ES	10.2	-6.5
NL	11.0	-6.4
FR	6.4	-6.1
PL	19.2	-5.8
DE	7.9	-5.6
PT	11.1	-5.1
HU	8.0	-5.0
LV	9.3	-4.9
AT	10.6	-4.7
DK	3.6	-4.4
LT	9.0	-4.4
SE	2.9	-4.3
HR	11.1	-1.7
LU	5.5	-0.9
RO	32.4	-0.2

Source: Eurostat; UK: 2011.

## Socio-demographic background

Concentrating on female employment, it is worth shedding some light on the differences *between* women. In all countries we can see that there is no homogeneous picture for the labour market situation of women. Very general trends exist, such as segregated labour markets, gender pay gaps and lower employment rates for mothers of young children, but even these very superficial statements do not apply to all countries and regions, or, if they do, it is to a very variable degree. In the following section we gain some

Table 5.2 Occupations with the highest percentages of men and women, 2012 (%)

	Men					Women				
	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale/ retail	Education	Health/ social work	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale/ retail	Education	Health/ social work
EU-27	20.4	12.1	13.1	3.9	4.3	10.2	1.5	15.1	11.7	18.2
EU-15	19.7	11.7	13.5	4.2	4.8	8.7	1.5	14.5	11.6	20.1
NMSS	24.9	13.7	11.5	3.0	2.1	15.6	1.2	17.2	13.2	11.3
BE	18.6	12.1	13.4	5.0	6.0	6.8	1.4	13.3	14.0	24.6
BG	19.7	15.8	15.8	2.4	2.0	21.8	1.4	20.3	10.9	8.1
CZ	31.3	14.2	10.0	2.5	2.4	20.9	1.6	15.4	11.7	12.6
DK	16.8	10.3	15.1	7.0	6.6	7.9	1.0	13.2	11.5	31.8
DE	27.0	11.0	11.7	3.5	5.3	11.7	1.8	15.1	9.6	20.7
EE	22.8	17.7	10.3	3.4	1.4	15.4	1.6	16.1	16.0	9.5
IE	15.0	9.9	14.3	3.9	5.0	7.6	0.7	15.4	12.5	22.8
GR	12.2	8.8	17.6	4.7	3.6	5.9	0.7	18.3	12.6	9.6
SP	17.2	11.2	15.2	4.0	3.3	7.2	1.2	17.7	10.1	13.5
FR	17.4	12.5	13.1	4.5	5.5	8.0	1.5	12.2	10.1	22.3
HR	20.9	11.0	11.4	3.0	2.5	14.4	1.6	16.9	10.3	11.9
IT	23.2	12.3	14.6	2.8	4.0	11.9	1.2	14.7	11.8	13.1
CY	9.1	18.6	18.3	3.5	2.0	5.5	2.1	19.0	12.0	6.6
LV	16.7	13.4	11.8	4.1	1.9	11.5	1.3	17.4	16.2	9.6
LT	18.3	13.2	15.8	4.3	1.7	13.8	1.3	19.5	15.6	11.2
LU	7.8	10.1	8.0	5.1	5.1	2.2	1.4	8.5	11.3	18.9
HU	24.3	10.8	12.0	3.5	2.6	16.8	1.1	16.6	13.5	12.0
MT	15.9	9.5	14.1	4.8	5.9	8.9	0.8	15.0	17.1	14.4
NL	13.3	8.9	12.6	4.7	5.2	4.6	1.1	13.8	9.1	29.7
AT	21.9	14.6	12.9	3.6	3.9	9.2	3.0	17.5	9.6	15.9
PL	23.0	13.8	12.0	3.0	1.9	13.6	1.1	18.0	13.1	10.6
PT	20.3	14.7	14.8	3.7	3.1	14.4	1.0	15.1	13.6	14.4
RO	19.1	12.9	10.8	1.9	1.7	18.7	1.5	17.0	7.1	7.7
SI	28.4	9.9	11.0	3.3	2.0	16.0	1.4	13.7	15.3	10.4
SK	29.1	17.5	9.2	2.4	2.1	18.8	1.3	16.6	12.2	13.0
FIN	21.3	12.7	11.7	4.6	4.1	7.4	1.2	12.5	9.8	29.7
SE	17.0	12.0	12.9	5.6	5.4	6.0	1.3	10.9	17.0	26.3
UK	14.0	12.3	13.5	5.4	5.3	5.2	1.7	13.9	16.1	22.5

The occupations with the highest share are marked in bold.

Source: Eurostat, own calculations.

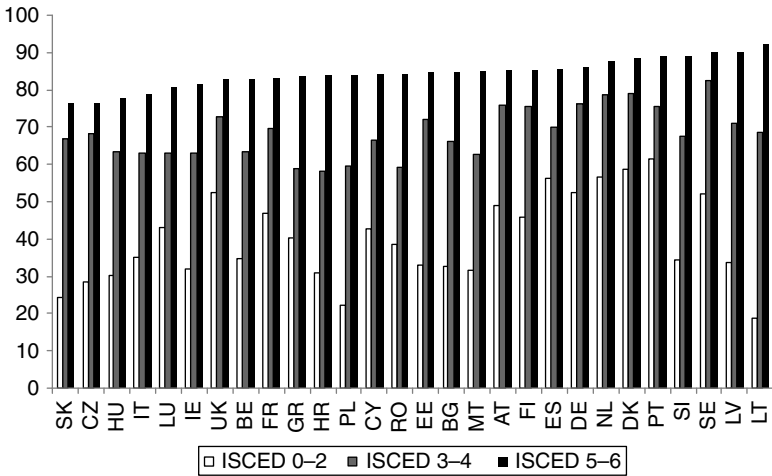


Figure 5.3 Female employment rates and level of education, EU-27 and Croatia, 2012 (%)  
 Source: Eurostat.

insight into the employment rates of women according to their education, earnings and age, and we also look at employment rates for parents.

**Education**

Generally speaking, employment rates are almost always higher for better-educated people than for people with very low levels of education. This is true for all European regions and countries, for men and for women. Nevertheless, rates differ across countries and regions. For example, we can see in Figure 5.3 that women with an International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 0 to 2 have higher employment rates in Portugal than do women with the higher education level of ISCED 3 to 4 in Greece or Poland.

This can be partly explained by the in-country differences of employment rates for highly and less well-educated women. Interestingly, here we see one of the few examples of a more or less pronounced West–East divide: for the EU-15 the spread is 36.1 percentage points, while the average for the NMS8 is 57.3 percentage points, and the four countries with the highest spread in employment rates for different education levels are Lithuania, Poland, Latvia and Slovenia (Figure 5.4).

The lowest spread of all CEEs was in Hungary, with 47.3 percentage points, scoring in the middle of all of the EU-27 countries. A low spread can be interpreted as a signal of a more equal distribution in the labour market, a comparatively high demand for unqualified labour, or a comparatively low demand for high qualifications. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the different general levels of employment for women. Two countries with a

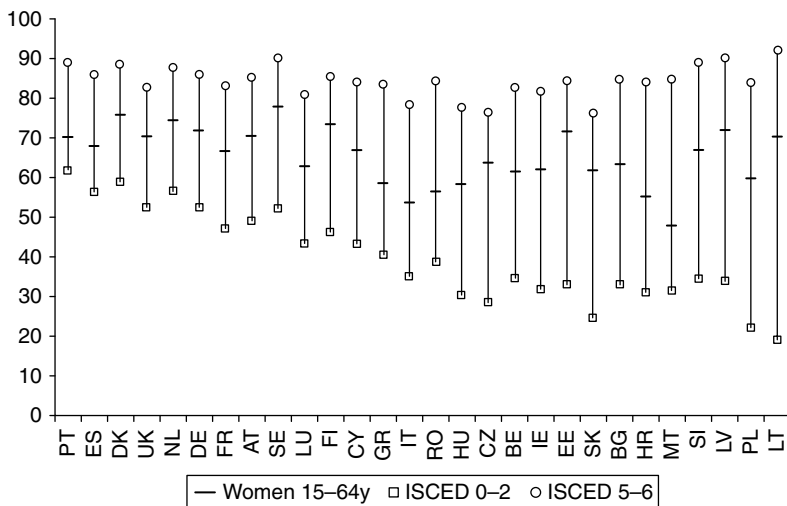


Figure 5.4 Employment rates for women (age 15–64 years) and spread between employment rates for women with the highest level of education of ISCED 0–2 and ISCED 5–6, EU-27 and Croatia, 2012 (%)

Source: Eurostat, own calculations.

similar spread between high- and low-qualified women might have markedly different overall levels of employment, such as Denmark and Portugal, and Finland and Greece.

### Income

Not only do women and men show different employment patterns, but they also have different income levels. It is difficult to compare incomes across countries because of varying currencies and also because of different standards of living and differences between nominal and real wages. So, to get a clearer idea of the differences in income between women and men, we used purchasing power parities (PPPs). Table 5.3 also gives mean net incomes, just to get an idea of what people earn where and of the difference in mean incomes between women and men.

We see that, in all countries, the mean net income, as well as the PPPs, of women is below that of men. Since 2006, the PPPs of women have risen less than those of men in many countries. This was particularly the case in Luxembourg, Bulgaria and Poland, whereas the reverse was markedly the case for Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia and Spain. Only women in Luxembourg and the UK had to face a loss in PPP.

While mean incomes in terms of PPPs are a good approximation for comparing living standards in different countries, the differences between male and female incomes are best expressed in gender pay

Table 5.3 Mean net income in 2011 (€); PPPs in 2011; PPP change since 2006 (%)

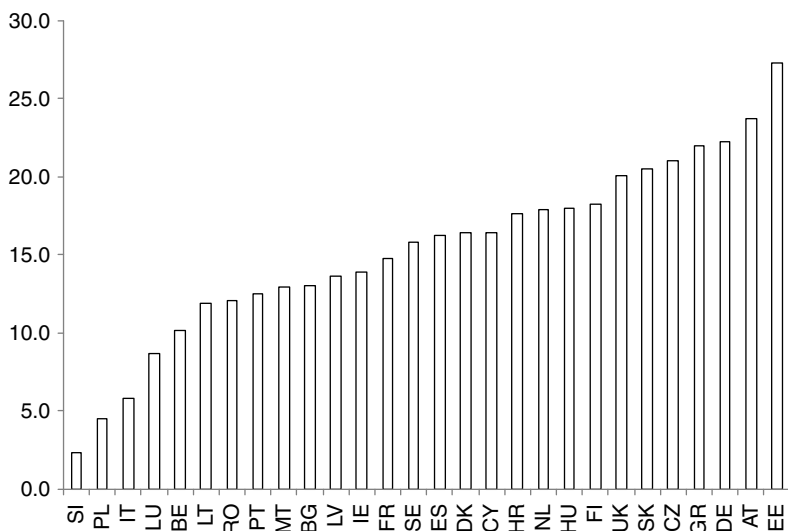
	Women			Men		
	Mean net income 2011 (€)	PPP 2011	PPP difference from 2006 (%)	Mean net income 2011 (€)	PPP 2011	PPP difference from 2006 (%)
EU-27	14.538	11.301	14.6	15.248	13.535	7.7
EU-15	17.141	16.812	10.8	17.899	17.574	11.2
NMS8	5.993	8.169	1.961	6.248	8.517	30.8
BE	19.380	17.430	11.1	4.830	18.409	10.8
BG	2.814	5.529	75.7	6.248	5.850	79.3
CZ	7.274	9.624	19.2	20.468	10.114	20.0
DK	25.899	18.331	16.5	2.977	19.127	16.0
DE	18.700	17.914	20.1	7.644	18.574	20.5
EE	5.415	7.098	32.2	27.024	7.572	28.1
IE	19.077	16.275	5.7	19.389	17.305	6.1
GR	10.760	11.247	3.0	5.777	11.641	2.7
ES	12.317	12.703	3.5	20.284	13.104	1.5
FR	19.683	17.776	21.0	11.137	18.373	20.9
HR	5.410	7.130	–	12.706	7.445	–
IT	15.448	15.006	11.0	20.344	16.022	12.7
CY	16.580	18.531	15.8	5.649	19.279	15.0
LV	4.057	5.539	30.5	16.495	5.819	25.9
LT	3.742	5.761	29.8	17.250	6.166	28.4
LU	31.959	26.195	–0.8	4.262	27.209	2.9
HU	4.467	6.912	15.1	4.005	7.115	15.5
MT	10.575	13.664	15.2	33.196	14.384	15.9
NL	19.869	18.345	13.9	4.598	19.135	13.2
AT	20.824	19.781	16.0	11.133	20.679	16.4
PL	4.951	8.086	59.5	20.725	8.307	62.5
PT	8.255	9.408	10.9	21.769	9.728	11.2
RO	2.079	3.494	23.5	5.087	3.598	23.7
SI	11.798	13.577	13.8	8.536	14.051	13.8
SK	6.236	8.758	93.2	2.141	8.992	90.9
FI	21.336	17.346	19.7	12.209	18.163	19.9
SE	21.946	18.015	21.5	6.402	18.913	23.2
UK	16.728	16.405	–4.1	22.341	17.223	–5.3

Romania: Changes between 2007 and 2011.

Source: Eurostat, own calculations.

gaps, the average difference between men's and women's hourly earnings (Figure 5.5).

At 14.9 per cent, the difference between female and male income was only slightly higher in the NMS8 than in the EU-15 (14.5 per cent), and both are clearly below the EU-27 level (16.2 per cent). Interestingly, we see countries from almost all regions at both ends of the scale. While Slovenia shows the smallest gap (2.3 per cent), women in Estonia suffer the highest difference in incomes compared with men (27.3 per cent). The gender pay gap is a good



*Figure 5.5* Gender pay gap, EU-27 and Croatia, 2012 (%)

*Source:* Eurostat; Greece: 2008, Ireland: 2011.

approximation of the extent of equality between women and men in the labour market, but should not be taken as a single base for judgements. For example, the gap is also comparatively small in Italy, but one should be careful how to interpret this number. The reasons behind the low number might be completely different from those for Slovenia. It is not surprising that the gender gaps are lower in countries where there are comparatively fewer (but eventually better-educated) women employed than in other countries (see Table 5.1; for a discussion of the interdependencies between pay gaps and employment levels see, for example, Boeri, 2005; Krell and Winter, 2008).

### Age

Many aspects of age-related employment are connected to women as mothers. These items are covered in a separate paragraph below. This short section deals only with the aspects not directly related to motherhood. When we look at the variations in employment according to age, we find various patterns (see Figure 5.6). We are able to distinguish three groups: first, countries with a high variation over age groups and comparatively low female employment rates (Italy, Greece, Belgium, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Luxembourg, Croatia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia); second, countries with a medium variation over age groups and a female employment rate in the middle of the range (Cyprus, Spain, France, Portugal, Latvia and Estonia);



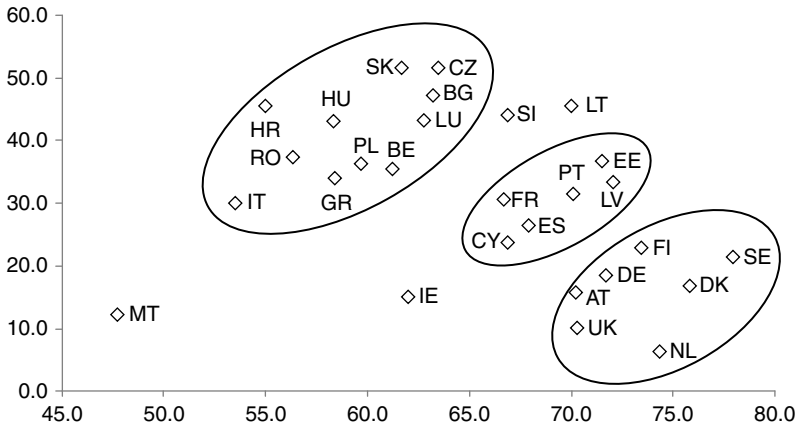


Figure 5.6 Female employment rates (x-axis, %) and variation in employment rates over age groups (y-axis, percentage points difference between the age groups with the highest and the lowest employment rates in each country), EU-27 and Croatia, 2012  
Source: Eurostat, own calculations.

and third, countries with little variation over age groups and high female employment rates (the Netherlands, the UK, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Finland).

Malta seems to be an exception, with a comparatively low variation of female employment rates over age groups and a low general employment rate. Also, Ireland, Slovenia and Lithuania do not fit well into any of the groups. Some of the NMS8 (for example Poland and Slovakia) are in the same group and match well with Greece and Italy; others (like Estonia and Latvia in the second group) are similar to Spain and Portugal. The Nordic countries are in a group with 'conservative' countries, like Austria and Germany, whereas Luxembourg is in the same group as Bulgaria.

When we compare women's employment rates over their life-cycle, we witness almost the same behaviour in all countries: during periods of education the employment rate is below the average, afterwards it is more or less around the mean or slightly above it, and the rate mostly reaches a peak during the late thirties, after that falling more or less steeply. Special patterns were found in Malta, Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, Portugal and the Netherlands, where the 25–29 age group shows the highest employment rates of all, and in Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Finland, where the highest employment rates were for the cohort of 45–49-year-old women. This might be related to the employment rates of mothers.

**Table 5.4** Employment rates of women (15–64 years) with no children, one child and three or more children, EU-27, 2012 (%)

	No children	One child	Three or more children
EU-27	61.7	68.0	54.2
EU-15	63.0	68.4	54.6
NMS8	61.0	70.0	56.9
BE	56.2	72.7	60.7
BG	59.5	69.1	31.9
CZ	63.2	67.6	50.4
DK	68.1	78.2	81.1
DE	73.1	76.8	52.5
EE	72.4	71.5	61.5
IE	63.0	62.5	47.2
GR	41.8	51.5	47.3
ES	53.3	57.9	48.0
FR	60.0	74.0	58.8
HR	44.8	60.5	54.5
IT	50.2	56.3	41.5
CY	62.5	67.8	67.6
LV	65.8	73.1	58.8
LT	63.8	77.2	60.9
LU	64.4	73.7	55.5
HU	57.8	62.8	37.4
MT	45.4	52.7	41.3
NL	67.7	77.7	70.7
AT	67.3	81.0	62.4
PL	52.4	66.9	58.4
PT	58.2	71.9	58.4
RO	54.3	64.7	49.0
SI	54.1	75.4	79.7
SK	58.4	65.5	48.3
FI	71.2	77.9	68.6
SE	71.9	78.5	79.9
UK	69.9	71.9	49.3

Source: Eurostat.

### Employment rates of mothers

Employment rates for women between 15 and 64 years *without* children are lower for the NMS8 than for the EU-15. Interestingly, the employment rates of men as well as women increase when we only look at those with one child, independently of the region and with the only exceptions being Irish and Estonian women (differences of  $-0.5$  percentage points and  $-0.9$  percentage points; see Tables 5.4 and 5.5). In the NMS8, mothers with one child had an employment rate of more than 9 percentage points higher than women without children. In the EU-15, the corresponding difference is 5.4 percentage points, clearly lower, but still remarkable.

Table 5.5 Difference in employment rates of mothers and fathers (15–64 years) compared with women and men without children, EU-27, 2012 (percentage points)

	Women with ...		Men with ...	
	One child	Three or more children	One child	Three or more children
EU-27	6.3	-7.5	12.0	10.5
EU-15	5.4	-8.4	11.5	10.7
NMS8	9.0	-4.1	15.2	11.8
BE	16.5	4.5	17.3	15.7
BG	9.6	-27.6	13.9	-17.0
CZ	4.4	-12.8	13.0	6.9
DK	10.1	13.0	12.8	18.9
DE	3.7	-20.6	11.1	6.6
EE	-0.9	-10.9	15.2	14.5
IE	-0.5	-15.8	9.6	9.4
GR	9.7	5.5	14.7	21.3
ES	4.6	-5.3	9.7	6.5
FR	14.0	-1.2	18.3	17.6
HR	15.7	9.7	15.3	16.8
IT	6.1	-8.7	13.4	16.6
CY	5.3	5.1	10.0	17.6
LV	7.3	-7.0	13.7	9.9
LT	13.4	-2.9	15.9	10.0
LU	9.3	-8.9	8.3	14.6
HU	5.0	-20.4	13.8	4.8
MT	7.3	-4.1	18.6	20.4
NL	10.0	3.0	13.2	14.8
AT	13.7	-4.9	13.1	8.5
PL	14.5	6.0	17.3	18.6
PT	13.7	0.2	14.0	11.0
RO	10.4	-5.3	11.4	2.0
SI	21.3	25.6	18.6	27.3
SK	7.1	-10.1	13.8	2.6
FI	6.7	-2.6	17.5	21.8
SE	6.6	8.0	11.8	15.2
UK	2.0	-20.6	11.1	3.7

Source: Eurostat.

This result is striking, as we would expect the employment rate to be lower for mothers, and it is not easy to find explanations for this result. One might be that children are an expense and the families need the money. This reasoning might appear to contradict the figure for mothers of three or more children: their employment rate is 8.4 percentage points below the figure for women without children in the EU-15 and 4.1 percentage points below the figure for women without children in the NMS8. Lack of childcare facilities

is the most obvious reason for this difference, and this seems to counter-balance economic necessity. While it might be possible to find an adequate solution for one child, arranging childcare for three or more children might be impossible, and dropping out of the labour market might be the only option.

Another clue could be the age group in question. When we only look at women between 25 and 49 years (Table 5.6), the main years when parents tend to devote some of their time to childcare, we find a different pattern. The employment rates for mothers of one child in this age group are below those for women without children in most countries (the exceptions were Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Greece, France, Croatia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania and Sweden; in some of them the deviation is small). In some countries the difference is very pronounced (Malta: -16.9 percentage points, the Czech Republic: -16.0 percentage points), and even more if compared with mothers of three or more children. Only in Sweden (+6.7 percentage points), Denmark (+6.3 percentage points) and Slovenia (+2.4 percentage points) did mothers of three or more children, in the age group 25-49, have a higher employment rate than women without children. The difference is most pronounced in Hungary (-38.1 percentage points), Malta (-36.6 percentage points) and Bulgaria (-36.2 percentage points).

The employment rates for the different groups of mothers were not similar in the different CEEs. The most extreme examples are Slovenia and the Czech Republic. In Slovenia, the employment rate of mothers with one child is the same as the rate for women with no children, and the employment rate of mothers with three or more children is 2.4 percentage points higher. The age of the youngest child has no marked influence. On the other hand, in the Czech Republic, the age of the youngest child in the family has an enormous influence on female employment, with the employment rate reducing to 34.9 per cent if there are children under the age of six in the household. In Hungary, we see the same phenomenon for mothers with three children and more, with the employment rate dropping to 23.6 per cent – a decrease by 53.2 percentage points.

These results are particularly interesting compared with the employment behaviour of men. Men generally show higher employment rates if they have children (the exception was Bulgaria for fathers with three or more children). For the whole group of all fathers (15-64 years), the number of children does not make a big difference. Almost the same is true for the 25-49 age group: employment rates of fathers aged 25-49 are higher, although to a lower degree than those of all fathers. Therefore, while mothers tend to decrease their employment, especially when their children are small and when they have more than one child, the employment rate of fathers generally increases, irrespective of their age and the age and number of their children. This result corresponds to what one would expect

*Table 5.6* Employment rates of women (25–49 years) with no children, one child (with the youngest child under six years old) and three or more children (with the youngest child under six years old), EU-27, 2012 (%)

	No children	One child	One child under six	Three or more children	Three or more children (youngest child under six)
EU-27	75.0	70.1	65.0	54.6	46.6
EU-15	75.3	69.9	67.1	54.6	47.1
NMS8	77.2	71.7	55.4	58.0	47.3
BE	75.4	76.0	74.0	61.3	54.5
BG	69.8	71.7	55.7	33.6	27.6
CZ	82.9	66.9	36.3	50.4	34.9
DK	75.0	77.7	72.2	81.3	75.4
DE	83.4	77.5	66.1	51.5	40.3
EE	81.8	71.8	53.7	62.2	52.6
IE	76.9	65.5	65.5	47.0	44.3
GR	53.0	54.0	52.2	48.2	44.5
ES	66.6	60.7	62.6	48.4	44.0
FR	74.5	75.4	72.2	59.2	49.9
HR	64.3	65.9	61.7	56.6	49.1
IT	64.5	57.4	59.9	40.8	38.6
CY	77.3	69.8	67.5	68.4	62.0
LV	74.9	74.8	65.1	60.4	53.6
LT	74.7	79.7	72.5	61.4	56.5
LU	83.8	78.7	79.9	56.0	51.4
HU	76.8	64.8	39.8	38.7	23.6
MT	78.0	61.1	62.9	41.4	41.1
NL	82.0	78.8	79.8	70.4	66.4
AT	83.7	83.1	77.9	63.2	56.4
PL	73.2	71.9	63.2	60.6	51.8
PT	70.7	75.5	74.8	60.0	53.9
RO	68.3	70.3	65.0	51.5	45.6
SI	77.9	77.9	75.0	80.3	75.7
SK	75.7	66.1	37.7	49.6	29.7
FI	78.7	75.1	62.0	67.3	55.8
SE	73.9	78.8	74.0	80.6	76.9
UK	81.6	72.8	68.2	49.2	41.4

Source: Eurostat.

intuitively, given that childcare is still more associated with women in all countries and that childcare facilities are limited in most countries.

These are clear indicators that childcare facilities are lacking and that the main responsibility for raising children and childcare in general is passed to women. Among others, the EU and the OECD recognize this problem, especially with respect to the lack of qualified employees in exactly this

age group in some countries. Their recommendations are always to better integrate mothers into the workforce, particularly by spending more on childcare facilities and less on generous and long parental leave schemes (see, for example, OECD, 2000, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; European Commission, 2010).

### The 'other side': Unemployment and inactivity

To get a coherent picture of female employment, we have also looked at those excluded due to unemployment or non-participation in the labour market.

#### Unemployment

Before the economic crisis, female unemployment rates were somewhat higher in the NMS8 than in the EU-15 on average. Since 2007, this has slightly changed, with the EU-15 and the NMS8 showing very similar unemployment rates. As in almost all of the other comparisons that we have undertaken in this study, the differences *within* the two groups are bigger than the differences *between* 'East' and 'West' (Figure 5.7).

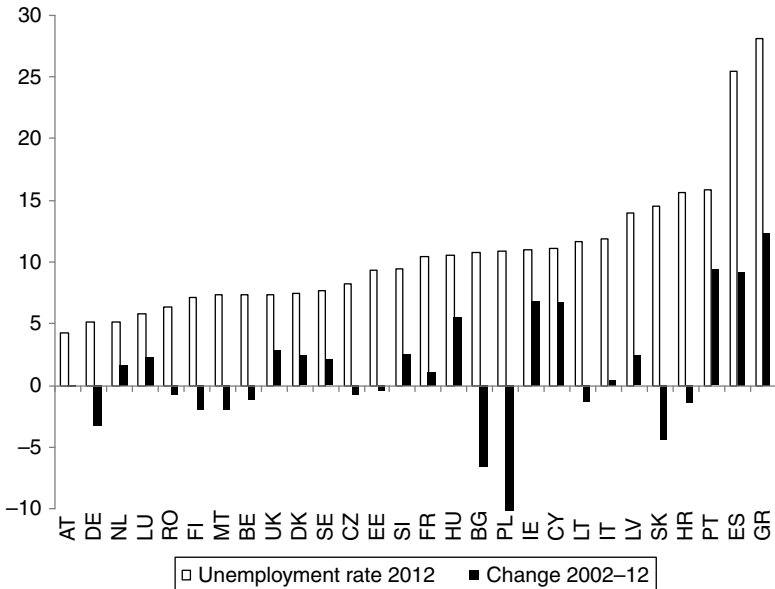


Figure 5.7 Unemployment rates of women, 2012 (%), and change in female unemployment rates, EU-27 and Croatia, 2002–2012 (percentage points)

Source: Eurostat.

When we look at the countries with the highest and those with the lowest female unemployment rates, we find Western European countries at both ends of the scale. Furthermore, we find countries from almost all regions of the EU in the highest and lowest ranges. Only the Nordic countries are the exception, with moderate rates throughout. It is clear that the actual rate of unemployment is highly affected by the extent to which the country in question was hit by the economic crisis. Thus, Greece, Spain and Portugal show the highest rates of all countries and also the sharpest increases in unemployment since 2002.

In the last decade, unemployment of women rose in the EU-15 but fell slightly in the NMS8. As with some other indicators used in this chapter, one has to bear in mind that results can be very dependent on the time period in question and the effects of different starting levels. In 2011, it appeared that female unemployment in the EU-15 had dropped sharply over a ten-year period – for 2013, we see a different picture. With the general state of the economy in mind, it is useful to look at differences in the unemployment rates of men and women (Table 5.7). The unemployment rates of women and men were very similar in the NMS8. But between 2009 and 2011 they began to drift apart (deviations of between 1.0 percentage points and 2.1 percentage points per year). Currently, the rate for women is slightly lower than the rate for men. The EU-15 show a different picture: the unemployment rate of women was higher, but the rates for men and women have evened out since 2009. So, while the difference between the unemployment rates of men and women in the NMS8 narrowed by only 0.3 percentage points between 2002 and 2012, it dropped by 1.7 percentage points in the EU-15.

Again, we find no clear trend for ‘East’ or ‘West’, nor a North–South divide. We find countries from all regions with a closing gap between female and male unemployment rates over the past ten years, for example, France, Greece, Finland and Bulgaria. On the other hand, the difference between the unemployment rates of women and men remained the same in the UK, the Czech Republic and Sweden. Interestingly, the countries with no significant change over the last decade were often also the countries where there was little difference between the unemployment rates of women and men (although the trend is not that clear). There is a clear trend towards closing the gap between unemployment rates. Only six countries witnessed an increase, mostly at very moderate levels. However, this does not reveal much about labour market performance, as a closing gap between male and female unemployment depends on the starting point (which unemployment rate used to be higher?) and it can also be a signal of rising unemployment rates in general. It is always the case that a gender gap can only be used as an indicator for the structure of the labour market.

Initially, it appeared that women were not hit as hard as men by the economic crisis, as the first jobs to go were from the predominantly ‘male’

*Table 5.7* Difference in unemployment rates for women and men, 2012 (percentage points) and change between 2002 and 2012

	2012	2002–2012
EU-27	0.1	-1.5
EU-15	0.1	-1.7
NMS8	-0.3	-0.3
FR	0.7	-7.3
GR	-6.7	-6.1
MT	-0.6	-4.2
FI	-1.5	-3.0
BG	2.0	-2.9
ES	-0.3	-2.2
LT	6.7	-2.2
NL	-3.6	-1.9
PT	0.3	-1.6
DE	-0.2	-1.5
AT	1.4	-1.3
IE	-2.7	-1.3
HU	-1.2	-1.2
HR	2.2	-0.9
RO	-0.1	-0.9
CY	0.0	-0.7
BE	-1.7	-0.6
PL	-0.1	-0.5
SI	-1.2	-0.5
LU	1.5	-0.3
DK	1.3	-0.2
IT	-0.5	-0.2
SE	1.0	0.1
LV	-0.5	0.2
EE	-0.6	0.3
SK	-0.9	0.3
CZ	-2.2	0.4
UK	1.0	0.9

*Source:* Eurostat.

industries, not from the ‘typical female professions’. This trend has partially reversed in many countries since 2010, as jobs in ‘typical female professions’ have become more at risk. Lower real pay, and other working conditions that are ‘usual’ or often taken as given for women, have started to become increasingly normal for men, too (see, for example, Smith, 2009; Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). (For more literature on the gender aspects of the economic crisis, see, for example, Antonopoulos, 2009; Scheele, 2009; Walby, 2009; Bettio et al., 2013; Eurofund, 2013.)



### Part-time and underemployment

Many EU-15 countries saw a sharp rise in part-time employment over the last decade, particularly for women. However, part-time employment is not as significant for the NMS8, and this is one of the few areas where different patterns can be seen between the employment of women in the NMS8 and the EU-15. Working full-time fits with the usual idea of female employment in Eastern European countries, which is characterized by an image of a labour market with equal opportunities for women and men and few differences in occupation, industry or pay. Even though this picture is not at all true any longer, as we can see throughout this chapter, when it comes to part-time employment, this is exactly what we find in the NMS8. As with men, women predominantly work full-time, and, thus, the level of female part-time employment is low, as is the difference between the part-time employment rates of men and women. The NMS8 do not show a trend of increasing part-time employment (Table 5.8): overall, part-time employment rose by only 1.1 percentage points (+0.3 percentage points for men and +1.9 percentage points for women). Although the EU-15 started with a rate three times higher, the rise since 2002 was also more pronounced (+5.5 percentage points overall). The few EU-27 countries with a reduction in part-time employment rates are all from the NMS8.

There are many different aspects to part-time work. It can be a powerful means for improving the combination of work and family life; it can be an important element in a strategy for distributing paid and unpaid work more evenly – and it can be a dead end. Especially women often find it hard to return to full-time employment. Even increasing their working time by only a few hours (but still below full-time) often seems impossible. In many countries, part-time work means lower social protection, less income and no opportunity for professional advancement. The clue, in most countries, is whether working part-time is seen as a strategy solely for women to combine childcare and work, or whether part-time work is understood as a general tool for everybody to profit from either increases in productivity or distributing work, or both. Among others, already Bosch and Wagner (2001) give a good overview of the link between working-time differences of women and men and the availability of childcare facilities. The first case means that families have to find private solutions for a societal problem (who is responsible for childcare?) and the lack of public services such as kindergartens or care facilities. In the second case, we mostly see ‘qualified part-time’, that is, lower working hours (but still clearly more than half of the usual working time), with decent pay and sound social security benefits. The reality in most countries is that part-time workers are predominantly female and often involuntary, in that they would choose to work full-time if the opportunities were available. Therefore, we can also refer to underemployment, because these are people who do work, but not as much as they would like to.

*Table 5.8* Part-time employment of men and women, 2012 (% of all employed) and change between 2002 and 2012 (percentage points)

	2012		2002–2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
EU-27	9.5	32.6	2.9	4.1
EU-15	10.4	38.2	3.8	4.9
NMS8	5.4	10.9	0.3	1.9
BE	9.7	43.6	4.1	6.2
BG	2.2	2.7	0.1	-0.3
CZ	2.9	9.5	0.7	1.2
DK	16.0	36.4	4.9	6.1
DE	10.5	45.6	4.7	6.1
EE	5.8	14.9	1.0	4.2
IE	14.1	35.4	7.6	4.8
GR	4.9	11.9	2.6	3.9
ES	6.6	24.5	4.0	7.7
FR	6.9	30.2	1.7	0.4
HR	7.0	10.0	0.4	-0.5
IT	7.2	31.1	3.7	14.2
CY	8.0	13.7	4.0	2.4
LV	7.1	11.6	-0.5	-0.4
LT	7.5	11.3	-1.9	-1.0
LU	5.4	36.3	3.6	11.0
HU	4.7	9.7	2.4	4.6
MT	6.9	26.3	3.0	8.0
NL	26.4	77.0	5.2	3.9
AT	9.0	44.9	3.9	9.0
PL	5.2	11.3	-3.3	-2.1
PT	12.1	16.8	5.1	0.4
RO	9.5	11.1	-1.4	-1.9
SI	7.0	13.1	2.1	5.6
SK	2.9	5.7	1.8	3.0
FI	10.3	20.1	2.0	2.6
SE	14.6	39.6	3.5	6.5
UK	13.3	43.3	3.7	-0.5

*Source:* Eurostat.

It is not easy to clearly distinguish between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ part-time. Eurostat asks people who work part-time for their reasons, and the possible answers are: no full-time employment available, family-related or other private reasons, care duties (childcare, care of the elderly), illness, in formation and other reasons. For the purpose of this chapter it seemed useful to classify the last three as ‘voluntary’ part-time employment and the first three as ‘involuntary’ – but other classifications are also possible. It is evident that classifying ‘family-related and other private reasons’ as an

indicator for ‘involuntary’ part-time employment is, in the context of this book, particularly delicate. The same may be true for ‘care duties’. We possibly could single out those who would seek other arrangements and those who are happy with the situation. However, we know that people tend to be ‘satisfied’ with the childcare offered in their region, for example, only because they knew from the very beginning that they would have to make arrangements within the given situation. Therefore, maybe we should understand ‘involuntary’ part-time workers as people who would be able to work more, if the circumstances were different. People who are ill or in training would mostly not be able to work more. This approach also seems appropriate, as what we are really interested in here is whether ‘underemployment’ is voluntary or involuntary (Table 5.9).

Even though the part-time employment of women does not play a major role in the NMS8 (see, for example, Fuchs, 2011), those working part-time seemed to be more satisfied with their situation than in the EU-15. However, discontent was lower in the EU-15 countries with comparatively high part-time rates (the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark) than in countries with lower part-time rates. In the context of this book, it is also interesting to look at those women who work part-time due to family-related reasons and care duties: there were no NMS8 countries putting at the top of the list that family and private reasons or care duties are responsible for part-time work. However, in Luxembourg, the UK, Malta, Austria and Germany, family-related reasons and care duties are heavily responsible for part-time work, with more than 50 per cent of women naming this reason. This may be an indicator of the better availability of care arrangements outside the family in the NMS8, or it may be an indicator that more women in these countries opt out of the labour market completely (see the following section).

In the ‘conservative’ welfare states in particular, people often argue that part-time work due to family-related reasons is a positive way of combining work and family and is, therefore, voluntary. Following this reasoning, the values for part-time work due to family and care reasons should be more similar over all countries – it is hard to imagine that parents in different countries show such strong differences in their preference for being with their children or having a sound family–work balance.

### **Inactivity**

For the inactivity rates of women, we mainly see a North–South divide and no marked difference between ‘East’ and ‘West’. In this context, it is also worth looking at the changes in inactivity over the last decade (Table 5.10).

On average, in the NMS8 the female inactivity rate reduced by 4.5 percentage points and in the EU-15 by 6.1 percentage points between 2002 and 2012. Again, we have to be careful with the time period in question, as inactivity is correlated with overall economic performance. A sharp drop in inactivity rates might not only be a sign of activating the labour

Table 5.9 Reasons for 'involuntary' part-time employment of women, 2012 (%)

	No full-time employment	Family or other private reasons	Care duties	All 'involuntary' reasons	Family or other private reasons and care duties
EU-27	24.4	16.1	28.1	68.6	44.2
EU-15	23.9	16.6	29.3	69.8	45.9
NMS8	20.5	16.5	26.7	63.7	43.2
SI	9.2	5.7	10.5	25.4	16.2
SK	30.0	–	3.9	33.9	–
HR	16.1	14.5	4.8	35.4	19.3
EE	20.8	5.2	12.9	38.9	18.1
PL	27.9	3.8	10.1	41.8	13.9
LT	33.5	15.5	–	49.0	–
NL	7.8	4.4	37.1	49.3	41.5
BE	9.7	31.7	9.5	50.9	41.2
DK	19.2	28.7	4.2	52.1	32.9
LV	42.5	10.6	–	53.1	–
HU	38.9	4.7	13.1	56.7	17.8
CZ	22.0	11.7	23.7	57.4	35.4
RO	41.7	13.2	4.2	59.1	17.4
SE	28.3	13.0	21.0	62.3	34.0
FI	26.5	25.0	12.8	64.3	37.8
PT	51.9	7.5	6.1	65.5	13.6
AT	9.3	18.2	38.6	66.1	56.8
BG	66.2	–	–	66.2	–
DE	14.4	25.9	26.3	66.6	52.2
MT	11.5	35.2	24.4	71.1	59.6
UK	13.9	17.1	42.2	73.2	59.3
LU	13.9	40.7	23.6	78.2	64.3
FR	29.9	14.2	34.2	78.3	48.4
ES	58.2	6.0	14.7	78.9	20.7
IE	33.6	26.1	20.3	80.0	46.4
GR	62.2	9.5	8.6	80.3	18.1
CY	46.8	16.1	20.9	83.8	37.0
IT	54.5	6.1	23.7	84.3	29.8

Source: Eurostat.

forcepotential, but could also be related to the improving state of the economy. The other point of interest is whether the inactivity rates of women and men differ. Here, again, we find a North–South divide, if anything, and the difference in inactivity levels is somewhat lower in the NMS8 than in the EU-15.

With reference to inactivity and female employment, and whether the reasons differ from those of men, the reasons for inactivity are particularly interesting. About 20 per cent of women in the NMS8 and 25 per cent in the

Table 5.10 Inactivity rates of women, 2012 (%); change between 2002 and 2012 (percentage points); difference in inactivity between men and women, 2002 and 2012 (percentage points)

	Women		Difference between men and women			
	Inactivity rate 2012	Change 2002–2012	2002		2012	
EU-27	34.4	–5.1	EU-27	16.3	EU-27	12.4
EU-15	33.0	–6.1	EU-15	17.4	EU-15	12.1
NMS8	35.2	–4.5	NMS8	11.7	NMS	10.0
SE	22.1	–1.8	SE	3.7	LT	3.6
DK	24.2	0.1	FI	4.5	FI	3.7
NL	25.7	–6.4	DK	7.9	SE	4.7
FI	26.6	1.5	BG	8.4	LV	5.1
LV	28.0	–6.8	LT	8.6	DK	5.6
DE	28.3	–7.5	SI	9.0	SI	6.8
EE	28.5	–8.3	LV	9.7	EE	7.0
AT	29.7	–6.4	EE	10.7	BG	7.8
UK	29.7	–2.1	PL	11.7	PT	7.8
LT	29.9	–4.4	FR	12.9	FR	8.7
PT	29.9	–4.7	SK	13.2	NL	9.9
ES	32.1	–15.0	RO	13.4	DE	10.7
CY	33.1	–5.3	HR	13.5	AT	11.1
SI	33.1	–3.0	UK	13.8	HR	11.1
FR	33.3	–4.1	HU	14.4	BE	11.2
CZ	36.5	–1.0	DE	14.5	UK	11.9
BG	36.8	–4.8	PT	14.7	ES	12.2
LU	37.2	–9.3	AT	15.5	HU	12.2
IE	38.0	–4.7	CZ	15.9	LU	13.1
SK	38.3	1.3	NL	16.9	PL	13.6
BE	38.7	–5.9	BE	17.2	CY	13.8
PL	40.3	–0.6	CY	19.4	IE	14.6
GR	41.6	–7.4	IE	21.3	SK	15.4
HU	41.7	–5.8	LU	23.5	RO	15.7
RO	43.6	1.2	ES	26.0	CZ	16.0
HR	45.0	1.0	IT	26.2	GR	19.0
IT	46.5	–5.5	GR	26.6	IT	20.4
MT	52.2	–10.4	MT	43.3	MT	30.2

Source: Eurostat.

EU-15 say that care duties and other family-related reasons are responsible for their economic inactivity, and, in most countries, these reasons are the most common explanation of why women do not join the labour market. The situation is even clearer for the younger age group, women between 25 and 49 years (Figure 5.8): 52.2 per cent in the EU-15 and almost 65 per cent in the NMS8 cited care duties and family-related reasons as the main reason

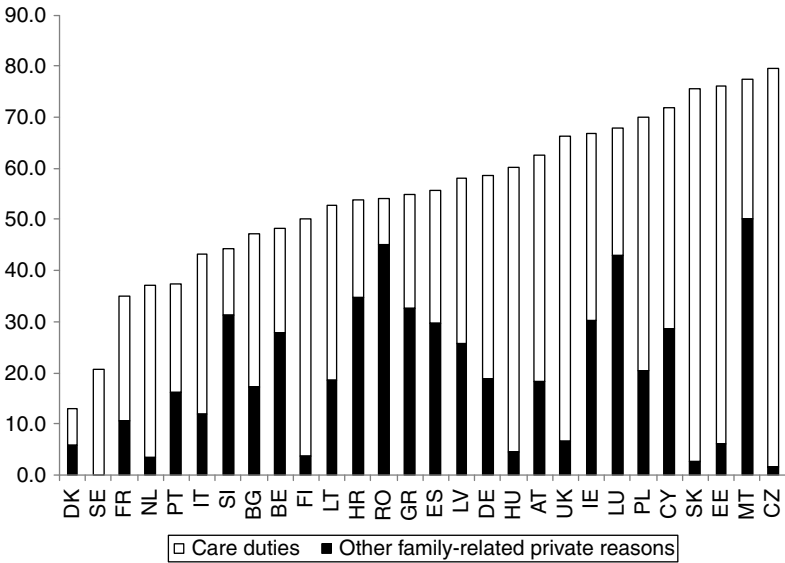


Figure 5.8 Care duties and other family-related reasons for inactivity of women aged 25–49 years, 2012 (%)

Source: Eurostat; no value for ‘other family-related private reasons’ for Sweden and Estonia.

why they did not seek a job. Interestingly, a higher proportion of women cited private reasons in the NMS8 than in the EU-15, so we see the opposite pattern to part-time work. However, as so often is the case, the situation varies between countries. At the lower end of the list we find some of the usual suspects: Northern European countries, France and Slovenia, but also Italy. Interestingly, at the higher end of the list we also find some NMS8 countries.

This is a strong hint that women who do work might find more equal employment conditions and a less segregated labour market in the NMS8 – but eventually at the expense of those excluded from the labour market as a whole.

**Trends in female employment: Convergence of ‘old’ and ‘new’ members?**

As we have seen throughout this chapter, there is no clear labour market pattern for women in Eastern European countries – as there is no clear pattern in Western European countries. Mostly, if anything, we see more of a North–South divide, which existed before EU enlargement and seems to be continuing. For most social and welfare policies, we now recognize that there is no such thing as one Eastern European regime; each CEE country

followed its own reform path, resulting in a variety of regimes (see, for example, Pascall and Kwak, 2009; for a broader debate on labour regimes see, for example, Saint-Paul et al., 1996; Blau and Kahn, 1999; Eichhorst and Konle-Seidl, 2005; OECD, 2006). However, irrespective of the reform path, women are often referred to as being the main losers of the system change: their share in the labour market and in influential political and economic positions, and the degree of equality, has diminished in almost all CEEs (Klenner and Leiber, 2009: 13).

Overall, we can see some trends, although their significance should not be overstated. Whereas most 'old' EU members tend to try to better integrate women into the labour market, it seems that, generally speaking, for all the NMS8, ignoring singular deviations in some countries, the reverse is true. I would like to conclude with the hypothesis that, if anything, we see a slight convergence of old and new member states (see also Pascall and Kwak, 2009: 124). It is important to note that this is definitely not true for all countries, and very much depends on the starting point for each country (high or low female employment rates, high or low employment of mothers and so on).

Generally, it seems that with labour market characteristics that are somehow related to family policies, we tend to find a 'conservative' group in the centre of Europe (Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and often also Hungary and Poland) that is close to countries in the south (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece), and there is a Nordic group (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, but also very often the Baltic countries). By 'conservative characteristics' we should think not so much in terms of Esping-Anderson's terminology, but more in terms of family policies, differences between female and male labour market patterns, and a political conservative–progressive divide. The Baltic countries can be divided between those with more conservative characteristics, similar to the group in the centre of Europe, and those with more liberal characteristics, and thus closer to the Nordic group. The rest of the EU countries often switch between these groups.

The need for a better work–family balance and better reconciliation for women in many countries seems evident, especially in some of the former CEEs (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland), in most of the 'conservative welfare states' (Luxembourg, Austria and Germany) and in some of the Southern European countries (Malta, Cyprus and Greece). This is even more the case for countries that do not have a well-qualified labour force. Women react differently to care and family-related duties when they lack appropriate services and institutions. In Eastern European countries this seems to exclude women from the labour market, while in the conservative countries women more often react by taking involuntary part-time work. Besides all considerations from the family policy perspective, which cannot be covered in this article, and seen purely from an economic viewpoint, it seems inefficient to invest in the education and training of women and then not to make use of these resources.

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# 6

## Paths and Barriers to the Labour Market: A Comparative View of Working and Homemaking Young Adult Women in Hungary and Romania

*Réka Geambaşu*

### Introduction

It has been widely acknowledged in the sociological literature that the post-1989 social, economic and political transformations have had different effects upon women and men. However, except for a few cases, there has been no systematic overview of the mechanisms through which structural changes impacted on women's economic opportunities or their lives in general. The aim of this study was to offer a macro-level comparative account of two of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) post-socialist countries in terms of women's changing positions in the labour market. Through this analysis we aimed to provide a more nuanced account than the straightforward 'loser-winner' dichotomy, and we challenged the assumption that women form a single, unitary and homogeneous social group. So, one of the objectives of our study was to highlight the heterogeneous social and economic positions of women created during the past two decades.

As the trends of decreasing employment and increasing unemployment became more accentuated in the CEE societies after the fall of socialism, so did the rendition of women as *a particularly vulnerable group* become more pervasive in the sociological and gender studies literature (see, for instance, Einhorn, 1993; Łobodzińska, 1995; Pasca Harsanyi, 1995; Pasti, 2003; Miroiu and Popescu, 2004; Oprică, 2008). These analyses – sometimes more like prognoses, as in the case of Barbara Einhorn's book, for example – envisaged that the losses to be faced by women would occur not only in the labour market, but in the political sphere and in their private life, as well. Although women's economic activity during socialism was, indeed, higher

than ever before or since (see Frey, 2002: 10; Koncz, 2008: 278), total gender equality was far from having been accomplished. Even though women's paid work – indispensable for the industrialization project of the centrally planned economies – was both a right and a duty, labour markets all over the region perpetuated gender inequality.

Several authors have nevertheless suggested *the image of women as losers in the post-socialist transformations*. Discussing women's changing positions in the Hungarian labour market, Szalai argues that, through the restructuring of the former socialist economies, the newly developed service sector has provided women with job opportunities, thus enabling them to avoid mass unemployment. In this process, Szalai claims, women could make use of the experience gained in the former socialist second economy (Szalai, 2003). In another paper, based on a comparative study, Fodor suggests a similar interpretation, that the concentration of women in white-collar service jobs may be seen as a resource that protects them from unemployment in times of economic restructuring and de-industrialization (Fodor, 1997).

The transformation of women's economic positions in Hungary has attracted a great deal of sociological attention<sup>1</sup> over the past two decades. Written from several perspectives and different disciplinary approaches, it applies a range of methods to reveal women's positions in contemporary Hungarian society. Most of the conclusions formulated point to a rather traditional society, which, in spite of its dominant family-centrism, struggles with low marital and fertility trends. The strengthening of traditional values – if not its direct consequence – is undoubtedly a reaction to the narrowing labour market opportunities women face (Blaskó, 2005: 168).

Unlike Hungarian studies, Romanian empirical research has dealt with gender inequalities to a much smaller extent.<sup>2</sup> The books published by the Polirom Publishing House within its 'Gender Studies' series are rather theoretical and belong more to the fields of philosophy and political science. The central issues they tackle are not so much related to the economic resources to which women have access, but, rather, to the lack of popularity of the feminist movement in Romanian society and to the consequences of the socialist abortion law.

This study aimed to describe Hungarian and Romanian women's labour market status and opportunities from a comparative perspective. The analysis focused on women and men aged 21–44, as these age groups encompass those who are most affected by the post-socialist economic and social transformations. Significant proportions of the interviewees, especially those under 35, were able to make their most important education-related decisions after 1990, and were thus able to better tackle the changed conditions of the post-socialist period. A further reason for concentrating on fertile age groups came from the European demographic and political concern about very low fertility rates, which made understanding women's and men's labour market opportunities in relation to their family background

and childbearing decisions one of the central concerns of the study. People's responses to the challenges of the post-socialist economies are described using the first wave data of the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP).<sup>3</sup> This cross-European and international comparative panel survey first covers demographic issues, aiming to provide reliable data for policy-makers. However, as the most important aspects of the interviewees' social and professional status have been recorded as well, the survey data enabled us to understand the most significant country- and gender-specific labour market trends. Data was gathered in 2005 in Romania and 2004–05 in Hungary.

This chapter consists of three major sections. The first deals with the general economic, labour market and social political evolution of the two countries in the post-socialist period. The second offers a general overview of the two countries' major labour market trends, relying on official statistical accounts. The third analyses women's employment in Romania and Hungary, focusing on the young adult segment targeted by the GGP surveys. Within this section, we first concentrate on a general description of women's work, then we turn to a specific feature of CEE labour markets, that is, the lack of part-time employment. The last part of the third section sets out to understand the conditions under which a large segment of the Romanian working-age female population loses all ties to the formal labour market.

### **Differences in building capitalism: A general overview of Romania and Hungary**

In this first section, the larger social and economic context of what constitutes the core issue of the present chapter – gendered positions in the Hungarian and Romanian labour market – is described. First, we concentrate on the economic, labour market and social policy aspects that have shaped the two countries' paths over the past two decades, and which we consider to be important in determining the social and economic status of women and men. We expected that Hungary's more powerful reliance on privatization and the high inflow of external capital, paralleled by the shrinking role of agriculture and a growing service sector, would act as a significant resource for women. Although in both countries the female labour force has experienced a sharp decline in employment, the sectoral structure of the Hungarian economy – that is, the significant role of the growing service sector – should offer alternative employment opportunities to women, and the overall high level of education of both male and female population should assist this. In contrast, in Romania, agriculture has maintained its prominent role, while services are less developed: we expected both aspects to contribute to the lower access for women to formal paid employment. Furthermore, women's economic positions are being shaped, not only by the structure of the labour market, but by the general aims and means of the social political system. The Hungarian welfare and family policy system

has been more generous and more inclusive (while allowing for important class differences) than the Romanian system, which has relied more on lower-level and means-tested benefits. Following this, we expected that the polarization of the female population would reflect the effects of the different welfare transfers as well.

### **External actors shaping the transition**

Romania and Hungary have followed different paths over the post-socialist decades, in terms of economic and social policies, despite their geographical proximity and wide range of cultural and social similarities. King and Szélényi (2005) suggest that Hungary was first an example of building capitalism from above and then, in the light of the post-1990 transformations, became part of the cluster of capitalism from without. Romania, on the other hand, stands out as a classic example of capitalism from above (King and Szélényi, 2005). Capitalism from without has been developed in those countries where the former holders of political power have gradually lost control over privatization processes and over the institutions and resources of the newly emerging market economies. In Romania, the formation of capitalism from above meant that political capitalism has been formed as an alliance between the old system and the technocrat managerial class of the former socialist enterprises (King and Szélényi, 2005: 208–214).

Other analysts have also highlighted the role of external actors – whether the dissident intelligentsia or the international financial organizations – in shaping the newly emerging CEE regimes of capitalism. Nölke and Vliegthart (2009) propose the concept of the dependent market economy in order to describe those former socialist countries (including Hungary) where foreign direct investment (FDI) has been significant. The main set of incentives maintaining the multinational corporations' (MNCs) interest in some of the former socialist countries is the availability of a medium level of technology, as well as a fairly well-educated but cheap labour force, willing to commit to the creation of assembly platforms for semi-standardized industrial goods (Nölke and Vliegthart, 2009: 679). One of the major aspects of this model is that it is only sustainable as long as the labour force maintains its level of qualification and there is a relatively low wage level, and no real internal force to promote the development of education (Nölke and Vliegthart, 2009: 679, 692).

The role of FDI in Romania's economy, on the other hand, has been marginal compared with CEE dependent market economies. Marinova and Marinov (2003) calculate that by the end of 2000 more than half (57 per cent) of the total inward FDI directed towards the countries of the CEE region was attracted by the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Romania's share in the total inflow of FDI in the region (4.13 per cent), in contrast, was smaller than its share in the regional population (7.67 per cent) (Marinova and Marinov, 2003: 5). Comparative data on gross domestic product (GDP)

in CEE countries confirm that the Slovakian, Hungarian, Czech and Polish GDPs have been among the highest in the region for the past two decades, leaving Bulgaria and Romania behind. In 2011, the GDP per capita, based on purchasing power parity, was 21,663 current international dollars in Hungary, and only 15,139 in Romania (TransMonee project, World Development Indicators Database).

### **Sectoral differences in the labour market**

Several other features of the national economies have influenced the evolution of economic indicators, and the relative size of economic sectors throughout the post-socialist period has been suggested to be significant. In spite of the overarching industrialization project carried out in all former socialist countries, Romania still relies heavily on agriculture. In 2011, 25 per cent of employees worked in agriculture in Romania, compared with only 5 per cent in Hungary. The Romanian service sector has not managed to catch up either, with only 44 per cent of employment compared with 64 per cent in Hungary in 2011. Nor is the weight of the Romanian agrarian sector, in terms of its contribution to GDP, comparable with its share of employment. Between 1990 and 2011, the proportion of the population employed in agriculture decreased from around 50 per cent to 25 per cent, accompanied by a much greater decrease in its contribution to the Romanian GDP: from 23.75 per cent to 6.40 per cent in the same period (INS Tempo Online Programme, Romania).

The *share of the agrarian sector* in Romanian employment (responsible for the bulk of Romanian part-time employment) is one of the principal explanations for the differences in the overall employment levels between Romania and Hungary. Romanian employment rates have stayed at over 50 per cent for the entire post-socialist period, even exceeding 60 per cent during the second half of the 1990s, while in Hungary employment-to-population ratios have fluctuated between 40 and 50 per cent. These unemployment data seem to contradict the general representation of a much more competitive Hungarian economy compared with its Romanian counterpart. Except for the first half of the 2000s, the proportion of the unemployed in the Romanian population aged 15 and over has been around 2 percentage points lower than in Hungary. Beyond the sectoral structure of employment, the other explanation for the 'better' Romanian data could be as a result of inconsistencies in defining and registering work and unemployment. Unemployment data are widely acknowledged as multifaceted, and they pose serious limits for comparison, as they do not always take measures of labour under-utilization into account. The most important forms of labour marginal to the labour market are laid-off workers on recall, involuntary part-timers or discouraged workers.

Nevertheless, in Romania's case the central reason for the exceedingly high employment rates is strongly linked with the almost unmatched size of the

agricultural sector in terms of employment. The inclusion of the otherwise extremely large population of subsistence farmers and unpaid family helpers into the employed group in the Romanian statistics is almost unique in European statistical practice, and to a great extent explains the differences in employment rates. Some estimates suggest that Romanian employment rates would have fallen by approximately 12 percentage points in 2001 if subsistence farmers had been excluded and by an additional 6.2 percentage points if other categories of self-employed and unpaid family helpers had been extracted from employment data (Brown et al., 2006: 7, 11). There are similar problems of reliability and limits to comparability with unemployment data: 'partially relaxed unemployment', for example, laid-off workers expecting to be recalled, is not typically included in the category of the unemployed, resulting in lower rates than in other countries (Brown et al., 2006: 11). However, the restrictive definition of unemployment that counts only those people who are actively looking for a job, or are available to start at a workplace in two weeks' time, excludes those 'discouraged workers', not only in Romania but, for instance, in Estonia and Russia as well, who have been struggling with long-term unemployment and do not see themselves as able to find and carry out paid work. Brown and his colleagues consider that adding discouraged workers to the unemployed category in 2001 would have raised unemployment rates by percentage points in Romania (Brown et al., 2006: 17). Lastly, beyond the statistical issues, explained above, that convey a biased statistical representation of the Romanian labour market, the high incidence of international migration has also played a crucial role in reducing the number of registered and non-registered unemployed, and has, thus, improved the employment statistics.

### **Social and family policies**

In his influential work, Esping-Andersen (1990) defines the welfare state by its ability to de-commodify labour, that is, to free its citizens from market dependency and the pressure to work for survival. In this respect, the area of social policy is widened to include not only income transfers, social services and the provision of housing, but all the measures of economic control available to the state through which class inequalities can be dissolved. The gender dimension of the impact of the welfare state upon its subjects has mostly been neglected, and this has often been pointed out. The family model, rendered as a normative reference point by the state's social policy, impacts the choice most families make between the dual-earner and the male breadwinner model, leading to particular patterns of gender inequality (González et al., 2000: 5). This was the same for the socialist and post-socialist welfare state, as 'welfare benefits [were] highly consequential for women's chances of becoming and/or staying poor' (Fodor et al., 2002: 475).

Social and family policies were similar in most important aspects throughout the socialist region. The central feature of defining the terms of social

citizenship for women was the redistribution of resources by a centralized paternalist state that granted welfare on the basis of need. However, after the regime change, social and family policies diverged, mainly according to the general paths followed by the societies as a whole. The overall reduction of the size of the female labour force and the falling birth rates, accompanied by the rapid ageing of the population, represented significant coercive forces that shaped the possibilities and scope of family policies. Moreover, the dissolution of the common socialist market induced a massive de-industrialization and economic restructuring process, which made a significant part of the labour force redundant. As a regional average, approximately 30 per cent of jobs were lost during the early years of the post-socialist period (Fodor et al., 2002: 481). The financial resources available for social welfare were drastically reduced as a consequence of a series of factors, from the general economic restructuring to the losses caused to state budgets by tax reductions given to investing multinationals (Nölke and Vliegenthart, 2009: 679). Cuts in the volume of public spending were accompanied – sometimes even facilitated – by an upsurge in conservative and individualist value orientations that denied the usefulness of most social transfers and appealed instead to the support of the family and community in case of need (Preda, 2002).

Former socialist societies are generally more reluctant to embrace social-democratic values and welfare models. In a paper comparing *attitudes towards welfare systems* across European countries, and their relationship to the existing welfare models of those countries in 2008 (Bányai et al., 2012), Hungary turned out to be rather conservative, considering spending on social welfare too heavy a burden for the public budget, seeing it as not effective in leveling social inequalities, and considering social support to hinder individual motivations to improve one's material situation. The Romanian population was more ambivalent towards the use of social transfers: public opinion did not consider spending for social assistance to be a useless burden, but it was generally suspicious about the efficiency of welfare policies in dissolving class inequalities. The Romanian population, along with the Bulgarian, the Czech, the Slovak and other countries, did not consider the social interventions of the state to be efficient, but nor did they consider them harmful to individual or collective responsibility. The CEE countries have spent only a very small amount of their GDP on social security compared with other European states, but, in spite of the high share of pensions within social expenses, the support granted to individual recipients is usually below the average. It is very likely that such contradictions feed the public opinion that questions the efficiency of state provisions in counterbalancing market-created inequalities (Bányai et al., 2012). It is still largely debated to what extent public policies in general react to the expectations of the voters or, the other way around, whether public perception and evaluation are influenced by political decisions and strategies. Hungary, according to our 2008 data,



adopted on average a much more liberal and conservative stance regarding welfare systems, based on a more accentuated concept of meritocracy and individual responsibility. Fodor et al. rate the Hungarian population, in terms of family values, as less traditional than Poland or Romania (Fodor et al., 2002: 481). Romanian public opinion, on the other hand, although reserved about the efficiency of the welfare programmes, does not show any concerns about the presupposed negative effect upon individual motivation.

The two countries have developed different sets of *family policies*, in this way creating different incentives and opportunity structures for women's work or, the other way around, contributing to differences in women's dependency upon their husbands or partners. As Fodor et al. (2002: 483) formulate it, 'the interpretation of caregivers' social citizenship status' has been granted by varying family policies. The most important difference between the roles of the Romanian and the Hungarian welfare state was the latter's much greater contribution to preventing women from slipping into poverty, even though support was granted in a differential manner to middle-class and lower-status women. On the contrary, the minimalist Romanian family policy assists only employed women, thus enlarging the gap that already exists between poor and better-off women. Both systems included elements that were meant to financially discourage Roma women's fertility. Beyond varying levels of economic development, the degree of secularization (more accentuated in Hungary), the impact of working-class mobilization and the influence of international financial agencies played a decisive role in shaping social and family policy in the two countries (Fodor et al., 2002: 486–489).

## **Women and men in the Romanian and Hungarian labour markets**

### **General trends in gendered labour market participation**

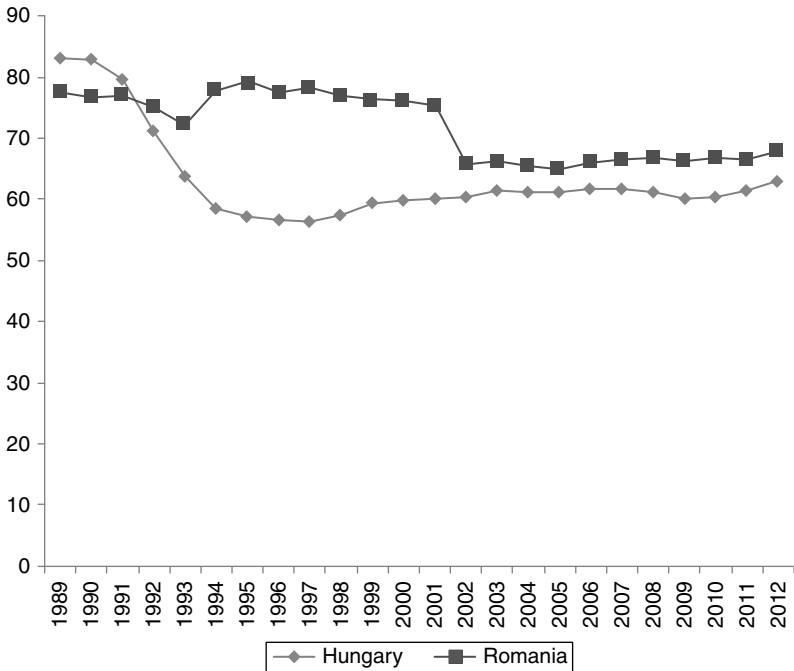
Even though the socialist project of gender equality aimed at improving not only women's employment rates, but also their access to education, by 1989 the patterns of gender inequality ended up being almost identical in the Eastern and Western parts of Europe (Frey, 1998, 2002; Pasti, 2003). Although the female labour force was crucial for the industrialization and, consequently, for the modernization of the CEE societies, most women were not directly employed in industrial production, but in agriculture, in the rather underdeveloped service sector and in the administrative units of the newly founded industrial centres (Łobodzińska, 1995: 30, 210). As much as women's access to the labour market improved their financial situation, the state, by not addressing women's multiple home and work duties through adequate policy measures, basically doubled the workload for women. Female and male social roles, codified and defined by the socialist state as normative for its citizens, differed significantly from each other. While men were primarily seen as *producers* and implicitly as *the holders of*

*political power*, women were seen not only as producers and political actors but as *reproducers*, too (Einhorn, 1993: 39–40).

After the fall of communism, the women's labour market and economic situation was influenced by several factors: although analysts regularly limit their scope to only the 'hard' facts of transition – economic restructuring, demographic trends and policies, the eradication of political quotas – the upsurge of conservative values, which offered women completely different roles from those defined within the socialist emancipatory project, played a significant role in the self-perception of women as social and political agents. Women's work was re-evaluated by traditional norms and values, and the overt or implicit exclusion of women from the labour market was often justified on the basis of their family duties. The weakening of the labour market status of women after 1990 was paralleled by the strengthening of traditional value orientations (see, for instance, Frey, 2002; Blaskó, 2005). In the post-socialist context, decreasing employment was not the only risk to the economic situation of women. While the employment rates of men were shrinking too, unemployment and inactivity, followed by irreversible exclusion from the paid labour market, were threats to which women were totally exposed (Frey, 1999: 17).

As a result of economic restructuring, employment rates have fallen from 83 to less than 60 per cent in Hungary during the first decade of the post-socialist period. In Romania, the shrinking of the labour market was much less drastic, according to Labour Force Survey (LFS) data. The employment rates among persons aged 15–59 remained around 76–77 per cent for the entire first decade, falling below 66 per cent only after 2002, when the methodology of the LFS was itself adjusted (Figure 6.1). The reason behind the seemingly higher Romanian employment rates is, indeed, methodological in nature. The rather inclusive definition of employment has allowed a significant segment of the Romanian population working as agricultural self-employed or family workers to be considered as employed.

Romanian and Hungarian employment trends have not always followed European trends. Moreover, the rates have not developed in parallel in the two countries. LFS data shows that after 1997, both at the level of the EU-average and in Hungary, the share of the employed within the active population started growing, while it was moving in the opposite direction in Romania. In Hungary, the post-1997 growth of the labour market was accompanied by a general trend of increasing prosperity and economic growth. This is often attributed to an austerity package put in place in 1995 and the resulting significant inflow of FDI (Gödri et al., 2013: 14). However, in both countries the differences between the two genders' employment rates decreased quite significantly. The trends are similar to the EU member states in general: here the employment gap shrank from 20 per cent to 11.1 per cent by 2012. While female employment is lower in both Hungary and Romania than in the 'average EU country', gender



*Figure 6.1* The trends of employment rates in the population aged 15–59 in Hungary and Romania from 1989 to 2012 (%)

*Source:* TransMonEE database 2014 based on Labour Force Survey data (available at [www.transmonee.org](http://www.transmonee.org)).

differences in employment, on the other hand, are smaller (13.9 per cent in Romania and 10.4 per cent in Hungary). Between 1997 and 2006, women's labour market activity grew by 12 per cent in Hungary, whereas in Romania women's employment experienced a different trend, decreasing from higher levels, but by more than 10 per cent (EUROSTAT Labour Force Survey).

The interpretation of the differences between Western European and Eastern European employment rates should also take into account the availability and accessibility of part-time jobs in the different economies. In one of her papers analysing data for the year 2000, Frey concludes that if only full-time jobs were considered, Hungarian women's employment rates would exceed the European averages in both 1997 and 2000 (Frey, 2002: 11). Data supplied by the LFS shows that part-time rates were much lower in Romania and Hungary than in the EU-28: 9.1 per cent in Romania and 6.6 per cent in Hungary, compared with 19.2 per cent in the EU. The relatively high share of women employed in part-time jobs is a distinctive characteristic of the Western European economies: on average, only around half of the

women taking up paid jobs work more than 35 hours a week (that is, full-time according to European standards): 27 per cent in Holland, and between 53 per cent and 59 per cent in Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland and Austria. The same rates in the former socialist states exceed 80 per cent (in both Hungary and Romania, out of ten female employees, nine worked more than 35 hours per week). Part-time jobs are mostly for women in the EU, as 95 per cent of men are employed on full-time contracts (EUROSTAT LFS). The main differences between the EU-average and the two post-socialist countries in terms of working hours may be found in the 15–29 hours category. In both countries studied, the share of women applying the part-time strategy of reconciling family and work is five times lower than the EU-average. In the case of men, the differences are much lower, as non-standard labour arrangements are basically feminine specialities (Hárs, 2012).

Lastly, the social and economic transformations brought about by de-industrialization, as well as the massive reduction of the former state and local administrative apparatus, an important employer of the female labour force, resulted in a rapidly increasing unemployment rate, for both women and men, all over Eastern Europe. In Hungary, unemployment rates peaked in 1993 (Andorka 1997: 139). Again, comparing Romania and Hungary is somewhat limited because of the differences in measurement methods. Table 6.1 shows the unemployment rates in the two countries.<sup>4</sup>

*Table 6.1* Total unemployment rates (%) in Romania and Hungary between 1997 and 2012

	EU-15			Hungary			Romania		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1997	8.9	11.6	10.0	9.9	8.0	9.1	5.0	5.7	5.3
1998	8.3	11.1	9.5	9.4	7.9	8.7	5.5	5.3	5.4
1999	7.6	10.2	8.7	7.3	6.2	6.9	6.8	5.6	6.2
2000	6.8	9.3	7.9	6.8	5.6	6.3	7.2	6.3	6.8
2001	6.5	8.5	7.3	6.1	4.9	5.6	6.9	6.2	6.6
2002	6.9	8.7	7.7	6.0	5.1	5.6	7.8	7.1	7.5
2003	7.4	9.0	8.1	6.0	5.5	5.8	7.2	6.3	6.8
2004	7.6	9.2	8.3	6.1	6.1	6.1	9.0	6.9	8.0
2005	7.7	9.1	8.3	7.0	7.4	7.2	7.7	6.4	7.2
2006	7.2	8.7	7.8	7.2	7.8	7.5	8.2	6.1	7.3
2007	6.5	7.9	7.1	7.1	7.7	7.4	7.2	5.4	6.4
2008	6.8	7.8	7.2	7.6	8.1	7.8	6.7	4.7	5.8
2009	9.2	9.1	9.2	10.3	9.7	10.0	7.7	5.8	6.9
2010	9.6	9.6	9.6	11.6	10.7	11.2	7.9	6.5	7.3
2011	9.6	9.8	9.7	11.0	10.9	10.9	7.9	6.8	7.4
2012	10.6	10.7	10.6	11.2	10.6	10.9	7.6	6.4	7.0

*Source:* EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey.

Hungary's active population was more severely affected by unemployment than was the case in Romania. In 2000, however, Hungarian rates fell below the Romanian rates, only exceeding them in 2006. The Romanian rates of unemployment reached their peak (8 per cent) in 2004. In Hungary, in contrast, between 1996 and 2002, unemployment showed a decreasing trend. As far as the two genders' vulnerabilities are concerned, there are country-specific differences to be found. Whereas in Hungary women's exposure to job losses was higher after 2005, in Romania the first years of the transition, up to 1997, brought higher female unemployment levels. While affected by unemployment to a lower extent than men, the Romanian women's situation was aggravated by the fact that, unlike men, they had not been made redundant by large industrial companies that offered substantial severance pay (Pasti, 2003: 160).

Most specialists agree that lower levels of unemployment among women do not necessarily mean better labour market positions. The *reserve army of labour* theory suggests that particular groups in the labour force – especially the young, women and immigrants – are used in times of economic growth and dispensed with as recession starts. In the women's case, lower rates of unemployment may not only result from high levels of economic activity, but from the higher propensity to become inactive. Pasti finds, based on the Gender Barometer, a Romanian national-level survey<sup>5</sup> conducted in 2000, that 21 per cent of the female population of active age had no income whatsoever at the time the data was gathered. Apart from students and homemakers, this category included the unemployed not receiving any kind of social support (Pasti, 2003: 159). Indeed, rates of economic activity were higher for men than for women for the entire post-socialist period (see Table 6.2 for data on 2012). Contrary to expectations, and taking all forms of inactivity into account, high rates are not particularly characteristic of rural areas.<sup>6</sup>

Hungarian data – which differs from the Romanian statistics in that it always takes the legal retirement age into account – confirms the tendency already seen in Romanian society: inactivity among women is higher than among men by 13–14 per cent. Katalin Koncz found for 2006 that while most

Table 6.2 Economic activity rates in Hungary and Romania in 2012, by gender (%)

	Hungary	Romania
Men	70.5	72.1
Women	58.3	56.4
Total	64.3	64.2

Source: EUROSTAT, Labour Force Survey.

non-working men were either retired or still studying (each group making up around 40 per cent), the same categories' share among inactive women was much lower (30 and 30 per cent, respectively). Women not employed were very likely to be either on parental leave or staying at home as homemakers (Koncz, 2008: 295).

Summing up, one may conclude that, according to official statistical data, the status quo of the two labour markets by the early 2010s has been the result of rather different processes. While in Hungary the first years of the third millennium brought growth in the labour market, the Romanian employment rates, which were roughly the same as the Hungarian rates, were more the result of a gradually shrinking labour market. The same tendency may be observed for women's employment: Romanian women's access to paid labour became more and more limited, falling from 60 to 53 per cent during the first decade of the 2000s, whereas in Hungary over the same period it grew by more than 5 percentage points. Although official statistical data is not aggregated according to working hours, Frey argues that the differences in women's employment between Western and Eastern European societies are largely due to the former's great reliance on part-time work (Frey, 2002: 11). Finally, vulnerability in the face of unemployment proved to be gender sensitive, too: in both countries, except for short exceptional periods, women's exposure to job loss – at least at the level of the official statistical data – was somewhat lower than men's. However, as many analysts point out, this is mainly the result of women adopting alternative inactivity strategies when made redundant: either going on maternity and childcare leave or becoming housewives. Data shows that, especially after their second child, many women might choose not to return to the regular labour market for a long period, or even indefinitely.

## **Gender differences in the economic activity of young adults in Hungary and Romania**

### **Employment and education**

After describing the general trends of labour market participation of Hungarian and Romanian men and women, we now turn to a more specific segment of the two societies, those aged 21–44. In this section we used the survey data gathered within the framework of the 2004/05 GGP. In the young adult age groups, female employment rates are lower than male employment rates in both countries. The GGP data shows that, of all those surveyed in Romania, 85.5 per cent of men were working at the time of the survey and only 65.3 per cent of women. In Hungary, 81.2 per cent of men were working and 63.2 per cent of women. In both states, gender activity gaps were around 20 per cent, thus exceeding the officially registered values.

Table 6.3 displays data from the Romanian and Hungarian GGP broken down by gender and age groups. However, before analysing the economic activity recorded by the two surveys, let us take a closer look at the reality as it is reflected by official statistics. Official statistical evidence shows that in Romania the men's employment rate in the age group 25–34 was 78.3 per cent and the women's employment rate was 68 per cent, and that it was significantly higher in the next age category (35–44): 85.5 per cent for men and 73.4 per cent for women. In Hungary, too, official gender differences were lower in 2005: whereas in the relatively young age group of 20–24 years employment rates were low for both sexes (43.6 per cent for men, 34.7 per cent for women), among those aged 25–44 the share of employed men and women was 82.8 per cent and 67.4 per cent, respectively. One of the reasons behind differing employment rates may be the varying definitions of employment. It is known that LFS methodology considers all those people who have been working for pay or profit for at least one hour during the reference week, irrespective of the formality or informality of the contract, to have been employed. In contrast, GGP has limited its definition to more formal forms of employment, at the same time raising the threshold of working time.

In Hungary, the highest employment rates are found among women aged 40–44 and men aged 30–34. Bukodi and Frey claim that women's labour market activity is more strongly influenced by the number of children they raise than men's (Bukodi, 2005: 18; Frey, 2009: 35). Without suggesting that this would be the only factor determining and explaining access to paid labour, our data support this: a working man raises twice as many children as a working woman. In Romania, employment and age relate to each other in roughly the same manner: whereas more than nine out of ten men aged 30–34 work, the highest female employment rate may be found not towards the end of reproductive age, that is, in the age group 40–44, as in Hungary, but one age group earlier, 35–39 years. The most conspicuous difference between women's labour market status in the two countries is related to the most widespread form of inactivity. It is quite common in both countries that unemployment rates tend to be somewhat higher for men than women, with only a few exceptions, but parental leave takers and homemakers make up very different proportions of the women's populations in the two societies. In each age group, women receiving maternity care allowance make up a group three to ten times larger in Hungary than in Romania. On the other hand, Romanian women's strategy of staying at home as housewives is much more widespread than in Hungary. Depending on the age groups, the proportion of women who are housewives may be ten to twenty times higher in Romania than in Hungary. In Romania, the number of young children has different impacts upon labour market activity for women and men. Women working outside the household have significantly fewer children younger than seven years old than those staying at home, but also

Table 6.3 Economic activity in Hungary and Romania, by gender (%)

		Hungary			Romania		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
21–24 years	Employed, self-employed or helping family member	57.8	44.2	51.4	61.8	42.1	53.5
	Retired, ill or disabled	0.4	0.2	0.3	1.1	0.5	0.9
	On leave: maternity, parental or childcare	0.2	13.3	6.4	0.0	4.2	1.8
	Homemaker	0.2	1.3	0.7	0	17.4	7.3
	Student	28.4	31.9	30.1	25.2	29.5	27.0
	Unemployed	10.1	7.3	8.7	8.0	6.3	7.3
	Other	3.0	1.7	2.4	3.8	0	2.2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
	N	567	520	1087	262	190	452
25–29 years	Employed, self-employed or helping family member	87.2	61.9	74.9	88.3	57.5	73.1
	Retired, ill or disabled	1.2	1.4	1.3	0.4	0.8	0.6
	On leave: maternity, parental or childcare	0.3	24.0	11.8	0.5	7.5	4.0
	Homemaker	0	1.6	0.8	0	29.3	14.5
	Student	3.5	3.0	3.2	1.5	1.8	1.6
	Unemployed	6.6	4.8	5.7	6.8	2.5	4.7
	Other	1.3	3.3	2.3	2.4	0.8	1.6
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
	N	748	707	1455	409	400	809
30–34 years	Employed, self-employed or helping family member	89.0	59.6	74.4	90.6	63.5	77.2
	Retired, ill or disabled	1.8	2.2	2.0	1.4	1.2	1.3
	On leave: maternity, parental or childcare	0.6	23.6	12.0	1.0	5.1	3.0
	Homemaker	0	4.0	2.0	0.4	26.3	13.2
	Student	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.4
	Unemployed	6.7	7.8	7.3	4.4	3.5	4.0
	Other	1.7	2.5	2.1	1.7	0.2	1.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
	N	652	644	1296	520	509	1029
35–39 years	Employed, self-employed or helping family member	85.1	73	79.0	87.3	74.6	81.2
	Retired, ill or disabled	5.1	3.3	4.2	3.4	1.5	2.4
	On leave: maternity, parental or childcare	0.5	10.1	5.3	0	1.4	0.7
	Homemaker	0	3.8	1.9	0.3	18.7	9.2
	Student	0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
	Unemployed	7.0	8.1	7.6	7.3	3.3	5.4
	Other	2.3	1.5	1.9	1.5	0.5	1.0
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
	N	602	603	1205	713	664	1377



40–44 years	Employed, self-employed or helping family member	83.8	75.7	79.6	88.1	71.1	80.3
	Retired, ill or disabled	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.2	4.4	4.9
	On leave: maternity, parental or childcare	0.4	4.5	2.5	0.2	0.7	0.5
	Homemaker	0.2	4.2	2.3	0	20.0	9.2
	Student	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unemployed	5.9	5.4	5.6	5.7	3.7	4.8
	Other	3.8	4.3	4.1	0.8	0	0.5
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
	N	526	576	1102	477	406	883

*Source:* Generations and Gender Programme data (Romania 2005, Hungary 2004/2005).

fewer than working men. However, women who are usually not formally employed, but helping in family businesses, have more pre-school-age children than those who work outside their homes. The analyses of women's and men's labour market activity often underline that children, especially young children not yet at school, influence women's and men's chances of employment in opposite ways: decreasing paid work for the former and encouraging it for the latter. The special social, economic and professional status of homemaking women will be dealt with separately in the following sections.

In the age group 21–24, Hungarians exceed Romanians by only 3 per cent in the proportion of those still studying, but in both cases women are more prone to spend a longer period in the education system – at least as far as the 21–24-year-olds are concerned. However, the share of those studying among all of those categorized as inactive is higher for men than for women. The differences in the overall educational level – both within and between the countries – are shown in Table 6.4.<sup>7</sup> In Romania, the proportion of university graduates is lower by almost 10 per cent than in Hungary, with a greater difference between the proportion of women who are graduates in Hungary (27.6 per cent) and Romania (13.4 per cent). Romanian women are under-represented among secondary school graduates, too, compared with men, although we added the non-tertiary post-secondary schools to this group as well. Women are, thus, much less well educated in Romania, and also less well educated than men in both countries.

Following general European tendencies, women are more likely to work as employees in both countries, rather than as entrepreneurs or self-employed. EUROSTAT figures have not detected any reduction in the differences between women and men's entrepreneurship in recent years. In 2005, for example, in the European Union (EU), only 3.5 per cent of

*Table 6.4* Educational attainment among Hungarians and Romanians aged 21–44 years (%)

	Hungary				Romania		
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total
Primary school or less	12.7	14.5	13.6	Elementary or less	0.3	0.9	0.6
Vocational and professional	61.2	44.3	52.8	Primary and vocational	17.6	24.6	20.9
Secondary	9.5	13.6	11.5	Secondary	69.3	61.1	65.4
Tertiary	16.6	27.6	22.1	Tertiary	12.8	13.4	13.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source:* Generations and Gender Programme data (Romania 2005, Hungary 2004/2005).

the women working in the industrial and service sectors were entrepreneurs with employees, and a further 8 per cent were self-employed, without any employees. The corresponding rates for men were 7.1 per cent and 11.6 per cent, respectively. In the same year, Hungary exceeded the European averages as far as women entrepreneur rates were concerned (with 5.3 per cent), but remained below the EU mean rates in the case of self-employed women (7.3 per cent). Entrepreneurship among women is characterized by a high level of sectoral concentration, with most representatives in the retail sector (Eurostat, 2008). Self-employment – basically a male labour market strategy – is most widespread in the rural areas, just like the helping family member status, which, in contrast, is more specific to rural women. The high concentration of women employed in the public sector is characteristic for both countries, although the private sector employed more than 60 per cent of the female workforce (see Table 6.5).

*Table 6.5* Employees' distribution by economic sector and by gender (%)

	Hungary			Romania		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Totally or partially public or administrative sector	25.1	41.7	32.5	30.0	34.6	32.1
Private sector	74.9	58.3	67.5	70.1	65.4	67.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
N	2335	1854	4189	1506	1241	2747

*Source:* Generations and Gender Programme data (Romania 2005, Hungary 2004/2005).

The concept of *flexicurity* describes, through the combination of *flexibility* and *security*, the kinds of jobs – most often to be found in the public sector and regularly taken up by women – that offer flexible schedules and job security more easily reconcilable with family and household duties. However, as human capital theories claim, there is a trade-off behind striving for such types of jobs: most of the time employees are willing to give up higher wages in exchange for the above-mentioned qualities of the job. Nonetheless, this model fails to explain the higher concentration of women in public sector jobs, as in both countries, and for both women and men, wages are significantly higher in public administration and state institutions than in private enterprises.

### Gender differences in working time arrangements

Since the middle of the 20th century, part-time jobs have been a specific and quite widespread strategy for reconciling paid work with household tasks for Western European women. The expansion of women's employment in capitalist societies has been largely realized through part-time work. 'Part-time work ghettos' have been created in the labour market as shorter part-time working hours allowed women to fulfil their family roles and complement family budgets. These segments of the labour market were less safe, low paid and regularly non-unionized (Hakim, 1996: 65–66). As far as the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are concerned, most analysts agree that the lack of these arrangements during the socialist period may be seen as the reason for their virtual absence from today's post-socialist labour markets. Women's lack of access to jobs with shorter working hours is another disadvantage that Eastern European women need to face compared with their Western counterparts. In addition, demographers in particular claim that part-time work would improve not only female employment rates and the economic situation of women, but also their propensity for childbearing (Blaskó, 2006: 91–92; Frey, 2009: 33).

People aged 21–44 in Romania work on average almost 42 hours per week (women: 40.5, men: 43 hours per week), compared with Hungarian women's 39.8 and men's 44.4 weekly hours.<sup>8</sup> Table 6.6 gives a detailed overview of the working time arrangements of the Hungarian and Romanian employed population.

The two countries' approximately similar rates suggest a somewhat more widespread availability of and access to part-time jobs among the labour force aged 21–44 compared with the official EUROSTAT data concerning the age group 25–54. The differences between the two datasets may stem from a series of reasons. First, the relatively high rate of part-time workers among the survey interviewees might be the result of the way the question was formulated: the actual hours worked the previous week or usually might be just the *de facto* aspect of the *de jure* situation: not always identical. Second, the dissimilarities may be attributable to the different age groups the two sets of

*Table 6.6* Employees' distribution by working hours and gender, Hungary and Romania (%)

	Hungary			Romania		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Less than 14 hours per week	1.2	1.5	1.3	0.4	0.7	0.5
15–29 hours per week	2.7	6.8	4.4	6.9	7.4	7.1
30–34 hours per week	2.9	5.1	3.8	3.7	4.1	3.8
More than 35 hours per week	93.2	86.6	90.4	89.0	87.8	88.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
N	2440	1879	4319	2080	1506	3586

*Source:* Generations and Gender Programme data (Romania 2005, Hungary 2004/2005).

data refer to. Nevertheless, it is true that the Hungarian and Romanian reality falls a long way behind EU labour conditions as far as part-time jobs are concerned. Moreover, as Bukodi finds for Hungary, jobs with shorter hours are usually limited to low-skilled and older women (Bukodi, 2005: 34). A detailed analysis of the socio-professional profile of part-time workers cannot be carried out due to the low occurrence of such employees in the sample. However, comparing the level of education of the employees of the two categories, Bukodi's thesis is only supported by Romanian data. Unlike in Hungary, Romanian employees – both men and women – are more prone to take up part-time jobs (that is, to work less than 34 hours a week) when they are primary or vocational school graduates. On the other hand, in both countries, part-time work seems somewhat more popular among younger employees, though the mean age differences are rather small. Nevertheless, in both countries, jobs with working hours of less than 34 hours per week are more likely to be available in the state or public administration or institutions supported by the state. Although no evidence can be found in our surveys, it is highly likely that most non-standard jobs are to be found not in state institutions but, rather, in non-governmental organizations, in which a high proportion of the employees are women. Besides education, type of residence and the number of children also directly affect whether someone – especially a woman – opts for a part-time job. So, it may be concluded that, rare as they are, part-time jobs are most often taken into consideration as viable labour market solutions by low-skilled rural women raising more children than their urban highly skilled counterparts. The data does not provide any answers as to the extent to which working fewer hours for lower wages is really a choice or just another constraint rural women have to deal with.

One of the most significant differences between Romanian and Hungarian women's labour market strategies is related to the methods of tackling the pressures caused by reconciling work and family, as well as coping with the loss of a job. Compared with Hungarian women, in Romania, based on our data, mothers have much more limited access to parental leave, while homemakers comprise the most significant group of economically inactive Romanian women. One of the most plausible explanations might be that – unlike in Hungary – in Romania the status of homemaking is not so much a choice as the only option for many women who have never had a paid job before. The following section aims to explain the social meaning of homemaking in Romania.

### Explaining gendered labour market participation: Homemakers in Romania

Table 6.7 shows the distribution of the several forms of inactivity among Romanian and Hungarian men and women.

Most non-working men in both countries are unemployed, students or retired. The proportion of men who had previously lost their jobs is two times higher in Hungary and more than four times higher in Romania, compared with Hungarian and Romanian women, respectively. At the other end of the scale, the proportion of those still studying – most probably pursuing a higher education degree – after their 21st birthday is significantly higher among men than women. This contradicts the often-claimed thesis that mass higher education primarily targets women, of whom there are higher numbers, and who spend longer periods, within the educational system. Bukodi, for instance, showed that the expansion of the education system is, in many countries, more attractive for women, offering them the possibility

*Table 6.7* Non-employed Hungarians and Romanians aged 21–44 by form of economic inactivity and gender (%)

	Hungary			Romania		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Unemployed	38.2	18.1	25.0	43.8	10.2	20.8
Retired	14.8	7.0	9.7	13.0	3.3	6.4
On parental leave	2.1	42.6	28.8	2.3	10.1	7.7
Homemaker	0.3	8.0	5.4	1.2	65.0	44.9
Student	32.2	16.9	22.1	22.0	8.6	12.9
Other	12.4	7.3	9.0	17.6	2.6	7.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
N	581	1122	1703	345	752	1097

*Source:* Generations and Gender Programme data (Romania 2005, Hungary 2004/2005).

of spending more time within educational institutions (Bukodi, 2005: 16). Finally, it is important to underline that men in both countries are over-represented among the retired. This is probably due to those predominantly male jobs, especially within the army, that offer early retirement possibilities. However, the main objective of the present section is to offer a more detailed picture of the fairly widespread Romanian phenomenon of female homemaking.

Choosing not to work, but staying at home and caring for the family and the household, seems not so much a choice, but, rather, unavoidable for a certain group. Homemaking is not, as in Hungary, the option of a quite limited social category, but it is linked to poverty. Homemaking status is, first of all, a rural phenomenon: 14 per cent of urban-based women stay at home, while more than one third of women living in rural areas belong to this category.

The net monthly income per member of the average Romanian household (of which members aged 21–44 were surveyed) was approximately RON 371 (around €103 at the mean exchange rate of 2005). Those families, however, in which the woman surveyed was a homemaker had to make ends meet with less than half of the above sum (that is, RON 181.6, corresponding to €50). Those women who need to support large families have particular difficulty entering the labour market: whereas the average number of household members was 3.54, in the case of homemakers, there were 4.1 people living under the same roof and from a shared budget. As probably expected, rural households are affected to a much greater extent by the inability of women to find and keep a paid job: whereas in the total sample the proportion of respondents living in rural areas was 42.5 per cent, among the households in which a homemaker woman was interviewed 62.3 per cent live in rural areas. The state of long-lasting or permanent exclusion from the labour market is inextricably linked to childbearing, although, of course, that is not the only factor leading to exclusion from the labour market. In Romania, the most important eligibility criterion for two years' parental leave is at least one year's paid and legal work before the child is born. Whereas the average number of children below 18 years raised in the Romanian households is 1.16, families with at least one homemaker have 1.6 children. The distribution of Hungarian households by the number of children under the age of 18 is shown in Table 6.8.

Homemaking women are only slightly younger than the average, 33 years old, but much less qualified. The proportion of homemaking women with less than secondary education is more than double (48.5 per cent) the proportion of women who have graduated from secondary school (21.5 per cent) among the total female population. These extremely low levels of qualifications mean that it is almost impossible for these women to re-enter the labour market. Furthermore, the precarious economic status of those families in which the woman has been out of work for so long as to not even qualify

*Table 6.8* The distribution of total households and households with a homemaker by the number of children below 18 years in Hungary (%)

Number of children below 18 years old	Homemakers	Total population
0	12.6	34.6
1	38.5	35.2
2	35.7	24.2
3	7.9	3.7
4	2.8	1.3
5	1.6	0.6
6	0.4	0.2
7	0.2	0.1
10	0.2	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>
N	493	4550

*Source:* Generations and Gender Programme data (Romania 2005, Hungary 2004/2005).

for unemployment benefit is also shown by the fact that in 7 per cent of the cases the woman's partner was unemployed (compared with only 5.9 per cent in the total population) and in a further 3.7 per cent the woman's partner was retired (compared with 3 per cent in the total sample). In conclusion, staying at home is not a matter of choice for most Romanian women, but the almost unavoidable outcome of at least two social and economic disadvantages: low education and living in a rural area.

## Conclusions

Although the official statistics suggest that Romanian female employment has been higher than in Hungary in the past two decades, after a decreasing trend in Romania and a growing one in Hungary, and in spite of the fact that official unemployment seemed to have affected Romanian women to a smaller extent than their Western neighbours, a closer look at a particular segment – women aged 21–44 – suggests a somewhat different picture. The poorer economic situation of Romanian women compared with their Hungarian counterparts is, however, most visible in their level of education and Romanian women's more precarious labour market positions. Romanian rural and low-skilled women have been the most affected by post-socialist transformations, by not being able to acquire or keep a position in the labour market due to the general lack of employment in the rural areas, by their low skills and the extended families they need to care for. More than one fifth of the women, who are expected by the revitalized nationalist and traditionalist discourses to actively contribute to the strengthening of the nation by having as many children as possible, struggle with a lack of access to the paid labour market.

However, we do not suggest that women's social and demographic characteristics (in terms of education, residence or family structure) offer a complete and exhaustive explanation for their marginal economic position. Although human capital theorists are eager to point to differences in education, motivation and other aspects of personal characteristics as single or decisive bases of economic advantages and disadvantages, our data suggested that the position of women might be best understood within the framework of *vulnerability theory*. We found evidence that inclusion and exclusion of the female labour force from the labour market follows the cycles of economic crises and growth (see, for example, Hungary's case after 1997). This confirms the assumption of the reserve army of labour theory. Similarly, the main difference between Romania and Hungary in terms of the sectoral structure of the economies seems relevant in the explanation of the better employment opportunities for Hungarian women. The theory of re-evaluated resources, developed by Fodor (1997) and Szalai (2003), claiming that the growing service sector will attract laid-off women workers, was confirmed by our data. However, while we do not claim to have been able to test all the theoretical assumptions regarding women's employment in CEE countries in detail, we argue that not only the market, but the states themselves, have contributed to the distribution of resources between men and women. Throughout this process, both the market and the states contributed to the growing salience of gender in creating economic privileges and disadvantages.

## Notes

1. Without aiming to fully enumerate them, these articles examine the characteristics of the decreasing female employment (Bukodi and Péter, 2006), the dynamics of women's unemployment (see, for instance, Frey, 1998, 1999, 2002; Bukodi, 2005; Koncz, 2008), women's access to managerial positions (for example Nagy, 2001), the growth and determinants of the gender wage gap (Galasi, 2001), the impact of several life course events on employment (Lakatos, 2001; Spéder, 2003), as well as the normative context in which these phenomena are embedded (Pongrácz, 2001; Blaskó, 2005 and others). The importance of the gender-sensitive approach of sociological analysis is best demonstrated by the publication of the annual volumes 'Changing Roles'. The series is published by the TÁRKI Research Institute with the financial support of the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs, and it aims at widening the aspects of gender inequalities investigated.
2. A few examples are the following: Miroiu and Popescu (2004), Magyari-Vincze Enikő (2001), Magyari et al. (2001), and Pasca Harsanyi (1995). To our knowledge, the most extensive analysis of the Romanian gender regime can be found in Pasti's (2003) book based on the 2000-survey 'Gender Barometer'.
3. More information is available on the [www.ggp-i.org](http://www.ggp-i.org) website.
4. In Romania, unemployment statistics are only available from 1991 in the publications of the National Statistical Institute. The number of the registered unemployed is compared with the total population aged 15–74. Total unemployment rates have only been recorded since 1994, whereas in Hungary these have been available



in the publications of the Central Statistical Office since 1992. However, for comparability, we use Labour Force Survey data.

5. The survey, conducted on a sample that was representative of the Romanian population, was commissioned by the Open Society Foundation Romania.
6. It should also note that in rural areas a large segment of those registered as employed are, in fact, working as *helping family members*, performing non-paid work within the family agricultural unit. In Romania, as many as 7 per cent of all employed men belong to this category, and a much higher proportion, almost one fifth, of working women. As in the case of many other non-standard forms of employment considered ‘invisible’ (Hakim, 1996: 32–34), non-paid helping family members are mostly rural women (Geambaşu, 2013).
7. The table’s comparative scope is limited. Whereas in the Romanian data gathering the ISCED codes (International Standard Classification of Education, the classification of educational attainment by UNESCO) for educational attainment were taken into account, the Hungarian survey used more country-specific categories to record educational level. The most important consequence was that in analysing the Romanian data it was not possible to separate out vocational graduates with no secondary degree (a typically male educational category). Moreover, the Hungarian survey did not record elementary education. The comparison should take account of all these shortcomings.
8. Whereas in the Hungarian survey the question referred to the previous week, in Romania the respondent was asked to estimate their ‘usual’ weekly working hours.

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# 7

## Parental Employment Patterns in the Czech Republic: Economic Rationality or Cultural Norm?

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### Introduction

As one of the post-communist countries, the Czech Republic has gone through a transition from a state-planned to a market economy, which has influenced, among many other processes, the situation in the labour market. The route to economic and political transformation has been described in detail elsewhere (for example Večerník, 1996; Potůček, 1998, 1999; Hamplová, 2003). The aim of this chapter was to explore the influence of motherhood and fatherhood on the position in the labour market in the Czech Republic in the context of the work–life reconciliation policy measures. With the results, we would like to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the impact of the institutional setting and the cultural norms related to motherhood and parenthood on the employment of men and women. The chapter concentrates on the situation of Czech mothers and fathers with young children during the period from the beginning of the political changes in 1989 until the aftermath of the global economic crisis in 2009. The distribution of risks regarding labour market participation – insecurity in the labour market and poverty – was considered in the specific cultural and institutional context.

One important characteristic of the post-communist countries, in comparison with the old EU member states, is the long tradition of the relatively high participation of women in the formal labour market (for example Pollert, 2003). Although this is also true in the Czech Republic, we can observe the significant impact of motherhood on female employment as the effect of certain cultural and institutional pressures (Hamplová, 2003; Saxonberg and Sirovátká, 2006; Tomešová-Bartáková, 2009; Křížková and Vohlídalová, 2009; Formánková, 2010).

Welfare state adjustment, or, to be precise, its family policy, has a tendency to amplify some of the so-called new social risks, and this is particularly

true for the imbalance between family and work life. From the beginning of the transformation, the former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe started to promote policies that encouraged women with small children to stay at home (for example Saxonberg and Szelewa, 2007). The formerly hybrid Czech welfare regime, with social-democratic features supporting institutional childcare, shifted in the area of family policy to financial support of parental care (Saxonberg and Sirovátka, 2006; Sirovátka 2006; Tomešová-Bartáková, 2009; Formánková, 2010). In our analysis, we assumed that a country's institutional arrangements are directed both by economic rationality, considering the benefits of both parents working, and societal and cultural ideals, which may follow economically irrational norms and practices that are nevertheless culturally viable. We aimed to assess the extent to which these rational and cultural norms overlap and the extent to which one or the other dominates the policy-making processes.

In the first part of the chapter, after a brief discussion of the theoretical background, we showed the gender-driven differentiations in employment patterns associated with parenthood. In the second part, we put the findings about the position of parents in the labour market into the context of Czech family policy design to identify the neuralgic points (characteristics) that have the potential to significantly affect the position of parents (mainly mothers) in the labour market. We focused on leave arrangements and childcare facilities as the most supportive policies for female employment (for example Gornick et al., 1997; Esping-Andersen, 2009), together with part-time employment legislation and specific legislation providing protection of parents at the workplace. In the final part of the chapter, using correspondence analysis, we showed the interaction of the different factors regarding the employment of mothers and fathers with children under 15 years old.

### **Theoretical background: Rational irrational institutions**

Support of parental employment becomes increasingly relevant in the context of post-modern societies dealing with a new distribution of risks (Beck, 2000; Taylor-Gooby, 2004). The changes in economic production (globalization and the use of new technologies) led to a deterioration of the formerly stable labour market relations (Beck, 2000). At the same time, changes in family structures and related demographic changes (lower fertility and increasing life expectancy) are related to the increasing importance of female participation in the labour market. All of these trends have changed both the structure of social risks and the structure of categories of workers at risk or in a state of insecurity (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). First of all, the risks are connected to a lack of competencies valued in the labour market, which would secure 'adequately remunerated and sustainable employment' (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). At the same time, European states are reacting to

the increased costs of their social security systems by cutting back on state welfare programmes and partly privatizing them, which leads to restricted access to social benefits and services for certain groups of the population (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). Another source of risks comes from the imbalance between paid work and family commitments. As female employment has become prevalent, and, in many families, the double income has become an economic necessity, the topic of work–family reconciliation has received increasing attention (Beck, 1992; Lewis, 2006). Difficulties in achieving an acceptable work–life balance can have a negative impact on female employment in particular, and consequently on gender equality in the labour market. Moreover, female unemployment increases the risk of poverty for families with young children (Ranci, 2009).

The relationship between female employment patterns, cultural norms and institutional arrangements can be considered from various perspectives. Theories on the welfare state assume a close connection between the given design of social policies and work–life balance strategies of men and women (for example Lewis, 1992, 2007; Sainsbury, 1994; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 2000). One group of authors consider the economic rationality of beneficiaries, who primarily take into account the financial impact of social policies (for example Lewis, 1992; Korpi, 2000; Leitner, 2003).

By economic rationality we mean the model inspired by Gary Becker (1996), which sees individuals as economic agents, who base decisions on economically rational (cost–benefit) analyses in order to maximize their utility. Their preferences, assumed to be independent of cultural and social norms, are, therefore, individual and exogenous. In the area of paid and unpaid work, Becker (1981) argues that the major gain to marriage accrues when men and women are specializing in the complementary domains – women in domestic work, men in market work. However, in today's society, as mentioned above, the ability of men to be the sole family breadwinner is challenged, and two-income families are becoming an economic necessity in most EU countries (Esping-Andersen, 2009). At the same time, the absence of women from the labour market may result in the reduction of lifetime incomes, career opportunities, pension incomes and social security rights throughout their life course (Esping-Andersen, 2009). In such a model, the economically rational behaviour for both men and women is to design their work–life reconciliation strategies to maximize the security of their position in the labour market. Also, at the level of both state and company policies, it would be economically rational to support female employment through work–life balance policies, which enable women to stay in the labour market.

Other authors prioritize the power of cultural values and norms as the main factors influencing the behaviour of men and women (for example Pfau-Effinger, 2004; Kremer, 2007). Micro-level theories ascribe women's care and work behaviour to their heterogeneous personal preferences (Hakim, 2000, 2003). However, scholars do argue that these preferences largely

depend on the given forms of social policies and on established gender norms (Crompton and Harris, 1998; see Křížková and Vohlídalová, 2009).

Cultural norms influence both the private and working lives of men and women in many aspects. The context of combining work and personal life is, to a great extent, influenced by gender stereotypes. Gendered moral rationalities influence everyday life decisions together with structural and institutional conditions, and shape the ideal or appropriate patterns of both female employment and welfare state policies (Duncan and Edwards, 1999). According to Duncan et al. (2003), assumptions about the impact of the welfare regimes on the gender division of work, as discussed by feminist researchers on welfare states (Lewis, 1992; Sainsbury, 1994), under-rate the significance of these culture-based moral ideals for individual decisions regarding work and family life. In the perspective of cultural welfare state theories, the dominant gender order in a society influences, through the policy-makers, the nature of the policy measures. This gender order, or gender moral assumptions, influence not only the individual agents, but also, through diverse actors, the setting of family policy (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 2004; Kremer, 2007).

Family policy reflects the gendered norm in the form of policy arrangements with the purpose of maintaining or altering the given gender order. Parental, and especially female, employment is, therefore, influenced to a great extent by the state support of families (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, 2004). When focusing on the extent to which care duties are taken from the shoulders of the families, Esping-Andersen (1999) started to use the term 'de-familialization'. Leitner (2003) suggests that welfare states can be divided into several types according to direct or indirect support of in-home or institutional childcare. Behind the familialistic family policy model is an assumption, or, rather, an expectation, that 'households must carry the principal responsibility for their members' welfare' (Esping-Andersen, 1999: 51), and thus it does not offer alternatives to family care (Leitner, 2003). In the de-familialistic model, the state provides institutional care in order to participate in the care burden. In relation to post-communist countries, we talk about re-familialization, in other words, the return to the support of in-family care (Saxonberg and Sirovátka, 2006).

So, the macro-level theories suggest that a country's institutional arrangements are directed both by economic rationality, considering the benefits of both working parents and society, and by cultural ideals, following culturally viable norms and practices even if these are economically irrational for individuals or labour markets.

## **Key developments in the Czech labour market**

### **Economic development**

The Czech Republic, as a transitional country, has gone through various changes in economic and political development. The political 'revolution'



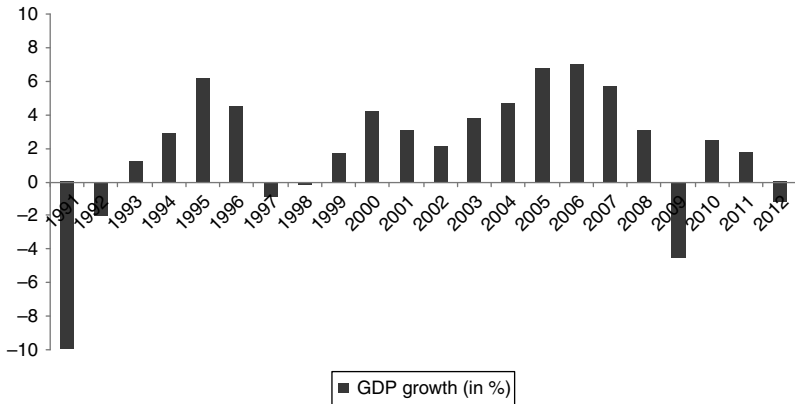


Figure 7.1 Annual GDP growth per capita in the Czech Republic (%)

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2013.

in 1989, followed by fundamental macroeconomic reforms, including labour market liberalization and privatization, resulted in an economic downturn (Čermáková, 1995). Gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by 10 per cent while inflation rose by nearly 12 per cent in the early 1990s (Kotýnková, 2006). However, the economic decline quickly stabilized. From 1994 to 1996, as a result of foreign investments and an increase in consumption due to rising salaries, the Czech economy accelerated. The liberal monetary policies of the Czech government led to another economic slowdown in 1997, which continued until the beginning of the millennium (Kotýnková, 2006). However, significant economic growth did not start until 2004, and peaked in 2007. Since the second half of 2008, the economic growth of the Czech Republic was negatively influenced by the global monetary crisis, which has continued to influence the economic profile of the country ever since (see Figure 7.1).

In 2009, the Czech Republic was hit, in common with other EU countries, by a global monetary crisis followed by a sharp decline in GDP. Despite a partial recovery, the Czech economy continued to slow down from 2010, and in 2012 GDP growth per capita was negative. The Czech share of the world export market declined for the first time since monitoring started in 1999. This resulted in an increasing gap between EU and Czech Republic average GDP per capita, and pushed the Czech Republic to 17th place among the EU-27 countries (Czech Statistical Office, 2013).

### Labour market

The employment of women has a long tradition, dating from the period of state socialism, when full employment of men and women was one of the main goals of the ruling party (Možný, 2009). The political change brought a sharp decline in women's participation in the labour market,



*Figure 7.2* The development of employment and activity rates of men and women (15–64 years, %)

Source: Eurostat 2013.

and unemployment emerged (Kotýnková, 2006). However, the labour market stabilized after the early turbulent years. The levels of economic activity have been slowly declining since the 1990s for both men and women (see Figure 7.2). During the last 15 years, the employment and economic activity rates of men and women in the Czech Republic have shown similar patterns of development. The gender employment gap has been stable for more than 15 years, at an average level of 17 per cent, and the gender economic activity gap has been at an average level of 18 per cent (Czech Statistical Office, 2013).

As is evident from Figure 7.2, the economic activity and employment rates of women and men show a similar pattern. For both genders, it dropped at the end of the 1990s due to the economic depression in 1997. The employment and economic activity rates of men and women grew from 2005 until 2008, when economic growth reached a peak. From 2008 to 2010, the employment rate of women declined again, probably due to the economic crisis, but the employment rate of men seemed to be more stable. Employment and economic activity rates started to rise again in 2011.

The level of education achieved gives a significant competitive advantage for both men and women, and this is true for the Czech Republic. Tables 7.1 and 7.2 highlight the differences in employment and unemployment rates in relation to level of education.

Both women and men with primary or lower secondary education (that is, vocational training or an apprenticeship certificate) are very often the victims of marginalization and exclusion in the Czech labour market, as is the case for other EU countries. However, the situation of low-qualified men and women in the Czech labour market is significantly worse than in other EU countries. The employment rate of Czech women with primary or lower

*Table 7.1* Employment rates by sex and levels of education (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)) (15–64 years, %)

ISCED	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2012–1998 difference*
<b>Women</b>									
0–2	31	29	27	24	24	24	22	21	–10
3–4	67	64	64	63	63	63	61	63	–4
5–6	82	77	80	78	77	76	73	74	–8
<b>Men</b>									
0–2	34	29	25	21	23	24	22	21	–13
3–4	84	81	81	79	80	82	79	80	–4
5–6	93	92	92	91	90	90	89	89	–4
<b>Gender gap (men's advantage**) (%)</b>									
0–2	3	0	–2	–3	–1	0	0	0	–3
3–4	17	17	17	16	17	19	18	17	0
5–6	11	15	12	13	13	14	16	15	+4

*Note:* Levels 0–2 – pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education; Levels 3–4 – upper secondary, post-secondary and non-tertiary education; Levels 5–6 – tertiary education.

\*The number indicates the decline or rise of employment rates between 1998 and 2012.

\*\*Men's relative advantage (chance for gainful employment) is calculated by deducting women's employment rates from men's.

*Source:* Eurostat, 2013, own calculations.

*Table 7.2* Unemployment rates by sex and level of education (ISCED) (15–64 years, %)

ISCED	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2012–1998 difference*
<b>Women</b>									
0–2	14	20	19	24	24	19	24	26	12
3–4	7	10	8	9	8	5	8	8	1
5–6	2	4	2	2	3	2	3	3	1
<b>Men</b>									
0–2	17	26	24	29	26	20	27	32	14
3–4	4	6	5	6	5	3	6	5	1
5–6	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	1
<b>Gender gap (men's advantage**) (%)</b>									
0–2	–3	–6	–5	–5	–2	–1	–3	–6	–3
3–4	+3	+4	+3	+3	+3	+2	+2	+3	0
5–6	0	+2	0	0	+1	0	0	0	0

*Note:* Levels 0–2 – pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education; Levels 3–4 – upper secondary, post-secondary and non-tertiary education; Levels 5–6 – tertiary education.

\*The number indicates the decline or rise of unemployment rates between 1998 and 2012.

\*\*Men's relative advantage (protection from unemployment) is calculated by deducting men's unemployment rates from women's.

*Source:* Eurostat, 2013, own calculations.

secondary education was about 16 per cent lower than the EU-27 average (according to Eurostat, the average employment rate of this group in the EU-27 was 37 per cent in 2012). The employment rate of Czech men with the same level of education was about 31 per cent lower (in the EU-27 the average employment rate of this group was 52 per cent in 2012). Table 7.1 also shows that in the last decade low-qualified men were threatened more than low-qualified women. There was also a sharp decline in the male employment rates, which were at the same level as the female employment rate by 2012. The change in these rates between 1998 and 2012 suggests that the economic crises affected low-educated men more than low-educated women in the Czech Republic. As the employment rates of low-qualified men and women were decreasing, their unemployment rates were increasing (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Men and women with higher levels of education seemed to have more secure positions in the labour market, even in comparison with other EU countries.

In the following section, we focus more on the specific patterns of labour market participation of men and women at different ages. Diverse patterns of employment between men and women in the different age cohorts can be seen in Table 7.3.

The very low employment rates in the 15–19 age group probably reflect recent changes in the education levels of the Czech labour force, with individuals increasingly striving to attain higher qualification levels. However, the employment rates of men and women in this age group are the most equal in comparison to the other age groups. Regardless of the tradition of full employment for both sexes, Czech women have left the labour

*Table 7.3* Specific employment rates by gender and age groups in 2012 (15–64 years, %)

Age group (years)	Women	Men	Difference	Women's employment rate as a proportion of men's
15–19	2.8	4.2	1.4	67
20–24	35.2	48.9	13.7	72
25–29	60.3	83.6	23.3	72
30–34	58.4	92.7	34.3	63
35–39	74.9	93.6	18.7	80
40–44	85.1	93.7	8.6	91
45–49	88.2	91.4	3.2	95
50–54	83.6	89.0	5.4	94
55–59	62.1	80.8	18.7	77
60+	6.9	17.5	10.6	40
Total	45.9	63.6	17.7	72

*Source:* Czech Statistical Office, 2012, own calculations.

market for a number of years due to early motherhood (Hašková, 2005). The most pronounced difference in the employment rates of women in comparison to the employment rates of men is in the age group 30 and 34 years. Also, the gender gap is rather high in age group 25–29 years. This can be explained as the consequence of the absence, for up to three years, of Czech women from the labour market due to motherhood. According to the Czech Statistical Office, the average age of women having any child was 29.8 years in 2012.

### Basic features of parental employment in the Czech Republic

The labour market situation of Czech mothers is, to a great extent, the result of the long breaks in employment that they usually take after they give birth (see Figure 7.3).

Czech women with children under six face the highest employment impact due to motherhood among all EU countries (35.7 per cent less employment in comparison with childless women; the average in the EU-27 is 9.7 per cent) (European Union, 2013). Fathers are usually in a very different position. In common with other EU countries, the impact of fatherhood on male employment rates is mostly positive in the Czech Republic (the difference between employment rates of fathers with children under six years old and childless men is 9.8 per cent; the EU-27 average is 11 per cent) (European Commission, 2010). A high percentage of women with

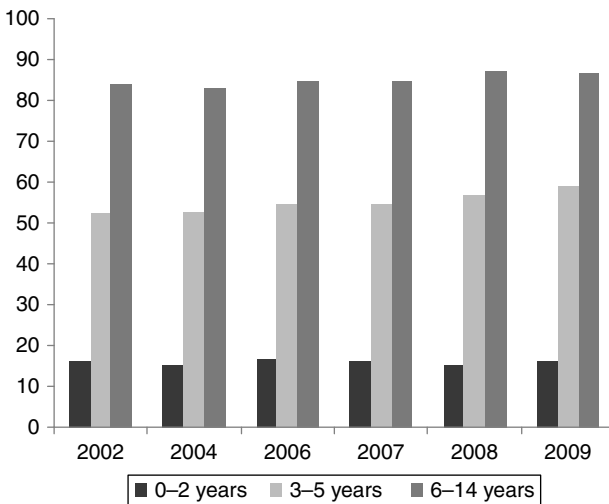


Figure 7.3 Employment rates of women from 20 to 49 years old, by the age of the youngest child (%)

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2012.

children under three years old remain out of the labour market (Figure 7.3). This is attributed to the lack of places in nurseries and kindergartens and up to four years of paid parental allowance (for example Kuchařová et al., 2006; Hašková, 2011). Here we can see the impact of the cultural norm of full-time motherhood keeping Czech mothers out of the labour market, which is supported by government policy (Formánková, and Dobrotič, 2011). At the same time, staying within the parameters necessary for parental benefits may, in the short term, be an economically rational decision for women with lower incomes who cannot afford private childcare institutions. However, this decision usually has a long-term negative effect on their salary and the level of social security, as discussed above (Křížková et al., 2011).

Not only the age of the child, but also the family status of the mother and father, matters when we focus on employment and activity rates. Table 7.4 shows fairly similar high levels of inactivity for both single mothers with children up to three years old and mothers living in a couple with children in the same age group. This situation mirrors the cultural model of full-time motherhood, which leads mothers to use the whole length of parental allowance, which is up to four years in the Czech Republic (Hašková, 2011). We would assume that for single women, it would be economically rational to return to the labour market earlier. In a study focused on the timing of the return of Czech mothers to the labour market, Chaloupková and Mitchell (2009) found that in case of single mothers, the economic needs of the family were the central factor influencing their return to the labour market.

Involvement in the labour market was about the same for mothers living in a couple as for single mothers (Table 7.4). However, the unemployment risk was significantly higher for single mothers than for mothers living in a couple, and this holds true for all the age groups of children. Overall, the risk of unemployment was highest in the group of single mothers with children up to three years old. In the case of women living with their partner, the highest percentage of unemployed were women with children over three years old. This, again, proves that single women are returning to the labour market earlier than mothers living with their partners, who tend to use the full length of parental leave, as the moment of return to the labour market brings a great risk of unemployment for Czech women (Tomešová-Bartáková, 2009; Hašková, 2011). The vulnerable position of single mothers with small children in the Czech labour market has been proven by several studies (for example Sirovátka, 2005; Chaloupková and Mitchell, 2009). The social welfare system influences the economic rationality of the earlier return of single mothers to the Czech labour market. As Chalouková and Mitchell (2009) argue, the earlier return to the labour market is beneficial mostly for university-educated single mothers. For lower-educated women, the financial loss connected with losing the rights to social benefits while

Table 7.4 Employment and unemployment rates of parents by age of the youngest child and their family status (%)<sup>1</sup>

	Child < 3 years	Child 4–7 years	Child 8–15 years	Child < 3 years	Child 4–7 years	Child 8–15 years
	<b>Single mother</b>			<b>Mother living in couple</b>		
Employment rate	70	76	85	90	85	93
Unemployment rate	30	24	15	10	15	7
Inactivity rate	72	18	27	71	17	26
	<b>Single father</b>			<b>Father living in couple</b>		
Employment rate	87	75	91	96	96	95
Unemployment rate	13	25	9	4	4	5
Inactivity rate	20	48	55	4	9	23

Specific *employment rate* = number of employed persons in given category/sum of employed and unemployed persons in the same category.

Specific *unemployment rate* = number of unemployed persons in given category/sum of employed and unemployed persons in the same category.

*Inactivity rate* = number of inactive persons aged 15+ years in given category/number of persons aged 15+ years in the same category (not including pensioners).

Source: Eurostat, 2009, own calculations.

entering paid employment is higher than the potential gain in salary, so this category of women may find it economically reasonable to stay out of work.

The situation is different for single fathers.<sup>2</sup> As expected, the employment, unemployment and inactivity rates of single fathers were worse than those of fathers living in a couple. The group of single fathers with children up to three years old was characterized by a relatively low level of inactivity compared with single mothers with children in the same age group. It might be that childcare was provided by someone else in these households, or by private babysitters, as public childcare facilities for this age group were practically non-existent. Table 7.4 also shows the relatively high unemployment rate of single fathers with children aged from four to seven years. This rate is almost the same as that for single mothers with children in the same age category. A hypothesis is that these fathers were no longer eligible for parental allowance, so they had lost a source of income that could cover the cost of care provided by somebody else. Just like single mothers, they may be confronted by the dilemma of how to balance work and care (the opening hours of kindergartens, the need for sick leave if a child is ill, no partner to share childcare with and so on). Nevertheless, in contrast to single mothers, single fathers probably overcome this 'handicap of caring responsibility' in the labour market better than single mothers. The unemployment rate of single fathers with children over eight years old was only 9 per cent, while the unemployment rate of single mothers with children in the same age group

was 14 per cent. Later in this chapter a more detailed discussion about the interconnection of these factors will be introduced, where we describe the results of the correspondence analyses.

The next section focuses on the family policy framework and company-based policy, which seemed to be crucial for the position of parents and mothers in the labour market, because arrangements provided by national family policy and companies usually help parents to meet both the expectations of employers and the family's needs.

## **Institutional factors: General family policies and labour market flexibility**

### **Leave policies and parental entitlements**

As mentioned above, the impact of motherhood on female employment in the Czech Republic is one of the highest among the EU countries. This is mainly due to the ideal of full-time mother care influencing the design of family policy measures, which support three years out of the labour market in the form of parental leave (for example Formánková and Dobrotič, 2011). The low replacement rate of parental allowance and the absence of paternity leave have resulted in fewer than 2 per cent of fathers taking parental leave. The lack of childcare provision outside the family (especially for children up to three years old) appears to be another crucial factor influencing the women's careers. For this reason, actual as well as potential motherhood has a highly negative influence on the character of the economic activity of women.

The design of family policy measures has been strongly influenced by the state-directed process of women's emancipation that was launched in socialist Czechoslovakia after World War II. The main feature of the emancipation policy was the 'mass, top-down imposed entry of women into paid employment after 1948' (Vodochodský, 2007: 36). Society's ideal of high employment was propped up by policy measures developed to target families with children (Kuchařová, 2008). From the 1950s, explicit defamilialization was supported by communist ideology, which initiated the development of new pre-school facilities in Czechoslovakia. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the proportion of all pre-school children enrolled in childcare facilities rose from 26 per cent to 56 per cent (Hašková, 2007). Pre-school facilities were divided into nurseries (established as healthcare facilities) and kindergartens (established as educational facilities). While the kindergarten day programmes focused on socio-cultural education and the cognitive development of children, nurseries mainly fulfilled the function of simply looking after children while their mothers were at work (see Hašková et al., 2009).

A shift towards supporting in-home care provided by mothers, which has dominated family policy reforms since the 1980s, occurred in the public



discourse in the late 1970s and was partly motivated by the discussion on falling fertility rates (Hašková et al., 2009). Around that time, the debate on 'active motherhood' was beginning, which highlighted the positive effect of full-time maternal care on child development (Šiklová, 1997). Psychological studies about negative developmental effects on young children staying long term in pre-school facilities deepened the Czech public's distrust of institutional childcare for children under the age of three years old. This is still the attitude today towards any type of childcare facilities for children under three years old (Hašková et al., 2009).

The relatively low financial compensation during maternity leave in the 1960s had a strong de-familializing effect. From the 1970s, the contribution was paid solely to previously employed mothers for 18 weeks only; however, it did equate to 75–90 per cent of a mother's previous income (Hašková et al., 2009). In 1987, paid maternity leave was prolonged to the current length of 28–37 weeks. The ideal of full-time motherhood received additional support in 1964 with the introduction of additional maternity leave: initially it was given until the child was one year old, and since 1985 until two years (Rychtaříková, 2008). From 1989 onwards, all mothers (and lone fathers) were eligible for additional maternity leave until the child's third birthday (Hašková et al., 2009). In the beginning, additional leave was unpaid, while the flat-rate allowance was first introduced in 1970 (Krebs, 2005). Since 1987, mothers of two have been entitled to receive maternity allowance until the youngest child's third birthday. In 1990, the maternity allowance was renamed 'parental allowance' to include fathers as the eligible beneficiaries.

However, until 2001, when legislation on parental leave was passed (additional maternity leave changed to parental leave), fathers were not equally involved in care duties. It was not until 2007 that parental leave taken by fathers was counted as a period insured for the purpose of pension insurance under the same conditions as that of mothers. However, the low parental allowance has provided little incentive for fathers to take leave, and, thus, parental leave does not directly support the ideal of sharing parental duties. In 2009, men also become eligible for maternity benefit (connected to maternity leave), financed from the sickness insurance scheme: men can take the benefit from the seventh week after the birth of a child (Act No. 187/2006 Coll., on Sickness Insurance). This was an important step, as maternity benefit is usually higher than the parental allowance. Maternity benefit is calculated on the basis of prior income, but as the amount progressively decreases as income rises, the de-familializing effect of the benefit is weaker for those women with higher incomes (Act No. 187/2006 Coll., on Sickness Insurance).

Current legislation on parental leave makes the Czech Republic a country with one of the longest leave policies in Europe. During a period of three years (plus an additional six to eight weeks of maternity leave prior

to the birth), the parent on leave has a secured position with their previous employer. However, some employers are obviously able to avoid this commitment, because a lot of mothers experience difficulties when returning to work after parental leave due to the employers' approach (for example Kuchařová et al., 2006; Křížková, 2007).

Since 2008, the parental allowance scheme has been changed several times. The main purpose of these changes was to make the parental allowance more flexible. A three-track system of parental allowance was introduced as the first important change in 2008. The amount of the monthly allowance correlated with the length of the support: either the fast, standard or slow version (Act No. 117/1995 Coll., on State Social Support).<sup>3</sup> From 2011, financial support for parents with the slow version of parental allowance was partially reduced as part of the cuts in public spending due to the financial crisis. Since 2012, a parental allowance up to a total amount of CZK 220,000 (€8,550) has been provided for all parents. By selecting the amount of the allowance, the parent also selects the duration of support. Depending on the monthly amount of the allowance, the length of the financial support is between approximately 19 months and four years. However, as stated above, the maximum length of the parental leave is three years. Therefore, the parent must return to work, even if still receiving the benefit, or he/she will lose the right to employment protection. Combining parental allowance with paid full-time employment is possible under the law. However, the use of childcare facilities for children younger than two is restricted to a maximum of 46 hours a month, otherwise the parents lose their right to the allowance (before 1 January 2012, children younger than three were allowed to spend a maximum of four hours a day in childcare; Act No. 117/1995 Coll., on State Social Support).

Even though the parental allowance was designed to be universal and not income related (the official reason for this system was to provide more choice), freedom of choice is restricted for parents with low incomes and those who are unemployed. Unemployed parents are directly forced to take the longest allowance, lasting up to four years. Hence, as Křížková (2007) points out, this system created a 'second-class' group of parents who were not free to choose the best solution for their situation.

We can see the strong influence of the norm of full-time motherhood on Czech mothers' decisions on the length of parental leave. The majority of Czech mothers (44 per cent) choose the customary three years' leave. However, as many as 27 per cent of them stay at home to care for the child for longer than three years, despite the low level of parental allowance and the loss of employment protection guaranteed during parental leave (Hašková, 2011).

While parents could alternate in caring for their children, and thus, *de jure*, the ideal of parental sharing was supported, the given family policy design, *de facto*, made the prospect of fathers taking leave an unlikely choice, appealing only to those families in which women had a considerably

higher income, or the participation of men in full-time care outweighed the economic impact of that choice.

### **Childcare facilities**

Related to the global economic crisis, many austerity measures were introduced in the area of family policy (that is, cuts in parental allowance and birth allowance and tax increases), which were in line with the legacy of the right-wing governments that had led the country since 2006. The shift to residual policy measures, which in the area of family policy mainly replaced universal means-tested benefits, was promoted as a necessary intervention in the context of the economic crises. The problem of the lack of childcare was shifted to the private sector (mostly employees) instead of the provision of state-run facilities (Blum et al., 2014).

Current institutional care reflects the historical development of childcare facilities. Nurseries for children under three years old lost support after 1989, whereas kindergartens (for children over three to six years), as educational institutions, have maintained their status.

As nurseries have enjoyed little support since the beginning of the 1990s, their number has declined significantly to the current situation (Paloncyová and Matějková, 2003), and the legislative frame for this type of institution was abolished by 2014. Currently, there are no other kinds of public childcare facilities for children under three years of age in the Czech Republic. The available services are provided by private commercial facilities, which are more costly and have a limited capacity.

Nevertheless, there is a relatively dense network of kindergartens for children from age two. As is evident from the relevant statistics, the majority of children from age three to school age (six years old in the Czech Republic) attend public kindergartens. However, the percentage of children enrolled decreased in the 2008–09 school year as a result of insufficient places at kindergartens. The facilities, which were reduced in the 1990s due to a dramatic fertility drop, did not always fulfil current demand (Kuchařová, 2010) and, due to the legislation, they gave priority to older pre-school children (four to five years of age). Insufficient places at nurseries and kindergartens reduced the options for parents to choose between home-based care and professional childcare, thus encouraging full-time motherhood of mothers with children under three (children between two and three years of age are rarely accepted, though eligible).

To sum up, the development of family policy in the Czech Republic during the 1990s can be assessed as a process of legitimizing the cultural norm of full-time motherhood, especially for the care of children under the age of three. Consequently, this family policy development can be referred to as a process of re-familialization, a return to the model of childcare at home (Saxonberg and Sirovátka, 2006). Although some changes have been made towards greater formal equality between men and women in access to early childcare benefits, the inadequate design of maternity and parental

leave and connected benefits has not had a significant effect on supporting alternating parental care in reality (Formánková and Dobrotić, 2011).

On the one hand, the reforms have resulted in more flexible parental leave and allowances that take into account the heterogeneity of family situations (to a certain level). On the other hand, family policy ignores the problem of the shortage of childcare facilities, one of the most important arrangements in the process of work–family balance. As a result, the changes have not brought more possibilities for parents caring for young children to return to the labour market earlier to maintain or develop their human capital, and, consequently, they may have a negative economic influence on families.

### **Company-based policies: The labour market legislation, flexible working regimes and the discretionary power of employers**

The role of companies in providing work–family arrangements in the Czech Republic is rather marginal, as the state holds the main responsibility for the provision of leave measures and childcare facilities. Employers are obliged to follow certain rules regarding the special protection of pregnant women and parents of children under the age of 15 in the labour market. The most important role of employers is in the area of flexible working arrangements. Thus, their approach can shape the situation of parents in the labour market quite significantly.

The levels of job security of parents seem to be quite high, but, on the other hand, we can see some ways for employers to avoid the obligations set down by law. Besides the health protection of pregnant or breastfeeding women (special working conditions and a ban on overtime working during pregnancy and early parenthood, additional daily breaks for breastfeeding, and so on), employers may not dismiss women during pregnancy or either parent during maternal (28 weeks) or parental leave (up to three years) and must guarantee their job to parents returning after leave. Nevertheless, well into the 2000s, only 22 per cent of Czech women continued to work for the same employer after parental leave,<sup>4</sup> and most of them were the higher educated (Kucharova et al., 2006). More than a tenth of those who did not return to the same job, or left within three months, reported the unwillingness of the employer as the main reason (Kucharova et al., 2006).

Also, employers must meet the demands of working parents of children under the age of 15 in adapting their working hours, but only if ‘it would not bring a serious problem for company operation’ (Labour Code Act. No. 262/2006 Coll.); the law does not provide an explanation of exactly what this means. Similarly, the requirement for agreement by the employee (parent) to be sent on a business trip outside their local area (Labour Code Act No. 262/2006 Coll.) does not seem to be very useful, because the power of employer and employee are naturally unequal. Employees can be pushed to agree or unpleasant consequences can result.

The Labour Code regulates conditions for flexible working in the Czech Republic. In the new Labour Code, enacted in 2006 (No. 262/2006 Coll.), the principle of 'what is not forbidden is allowed' was newly adopted, and this enabled employers to change working hours without agreement. The working hours of one shift must not exceed nine hours, but in the case of the flexible distribution of working hours (that is, flexible working regimes, working time account), shifts can last a maximum of 12 hours per day.

The following flexible working arrangements are covered by this legislation: flexible working time, working time account, part-time work and work at home (for example telework).

Within *flexible working time*, the employee can choose the beginning and end of the shift, but is required to be at the workplace for the contracted daily, weekly or monthly working hours. The working regime has to be agreed on by both employee and employer, who set the core working hours during which the employee must be at work. The only regulation associated with *part-time work* is related to the wage, which corresponds to the shorter working hours. As was mentioned above, employees providing care for children and relatives can demand a reduction of working hours. Concerning *work at home*, the Labour Code only defines that the workplace shall be specified in the work contract. The employer does not compensate for the employee's overtime (Labour Code No. 262/2006 Coll.). The *working time account* allows the employer to distribute work tasks and work time according to their actual needs in a particular period (Labour Code No. 262/2006 Coll.). This regime can be applied even without the employee's agreement. The enforcement period cannot exceed 26 weeks (or 52 weeks in the case of a collective agreement). The income of the employee is partly assured, as they are entitled to receive a minimum of 80 per cent of their average salary each month during the period of such a regime. After this period, the number of hours actually worked is calculated and the difference between the corresponding wage and what has already been received is paid out. This regime is not allowed for state employees, local governmental units or state schools.

As we can see, employers have relatively high discretionary power in the implementation of flexible working regimes. However, in the Czech Republic, full-time employment remains the major type of employment, with fixed working hours and location. Part-time employment does not follow the European trend (according to Eurostat, 32.1 per cent of women and 7.9 per cent of men were in part-time employment in the EU-27 in 2012), as indicated by very low part-time rates (part-time employment as percentage of total employment) since the beginning of the 2000s. In the Czech Republic, only 8.6 per cent of women and 2.2 per cent of men worked part-time, and other types of flexible jobs are even scarcer (Eurostat). Why is the level of flexible work so low? One reason might be that demand does not match supply (for example fewer than 10 per cent of employers offer part-time or flexible working regimes to all categories of employees)

(Plasová, 2008). Another reason might be that part-time work is often connected with lower-quality jobs and poorer working conditions (Kuchařová et al., 2006; Vohlídalová and Formánková, 2012). However, some Czech mothers still see part-time work as the best way to balance work and family, although, at the same time, they often have to sacrifice some job security and quality (for example Plasová, 2008). Although autonomously determined flexible working regimes are more available for Czech men (including fathers), this regime often means longer working hours (Víznerová and Vohlídalová, 2007), which can increase the work–family imbalance rather than solve it. Childcare facilities, as another possible family-friendly measure at the company level, are rather rare in the Czech Republic, and reliable data are not available. However, it should be noted that Czech legislation is not well prepared for companies that would like to become family-friendly and, for example, develop their own company childcare facilities. The first incentives of family policy to provide childcare services in companies only began to emerge recently. At the end of 2014, the law on the so-called ‘children’s group’ was approved definitively. The children’s group is supposed to be provided as a collective type of care on a non-commercial basis. Qualification requirements for providers of children’s groups are similar to those for providers of commercial childcare facilities, but the rules concerning qualification of staff, hygienic norms and food are less strict. Further, the costs of the children’s groups are tax-deductible for the companies providing them.

### **Parents in the field of work: An empirical study**

As was mentioned in the theoretical background section, the perspective of cultural values and norms is one possible approach to the problem of work–life (family) reconciliation. The cultural approach supposes that the policies implemented have only a limited effect on the decision of mothers and fathers to become involved in the labour market or to leave it. As Monique Kremer states, ‘for mothers, to work or to care is a moral predicament’ (2007: 21). In other words, in many cases the decision between work and care goes beyond the maximal utility expectations.

How is the imbalance between work and family solved in the Czech Republic, with its strong tendency towards a culturally based ideal of in-family care (familialism)? Undoubtedly, the riddle is unravelled in different ways in different family configurations. To reveal the relationship between family configurations and labour market position, we constructed a social space, a field occupied by parents of children up 15 years old, facing similar challenges and solving similar problems, but with different structures and amounts of capital (comprising, for the moment, the presence or absence of a partner, different education levels or just the age of the youngest child). The sum of possibilities constitutes the field, that is, the social space where the individuals pursue their goals, competing with each other for scarce resources and making their moral choices.

From the national Labour Force Survey (LFS), conducted in the fourth quarter of 2009, we selected a set of variables describing family situations (presence or absence of a partner, age of the youngest child) and relationship with the labour market (status in employment, hours usually worked per week, type of contract and so on) for the groups of mothers and fathers with a youngest child up to the age of 15.<sup>5</sup> Two complex contingency tables, one for mothers and one for fathers, were the primary output of the statistical method known as geometric data analysis (GDA) (Rouanet et al., 2000; Le Roux and Rouanet, 2004). In these tables, variables describing relationships with the labour market were in the rows and variables describing family configurations were in the columns. Correspondence analysis was used to array the range of variables and their modalities in the geometric space representing the proposed field of parents with a youngest child up to 15 years old.<sup>6</sup>

To make the results of the analysis more accessible, the output was not presented in the form of a table, but as a *symmetrical correspondence map*, in which a point represents each row and each column of the table. In the map, the modalities of family configuration are marked by *triangles*; the modalities of all other variables are represented by *dots*.

Figures 7.4 and 7.5 show the geometrical representation of the two-dimensional solution for the population of mothers with a youngest child up to 15 years old. The statistical solution presented suggests the position of different groups of actors according to the labour market and also in relation to each other in the proposed field. It should be stressed here that fields are considered 'as strong social structures resulting from the unequal distribution of various social resources' (Lebaron, 2008: 126). In the maps, the position of different groups is depicted according to an important social resource – the labour market.

In general, the analysis showed that access to the labour market for mothers was regulated by their education. The vertical dimension (axis F2) referred primarily to educational level: at the top of the map are mothers with elementary education only, and at the bottom mothers with tertiary education. However, education only contributed 14.7 per cent to the overall explained variance. More important was the second dimension (axis F1), which referred to the age of the youngest child and contributed 78.2 per cent to the overall explained variance.

From the map, it is clear that Czech mothers' access to the labour market was strictly divided into two groups:

- (a) mothers with a youngest child of up to three years of age, who had only limited access to the labour market, and this was also dependent on their attained education;
- (b) mothers with older children, who were fully integrated in the labour market – however, if they were single, they were more exposed to the risk of unemployment.

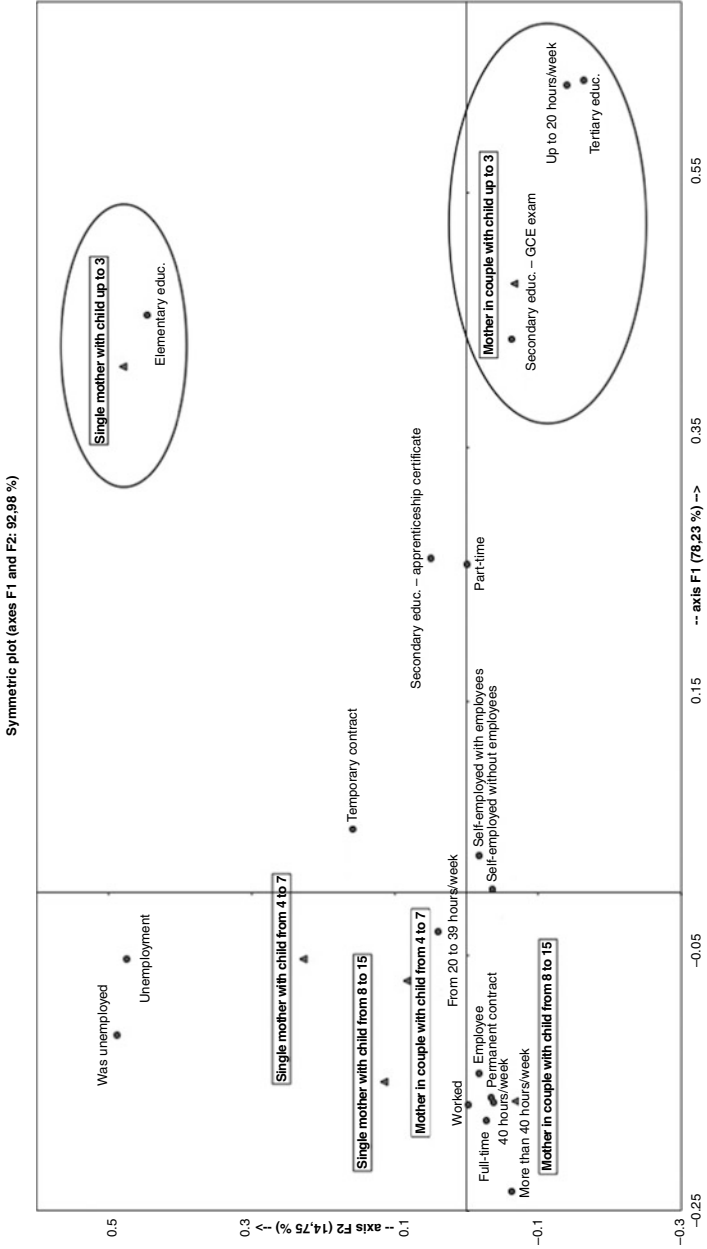


Figure 7.4 Symmetric correspondence map – Mothers in the Czech Republic whose youngest child is younger than 15 years old



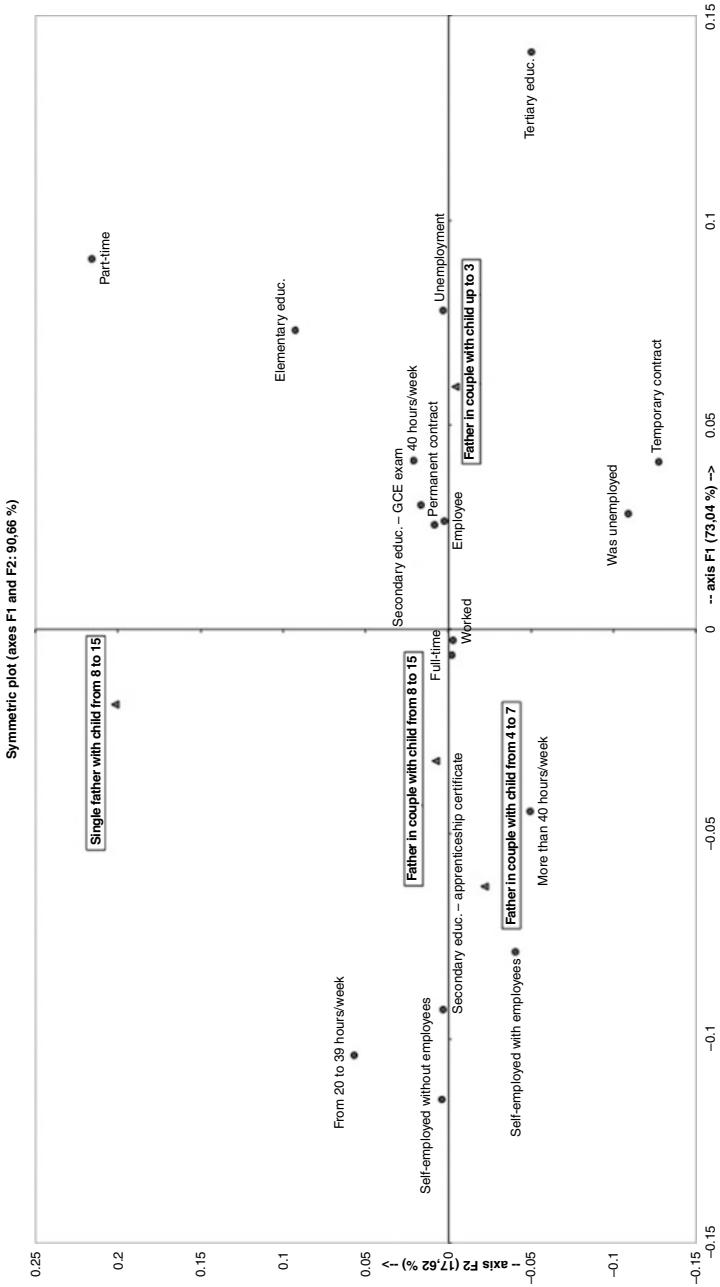


Figure 7.5 Symmetric correspondence map – Fathers in the Czech Republic whose youngest child is younger than 15 years old

Inside the described social space (*field*), mothers divided into three clusters according to their access to the labour market. The first cluster, occupying the upper right quadrant, consisted of the single mothers of children up to three years old. These women had no affiliation with the labour market, as they were on parental leave. The association of this status with the lowest level of education showed that lone motherhood is a culturally conditioned phenomenon. If they remain single, later on these mothers will move to the upper part of the third cluster, being in danger of unemployment.

The second cluster, in the lower right quadrant, was made up of mothers with children up to three years old and living in a couple. These mothers are usually equipped with better education: secondary education with General Certificate of Education (GCE) exams or even tertiary education. More often than those in the first cluster or mothers with an apprenticeship certificate, these mothers had part-time jobs, in which they usually worked up to 20 hours per week. This, of course, improves their chances in the labour market when their parental leave comes to an end. They had more chance of making the transition to the lower part of the third cluster, getting a full-time job with a permanent contract. This showed that, as well as education, the presence of a partner is an important social resource.

The third cluster was made up of all the mothers with their youngest child older than three. As indicated, all these mothers were fully integrated in the labour market, but there were still differences between them: some of them were in the secure position, while others had temporary contracts or worked only part-time. Being in a relationship seemed to be related to job quality. Mothers living in a couple had a better chance of having a permanent contract and a full-time job. In contrast, single mothers more often had temporary contracts and were more often at risk of becoming unemployed.

As Chaloupková and Mitchel (2009) argue, education is an important factor influencing the return of mothers to the labour market. The more educated women are, the greater their benefits from a paid job, while they lose their rights to social benefits. This is particularly true for mothers of children under three years old, who have to opt for expensive private childcare due to the lack of places in public nurseries (Hašková, 2012). In this institutional context, single motherhood is a motivational factor for early return to the labour market, but, again, mostly for highly educated women (Chaloupková and Mitchel, 2009). What we can see, in the context of low-educated single mothers, is a good example of risk accumulation. Authors describing the new social risks in the labour market often perceive the early stage of motherhood, one-person households, and low educational level as important risk factors (for example Esping-Andersen, 1999; Bonoli, 2006; see also Sirovátka, 2006).

In the case of fathers, as Figure 7.5 shows, fatherhood itself was not, in comparison with mothers, an important variable affecting access to the labour market. There are other variables, not included in the analysis, which gave the shape to the presented geometrical solution. For instance, the group

of fathers with a child of up to three years old and living in a couple was divided into two clusters: the first had permanent contracts and worked for 40 hours per week, while the second group were unemployed. Age and individual history in the labour market explained to which of the clusters the fathers belonged. Among fathers of a child up to the age of three, especially if it was their first child, there was a higher proportion of school-leavers entering the labour market for the first time. The incidence of unemployment in this group was disproportionately high. However, if it was not the first but their second or third child, then the fathers were, on average, older and had a better chance of already being established in the labour market. In other words, the relationship between fatherhood and the labour market was not as direct as in the case of mothers, but was mediated through other variables. This supports what was mentioned above: policies, as well as cultural norms, perceive fathers predominantly as breadwinners, and decisively not as caregivers. The position of mothers in the field of paid work is complementary to that of the fathers: mothers are primarily caregivers.

The full-time motherhood hypothesis also seemed to be clearly supported by the correspondence analysis. The position of mothers in the labour market was strongly influenced by the combination of the age of the youngest child and family configuration. The correspondence analysis solution for the group of fathers in this respect uncovered a strong pressure for them to enter or remain in the labour market, regardless of their educational level or family configuration. The correspondence analysis shows us how the economic rationality of returning to paid work is conditioned in the institutional context supporting the gender norm of full-time motherhood. As fathers are pressured by the complementary norm of the male breadwinner, they opt out of the norm of full-time care to a great extent even when they are the sole carers.

## **Conclusion**

When analysing the Czech labour market, we became aware of the prevalent gender norm of full-time motherhood (Formánková and Dobrotić, 2011). This norm influences not only the setting of the policies, but also individual decisions of women and men regarding paid work and care. The norm resulted in a highly differentiated impact of parenthood on the employment rate: whereas male labour market activity was not primarily affected by parenthood, the female employment rate declined sharply, especially for mothers of pre-school children. This decline was the largest of all the EU countries.

It can be said that the support of full-time maternal care for children under three years old is hegemonic in Czech policy discourse. This 'magic border of three years of age' in the family policy framework started to change in 2008, but only partly. The parental allowance has become more flexible, reflecting the heterogeneity of different family lives. Nevertheless, the availability

of childcare for children under three years old outside the family, as a key part of work–family balance, remains ignored and unsolved by Czech policy-makers. Thus, this situation still prevents parents, most usually mothers, from participating in paid work in the early years of their children's lives. As a consequence, family policy programmes serve as a means of conserving and reproducing the gender division of roles. The motherhood penalty on female labour market participation is thus extremely high in the Czech Republic compared with other EU countries.

The role of employers appears to be somewhat ambivalent in the Czech Republic. On the one hand, they have considerable discretionary power to set up flexible working regimes that can moderate the imbalance between work and family life. On the other hand, flexible working regimes are still not very widespread in the Czech Republic; when they are implemented, they are often connected with lower-quality working positions, longer working hours or overtime work. In conjunction with the familialistic family policy, which does not support the early return of mothers to the labour market, this situation pushes and keeps Czech mothers out of the labour market for a long time – with many negative implications for furthering their careers.

The correspondence analysis shows that the explicitly familialistic Czech family policy has a significant negative impact on female employment. However, besides the presence of a child up to the age of three, it was the combination of low education and single motherhood that led mothers to the secondary labour market or to unemployment. In the case of men, the effect of fatherhood on their chances in the labour market was relatively low. However, single fathers can face similar problems to single mothers, which they can perceive as a conflict with the socially ascribed role of breadwinner.

We can conclude that cultural norms, that is, the priority of maternal over institutional childcare, significantly influence the chances of fathers and mothers in the labour market in the Czech Republic. Despite the fact that cultural factors were partially suppressed under the former regime (at least until the mid-1980s), they reappeared, and currently play an important role in female employment. This may be a result of the decade-long experience of the double burden during the communist era (Čermáková, 1995). Now we observe a gendered distribution of the main responsibilities for caring and for family income. Such an arrangement makes the situation precarious, especially for those who cannot share, that is, single parents. We can see from the correspondence analysis that women with an already unstable position in the labour market – with a low level of education and single – are the most disadvantaged.

In relation to the new social risks, we can see that the Czech family policy design does not take into account economic rationality; in other words, it supports in-home mother care regardless of the economic impact on families and, consequently, on the well-being of the children.

From the findings, we can assume that cultural norms influence the female labour market attainment to a greater extent than policy design, and also, in many cases, policy design confirms rather than confronts or alters the cultural gender norm. At the same time, gender arrangements can be altered by policy design, and this may result in altering the predominant gender norm. However, when not followed by a more equal division of the household responsibilities and care duties, female labour market participation results only in great pressure on women and a consequent increase in work–family conflict (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006).

In this chapter, we looked at the extent to which policies were influenced by the cultural norm, what the norm was, and how such an arrangement influenced the position of women in the labour market. It must be noted that we did not look at individual preferences and decisions, or whether these were based on economic rationality or the cultural norm. This would be a topic for further research.

We cannot say that the cultural norm is always irrational economically. It really depends on what the norm is and what the institutional and structural conditions are. But we can see that the norm of full-time motherhood makes the situation for some, if not most, women very difficult in post-modern labour markets. Consequently, full-time motherhood can have a negative economic influence on the family, and possibly on the economy of the state.

## Appendix

*Table A.7.1* The description of variables used in the correspondence analysis

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Type of contract:	Mother's/father's education:
Permanent contract	Elementary education
Temporary contract	Secondary education – apprenticeship certificate
Part- and full-time jobs:	Secondary education – GCE exam
Full-time	Tertiary education
Part-time	Position one year ago:
Hours usually worked in the week:	worked
Up to 20 hours/week	was unemployed
From 20 to 39 hours/week	Familial configuration:
40 hours/week	Single mother with child up to 3
More than 40 hours/week	Mother/father in couple with child up to 3
Status in employment:	Single mother with child from 4 to 7
Employee	Mother/father in couple with child from 4 to 7
Self-employed without employees	Single mother/father with child from 8 to 15
Self-employed with employees	Mother/father in couple with child from 8 to 15
Unemployed	

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## Notes

1. The data in Table 7.4 is only illustrative, because the Labour Force Survey is weighted solely according to the population of adults and not to the population of children.
2. In comparison with the sample of single mothers (N = 1767), the sample of single fathers is much smaller (N = 942).
3. Parental allowance followed three schemes: fast scheme – highest monthly rate of CZK11,400 (€443), paid only until the child is 24 months old; standard scheme – median monthly rate of CZK7,600 (€295), paid until the child is 36 months old; slow scheme – median monthly rate of CZK7,600 (€295) until the child is nine months old (before 1 January 2011 this was provided until the age of 21 months) and then reduced to a basic monthly rate of CZK3,800 (€147) until the child is 48 months old.
4. Some women who do not come back to the previous employer quit their jobs and stay at home longer with their child. Their choices are to have another child, find a new employer or start their own business (Kuchařová et al., 2006).
5. See Table A.7.1 for a comprehensive list of all variables used with all the corresponding modalities.
6. We excluded from the analysis modalities with extremely low frequencies: ‘single fathers of a child up to three years old’, ‘single fathers of a child from four to seven years old’, and for fathers also the solitary modality ‘working up to 20 hours per week’.

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# 8

## Gender Segregation in Post-Socialist Slovenia: Women's Experiences in the Retail Sector

*Tatiana Bajuk Senčar*

### **Contextualizing the discourse of exceptionalism: An introduction**

Slovenia's transition from socialism coincided with its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. This meant that Slovenia's path of reform in the 1990s involved not only political and economic reforms but also a multi-dimensional process of state building that included creating the necessary economic and political institutions so that it could operate as a nation-state. The 'three-track' process of reform and the distinctive socialist system that characterized Yugoslavia after 1948 have contributed to Slovenia often being considered in the literature as a 'particular case' among Eastern European countries.

In addition, there are a number of other features that contributed to such a classification. They include the fact that upon independence Slovenia was among the richest Eastern European countries – with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita comparable at that time to Greece and Portugal – and that it was already more market-oriented than its Eastern European counterparts, including the remaining former Yugoslav republics (Pleskovic and Sachs, 2004). These features have been cited as having aided Slovenia in becoming the second economy, after Poland, to recover from the initial macroeconomic shocks of transition (Silva-Jáuregui, 2004). Continued – albeit gradual – economic reforms enabled it not only to join the EU in 2004 with the remaining accession states but also to be the first new member state to join the Economic Monetary Union (EMU) in 2007.

Analysts have also singled out Slovenia because of its cautious – and, for post-socialist countries, rather unusual – approach to labour market reforms. Slovenia had among the strictest employment protection legislation among the then transition countries: while it was possible for employers to lay off

workers, this came at a high cost to them. It also introduced the most generous unemployment system among the transition economies, even after its reform in 1998, and in 1995 introduced a mandatory minimum wage, despite the fact that minimum wages were defined through collective agreements from the early 1990s onwards. This collection of measures, passed for the most part in two waves – the first in the early 1990s and the second in 1998 – seems to have facilitated a substantial but gradual restructuring of the labour market as well as the labour force (Vodopivec, 2004).

That Slovenia had developed a neo-corporatist market economy by the mid-1990s has also become a reason for it being labelled an ‘exception’ among post-socialist countries (see Bohle and Greskovits, 2007; Crowley and Stanojević, 2011). Its neo-corporative system was institutionalized in 1994 with the creation of the Economic and Social Council (ESC), in which social partners have systematically negotiated income and other policies that take the form of agreements or broader social pacts. From the mid-1990s onwards, social tripartite dialogue resulted in a number of income policy agreements and social pacts that facilitated the gradual adoption of the Eurozone criteria (Crowley and Stanojević, 2011). Implementation of these agreements hinged on a centralized collective bargaining system, and general collective agreements provided the foundation for collective bargaining at the sectoral level. Researchers have argued that Slovenia’s neo-corporatist model has experienced certain modifications and has endured numerous economic and political shocks in the 2000s, which have diminished its coordinative capacity; however, it is still in place during this present period of crisis (Mrozowicki et al., 2013; Stanojević and Klarič, 2013).

### **Gender segregation and the construction of Slovenia as an exceptional case concerning gender equality**

The framing of Slovenia as an exceptional case also extends to gender. As was the case in numerous post-socialist countries, the position of women in the labour market was considered to be better than that of women in Western European countries at the onset of the transition process. Orazem and Vodopivec (1995) examine the changes in the structure of wages and employment set in motion by Slovenia’s transition to a market economy in their hallmark study of Slovene workers, in which they argue that the position of women in the labour market improved compared with that of men during the first years of the transition process. Furthermore, they assert that this was primarily due to two factors: the first was the issue of the levels of education of men and women, and the second was the diverse effects that the transition exerted on different labour sectors.

The data collected by the authors demonstrates that within five years of the transition, the wages of workers with college education rose significantly relative to workers with elementary education, and that more women than

men had college training. The employment levels of Slovenes with elementary education also fell more sharply than for those with more advanced education. In addition, the economic shocks of the transition hit sectors that were male-dominated most strongly, with female-dominated sectors being less affected. The authors argue that women seem to have come out ahead in the first years of the Slovenian transition, an exceptional situation among post-socialist states, seemingly due to the gender segregation of the labour market.

Gender segregation has mostly been presented in the literature as a condition that needs to be remedied, with gender equality assessments of individual countries pointing to indicators of segregation as evidence of areas in which women's participation should be extended and encouraged (Europa, 2012). However, on the basis of early transition research, it seems that existing sectoral gender segregation benefited rather than hindered women. Research on the shape and trajectory of gender segregation in post-socialist countries has explored the relationship between gender segregation and gender inequality, studying similarities and differences across countries. Studies that have broken down gender segregation (vertical, horizontal, occupational) across European countries have found that segregation, particularly horizontal, is not as directly linked to gender inequality as has often been assumed (Blackburn et al., 2009).

While being a strong advocate of diminishing gender inequality, I wish to call attention to the limits of gender segregation as the defining indicator of equality in the case of Slovenia, given the ambiguous role that gender segregation has played in the development of post-socialist gender relations in the Slovenian labour market. Further research on Slovenia, which at first seemed to have protected women in female-dominated sectors from transition shocks, has done much to question the discourse of exceptionalism in terms of which gender equality and inequality have been framed. Blackburn et al. (2009) have furthered the thesis that Slovenia falls into the category of countries in which gender equality has resulted from equalizing downwards. They argue that the relatively positive status of women compared with men that has often been cited in the literature is the product of the losses men have experienced instead of any real progress made by women. Orazem and Vodopivec (2000), in a later study comparing the experiences of Slovenia and Estonia, make a similar argument, stating that early relative gains made by women due to transition shocks to the labour market are due neither to any evidence of diminishing discrimination against women nor, unfortunately, to any significant progress in gender equality.

In fact, one could also, albeit provocatively, propose that the significance accorded to gender segregation in Slovenia as well as Slovenia's 'exceptional' status could also be viewed in the same terms: that it concerns more what has befallen men than what is happening to women in Slovenia. According the status of "exceptional" to any given case implies that it stands out and is less

amenable to critical comparison. However, this is not to say that the studies that have qualified the thesis of the transition having been less detrimental to women than to men have not helped to shed light on the particular situation in Slovenia. The studies cited in the previous paragraphs have done so by introducing certain new variables and tracking the progress of women in Slovenia over a longer period. Yet, the question still remains whether this implies that women have been 'written into' the story of gender equality and inequality in Slovenia, and whether the crucial factors that shape women's lives in Slovenia have been identified. This is the main research question for this chapter.

## Data and method

The issues raised so far point to important questions to consider when analysing the qualitative data discussed in this chapter, which comprises a compilation of interviews with women within the retail sector, a sector that has been surprisingly resilient during the transition process as well as during the first years of the crisis. In addition, it is a sector that is heavily feminized, an example of the horizontal segregation in the Slovenian labour market. The interviews were conducted with numerous trade union officials and workers in the Slovenian retail sector; in addition, they were collected as part of a comparative research project<sup>1</sup> conducted from 2009 to 2012 in Slovenia, Poland, Romania and Estonia (see, further, Mrozowicki et al., 2013; Mrozowicki, 2014). The project concerned identifying and comparing trade union trends and developments across chosen new EU member states. To this end, the research team interviewed a range of trade union actors (officials and workers) from the automotive and retail sectors, conducting both biographical and expert interviews.

The combination of biographical and expert interviews was intended to access two different types of information. Expert interviews composed of a strict set of questions were conducted primarily with trade union officials in order to obtain responses concerning particular issues and questions concerning developments within trade unions. The team also collected biographical interviews structured by a series of open-ended questions so as to understand certain periods or processes through the eyes of the social actors who experienced and enacted them. The collected narratives also provided us with the cultural logic with which they make sense of their life experiences and their referential universe. This, in turn, provided us with crucial information from the ground level that that cannot be anticipated with a standardized set of questions.

For the purpose of this chapter, I used formal and informal narratives collected in the years 2011 and 2012 from women – both as workers and as trade union officials – to place existing studies of gender in Slovenia in a broader context. I also employed them to identify the major themes and

issues shaping the experience of women in the retail sector. The expert interviews, which were conducted primarily with trade union officials at varying levels of trade union hierarchies, provided a window into the way women in trade unions view the situation within the retail sector. Biographical interviews comprise first-person narratives of women – both workers and trade union officials – who directly experienced the way in which systemic changes have affected the retail sector. All the persons with whom I conducted interviews remain anonymous. All interviews were conducted in Slovene, and all translations of interview excerpts from Slovene into English are mine.

### **The retail sector in Slovenia: Context**

The retail sector in Slovenia is regulated by sectoral collective agreements that are binding for all enterprises in the sector and cover all who are hired directly by commercial enterprises, but not those employed through student or employment agencies. Very few enterprises have additional company-level collective agreements. In addition, the retail sector – especially the supermarket chains on which our research team focused – is also characterized by relatively low wages and increasing levels of non-standard employment. The main employers in the sector are large retail chains, in which unions are more present and where a slim majority of employees have permanent contracts. However, flexibilization of the labour force has also made its way into the retail sector, with approximately 20 per cent of employees being on short-term contracts from 2008 onwards and increasing levels (albeit low in comparison with other countries) of part-time employment. Existing labour regulations, at least in theory, protect employees who, after two years in the same enterprise, must receive permanent contracts (see also Mrozowicki et al., 2013). In addition to the larger, more established chains that are unionized, there are also numerous smaller, less unionized enterprises in which employment is more non-standard and workers' rights less protected. In these cases, trade unions do offer individual membership to workers in non-unionized enterprises or to temporary workers. The retail sector is, thus, quite diverse in nature. While the sector has a collective agreement to cover all workers employed by firms in the retail sector, it is not protected or enforced consistently from company to company or even from store to store.

The retail sector has also been recently framed in the discourse of exceptionalism as one of the sectors that did not suffer the shocks of the economic crisis, unlike the construction and manufacturing sectors. The change in turnover from 2008 to 2010 for the construction sector was –28 per cent, while in the retail sector it was only –5.6 per cent (Mrozowicki et al., 2013: 272). Major supermarket chains in Slovenia continued to open large shopping complexes, while at the same time one construction enterprise after

another was declaring bankruptcy across the country. Yet, what does this 'exceptionalism' imply for women in this sector?

## **Narratives of Slovene women in the retail sector**

### **The discourse of ongoing crisis**

One of my first discussions with a group of women trade union officials working in one of Slovenia's most successful supermarket chains signalled to me the level of discrepancy between the experiences of women working in this sector and the statistical data that I had available at that time. I had the opportunity to take part in an informal discussion among a small group of women in a particular trade union active in one of Slovenia's strongest supermarket chains. When I asked them about how the recent crisis had affected the employees of this chain and their own work, they began to laugh. They explained that the retail sector, according to employers, was always in a state of crisis, that employers used the concept (or discourse) of crisis as a rhetorical strategy to justify their refusal to raise wages for workers or extend benefits despite the fact this particular chain was a very profitable one. This profitable trend even extended to the first years of the crisis (2009–10), albeit with a lower profit margin. Trade union officials would meet with company management every quarter, at which time management would inform the trade unions of the company's performance. However, my interviewees explained, company management employed a number of arguments for prioritizing where profits were to be allocated, and these arguments were the cornerstone for the image of crisis that company officials employed to justify not raising wages in accordance with profit levels. These included the need to remain competitive by reinvesting profits into the company or expanding into new markets. Having enough funds to distribute among the owners in the form of dividends was also incorporated into the discourse of crisis, prioritizing this goal before funds for higher wages.

My interviewees' explanations of the use of crisis discourse were not meant to counter the fact of the economic crisis – which, by then, had even made itself felt in the retail sector, though to a relatively diminished degree. Instead, they meant to point to its use as a reframing mechanism that placed recent events in the context of an expanded understanding of the crisis. This was, in turn, identified as resulting from the transition and the development of what they refer to as a harsh form of capitalism that facilitated the emergence of greedy, exploitative employers and the subsequent loss of worker rights. These form the core discourses of trade union officials in Slovenia – across gender and across sectors (Bajuk Senčar, 2014).

SV: With the new country and the new system, the role of the trade unions changed dramatically. They changed in such a way that now every day we feel the pressures, and every day we have to engage to maintain,

I would say, the rights that had already been attained. Every day new appetites appear, and I am not talking about only in the companies but more broadly speaking, the changes to the labour legislation and the changes to the collective agreement, of course always to the detriment of the workers, right.

SV, a high-level trade union official in one of the largest supermarket chains, argues that trade union officials perceived the change in the economic system and its effects on the trade unions in terms of pressure on existing rights. The shift in the economic system was understood as a shift in the relationship between workers, employers and trade unions; in this passage, SV focuses on the changed role of trade unions, which now work to maintain the worker rights upon which companies and lawmakers exert continual pressure. The period from the transition onwards, in her view, was marked by a continual loss of worker rights over time. This narrative stands in stark contrast to the thesis of Slovenian exceptionalism, in which women made relative progress with the transition from socialism, however problematic this thesis may be. SV's words beg the question: how did women, in particular, experience developments from the onset of the transition onwards?

### **The gendering of work intensification**

The supermarket chains upon which we focused our research are heavily feminized, with 70 per cent of all employees being women. Surprisingly, many of the interview narratives concerning the situation of retail sector workers that I collected were not explicitly gendered, even the narratives related by women. Perhaps this is due to the unmarked role that the discursive category of the female worker plays in a sector that is so strongly feminized, resulting in an inversion of the norm whereby the female category is marked and the male unmarked.

It is, however, important to point out that the female gender of the majority of retail sector workers has been invoked by trade union officials as an argument for opposing work intensification in the retail sector. Such an instrumentalization of gender in trade union discourse was meant to provide additional weight to arguments against certain measures by calling attention to the way in which these measures affected women. One of the first significant work intensification measures that has marked the retail sector has been the liberalization of working hours. This was set in motion when the government issued the Regulation of Retail Opening Hours in 1997 (Uradni list, 1997), which allowed employers to extend operating hours in retail enterprises during the week as well as on traditional days off (Sundays and holidays). Trade union officials called attention to the effects of the liberalization of working hours with the passing of this agreement, which they considered to cause a significant deterioration of working conditions, as is



apparent from the following excerpt of the Activities Report issued by the Retail Workers Trade Union of Slovenia (SDTS):

Employers impede numerous employees from using their annual leave, they deprive them of their daily and weekly rest breaks and force them to work beyond regular working hours without proper compensation.

(SDTS, 2006: 4)

The activities of trade union and employer organizations concerning the liberalization of working hours in retail enterprises were carried out over almost ten years. Trade union officials – in particular SDTS, Slovenia's representative trade union in the retail sector – proposed amendments to the existing Law on Retail Trade (Uradni list, 1993b) to curtail retailers' rights to determine the opening hours of shops on Sundays and holidays and to ensure proper compensation for work on these days. When this proposal proved unsuccessful, trade union leaders proposed a national referendum on the Sunday opening hours of shops, in which a majority voted for the closure of shops on Sundays. Slovenia's parliament was thus obliged to amend the Law on Retail Trade, a decision that was contested twice by employers at the Constitutional Court level. The Constitutional Court twice upheld the constitutionality of the amended legislation, albeit only in certain parts, which resulted in the loosening of the restrictions on operating hours on Sundays and holidays. In 2006, employer organizations annulled the sectoral collective agreement for the retail sector, which spurred a new round of debates concerning opening hours. The existing regulations concerning opening hours are a result of negotiations between trade unions and employer organizations at the level of a retail sector collective agreement, which was signed the very same year (SDTS, 2006: 2–15; Skledar, 2006).

One of the major arguments that certain trade union officials cite against the liberalization of opening hours involved reframing liberalization in terms of its effects on women, which meant bringing up the issue of Sundays and holidays in a particular manner. KL, a high-level trade union official who participated in trade union initiatives against the liberalization of opening hours and the subsequent deterioration of working conditions, called attention to this issue, defining it in the following terms:

KL: In the retail sector the greatest number of problems concern the balance of work, private and family lives. This is the case because there is a great number of women, of mothers in this sector. The problems that they experience revolve around work schedules, the scheduling of leave... We will have to keep working on the opening hours issue...

KL points out the effects of the liberalization of opening hours on women, particularly mothers working in the retail sector, who must deal with

increasing work obligations while finding time to care for the family and home. Studies on the effects of work flexibilization and intensification on parents have called attention to the increasing double burden placed on women, who, in addition to their duties at the workplace, still take on the majority of work in the home, particularly childcare and housework. The research of Kanjuo-Mrčela and Černigoj-Sadar (2006), for example, demonstrates that the vast majority of the parents in Slovenia who make use of the different forms of parental leave are women, and that women do at least twice as much household work as men. Gendering the effects of the liberalization of working hours allowed trade union officials to address the effects of working conditions to include repercussions outside the sphere of work.

While the opening hours of stores remain liberalized – including Sundays and holidays – employers and trade unions have agreed to certain stipulations in the sectoral collective agreement that provide exceptions to working on these particular days for certain groups of workers. The 47th and 48th amendments of the retail sector collective agreement, passed in 2006, state that women are exempt from working Sundays and holidays during pregnancy and for a year after a child's birth. The same holds for workers (both women and men) with children up to the age of three; workers (both women and men) with children from the age of three to seven (pre-school children) cannot be scheduled for more than ten Sundays a year. Sunday work for all workers is limited to two Sundays a month and a maximum of 26 Sundays a year. Thus, while the problem of work on Sundays was framed in part as a women's issue, it is dealt with in the present regulation as a family issue that extends to parents of both genders.

Another of the major trade unions in the retail sector, the Retail Trade Union of Slovenia of the Conference of Trade Unions 90 (STS KS-90), did not support efforts to regulate work on Sundays and holidays but focused instead on proper compensation for work outside traditional work hours, a goal that was not gendered. Efforts to this end did not comprise the main discourse in terms of which the liberalization of work hours was defined in the public sphere. Given that SDTS spearheaded a referendum campaign, it is not surprising that the liberalization of the working hours issue in the public sphere was equated primarily with women and work on Sundays instead of with the question of proper compensation. Collective agreement negotiations also addressed the latter issue, and amendment 74 of the collective agreement stipulates regulations for compensation for all work that could be categorized as 'less favourable' (Uradni list, 2006).

### **Women's experiences of work intensification**

Interviewees referred to additional problems that could be classified as work intensification. One common problem was overtime. Overtime was, in theory, regulated by labour law legislation and the collective agreement. These two pieces of legislation stipulated the maximum number of hours that a worker could work per week, how overtime pay was to be calculated, the

conditions under which employers could require overtime work from their employees, and the categories of workers who were exempt from overtime work. However, KM, a trade union trustee at one of the leading supermarket chains in Slovenia, articulated the shared belief in a causal link between the liberalization of operating hours and an increase in overtime work.

KM: Yes, the biggest problem is that *store name* is open all the time, you know. During holidays, I don't know if there are even five holidays during which the store is closed during the year.

Interviewer: Really?

KM: I don't know if there are five ... Yes, this is a problem, one has to work all the time [...] And the wages are going to be a constant problem, they will be a problem forever because we are not paid as we should be. I also do work for which I am not paid. This is a perennial problem.

One of the main problems KM identified concerned the fact that they had to work 'all the time'. There were particular periods during which workers would work an inordinately high number of overtime hours, such as during inventory or renovation; during this period workers might exceed the maximum number of hours per week (8 hours) or per month (20 hours) that an employer can by law require of the employees (Uradni list, 2013). However, PM, a trade union official who had previously worked in a smaller, non-unionized company, related how her employer systematically required that all employees work the maximum number of overtime hours allowed per month every month:

PM: And now if you can imagine, eight hours a day, plus every other Saturday, despite the fact the law stipulates only 40 hours a week. Overtime was defined in advance, at least 20 hours a month, plus some sort of compensation, together with the yearly calendar. This is the first legal fault that we called attention to ... he would not even register the overtime on the pay cheques, but he would show these extra hours worked on Saturdays as percentages in the stimulus or compensation.

Working 20 hours of overtime every month of the year meant that these workers by far exceeded the maximum amount of overtime allowed per year (180 hours). In addition, PM related how in this company those 20 hours a month were not considered in practice a maximum but a minimum, which meant that employees were working considerably more than the legal maximum.

While employees in larger, more high-profile and unionized chains did not report systematic work excesses such as PM described, they did relate similar experiences concerning the way in which overtime was calculated and paid. A number of trade union officials and workers recounted experiences of overtime hours not being properly calculated and paid to

workers. Amendment 74 of the retail sector collective agreement states that employers must pay 30 per cent extra for each hour of overtime; however, interviewees recounted the different ways in which employers would try to keep from paying extra for hours that should have been billed as overtime. In the above passage, PM recounts how overtime hours would not be calculated as overtime on pay cheques but as compensation in order to avoid paying out those hours as overtime. Trade union trustee KM, who in her previous segment stated that she 'did work for which she was not paid', recounted one of her own experiences concerning overtime with store management:

KM: In September there were renovations in the store. There was so much work during the renovations that you came in at 6, you worked fixing things up until 11. In the end, I wound up working up an abnormal number of hours. When I received my pay cheque in October, my hours were not on my payslip. And then I begin to make calculations, and then I went to the management headquarters. And I say that I want a printout of my hours. For October my printout said I had 15 extra hours. I asked them what did they think they were doing, where are my hours and why they did not pay them. My boss later came over together with the department manager and told me: you are right, they forgot to pay for your overtime. And I received payment for those hours, I don't remember, in November or December, finally.

KM's effectiveness in those negotiations may have been due in part to her being a trade union member; however, many employees, for various reasons, do not confront their employers.

Another common form of work intensification, in addition to increased (and often underpaid) overtime, involved increased workloads or additional responsibilities. In their narratives, interviewees drew a distinction between certain periods that simply required more work than others (inventory, holidays, and extraordinary events, such as renovation) and a permanent or chronic increase in work duties. The additional responsibilities accorded to cashiers in the larger supermarket chains in Slovenia are an example of this. One would presume that the partial introduction of self-service cash registers would imply a decrease in the need for cashiers or a decrease in their workload. However, trade union officials argued the opposite, describing the conditions under which cashiers had to work and how management continually evaluated their efficiency and speed, introducing a minimum number of items to be scanned in a minute. Cashiers were also responsible for asking every customer whether they wanted a store card and for handing out advertisements with their purchases. The change that they singled out as most problematic was the introduction of test purchases, a version of the commonly known personnel evaluation practice of mystery shopping:

PM: The biggest problem in store name are the test purchases. Test purchases means verifying the work of the cashiers. This means that the employer designates a person who they know and sends that person to the store. This person chooses certain items that then they try to hide them so that they make it past the cashier. Try to imagine someone takes a pack of chewing gum and puts it in their purse... A cashier has no authority to tell a customer, please show me the contents of your purse. This person will go to the employer after the test purchase. The employer will verify the receipt and this person will show which items he or she was about to take without paying. And then the cashier will have to go before the employer, and because of this failed test purchase the cashier will lose his or her bonus and have to reimburse the cost of these items from their salary. There are no explicit rules for test purchases and until today we have not been able to come to an agreement. They [the employers] state that they can do this, we [the trade union] argue that they cannot, that this is illegal and unfair to workers and that they lower people's wages illegally.

According to trade union officials, the recent introduction of test purchases provides an example of work intensification in the form of designating additional and unrealistic responsibilities to cashiers. Interviewees stated that work intensification in the form of additional responsibilities was not only a problem that cashiers faced but was of more general concern, as fewer workers were assigned to cover the same level of responsibilities in a store. Someone would retire or complete their employment, and instead of management hiring someone to fill the vacant position, the work responsibilities would be distributed among the remaining store employees.

### **Passivity and the creation of gendered immobility**

Another issue mentioned as being important to the retail sector concerned the definition of the training requirements for jobs in the retail sector. They argued that the issue of minimal education requirements had been a collective bargaining issue for over a decade. This minimum, which was first defined after the transition in 1993, has been lowered for both sales people and store managers throughout the years, with the last change passed in 2010 (Uradni list, 1993a). According to SV, a high-level trade union official in the retail sector, this standard was lowered for two reasons:

SV: The Retail Law has a secondary level professional degree as the minimal educational standard. We changed this years ago; a secondary-level commercial degree was the previous minimal requirement. However, developments in the retail sector went in such a direction that commercial training was not enough. For example, they [employers] wanted a mason for the sale of construction material, a mason has more specialized

skills than the ones acquired with commercial training. Now employers wish that the minimal standard disappear completely from existing legislation, supposedly because they do not get qualified applicants.

In this passage, SV stated how the minimal standard had been adapted to the needs of the employers through the years. The first major change involved generalizing the minimum necessary secondary training so as to accord employers more leeway in choosing potential employees. The present wish of employers is to remove any mention of minimal education standards from existing labour legislation. The official reason for this request on the part of employers is that they cannot find enough personnel with the minimum educational standard required by law. One could suggest that perhaps they just cannot find them for the wages that they are ready to pay. However, my interviewees considered the true motivation behind the employers' request to lie elsewhere:

KL: This is in the interests of employers, who could then also employ unskilled workers whom they can mould with their measures and in accordance with their standards; then it is easier to work with such employees. They are not as self-confident, they do not know that much, they do not think with their own heads, and they do not think about their rights.

The excerpt above expresses an issue that the majority of trade union officials (both male and female) expressed as very important: passivity. Passivity has become a way to talk about problems related to the transition and in earlier excerpts was referred to as the emergence of the capitalist employer. The change in the system and in employers was cited as spurring the reform of trade unions, which had to become more pro-active in order to protect worker rights and organize workers, whom they considered to be key allies and partners. In this new framework, passivity – on the part of both trade union officials and workers – is seen to be a hindrance that could have far-reaching implications (Bajuk Senčar, 2014).

KM, in her discussion of legislation that would introduce unskilled workers to the retail sector, expresses the concerns of trade union leaders who equate the lack of skill with a lack of awareness and, thus, with passivity. This line of thinking echoes the findings of research conducted by Orazem and Vodopivec (1995) mentioned earlier, who found that education seemed to be the factor that facilitated labour mobility – particularly that of women – to better jobs. Attempts to decrease minimal education standards could, in this light, be interpreted as attempts to create a more malleable sector with less mobile workers. Trade union officials have also developed gendered explanations for the passivity of retail sector workers, citing women's fear and dependence on an income as a reason for their passivity. Skill levels and

awareness of one's rights are the key factors that trade union officials believe can combat fear and passivity.

However, the passivity of women working in the retail sector is a complex issue, despite the fact that the passivity and fear of women are often cited as an explanation for organizational troubles in the sector. Trade union officials who have worked for many years in the retail sector and who have followed the situation of women in recent years shared information that placed this depiction of women as fearful and passive workers in a new light. One of the more worker-friendly supermarket chains offers financial support to workers going through hard times, a fund that has become even more relevant during the financial crisis. Trade union officials who were invited to help go through applications observed that many of the women who applied for aid were married to men who were once employed in the construction industry and who had lost their jobs due to the crisis. In these cases, women had become the primary (or only) earners in the family, and the salaries that they earned were the only source of income for the household. Thus, the motivation to remain in a position despite rising employer demands in the workplace (which could also be defined as passivity or fear) can be reframed by taking into account the position of the retail sector vis-à-vis other, more volatile sectors, as well as the position of women in a broader context (including at the household level).

## Conclusion

The discussion of the interviews with women in the retail sector was designed to complement existing research that provides a macro-level view of the situation of women and trends in gender equality and inequality in the Slovenian labour market. The analysis of the interviews involved exploring the ways in which women viewed developments in the retail sector, the problems they identified from their own experiences, and a range of gendering practices particular to the retail sector. While the feminized retail sector could be characterized as stable vis-à-vis other, more male-dominated sectors, the narratives of women's experiences are not framed in such terms. Instead, women working in the retail sector portrayed a sector undergoing long-term change experienced in terms of work intensification: the liberalization of working hours, the over-use and under-compensation of overtime, and unjustified increases in workload. These measures were implemented across the sector, affecting both women and men. However, it became evident from the interviews that the gendered repercussions of such measures primarily concerned the way in which work intensification affects the balance of work and private or family life. The effect of work intensification on maintaining such a balance was framed as a female issue, and was also effectively presented as such in campaigns against the liberalization of store operating hours.

The narratives of women in this regard help to introduce a significant dimension to the issue of immobility of women with potential repercussions for the question of segregation. It is interesting to note that interviewees identified education and training – factors generally recognized as enabling gender desegregation – as key factors for also developing the awareness of women in the retail sector, often denoted as passive and immobile in the face of deteriorating conditions. Yet, at the same time, they emphasized the significance of the link between work and private life for mobility, narrating experiences in which changes in the role of women at the household level during the crisis also affect the range of mobility of women in the workplace. Further research exploring these connections across more sectors could help shed new light on the factors shaping gender segregation in the Slovenian labour market.

## Note

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## **Part III**

# **Combining Parenthood and Paid Work**

# 9

## Maternal Employment in Post-Socialist Countries: Understanding the Implications of Childcare Policies

*Jana Javornik*

### Introduction

Post-socialist countries, especially those from the EU-2004 enlargement, have been distinguished by high employment rates of women in full-time jobs since the late 1950s. In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia from Central Europe, and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from the Baltic States, these ranged between 85 and 90 per cent, with practically no cross-country variation and narrow gender gaps in the late 1980s, just before the severe labour market disruptions in the 1990s (see, for example, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 1999).

Scholarship on female employment largely relates these trends to their 'exceptional' socialist history and legacy, maintaining that the socialist states had designed generous childcare policies aimed at supporting female employment (for example Einhorn, 1993; van der Lippe and Van Dijk, 2001: 5; Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 375–377; Pascall and Kwak, 2005: 29). Pascall and Manning argue that these endorsed and legitimized social norms, and affirmed the place of women in society as well as securing their legislative protection in the labour markets (2000: 248).

Focusing on this early transformative period, literature on the gendered welfare state often conveys a sense of fundamental shift from the socialist past, arguing that 'the winds of change' evoked 'a renaissance' of traditional gender roles and familialism (for example Einhorn, 1993; Funk, 1993: 2; Gal and Kligman, 2000; Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 375–377; Pascall and Kwak, 2005: 29; for an overview see Motiejūnaitė, 2008: 83; Javornik, 2010). These authors argued that, lacking public subsidies and political support, public childcare would plummet; childcare would be re-familialized and women driven out of the labour markets.

On the other hand, the 'anti-feminist sentiment' thesis argues that, given the opportunity, women would opt out of jobs to stay home with their children (for example Einhorn, 1993; Gal and Kligman, 2000; Pascall and Kwak, 2005). This scholarship argues that socialist politics produced cheap labour and overburdened women (for example Gal and Kligman, 2000) and that conditions of work, low wages, and the magnitude of public-private demands evoked a sense of victimization and a perennial guilt in women, who felt that they were never able to do 'enough of anything, especially the mothering' (echoed as 'female brave victim' in Gal and Kligman, 2000: 53). 'Forced' by the authoritarian socialist governments, women would, thus, 'choose' to leave the labour market when possible (for an overview see Saxonberg and Szelewa, 2007: 354–355; Motiejūnaitė, 2008: 20–24). Therefore, a new awakening – compelling women to substitute one type of life for another – would not be perceived as the 're-domestication' of women. Taken together, this literature anticipated that women would return in droves to domestic life; only a few had suggested that paid labour might also be a source of self-realization and autonomy – and, as such, a benefit worth defending (for example Einhorn, 1993: 114; Motiejūnaitė, 2008: 86).

This strand of transition literature significantly informed the welfare state regime theory, which overwhelmingly introduced a single 'post-socialist', 'post-communist' or 'Eastern European' familialistic cluster (for example Hantrais, 2004; Rostgaard, 2004; Saraceno and Keck, 2008: 63). This is problematic for three reasons. First, the empirical evidence suggests otherwise. Although the decline in female employment in the early years of the 1990s was significant, in retrospect, this was a blip due to readjustment. Between 2000 and 2008, the employment rates for women in full-time jobs were, on average, again at about 80 per cent and over, with practically no cross-country variation, and with fairly narrow gender gaps (UNICEF, 1999; EC, 2008; Eurostat, 2008). Thus, much of this writing was premature, reflecting, rather, the period of 'exceptional' politics (King, 2002: 5), when countries were building up the conditions to 'go back to normalcy' (Kovács, 2002: 176). Second, conclusions are largely drawn based on only a few countries, those that have received more scholarly attention, that is, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. This opens the issue of 'representation', more so as these notably represent the familialistic spectrum (for example Fodor et al., 2002; Szelewa and Polakowski, 2008; Javornik, 2010; Thévenon, 2011). Third, it is often neglected that within the broad category of 'female employment' something else is going on. The employment rates for women aged 25–49 years who had pre-school children and those who did not contrast sharply; between 2000 and 2008, the employment rates for women with pre-school children ranged from 50 per cent in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to about 90 per cent in Slovenia. Such variation seems at odds with the re-traditionalization thesis suggesting that mothers' employment would be (equally) low in these countries.

This variation in the employment patterns provided a source of inspiration for my analysis, which explores the employment–policy nexus during the period 2000–09. Considerable bodies of research demonstrate that parental leave and childcare services (hereafter referred to as *policies on childcare*) have the highest explanatory power for cross-country variation in female employment (for example Rubery et al., 1998: 223–234; Ruhm, 1998; Pettit and Hook, 2005; Uunk et al., 2005; Eliason et al., 2008; Misra et al., 2010; for an overview see Javornik, 2010). Moreover, the feminist critique of the welfare state regimes maintains that the normative assumptions (hereafter referred to as *policy logics*) about the social organization of childcare (state–family–market nexus) and gender roles most clearly underpin regulations on parental leave and childcare services (for example Knijn and Kremer, 1997; Leitner, 2003; Ferrarini, 2006; Ciccia and Verloo, 2012). This analysis is, therefore, based on the premise that the two policies determine ‘proper’ parenthood ideals, that is, they frame the ways in which women engage in employment and men in parenting.

This is where the contribution of this chapter lies. A critical perspective on the power of ‘standard’ policy measures to explain policy logics is presented, and an approach that puts legal formulations on parental leave and childcare services in the centre of analysis is suggested. To capture state assumptions about social organization of care and gender roles, I expand upon Weber’s (1949) use of ‘ideal types’ and evaluate policies across multiple dimensions. Then, I examine their combinations and classify policies using the ‘varieties of familism’ framework. Thus, this chapter follows in four sections. First, the issue of how to think about policies in the area of childcare in terms of social organization of childcare, mothers’ employment and active fatherhood is considered. Then, analyses and theoretical models of varieties of familism are connected, and the differences across countries are mapped. Drawing on these, the analytical potential in eight post-socialist EU countries is investigated. The chapter concludes with critical reflections and directions for future research.

## Theoretical perspectives

Women’s access to independent income largely remains structured by widespread gendered parenting and caring, whereby women continue to bear the main responsibilities. Scholarship on female employment and the gendered welfare state research has uniformly found that female employment generally drops subsequent to childbirth and that, in general, mothers of young children are economically more disadvantaged across countries (for example Gupta and Smith, 2001). The size of their disadvantage and the proportion of women who withdraw from paid employment after childbirth, however, vary across welfare states.

The welfare states differ in the extent to which they consider the uneven capacity of women to invest in paid employment: while most assume that men and women equally need to earn for their own security, not all assume their equal obligations to care for dependants (Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 391). Familialistic welfare states promote and rely on traditional gendered caring, either explicitly (by investing in family care) or implicitly (by withdrawing support to carers), thus imposing different childcare penalties on women, the primary carers, around childbirth. By contrast, de-familialistic welfare states facilitate women's paid employment.

Relative to other scholars, Leitner (2003) argues that each welfare state combines elements of both familialism and de-familialism, and thus reinforces or challenges gender roles by providing 'incentives to ensure that care provision is shared on equal terms among male and female family members' (Leitner, 2003: 367). She maintains that in the area of family policy, state support of the familial caring function is ostensibly reflected in parental leave and childcare services; these are key mechanisms through which the state bolsters the incentives for women's continuous employment and men's active parenting. By providing leave, the state grants parents time off from work to care for a child, secures their labour market position (for example Knijn and Kremer, 1997) and attracts women of childbearing age to enter the paid labour force to qualify for the benefits (for example Rubery et al., 1998: 223–234; Ruhm, 1998). By providing childcare services, the state releases carers to engage in paid employment (Mandel and Semyonov 2005: 950; Esping-Andersen, 2009: 80). Thereby, it shapes women's prospects for gaining income during their working lives and into retirement (Meyer and Pfau-Effinger, 2006).

I contend that such a seemingly straightforward relationship is somewhat deceptive; using Leitner's (2003) and Javornik's (2014b) *varieties of familialism* framework, I argue that it is the overall policy design that signals whether or not the state supports women's continuous employment and challenges gender roles, and that parental leave and childcare services are two sides of the same coin (Misra et al., 2010); parents view and experience them as a 'package' which shapes their options following childbirth. Therefore, to fully understand their implications, the underlying logics of these policies must be considered, teasing out differences in policy configurations.

### **Varieties of familialism**

The concept of state de-familialism, which grounds this analysis, has been developed with somewhat different emphases since the mid-1990s (for example Lister, 1990; McLaughlin and Glendinning, 1994). Its central idea is that the welfare states differ in 'the degree to which an individual adult can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living, independently of family relationships, either through paid work or through social security provisions' (Lister, 1997: 173).

In the more recent literature, the concept has centred on care policies (Korpi, 2000; Leitner, 2003; see also Saraceno and Keck, 2008). Leitner (2003) provides a four-type analytical conception of state de-familialism, which teases out critical distinctions between states and encourages us to think about connections across policies. The author maintains that policy conceptual logics reflect how welfare states choose to allocate childcare responsibilities between the state, the family and the market, and within the family between men and women. Thus, policy combinations are organized in a four-type framework of state de-familialism, that is, *explicit* and *implicit familialism*, *de-familialism* and *optional de-familialism*, which is concerned with the degree to which the welfare states assume and support family interdependencies and reinforce, or challenge, gendered caregiving. Familialism promotes and supports familial childcare. States do this either implicitly, by leaving parents without publicly financed support, or explicitly, by rewarding them with public money to provide childcare themselves (that is, the 'caregiver parity model' by Fraser, 1994). In contrast, de-familialism promotes the dual-earner family model (that is, the 'adult worker model' by Lewis, 2001: 154), with the state investing in publicly funded childcare, whereas optional de-familialism allows parents to choose between preferable childcare options.

In this analysis, I use Leitner's (2003) conceptualization for the following reasons. First, it distinguishes between policy areas, such as childcare and old age, relative to the broad welfare state regimes. Second, legal regulations become central analytical dimensions relevant to parents with pre-school children. Third, it questions assumptions in which policy components combine to reflect different policy logics; namely, different combinations frame different opportunities or constraints. For example, either a too brief or an overly long leave increases the likelihood that mothers, but not fathers, will withdraw from the labour market, particularly those in less protected and secure jobs (for example Esping-Andersen, 2009: 87). Likewise, employers may penalize the (prospective) carers and avoid employing women of child-bearing age to avoid any risk of their taking long leaves (Fagan and Hebson, 2005: 90). Similarly, when the state provides parental leave but no public childcare alternatives, it increases the conflict between women's aspirations to achieve economic independence and their roles as caregivers. Thereby, the two policies can 'threaten to recreate earlier forms of gender inequality in a new form' (Jacobs and Gerson, 2004 in Mandel and Semyonov, 2005: 951). Fourth, egalitarianism is another important element in this concept, as policies can frame the ways in which women and men engage in parenting. Hence, it captures the *policy transformative potential*, that is, the extent to which the state challenges gender roles. Lastly, it recognizes that de-familialism may occur through both the state and the market. The two are, however, assigned different conceptual statuses, acknowledging that recourse to the consumer market is mediated both by the family resources

and the alternatives available through parental leave. Such theoretical observations, therefore, give rise to intriguing implications of childcare policies, calling for a systematic analysis of how they are designed. In this endeavour, it offers fruitful lines for analytical developments about the gendered implications of the welfare state in a country-comparative perspective; by providing flexible conceptualizations, it allows us also to include countries beyond the 'standard' welfare state regimes.

## **Methodological considerations**

The study was undertaken in three steps. First, policy programmes on childcare leave and childcare service provision between 2000 and early 2009 were analysed. Then, employment trends between 2002 and 2008, utilizing the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children relative to other women in the same country, were analysed. Finally, whether maternal employment rates vary in tandem with childcare policies was explored. This analysis focused on the period between 2000 and early 2009, in order to avoid changes caused by the recent economic recession. Post-2008 developments are an interesting study case on their own: European societies are facing transitions that will have a major impact on employment, in particular for some groups in the labour force or sectors of the economy. Fiscal shortfalls have undermined efforts to expand the welfare state, and the overall retrenchment has spurred significant cuts in family policy. This period, yet another tumultuous stage in the short post-socialist history of these countries, would, thus, require a separate study.

## **Country selection**

This chapter covers an eight-country analysis of the policy–employment nexus, comprising the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. These were selected because they form a somewhat coherent post-socialist group (von Wahl, 2008: 27). Moreover, they represented different socialist regimes with different roles of the state and influence of organized politics, which alone implies interesting internal diversity. While Slovenia was a constituent republic of Yugoslavia, others formed the Eastern Bloc with the 'Soviet model' of state socialism. Of these, only Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were constituents of the Soviet Union, whereas the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Czechoslovakia at the time), Poland and Hungary were 'independent' states from 1918 (for example Motiejūnaitė, 2008: 19). This notwithstanding, the Soviet Union had much political and economic influence and control over these countries (for example Fuchs and Klingemann, 2002: 28). Furthermore, they are similar in terms of their progress in democratization, and had similarly advanced labour market structures (that is, employment opportunities) before 2009. Lastly, other post-socialist countries lag behind the 'catching up' with Western Europe



(for example Domsch et al., 2003: 11; von Wahl, 2008: 27), while East Germany ceased to be a state when it reunified with West Germany; hence, they are omitted from this analysis.

### Policy analysis

Parental leave and childcare services are ‘complex objects of investigation’ (Ciccia and Verloo, 2012: 507). They are made up of a multiplicity of relevant components: these include the duration and payment of leave, flexibility, eligibility, accessibility, affordability, and quality of services, and each carries implications for the policy as a whole (Leitner, 2003; Javornik, 2010). This study assessed multiple policy components as structural elements that can combine into a ‘package’ that is available to working parents following childbirth. Considering their impact on gender roles and parental employment, it offers a new typology for understanding the policy–employment nexus.

This analysis builds on my earlier work (Javornik, 2012, 2014b), in which I used Weber’s ideal types and developed an index of de-familialism, which measures the degree to which the state supports women’s continuous employment and promotes active fatherhood. Its central concerns are related to the extent to which the states: (a) support public childcare, (b) financially compensate family care and (c) expect women and men to engage in childcare.

My analysis is based on the premise that policies are conceptually rooted, and that their underlying logics can be best understood through legal documents; through laws, the state regulates who should be the primary caregiver and who should bear the costs of childcare. To assess parents’ opportunities and constraints, I focus on working parents with pre-school children because of the volume of their childcare responsibilities. This builds on the assumption that stages in people’s life-cycles are causally linked; the choice of motherhood is a key element in family decision-making due to the costs associated with employment interruptions (for example Esping-Andersen, 2009: 24). The policies I consider are for children from birth until the mandatory school age: younger children demand more attention and time compared with older children, who are more independent. Moreover, older children are obliged to go to school; hence, childcare needs are reduced (for example Gornick et al., 1997: 54–55; Gilbert, 2008: 6).

In this analysis, policies on parental leave and childcare services are analysed as a single policy programme related to childcare. These are distinct from other work–family measures in two ways. First, they frame parents’ opportunities and constraints following childbirth. With reference to empirical studies of female employment, they critically frame women’s return to employment following childbirth, whereas other work–family policy measures (for example working time, workplace flexibility) frame the ways in which women return to work and parents combine multiple roles. Second, they reflect cultural scripts for socially acceptable allocations of childcare,

and hence for ‘proper’ parenting. Central analytical categories are legal formulations on parental leave and childcare services. These provide the right to time off from work for parental care, cash for family care and the right to external childcare. I evaluate them across 11 attributes from which assumptions about their implications can be drawn; these are examined first as single objects of inquiry, and then in combination (the methodology is described in detail in Javornik, 2012, 2014b).

I draw the de-familialistic boundary between parental leave (familialism) and childcare services for children aged from birth to school age (de-familialism). *Policies on leave* – maternity, paternity, parental and extended childcare leave – support family care while allowing parents to stay connected to employment (Misra et al., 2010). Maternity, paternity and parental leaves are childbirth-related and accompanied by earnings-related benefits, whereas extended childcare leave refers to a longer leave which is either paid or unpaid, and is available to wider groups of parents. Henceforth, I use *parental leave* to refer to all these types. When more than one type is granted, I follow the rule of the most ‘familialistic’ option and consider the longest period available. Given that in some countries differential arrangements are possible, such as in the case of multiple births or the birth of a sick child, I followed Smith and Williams (2007) and considered the least generous regulation.

Policy on leave is analysed through six components (Table 9.1). Limited theoretical knowledge about the implications of some components prevented me from considering certain legal aspects, such as eligibility according to parents’ employment histories, or benefit payment caps (the ceilings); since there is no standard way to determine what is optimal, erroneous conclusions could be drawn (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Plantenga et al., 2009: 25). Exclusion of these regulations is, however, acceptable (Smith and Williams, 2007; Ciccia and Verloo, 2012), considering that the focus here is on norms and not on actual outcomes of policy regulations.

Childcare services support the early education of children and help parents to combine family with employment (for example Misra et al., 2010). I included regulations on publicly funded services for children aged from birth to the compulsory school age in centre-based day care, and focused on five aspects that pertain to the availability, affordability, quality and intra-country disparity in service provision. When municipalities were responsible for childcare services, I checked whether national regulations ensured that these were comparable across the state.

Each policy component was assessed and scored against a set of theoretically guided standards, with scores ranging between 1 and 8 (see Table 9.1; for a full list of assumptions and methodology see Javornik, 2012, 2014b): the higher the score, the closer the component is to the optimal arrangement and the higher its transformative potential (that is, the state support for female employment and active fatherhood). There is no simple formula

Table 9.1 Policy dimensions, assessment criteria and scores

Score	Policy dimensions and assessment criteria
	<b>Total leave time</b>
8	Minimum 6 months, maximum 1 year
4	More than 1 year up to 2 years
2	More than 2 years up to 3 years
1	Less than 6 months or more than 3 years
	<b>Leave financial sustainability (maternity + parental)</b>
8	Paid at 85–100% of previous earnings for a minimum of 6 months
4	65–84% of previous earnings for a minimum of 6 months
2	50–64% of previous earnings for a minimum of 6 months
1	70–100% for 3 months or less, then means-tested flat-rate or unpaid parental
	<b>Job security</b>
8	Leave-users retain a contract and associated benefits to previous job or equivalent during parental leave
4	Job-secured leave shorter than earnings-related leave
2	Leave-users retain a contract, but leave does not guarantee a full set of rights for people returning from leave
1	Job not protected
	<b>Parental entitlement (excluding maternity and paternity)</b>
8	Individual right of each parent, joint decision, change in arrangement possible and not limited
4	Individual right of each parent, joint decision, fixed arrangement
2	Fathers entitled to shorter portion of parental leave
1	Individual right of the mother
	<b>Flexibility (parental and extended childcare leave)</b>
8	Leave can be used in sections over a longer period (minimum 6 years), different combinations possible
4	In sections over 3 to 4 years, or a portion of leave can be reserved and used flexibly (in sections) before child's school age
2	In one block, limited gainful activity allowed with proportional reduction in benefits and leave time
1	Full-time familial care, no gainful activity allowed/gainful activity allowed but familial care required (not in day care)
	<b>Father's non-transferable entitlement</b>
8	Minimum 1 month at 100% of previous earnings
4	2 weeks at 100% following childbirth + extra days at lower payment spread over a longer period of time
2	Less than 2 weeks, at 80–100%
1	No individual provision or less than 80%

Table 9.1 (Continued)

Score	Policy dimensions and assessment criteria	
	<b>Availability of childcare services</b>	<b><i>Allocation of places – admission criteria</i></b>
8		Legally set criteria, central capacity/demand planning (including crèches when run separately)
4		Legal guidelines on admission criteria (including crèches), providers allowed to add criteria when demand exceeds supply, no central capacity/demand planning
2		Conditional/various access to crèches, legally set nationwide criteria for kindergartens, no central planning
1		Providers autonomous in setting admission criteria, no central planning
		<b><i>Admission age</i></b>
8		No lower age limit or child can be admitted before the end of paid leave
4		Public childcare and paid leave are congruent
2		Time gap between paid leave and childcare services
1		Intra-country variation in admission age
		<b><i>Compatibility of service hours with working hours of parents</i></b>
8		Prescribed full-time with flexible provision to accommodate parents' care needs, all year round
4		Prescribed to cover typical day/week/year, limited flexibility
2		Prescribed to cover typical day/week, spells of shorter breaks allowed (limited alternative available)
1		Variant opening hours across municipalities
	<b>Affordability</b>	<b><i>Parental fees</i></b>
8		Sliding fee scale based on family income for both crèches and kindergartens
4		Sliding fee scale based on criteria other than income for both crèches and kindergartens
2		Providers autonomous in setting rules for crèches, legal guidelines for kindergartens
1		Providers autonomous in setting rules, no legal guidelines/ceiling
	<b>Quality</b>	<b><i>National coordination of service delivery</i></b>
8		Services joint responsibility of state and municipalities, legally set operating standards
4		Services legal duty of municipalities (to establish and administer both crèches and kindergartens), regulated standards and rules of operation
2		Legal duty of municipalities (both crèches and kindergartens), providers autonomous in some elements of provision
1		Crèches at discretion of municipalities (legal right), kindergartens prescribed (legal duty), autonomy in provision

to determine the optimal regulation in a country, and preferences, social norms and workplace cultures may shape what is considered optimal. In this study, assessment criteria were sourced from the predominant theories and empirical evidence on female employment and gender equity. This approach is based on endorsing maternal employment and active fatherhood, and I considered the optimal policy type to be ‘supported de-familialism’. This is characterized by gender-neutral, well-paid and flexible parental leave, with incentives for active fatherhood. After one year, publicly financed childcare becomes a pronounced alternative to family childcare. The state accommodates the childcare needs of as many parents as possible by prescribing accessible, affordable and high-quality public services across the state.

I hypothesize that such policy provision generates incentives for women’s continuous employment, and positively correlates with employment rates for women with pre-school children. Other policy models generate incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time after childbirth, and do not challenge gender roles. On the one hand, when the state subsidizes family care but provides no public childcare options for the youngest children, women are locked into familial care, and mothers are likely to curtail employment after childbirth. On the other hand, when the state withdraws any public support for mothers in employment and does not subsidize familial care or public childcare, the same result may ensue, because the state assumes, and relies on, the family as the primary carer. However, when public policies give parents the choice of using formal childcare or opting for familial care, maternal employment may be either low or high, because other factors will drive their labour force participation.

### **Data source**

To ascertain the extent to which national governments consider the uneven capacity of mothers to invest in employment and childcare, I combined and contrasted various sources of information: the Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) in the EU, Eurydice, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Education at a Glance and Family Database, the Council of Europe, UNICEF, and national administrative data and data from relevant national agencies and ministries. I also contacted national experts and agencies that reviewed policy information.

### **Maternal employment**

Maternal employment<sup>1</sup> was analysed using two indicators: the employment rates for women with pre-school children, and the employment gap between women with pre-school children and those without children of that age. Maternal employment rates are defined as employment–population ratios for women with children under seven years of age. The employment gap is a relative measure of the effect of having a pre-school child on women’s

employment, and measures the difference between the employment rates for women with pre-school children relative to other women in the same country (that is, women who have either older children or no children at all).

I focused on women aged between 25 and 49 years, that is, in the age range when women are most constrained by childcare obligations (for example Rubery et al., 1998: 49; EC, 2008a; Lewis, 2010: 32). Furthermore, these countries displayed comparatively lower employment rates for women above 50 years than other EU states (EC 2008a). The selected age group thus allowed the analysis of employment rates for women who had completed their formal schooling but were young enough to rule out a substantial outflow from employment into retirement (for example Antecol, 2003: 4; Scharle, 2007: 167). A woman is considered an employed mother with a pre-school child only if she is that child's mother; however, no differentiation is made between biological and adoptive mothers. This significantly differentiates this study from the published Eurostat datasets, in which each employed woman who lived in a household with a child was treated as the mother of that child, regardless of whether or not she was their mother (Eurostat, 2008: personal correspondence). Generally, compulsory schooling begins at six years of age. However, there is some cross-country variation in the compulsory pre-primary schooling age: children either have access to or are obliged to enter reception classes or universal schooling between the ages of five and seven. To reach a reasonable level of comparability, I filtered employment data for children from birth to under seven years of age.

To calculate employment ratios (ER), the following formulae were used:

ER women with pre-schoolers (in %)	=	$\frac{\text{No. of women with children 0-6, In employment}}{\text{Total population of women with children 0-6}}$
ER women without pre-schoolers (in %)	=	$\frac{\text{No. of women without children 0-6, In employment}}{\text{Total population of women with children 0-6}}$

In this study, the employment gap between two groups of women is a relative but standardized measure of the intra-country differences in employment rates between women with pre-school children and those without. To compute it, I adapted the method used by Gornick and Meyers (2003), and have applied the same mathematical procedure across the countries and over time. Comparing intra-country differences rather than maternal employment rates allowed the estimation of how the presence of a child affects female employment, as it isolates the effect of having a pre-school child on women's employment (Gornick and Meyers, 2003: 260).

For this analysis, I used Eurostat's tailored extracts of annual Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from the LFS 2000–12; data for 2000 and 2001 were subsequently dropped because they were incomplete for most countries. The data was analysed for the whole group of women aged between 25 and 49 years;

the data was also divided up into age groups (25–29, 30–34, 35–39, 40–45 and 45–49 years), but some groups of mothers were too small, and hence that data is not reported here. To explore women's employment at different stages in family life-cycles, the women were divided into two groups by age of children: those with infants and toddlers (up to two years) and those with children of play age (three to five years). The data for mothers with older children was also analysed, but no significant variation was found across the eight countries. The data was analysed using SPSS statistical software (version 15; SPSS 2009); it was nested in eight country-level units, and the unit of observation was the country.

### **Varieties of familialism – Graphical analysis**

To provide a synoptic overview of policies, spider charts are used (for example Schütz et al., 1998; Plantenga and Hansen, 1999). Each represents a single country and comprises 11 equiangular spokes, one for each policy component. Their length is proportional to the score, and ranges between 1 and 8: the higher the score, the closer to the optimum. The line connects them into a radial figure that gives each policy a spider web appearance: the larger the area, the more optimal the policy: the right-hand side illustrates leave regulations, with childcare services on the left, and the overview reflects their overall configuration.

Figure 9.1 shows how very diversified national policies were between 2000 and early 2009, with only Slovenia and Lithuania resembling spider webs. In the other six countries, family childcare was well entrenched, with policies cast in traditionally gendered roles. These six countries largely granted leave as a family entitlement, with limited flexibility in uptake and paternity quota. However, they significantly differed in the monetary value of familial care: while Hungary, Estonia, and the Czech Republic financially invested in familial care, Poland and Slovakia did not. Maternity leave was too short in Poland and poorly paid in Slovakia. Their parental and extended leaves were means-tested, whereas Slovakia and Hungary did not guarantee the full set of rights for workers returning from leave. In contrast, the Slovenian, Lithuanian, and Latvian leave regulations carried a higher transformative potential. Their one-year-long leaves were open to both parents and paid at a 100 per cent income-replacement rate. Slovenia and Lithuania allowed some flexibility in uptake and used the force of paternal quotas: Lithuania granted one month's fully paid paternity leave, and Slovenia combined a 15-day leave at 100 per cent pay with 75 days (for which only minimum social insurance was paid by the state) that lasted until the child's third birthday. However, Slovenian leave was cast in terms of female employment and extended full-time family childcare was not supported.

Countries also varied with respect to childcare services, but most distinctly in services for children from birth to three years old. These were the legal responsibility of municipalities in all cases; however, in Slovenia and

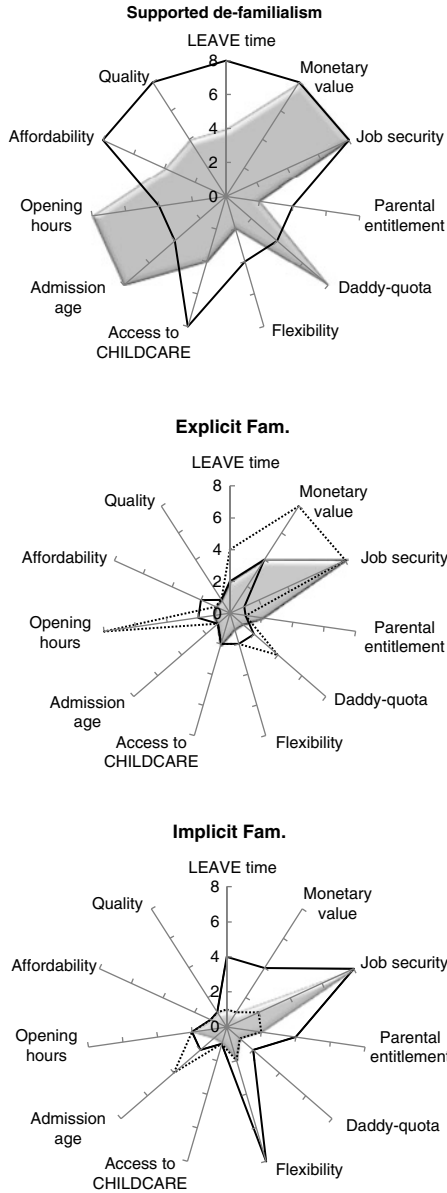


Figure 9.1 Childcare policies, 2008 (scores on a scale 1 to 8, maximum = 8), by policy type and by country

1. Supported de-familialism (Slovenia = solid line; Lithuania = grey area).
2. Explicit familialism (Hungary = solid line; Estonia = dotted line; the Czech Republic = grey area).
3. Implicit familialism (Poland = grey area; Slovakia = dotted line; Latvia = solid line).



Lithuania, they were centrally regulated, coordinated and supervised. Their crèches were available to children from one to three years old and were part of unitary childcare centres. Their regulations reflected a strong emphasis on high-quality services across the state: they were available on a full-time basis throughout the year, with some flexibility in provision and a centrally regulated sliding-fee scale. In the other six countries, public childcare for children from birth to three years old was limited and varied across the state, with a strong urban to rural divide. This divide also applied to services for older children; however, Hungary and Poland stood out in legally providing free childcare without any age limits. Notwithstanding this, they gave providers permission to set access criteria and charge for any extracurricular activities, thus hindering access to publicly funded childcare.

To compare these policies with Leitner's (2003) ideal types, I used spider charts. From these, familialism appears to be particularly strong in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia. Parents in these countries relied upon, and the state supported, familial childcare for up to three years; access to longer paid parental leave was a key feature of this type, while public childcare services were limited. Following Leitner (2003), these are characteristics of explicit familialism, since the states equate the right to family childcare with the family's obligation to provide it. This is reflected in the wide gaps in employment rates between women with pre-schoolers and those without, with a range of up to 50 percentage points in the Czech Republic and Hungary (Figure 9.2).

In contrast, Poland, Slovakia and Latvia leave parents with practically no public support. This resembles implicit familialism. While such regulations do not explicitly promote traditional gender roles, the lack of public support implicitly puts the responsibility for childcare primarily within families. Latvia, however, stood out with a high score on parental leave. While its leave policy is closer to the optimal, the state does not provide public alternatives after one year. Given a high reliance on private childcare and limited regulation in the consumer markets, access to high-quality childcare services was limited in all three countries, particularly for low-income families. I also found a negative association between the employment of women with pre-schoolers and women's education (not reported here), given that education is related to one's potential wage (for example Steiber and Haas, 2009: 646).

Slovenia and Lithuania focus on women's continuous employment, which is reflected in the policy logic of supported de-familialism. Parental leave generates incentives for the continuous employment of mothers and a more active fatherhood following childbirth, and leave and childcare services are contiguous. In Slovenia, public responsibility for childcare has been a long-standing principle, and parents' rights to family time have received limited recognition: while it remains a cultural norm to spend a year with the

new-born baby, parents have been incentivized to use public childcare thereafter (Javornik, 2014a). This is reflected in their maternal employment rates, which are the highest in the EU and the OECD: the gaps between different groups of women are narrow, and mothers generally work on a full-time basis.

Optional de-familialism remains an ideal; none of the analysed countries distributes childcare responsibilities equally between the state and the family, and between the mother and the father. The Lithuanian, Hungarian and Estonian policies came closest. In 2008, they provided extended paid leave as well as limited crèches for the youngest. However, their leave was cast in traditional gender roles, paid at a reduced rate and granted as a family right. Furthermore, frequent changes to this programme during the 2000s suggest that, in practice, their governments are compensating for limited public childcare services, given that family childcare costs less than setting up and maintaining crèches. In summary, a cultural script that phases out the gendered roles of a father and a mother and replaces them with the functional roles of a 'parent' does not exist in these countries.

## Discussion

The policy types of the eight countries share core characteristics with Esping-Andersen's (1990), Korpi's (2000) and Fraser's (1994) typologies. First, Slovenian and Lithuanian supported de-familialism could be compared with the social-democratic ideas of the Nordic states. These grant gender-neutral leave, promote active fatherhood, and view childcare as a social responsibility. Thereby, they first support 'the universal breadwinner' (Fraser, 1994), followed by the 'dual-earner/public-carer' model (Korpi, 2000: 144). Second, Hungarian, Czech and Estonian explicit familialism resembles the socially conservative principles of Korpi's (2000) 'single-earner' or Fraser's (1994) 'caregiver parity' model. Their policies are shaped by the subsidiarity principle, which stresses the primacy of financially supported family childcare. Third, implicit familialism in Poland, Slovakia and Latvia resembles a liberal type, whereby social benefits are largely organized to preserve the commercial markets. Although their policies are not explicitly cast in gendered terms, they nonetheless have gendered and class implications.

In the post-2008 period, however, state interventions in familialism rather than in public childcare have become a prominent mechanism, supported by many national governments. In Estonia, a slow accumulation of moderate extensions of leave could thus strengthen its currently weak conformity with explicit familialism. Unless the Lithuanian state increases investment in public services for the youngest, it, too, may shift towards explicit familialism. Moreover, heated discussions are going on between those advocating that a larger part of the parental insurance should be individualized (that is, more daddy weeks) and those arguing that such decisions should

be made within the family (currently in, for example, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia).

Policy change is part of 'normal policymaking' (Hall, 1993: 278–280), but a key question is whether the policies are undergoing a fundamental reshaping. Therefore, it remains to be explored whether the post-socialist countries are reaffirming their post-socialist status or are, instead, transforming their post-socialist characters. Although preliminary, this analysis offers some perspectives for further research that could derive more generalizations about policy stability and change in the post-socialist world.

### Maternal employment and the employment gaps

Employment statistics confirm a paradoxical panorama and show wide cross-country variation. To find out how the employment and policy profiles correspond with each other, I used a simple analytical approach in which countries were colour-coded according to their policy clusters (see Figure 9.2): **solid lines** illustrate countries with the supportive de-familialistic policy model, **round dots** the implicitly familialistic policy group, and **square dots** the explicitly familialistic group. The means are used as measures of central tendency, to show whether the values are high (above the mean) or low (below).

Discernible overall trends can be seen: the gaps were widest in the Czech Republic and Hungary with the explicitly familialistic policy model (**square dots**), and Slovakia with the implicitly familialistic (**round dots**). The Estonian employment gaps were also above the mean value (weaker membership in the explicitly familialistic group). The Slovenian and Lithuanian trends were opposite (**solid lines**). In fact, Slovenia was the only country in which maternal employment rates were higher than for other women; their employment gaps oscillated between  $-5.1$  and  $+0.3$  percentage points

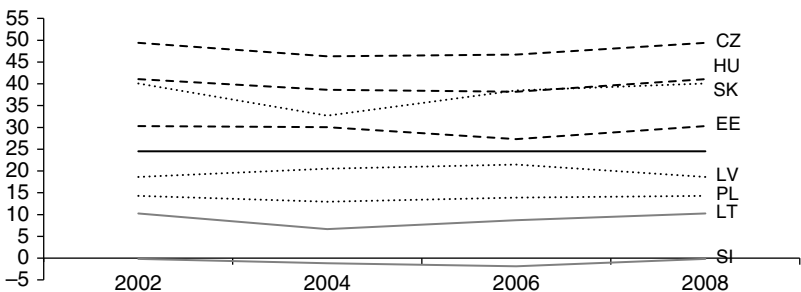


Figure 9.2 Employment gaps between women aged 25–49 years who have and do not have pre-school children (aged 0–6 years), 2002–2008 (percentage points)

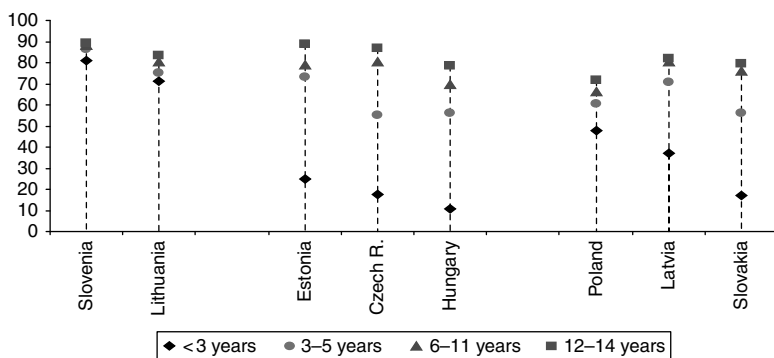
Note: SI, Slovenia; LT, Lithuania; PL, Poland; LV, Latvia; EE, Estonia; SK, Slovakia; HU, Hungary; CZ, the Czech Republic.

Source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat. Own calculations.

during the analysed period. In Latvia and Poland (implicit familialism), employment gaps were below the mean value. However, I did find wider employment gaps in women aged 25–34 years, compared with women aged 25–49 years, with significant variation over the period under review: the gaps for women aged 25–29 years increased by about ten percentage points over a period of six years (the two had similar values at the beginning and at the end of the period under review), and for women aged 30–34 years by about 20 percentage points.

The employment gaps largely corresponded to policy changes, and generally widened as governments either extended leave or installed more generous leave payments (for example in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Lithuania). This includes the three countries with the implicitly familialistic policy model – their governments slightly increased the amounts of flat-rate leave payments over the period under review, and Latvia also extended universal access to formal day care to all children up to five years of age, in order to address low service provision. Employment trends were fairly stable over time in most countries, except the Baltic States, especially Latvia, where maternal employment rates fluctuated significantly over the reviewed period.

Furthermore, a significant variation existed in mothers' employment rates by age of children: they were lowest for women with children under the age of three, followed by women with older pre-school children. Figure 9.3 illustrates the widest gaps between mothers of under-threes and older



*Figure 9.3* Employment rates for mothers aged 25–49 years, by age of children (years), mean values over 2002–2008 (% of total female population aged 25–49 years)

*Note:* Data for mothers with children under three years of age may be biased downwards because parents using unpaid leave for over a year can be identified as inactive in most countries, while parents on part-time leave may be counted as employed.

National data show a consistent pattern between 2002 and 2008; hence, only the mean value is reported.

*Source:* Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys 2002–2008.

pre-school children in countries with the explicitly familialistic policy model (Estonia, the Czech Republic and Hungary) and with the implicitly familialistic policy model (Slovakia), and the narrowest in Slovenia and Lithuania, with the supported de-familialistic policies. The differences between countries decrease, and maternal employment increases, with children's age.

The most significant drop was in the employment rates for mothers with lower levels of education – especially in Hungary and the Czech Republic, where the states subsidize familial childcare over a longer period of time – and they were the lowest in Slovakia, where parents do not have any public alternatives. By contrast, mothers with higher levels of education return to employment in the greatest numbers, as their opportunity costs of staying at home are the highest (Figure 9.4).

These findings complement the microeconomic rationality thesis: childcare benefits increase the disposable income of parents, and the income from cash benefits takes the financial pressure off women to stay in low-paid employment. Because affordable public childcare options are limited, a family would not make sufficient financial gains from women's employment. Alternatively, more highly educated women have more economic resources to shop around for different forms of care: from childminders providing services in the unregulated service market to the limited commercial service markets or care provided by informal networks.

However, how can one explain the higher employment rates of mothers in Poland and Latvia, the two countries with implicitly familialistic models, where the state leaves the vast majority of working parents almost without support? With reference to the extensive literature on the factors of female employment (for an overview see Javornik, 2010), it could be assumed that

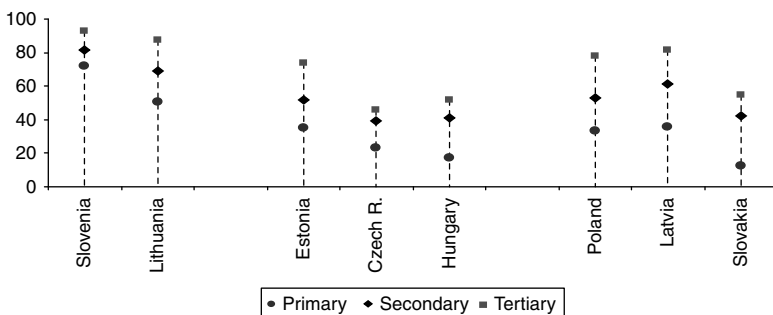


Figure 9.4 Employment rates for women 25–49 years with pre-school children, by level of attained education, mean value over 2002–2008 (%)

Note: National data show a consistent pattern between 2002 and 2008; hence, only the mean value is reported.

Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys.

the educational attainment of mothers, the income needs of households, and the size of the public service and agricultural sectors (both proxies for employment opportunities for women), carry some explanatory potential in this country group. Namely, more highly educated women in these countries found employment in the public service sector, which offered more secure jobs and better working environments. Hence, they had more incentive to stay active during the period of active motherhood.

Considering the choice that higher educational attainment brings, why did we also see higher employment rates for mothers with lower levels of education, who, on average, have more traditional attitudes as well as lower incomes to purchase commercial day-care services? The higher income needs of households provide a plausible explanation. Given that their household income is on average lower, and that the states provide few, if any, family cash benefits, women's wages increase disposable income and help to uphold the living standards of their households. In Poland and Latvia, these mothers still seem to find jobs in the agricultural sector and the low-paid service sector, where the demand for women with lower levels of education is higher (Javornik, 2010).

However, who cares for their children? In my previous work (Javornik, 2010, 2014a, 2014b), I found that informal childcare markets have a long tradition in these countries – be it by the informal network or by the (generally untrained) childminders in the semi-formal service markets. Informal childcare has been highest in Poland and the Baltic States, due to a growing proportion of unemployed and low-waged women. These women offered childcare largely to uphold the living standards of their own households. In sum, the widespread unregulated service markets and day care by informal networks (either paid or unpaid) provide options for these mothers to engage in paid employment, while at the same time taking the pressure off the national governments to address the issue of low state support... in terms of cash for care or public childcare services.

## **Concluding remarks**

The main research question of this chapter was whether policies on leave and childcare services accounted for the shape of the employment of mothers in eight post-socialist countries. Drawing upon detailed policy characteristics, I found compelling cross-country variation, showing that different combinations of policies that support family caregiving, and those that de-familialize it, led to significantly different outcomes in terms of mothers' employment.

One unambiguous finding was that varieties of familialism exist among the countries that have too often been treated as representing a homogeneous welfare state regime. By turning my attention to parental leave and childcare services, I found that Slovenia and Lithuania pragmatically shifted social investments from familial to public childcare in order to

facilitate women's continuous employment, and this was reflected in the narrowest employment gaps between women with pre-schoolers and those without. Belonging to the supported de-familialism cluster, they first explicitly invested in familialism through cash for care, while simultaneously promoting active fatherhood through fully compensated parental and paternity leaves. After a year, publicly financed childcare became a distinct and financially supported alternative (that is, de-familialism). By contrast, explicit familialism in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia financially supported familial childcare. Familial childcare was not only supported, but also expected for up to three years, while also reinforcing gendered parenting, and this was clearly reflected in the widest employment gaps. Lastly, implicit familialism in Poland, Slovakia and Latvia left parents without public support. Their mixed employment gaps suggest, however, that mothers in these countries sought/obtained childcare in the unregulated and regulated service markets.

Drawing upon maternal employment data, I found evidence in favour of the childcare policies explanation. In countries with gender-neutral leave of moderate duration, followed by affordable, adequate and accessible formal childcare services, the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children were significantly higher. While these are important preconditions for women to enter the labour market and to more efficiently manage their work and family demands, such policy designs seem especially important for the employment of low-skilled and low-income mothers. These women are often employed in less protected and less secure jobs, with lower levels of social protection (see similar finding by Del Boca et al., 2009). This chapter has shown that these mothers have the lowest employment rates in countries where childcare options are limited, and the correlation between their employment and childcare policies was also stronger (not reported here; see Javornik, 2010).

These findings suggest two things. First, these policies are a precondition for mothers' employment, and have broader social implications for women's economic and social autonomy. The findings underpin the importance of well-paid leave of moderate duration and adequate, affordable and accessible high-quality formal childcare services for enhancing women's continuous employment. Any other type of childcare provision lowers their employment and reinforces the conventional gender division of labour. Second, they complemented the microeconomic rationality thesis that women make a rational consumption choice between their potential market income and the value of time spent outside paid work. A low-income family with childcare needs would make too few financial gains from a woman's labour force participation when affordable formal childcare options are limited. By contrast, mothers with higher levels of education returned to the labour markets in the greatest numbers, because their opportunity costs of staying at home are higher. They largely found employment in the public service

sector, which offered more secure jobs and better working environments. Moreover, they also have more economic resources, and can shop around for different forms of care: babysitters who provide services in the unregulated service market, expensive childcare services in the limited commercial service markets, or care by other members of their families. This indicates that educational attainment and the income needs of households suppress, rather than rival, the childcare policies explanation, and that the unregulated service markets and childcare by informal networks provide options for mothers' employment in countries with limited state intervention. This suggests that many issues raised in this chapter are also relevant to social and employment policies more broadly. Lastly, this analysis highlighted that the total female employment rates misrepresent the employment behaviour of different groups of women, and thus mask large variations between women within the same country, as well as between countries. Thus, the considerable variations in the employment rates for different groups of women demonstrate that we are likely to misinterpret maternal employment by only examining total female employment.

In summary, the proposed approach to examining policies, maternal employment and their interrelationship allows researchers to test new hypotheses; it also has the potential to discredit the claims of post-socialist exceptionalism, given that mothers with small children across industrialized countries essentially face the same challenges in managing often competing demands. However, given that its focus was on policies tailored to dual-earner heterosexual couples, future research should incorporate differential statutory entitlements for different groups of parents. Against this background, these findings should be read as theoretically informed hypotheses that raise issues for further research.

## Note

1. I also analysed the employment rates for men who had pre-school children and those who did not. The employment rates significantly increased for men with pre-schoolers, without any significant cross-country variation during the studied period.

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# 10

## Habits or Frames? Explaining Patterns in the Division of Paid and Unpaid Work in Germany, Bulgaria, France and Hungary

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### Introduction

When looking at the division of paid and unpaid work and its societal determinants from a cross-nationally comparative perspective, much earlier research had investigated the role of country-specific labour market and welfare state institutions (for example Fuwa, 2004; Treas and Drobnic, 2010; Hofäcker et al., 2013). Following this line of argument, cross-national differences in the division of paid and unpaid labour were to be explained by differences in, for example, care policies and dominant working time regimes. In comparison, gender-sensitive value orientations have been under-represented in most explanatory models. This neglect in previous research is all the more pressing because the cultural dimension has only rarely been discussed in inequality-relevant research.<sup>1</sup> Even though gender roles are often discussed in the literature, they are also mostly considered as purely structural context conditions. Furthermore, the discussion does not reveal much about the link (or the lack thereof) between gender identity, behaviour and the cultural norms and values in a given society. We follow Risman and Davis's conceptualization of gender as a structure

which embeds cultural dimension as the non-reflexive habituated rules, patterns and beliefs, which organize much of human life. The taken-for-granted or cognitive images that belong to the situational context [...] are the cultural aspect of the gender structure, the interactional expectations that each of us meet in every social encounter.

(2013: 744)

In our following analyses, we try to explicate the link between gender, cultural norms and structural factors vis-à-vis the division of household

labour. The central question, therefore, is: what drives the unequal division of household labour? We test for three possible explanations: (1) *gender roles*, which we view as a traditionalistic form of behaviour that can therefore be measured only indirectly, by using a person's self-ascribed sex as a proxy; (2) *cultural values* regarding the status of women in relation to men; (3) *socio-economic factors*, meaning educational attainment and employment status. These effects are compared across four European societies to differentiate between cultural backgrounds and the surrounding institutional setting, that is, the specific welfare regime. As the basis for our comparison, we contrast post-socialist countries (Hungary and Bulgaria) with conservative Western European countries (France and Germany). This seems promising, as from a structural point of view, the post-socialist countries are often seen as being more egalitarian with regard to gender-specific employment patterns than most of their Western European counterparts. A non-egalitarian division of labour within the household in those cases, therefore, cannot be explained by structural forces alone.

For investigating the role of cultural norms and values for the division of household labour, we use the first wave of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) from 2004, a panel study designed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to facilitate cross-country comparisons and provide them with a sophisticated common methodological ground (Vikat et al., 2007). To measure gender-related value orientations of individuals, a Likert-scale factor analysis is performed. This scale is then combined with structural indicators in a log-logistic regression model to estimate and model the effects of gender roles, cultural norms and the socio-economic background on the chance of doing most of the household-related tasks. These effects are compared across different welfare regimes to control for institutional settings and evaluate the influence of specific welfare policies.

We find that most of the division of household labour can be explained by gender roles, which seem to be rooted in traditionalistic behaviour. Explicit cultural norms, on the other hand, seem to go along with this, but have almost no explanatory power of their own. Moreover, the measured effects are consistent across all four countries, pointing to a high structural independence of the mechanisms driving the unequal distribution of household-related tasks.

## Literature review

Previous research on the division of household labour has shown that, irrespective of national institutional settings, the majority of household-related tasks are carried out almost exclusively by women – a fact that has been studied so rigorously that Shannon Davis and Theodore Greenstein (2013) have legitimately asked: 'Why Study Housework?' However, they conclude that it is, indeed, worthwhile, since it allows us to study the ever-changing

dynamics of power distribution in couples. Furthermore, the study of the division of household labour represents a major field for the sociological study of inequality, because it can be regarded as a basic indicator for the mechanisms which produce and reproduce the differences between the genders in a given society, which – unlike many other mechanisms – is observable as a common social practice on a day-to-day basis. Accordingly, various explanations have been put forward to explain the household division of labour.

### Specialization

In *economically based research*, it has been suggested that the distribution of household tasks should be viewed as a rational and economical division of labour. This perspective was put forward most prominently by Gary Becker (1985), who essentially argued that the sexual division of labour was a form of specialization which guaranteed optimal efficiency of the household. However, this approach does not sufficiently explain why specialization follows a specific direction (women doing most of the household work) and is largely stable even in modern times when the structural basis of specialization advantages is eroding. According to Becker's theory, one would expect to see a fundamental trend towards a more egalitarian distribution of household work due to the growing numbers of highly educated women entering the workforce, which should drastically decrease the return from inner-household specialization. Additionally, it has been shown that, mostly because of technological advances, a strict specialization in couples regarding household labour is often highly economically inefficient (Esping-Andersen et al., 2013). The fact that – irrespective of changes in individual resources – certain types of household behaviour are constantly reproduced suggests that alternative explanations, referring to mechanisms other than mere economic factors, are required.

### Doing gender

Complementary to the economic approach, the *doing gender literature* explains the persistence of gender differences in the division of household labour by their conformity with gender-specific role-expectations (West and Zimmerman, 1987). The existence of differential attitudes, prescribing behaviour in accordance with gender norms, forms a specific cultural environment within society that, in turn, impacts on behavioural patterns within the family. Yet, the question remains how gender is actually 'done' and which cultural and structural factors drive the reproduction of gender differences in specific settings. Most existing research points to the influence of either cultural settings or institutional structures which promote or enable equality between the genders (for example Carpenter, 2003; Fuwa, 2004).

### **Habits and frames**

Our contribution follows the general idea of the doing gender approach, but aims to take it one step further by differentiating between gender roles and cultural norms. At first glance this might seem redundant, since gender roles are often seen as being identical with cultural norms and stereotypes, albeit self-imposed ones. However, what we are trying to convey is the distinction between ‘habits’ and ‘frames’ as made by Hartmut Esser (1990). He formulates the idea of habits in relation to Max Weber’s (1922: 12ff.) notion of traditional action (‘traditionales Handeln’) but formalizes the concept by using rational choice theory. *Habits* can, therefore, be defined as an *implicit* choice for a continuation of an already established pattern of action instead of taking up a new one. In the case of the latter, the rational actor would have to account for the costs associated with changing one’s learned behaviour.<sup>2</sup> We see gender roles or identities as a form of such habits, regarding them as a ‘taken-for-granted’ approach to everyday social problems. This implies that most actors do not consciously reflect about alternative ways of behaviour (or would even be able to formulate them), since the decision for a traditional pattern of action replaces any explicit rational choice of action, given certain preferences and subjectively evaluated risks. Habits are a form of action, and can, therefore, only be measured as such. In the context of this chapter, individuals would be considered to act on the basis of habits when their actions are independent of their world view in terms of the beliefs they hold. Under this assumption, the amount of household-related work would be independent of the person’s individual stance on gender equality.

*Frames*, on the other hand, can be formulated directly and are part of an *explicit* rational decision. The concept is derived from Erving Goffman’s (1986) ‘frame analysis’ and relates to the frame of reference on which a concrete decision is based. It means taking into consideration that which is ‘proper conduct’ and culturally accepted or even demanded. Cultural norms can thus be integrated into a rational choice explanation, as they add to the cost of an action, for example when ‘deviant’ behaviour is sanctioned by the rules of society. Such norms are, of course, intrinsic to the persons in question, meaning they are an essential part of their world view. Someone who acts upon a frame of cultural norms would often not be able to formulate this fact, but his actions would still be in alignment with his beliefs. More specifically, in terms of a cultural frame, doing most/least of the household-related tasks can be viewed as a general statement on the equality between the genders. A person who acts on the basis of these principles would show consistent behaviour in other areas of life, for example the workplace.

### **Institutional contexts**

Earlier research (for example Ostner and Lewis, 1995; Pfau-Effinger, 2000; Treas and Drobnič, 2010) on the gender-specific division of labour had



additionally pointed to the relevance of institutional context for individual behaviour, identifying ideal-typical ‘models’ or ‘regimes’ in the division of labour. The focal idea behind such typological approaches was that legal regulations or welfare state policies create the relevant structural opportunities and constraints under which individuals make their choices of action. In countries where, for example, welfare state policies explicitly foster gender equality in different spheres of life, a more equal division of labour may be achievable more easily than in countries where public policies explicitly or implicitly support a division of roles between the two genders.

In this article, we focus on two opposing types of such institutional regimes: ‘conservative welfare states’ (Esping-Andersen, 2013) and ‘post-socialist regimes’ (Deacon, 1993).

Germany represents a strong male breadwinner model (Ostner and Lewis, 1995) in which labour market and welfare state policies have long fostered an asymmetric division of labour (for example through the insufficient provision of full-day childcare, tax advantages for single- or one-and-a-half-earner families); only more recently has this orientation weakened somewhat (Erler, 2009). France has been regarded as a ‘modernised male breadwinner model’ (Ostner and Lewis, 1995), as it combines aspects of the conservative model with regard to family transfers with simultaneous support for women’s full-time employment through a developed system of crèches, thus leaving couples more choice in terms of their division of labour.

Bulgaria and Hungary, on the other hand, are selected as examples of ‘post-socialist’ Eastern European societies, characterized by the dominance of a dual-earner model with developed family policies.<sup>3</sup> Eastern European welfare states under communism were marked by several characteristics frequently regarded as being typical for the weak male breadwinner states of Scandinavia, such as the support of motherhood through generous parental leave schemes and a well-established network of childcare facilities. Universal provisions for childcare and maternity in Hungary and Bulgaria enabled women to combine family life and labour market participation (Fodor, 2001: 14). However, the transformation led to a liberalization of welfare policies and a decline in work–life balance opportunities within the private sector, which, in turn, was followed by a feminization of employment in the public sector as a gender-specific strategy for balancing paid and unpaid work, with possibly adverse consequences on the returns for female higher education (Stoilova, 2007; Stoilova et al., 2012).

Some evidence from an analysis of the European Social Survey<sup>4</sup> for selected countries (Stoilova and Haralampiev, 2008) – Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Spain, Finland and the UK – demonstrated that not only do actual life-course patterns of men and women differ between countries, but also *normative expectations towards men’s and women’s roles are dependent on the country*. Results from this study point to general cultural differences, which are not easily explained by the respective welfare arrangements alone

yet seem to be tied to them in some way.<sup>5</sup> We therefore see it as justified to look at Hungary and Bulgaria under the broad 'post-socialist' label, because the general difference in structural and cultural factors is more pronounced between Germany and France, as conservative welfare states, and the post-socialist group.

Considering the division of household labour in different institutional regimes allows us to test the assumed influences of the three theoretical explanations discussed above – economic theory, doing gender and habit/frames – controlling for institutional characteristics. In other words, it allows us to investigate whether the postulated influence of the aforementioned theories represents a regionally bounded explanation, restricted to certain types of institutional regimes, or whether their explanatory power can be generalized across institutional contexts.

### **Hypotheses**

From the above discussion of determinants of the household division of labour, we derive four hypotheses.

*First*, we assume that the division of household labour is influenced by cultural norms, that is, *frames*. Women who frame their role in a paternalistic and conservative way should be more likely to do the majority of household tasks (and vice versa), while men being in agreement with those statements would do the opposite.

The *second* hypothesis sets a stark contrast to the above by assuming that the division of household labour is a function of *habitual* gender behaviour. In this case, we assume household labour to be largely unaffected by most outside influences and to be explainable by gender alone.

Our *third* hypothesis addresses the notion of specialization and economic reasoning as guiding principles of the distribution of family work. If this hypothesis holds, higher education and participation in employment, as well as being a member of a higher social stratum, should reduce the risk of doing most of the household-related tasks.

Finally, as a *fourth* hypothesis, we test whether the relevance of the above explanatory factors differs between institutional regimes. The long-standing differences in actual policies and historical developments between the conservative and post-socialist countries thus provide a background of cultural and institutional variation for the other three hypotheses.

### **Data and methodology**

The data base for our analyses is the GGS, a longitudinal panel dataset including biographical, individual, household-level and even social network data (UNECE, 2007). One of the central advantages of this survey is its cross-national comparability established through a common framework for the surveys conducted in each participating country (Vikat et al., 2007), making

it well-suited for cross-country research such as that presented here. Up to now, the survey has been conducted in a total of 19 countries with two waves in 2004–05 (Wave 1) and 2008–10 (Wave 2). We use the first wave, from 2004, which contains all four countries under study. This leaves us with a raw sample size of 46,494 respondents (Bulgaria = 12,858; Germany = 10,017; France = 10,079; Hungary = 13,540).

To assess the cultural frames, we consider responses to various questions involving a person's opinion on matters of family, sexuality, children and gender equality, which was measured on a five-point Likert scale.<sup>6</sup> Based on these, we use dimensional reduction to construct factors for the division of household labour as well as for cultural frames. To this end, a principal-component factor analysis as implemented in STATA Version 11 was used.<sup>7</sup>

The final number of four factors was derived from comparing different solutions in terms of statistical validity, dimensional consistency and plausibility. Subsequently, factors were checked for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha and given distinctive labels which were meant to reflect the latent meaning behind the questions. All factors were consistent across all four countries. The first column of Table 10.1 presents the shortened versions of the statements which were used in the factor analysis for cultural frames as well as the labels given.

Results from the factor analysis reveal that there is apparently no latent cultural dimension which focuses solely on gender. Across all observed countries, the norms governing perspectives on gender are closely connected to other norms, suggesting that gender norms are part of a more differentiated overall world view. For example, agreement with the statement that 'a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works', if taken out of context, could easily be interpreted as an indication of being sceptical of mothers re-entering the workforce and could, therefore, be regarded as a form of discrimination by gender. Yet, as Table 10.1 reveals, those persons in support of this statement simultaneously expressed their agreement with the proposition that 'children often suffer because fathers concentrate too much on work' as an answer. The underlying dimension, apparently, is a general concern for work–family balance and largely independent of gender.

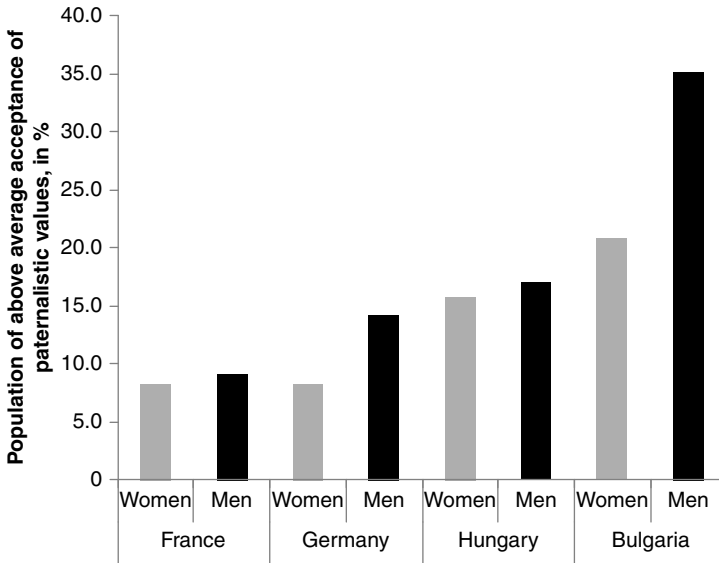
The third factor appears to come closest to reflecting a traditional or gender-sensitive value orientation – yet, its internal consistency (indicated by a Cronbach's Alpha of only 0.46) is rather weak. In our analyses, we therefore focus on the second factor, which combines agreement with the statements 'When jobs scarce, men have more rights to a job than women', 'When jobs scarce, younger people have more right to a job than older people' and 'When jobs scarce, people with children have more right to a job than childless'. Individuals displaying a high score on this factor thus seem to favour the labour market rights of men over those of women, of younger people in comparison with aged individuals, and of people with a family and children compared with single and childless individuals during

Table 10.1 Questions used in the factor analysis and resulting Cronbach's Alpha

Question	Label	Cronbach's Alpha
Opinion: A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his/her mother works	Factor 1: Intrafamily Childcare	0.62
Opinion: Children often suffer because fathers concentrate too much on work		
Opinion: When jobs scarce, men more right to job than women	Factor 2: Paternalistic Value Orientation	0.62
Opinion: When jobs scarce, younger people more right to job than older people		
Opinion: When jobs scarce, people with children more right to job than childless		
Opinion: In a couple it is better for the man to be older than the woman	Factor 3: Male Domination	0.46
Opinion: If woman earns more than partner, not good for relationship		
Opinion: On the whole, men make better political leaders than women		
Opinion: Grandparents look after grandchildren if parents are unable to do so	Factor 4: Intergenerational Solidarity	0.69
Opinion: Parents should provide financial help adult children when in difficulty		
Opinion: If adult children in need, parents adjust own lives to help them		
Opinion: Children should take responsibility for parental care if parents in need		
Opinion: Children should adjust working lives to the needs of their parents		
Opinion: Children should provide financial help if parents financial difficulty		
Opinion: Children should live with parents when no longer look after themselves		

*Note:* The table contains the shortend version of the questions. Possible answers were: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

times of crisis. The expression of these sentiments by the respondent can be interpreted as latent formulations of an underlying belief in reverting to a culture of dominance centred on young, strong fathers, which we interpret as a sign of paternalism. The selected group of variables form a scale with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.6. Given the relative uni-dimensionality of this factor and the overall plausibility, even such a comparatively low alpha score can still be regarded as adequate for interpretation (Schmitt, 1996). Following this, we calculated index scores<sup>8</sup> for the resultant new variable, which is



*Figure 10.1* Above average paternalistic value orientation (%) across countries  
 Source: GGS Wave 1 (own calculations).

analysed as an expression of a paternalistic, conservative value orientation (see Figure 10.1).<sup>9</sup>

As Figure 10.1 indicates, the level of the paternalistic value orientation differs between men and women as well as across countries. In general, such values seem to be more prevalent among men than women and more frequent in the post-socialist countries.<sup>10</sup>

To measure the division of labour within the household, we constructed a scale from questions related to tasks performed mostly inside the home and on a regular basis. These tasks were: preparing daily meals, doing the dishes, shopping, vacuum cleaning the house, and small repairs in and around the household. The respondents could choose between six different answers indicating that they were doing most of the household tasks alone, they were usually doing them alone, they shared equally with their partner, the partner was usually doing them, the partner was always doing them, or somebody else was doing most of this specific task. To use these questions in our analysis, we decided to code them in a binary form. Only 'always' and 'usually' were used as indicators for doing most of the household labour by oneself. The recoded questions were then summarized to form an index for the degree to which a respondent participated in household tasks. These sum scores were then again dichotomized along the median to indicate an above-average propensity to do most of the household-related

work and use them as an independent variable in a logistic regression model.

To measure the effects of a respondent's socio-economic background (Hypothesis 3), we include indicators for the highest educational attainment of the respondent and his or her employment status. The GGS dataset provides an International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classification which is designed to ensure international comparison. Yet, exploratory analysis revealed that the distribution of these characteristics differed across the four countries included in our analysis: the lowest category (ISCED 0) did not exist in France and Germany, while it showed low incidence in the other two countries. To nonetheless compare results across countries, we grouped the ISCED classifications into three categories: low (ISCED 0 and 1), medium (ISCED 2 and 3) and high educational attainment (ISCED 4 and 5). Employment status was reflected in a dummy for full-time employment, contrasted with the combined reference category of unemployment or part-time employment.

Logistic regression was used to model the influences of the aforementioned independent variables on the discrete dependent variable of 'doing most of the household-related tasks'.

## Findings

We now turn to the analysis of the above-mentioned societal determinants on patterns of unpaid work.

Our first regression model considers the influence of paternalistic value orientation alone on the division of labour within the household (see Table 10.2). In Bulgaria and Germany, a significant negative effect can be observed, indicating a negative relation; that is, higher scores of paternalistic value orientation are linked to a lower likelihood of doing the majority of household-related tasks. For France, a weak positive effect is found – albeit on a much lower level of significance – while in Hungary there seems to be

*Table 10.2* Linear regression 'Doing most of household-related tasks', effects of value orientations only

	Bulgaria	Germany	France	Hungary
Paternalistic Value Orientation	-0.132***	-0.0826***	0.0563*	-0.00175
Constant	0.280***	0.225***	-0.478***	-0.226***
N	7,160	4,843	4,374	6,794
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.006	0.002	0.001	0.000

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

Source: Generations and Gender Survey, Wave 1 (own calculations).

Table 10.3 Linear regression 'Doing most of household-related tasks', effects of value orientations + gender

	(1) Bulgaria	(2) Germany	(3) France	(4) Hungary
Paternal/Traditionalistic World View	0.0477	0.0472	0.132***	0.144***
Sex: Male	-4.141***	-2.674***	-2.782***	-4.765***
Constant	1.338***	1.194***	0.398***	1.112***
N	7,160	4,843	4,374	6,794
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.451	0.256	0.245	0.507

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

Source: Generations and Gender Survey, Wave 1 (own calculations).

no effect at all. Yet, the very small pseudo  $R^2$  suggests that the division of household labour is largely independent of paternalistic value orientations in all four countries. This result does not provide strong support for our first hypothesis, which postulated a link between the explicit cultural frames concerning the 'place' of women in a society and their propensity to do most of the household-related tasks.

Introducing gender into the model (Table 10.3) makes it clear that the influence of a paternalistic value orientation as a reflexive, gender-sensitive norm is even more limited. While coefficients for gender are large and highly significant, effects for norms appear to be unstable and rather marginal in size. In all countries, being male consistently reduces the likelihood of doing most of the household-related tasks. The effect of value orientations now turns insignificant in both Bulgaria and Germany. This suggests that the effects in the first model were, in fact, 'masked' gender effects. It is mostly because of the already gendered distribution of approval towards a paternalistic value orientation that these effects seem to exist. Even though there now appear to be significant coefficients for Hungary and France, a comparison with the earlier model (Table 10.2) shows that most of the effect can be explained by the greater prevalence of the paternalistic world view among men.<sup>11</sup> The reversal in the direction of the effect can be explained in a similar way: because the effect only becomes significant in the case of Hungary and France – which show only a marginal difference in approval of this factor between men and women – we conclude that this is most likely a statistical artefact. This relatively smaller difference made the paternalistic value orientation seem more significant because the interaction effect of the gender variable was relatively weaker than in the other cases.

The findings so far support the notion of a stronger influence of internalized gender roles (*habits*) as compared with explicit norms (*frames*). Metaphorically speaking, it seems that the question of who is doing the

*Table 10.4* Linear regression 'Doing most of household-related tasks', effects of value orientations + gender + socio-economic variables

	(1) Bulgaria	(2) Germany	(3) France	(4) Hungary
Index FemFamLab				
Paternalistic Value Orientation	0.0310	0.00794	0.0843**	0.0869**
Sex: Male	-4.308***	-2.556***	-2.906***	-4.770***
Age of Respondent (18–29)	-0.967***	0.0148	-1.374***	-0.441***
Age of Respondent (30–49)	.	.	.	.
Age of Respondent (50–64)	-0.0341	-0.359***	-0.103	-0.132
Respondents Educational Attainment (Low)	-0.0427	0.171	0.00293	0.0460
Respondents Educational Attainment (Medium)	.	.	.	.
Respondents Educational Attainment (high)	-0.235**	-0.138	0.0309	-0.359***
Respondent is full-time employed	-0.456***	-0.857***	-0.449***	-0.574***
Constant	2.002***	1.947***	1.072***	1.758***
N	7,160	4,843	4,374	6,794
pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.466	0.276	0.278	0.516

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

Source: Generations and Gender Survey, Wave 1 (own calculations).

dishes or ironing the shirts is not so much decided by explicit discriminatory beliefs, but, instead, follows more a habitualized gender-specific behaviour. Interestingly, the effect is less pronounced in the case of the conservative welfare states, which is rather counter-intuitive.

Adding more structural and biographic variables to the model (see Table 10.4) leads to a further decline in the influence of the paternalistic value orientation. The most consistent effect on engaging in household labour across all countries is observed with regard to employment status, indicating that full-time employed individuals have a significantly lower likelihood of engaging in household work. This corroborates our third hypothesis, which postulated that employment and higher social status would reduce the tendency of a person to do the majority of household labour. Yet, even when including employment status, the increase in explanatory power is only marginal, and a more complex interaction with gender can be assumed. Furthermore, it is not clear whether a decline in household labour due to one's own engagement in employment is the result of an explicit rational calculation of economic costs and benefits or, rather, reflects the processing of traditional gender roles.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, it needs to be noted that, even though there are apparently some structural and biographical variables which offer a contribution to the



overall explanation of the division of household labour, this contribution is not very distinct and leads only to a minor increase of the pseudo  $R^2$  by one or two percentage points as compared with earlier models. These findings further emphasize the influence of gender roles in determining the everyday activity within households. They also seem to be rather indifferent to the influence of external, that is, structural effects, which could severely limit the impact of welfare state policies aimed at lifting the 'double burden' of household work and career from women.

## Discussion and conclusions

The overall aim of this chapter was to identify the main determinants of the division of household labour in different types of institutional regimes. More specifically, we were trying to explain the prevalence of women doing the majority of household-related tasks by looking at two different mechanisms: habits and frames. In the first (*habits*) scenario, the likelihood of a person to do most of the household work solely depended on her assigned gender role. The second perspective (*frames*), on the other hand, suggested cultural norms as the central factor. These principal hypotheses were contrasted with two additional factors derived from earlier research: first, economic factors and social status to test the hypothesis of inter-couple specialization, and second, the structural environment provided by the different types of welfare state regimes.

We found that the acceptance of limitations to women's access to jobs in times of crisis cannot simply be viewed as a discriminatory statement against women. Instead, it could be seen as an essential part of a paternalistic world view. In this perspective, similar attitudes are expressed towards younger people in comparison with aged individuals and towards people with a family and children in comparison with single and childless individuals. The common theme seems to be the paternalistic notion that strong, vital men with children are the most productive members of society.

Yet, this frame of cultural norms had next to no influence concerning the division of household labour. Instead, the variable that had the most explanatory power was the sex of the respondent, which we interpreted as a proxy for gender. This effect was consistent across all four countries. Since no additional variables improved the model significantly, it seems justified to assume habits as the primary mechanism guiding the sexual division of labour. Therefore, the question 'Who does the dishes?' seems to be answered mostly by tradition: 'Those who have always done it'. Notably, this finding could be confirmed in different institutional regimes, making it reasonable to view it as a general mechanism, irrespective of country-specific context conditions.

However, results also pointed to a mitigating effect of a person being in full-time employment, and, in the case of the post-communist countries,

also of having received a higher education, suggesting that, in principle, the more egalitarian tradition of the post-communist welfare states coupled with their recent liberalization could thus be counteracting traditional mechanisms. However, in both Bulgaria and Hungary, household work was much more divided by sex, which could be seen as a systematic 'double burden' forcing women to work both inside and outside of the household.

With regard to policy implications, our results thus paint a rather pessimistic picture. While there is some evidence for structural influences on the division of household labour, the phenomenon as whole seems to be driven by internalized habits and old traditions, neither of which is easily changed, or even addressed, by political means in either Western or Eastern societies.

## Notes

1. 'The level of representation in the form of symbolically coded norms and ideologies lies across from constructs of identity (on the micro level) and social structure (on the macro and meso level) and rarely appears as an independent level in analyses of inequality which focus on social structure' (Winker and Degele, 2011: 58).
2. These costs are mostly due to unknown risks, which the rational actor tries to minimize by searching for information (Esser, 1991).
3. Especially the latter, rather broad categorization of post-socialist countries has been criticized, and more differentiated typologies have been suggested (Fenger, 2007). Yet, even the finer-graded typologies recognize that 'the differences between the Western countries and the post-communist countries stem primarily from differences in the social situation, not so much from differences in the governmental programmes' (Fenger, 2007: 26).
4. ESS waves 3 (2006) and 4 (2009).
5. This pattern can, for example, be illustrated by a comparison of the acceptance of women's employment when a child is less than three years old. Highest levels of acceptance are expressed by women in Finland and Poland (above 60 per cent), followed by a group of three countries Spain, Bulgaria and Hungary (with more than 40 per cent) as well as a third group at the end of the strata consisting of Estonia, the UK and Germany, with support rates around 30 per cent. Further questions in the same study allowed a more detailed differentiation between conservative, asymmetric attitudes and more egalitarian, universalistic attitudes towards men and women: the statement postulating that in times of crisis, men should be favoured over women in access to jobs receives acceptance among only a minority in all European countries under study. However, a grouping along the dimensions of conservative versus egalitarian attitudes can still be observed. While nearly 30 per cent of the respondents in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland accept this traditional attitude, a clearly lower level of acceptance is observed in the Nordic countries (Finland: 5.8 per cent). Furthermore, traditional, conservative attitudes are more frequently expressed by men than by women and by less-educated strata than among the better educated (the correlation with sex is 0.208, and with education 0.137).
6. Possible answers were: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

7. For more details see StataCorp (2009).
8. The index was calculated by using the variables from the second factor and adding their scores together. Therefore, the paternalistic value orientation might take on values between 0 and 15.
9. The percentages in Figure 10.1 relate to the total frequencies for the entire sub-population. For example, the 35.1 per cent of the last bar refers to the total number of respondents from the sub-sample of Bulgaria who had an above-average (median) paternalistic value orientation score and were male.
10. Yet, one has to keep in mind that these are cell frequencies, meaning that they are relative to the distribution of the sub-sample of the specific country. Since the populations are not of the same size or composition, these figures are hard to interpret on their own.
11. The assumption being that this is caused by an interaction effect between gender and the variable measuring the paternalistic world view. Since the effect was very small to begin with, it could not be modelled accurately.
12. It is possible that the effect is due to differences in gender roles for different strata of society. Both explanations would be consistent with the negative influence of higher education in the post-communist regimes.

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# 11

## Childbearing Behaviours of Employed Women in Italy and Poland<sup>1</sup>

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### **Introduction**

As a result of low fertility and ageing populations, reconciling work and family has become a prominent topic in demographic research. Numerous macro-level studies on this topic have found that the cross-country correlation between total fertility and women's labour force participation has changed from negative to positive in Western European economies (Ahn and Mira, 2002; Engelhardt and Prskawetz, 2004; Kögel, 2004). The micro-level relationship between the two roles has mostly been found to be negative, although its magnitude varies depending on the country studied (Matysiak and Vignoli, 2008). The economic theory of fertility and women's labour supply explains this phenomenon by the cross-country differences in the opportunity costs of childbearing, such as the income lost during the non-participation period, but also future earnings foregone due to non-accumulation and depreciation of human capital (Walker, 1995; Gustafsson, 2001). These costs are larger in countries with rigid labour markets and a pronounced insider–outsider divide, and those that lack safety nets and family policies oriented towards supporting a successful reconciliation of motherhood and paid work (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

However, recent micro-level research has challenged this prediction, showing that in some countries employed women are more likely to have a child, even if there are strong institutional barriers to combining work and family. Such evidence comes mainly from the post-socialist countries (Kantorova, 2004; Kreyenfeld, 2004; Róbert and Bukodi, 2005; Matysiak and Vignoli, 2008; Matysiak, 2009a), suggesting that in some country contexts it is important for women to have a job and to establish their position in the labour market before they decide to have a child. These findings call for a deeper investigation of how country-specific factors affect the interrelationship between childbearing and women's labour supply, and how they

influence the strategies that women employ to combine family and paid work throughout their lives.

With this chapter we respond to this research need by comparing Poland, a post-socialist country, with Italy. These two countries stand out in Europe by their very low public support for working parents, rigid working hours, traditional views on gender roles and strong attachments to family and Catholic values (Lück and Hofäcker, 2003; Matysiak, 2011). At the same time, they also display key differences that make this comparison informative: they differ in female labour supply developments and in the extent to which earned wages satisfy material aspirations. These similarities and differences between the two countries allow us to better understand how country-specific contexts affect women's employment decisions in connection with childbearing. For the purpose of our study, we adopted a life-course perspective and traced women's employment choices around the birth of their first child. More specifically, we investigated how employment affects the decision to become a mother, analysed women's entry or re-entry into employment after the birth of their first child, and studied how this transition, or lack of it, influences the mothers' decisions to have a second child.

In the following section, the contexts in which Italian and Polish women make their employment and reproductive choices are described, and the macro-level developments in fertility and women's labour supply in the two countries are illustrated. The data used is then presented, followed by the methodological strategy employed and the results obtained. The chapter concludes with a summary and a discussion of the findings.

## **The context of Italy and Poland**

Despite different geographical locations, Italy and Poland display several similarities that set them apart from much of the rest of Europe: these include the still low rates of cohabitation, non-marital childbearing and marital disruption (Hantrais, 2005). The delayed diffusion of new family behaviours is often linked to the pressure imposed by the Catholic principles uniting the two countries (De Rose et al., 2008; Kotowska et al., 2008). Only recently have the countries started to experience a slight weakening of ties with the Church, a process which is particularly visible among the younger generations and is manifested in an increase in separation and divorce (Vignoli and Ferro, 2009), as well as in cohabitation (Matysiak, 2009b).

In addition, both societies are characterized by strong attachment to the family and strong intergenerational ties (Dalla Zuanna and Micheli, 2004; Mai et al., 2008; Stankuniene and Maslaukaite, 2008). Parents support their children after they leave the parental home by helping them to establish independent households, organizing marriage ceremonies and,

later, providing care for their children. In turn, they receive financial and emotional support in their old age (De Rose et al., 2008).

The strong involvement of family members in providing care and support to each other, as well as the commonly shared conviction that families are the most relevant source of social aid, has left very little space for state intervention. The small amount of public support provided to working parents leads to a strong conflict between paid work and family, and this seems to be particularly pronounced in Poland. The availability of public childcare for the youngest children, aged up to two, is very limited in both countries. In Poland, in addition, the supply of childcare facilities for pre-schoolers is far from adequate (Table 11.1); instead, mothers make use of maternity and parental leave entitlements. These entitlements are offered to all working mothers in both countries, irrespective of their work record, but Poland is much more generous than Italy in terms of leave duration. In Italy, a five-month maternity leave is followed by an optional parental leave of six months, which gives mothers the possibility of staying at home with their child for up to 11 months without terminating their work contract. In Poland, by contrast, a mother can spend almost 3.5 years at home, as she can opt for a three-year-long parental leave after a 16-week maternity leave.<sup>2</sup> In both countries, mothers as well as fathers can take the parental leave until the child is eight years old. In the great majority of cases, mothers take it directly after maternity leave. While the financial compensation during maternity leave is high (80 per cent of monthly earnings in Italy and 100 per cent in Poland), the parental leave benefits are rather low (see Table 11.1). Indeed, in Poland, only mothers who meet certain income criteria are entitled to parental leave benefit. For those mothers who decide to work, the family network plays an important role in providing childcare in both countries. The Eurostat survey 'Reconciliation between work and family life' suggests that around 40 per cent of working mothers receive help from other family members (Eurostat, 2005).

Rigid working hours, strong barriers to labour market entry and the relatively high uncertainty of employment contracts further increase work-family tensions. These are reflected in the relatively low incidence of part-time jobs, high unemployment and the high proportion of temporary contracts among young people, compared with many other European countries (Table 11.1). Again, the rigidity of working hours, as well as job instability, seems to be higher in Poland than in Italy.

Finally, the attitudes towards working mothers in both countries are very traditional, and the gender division of tasks is heavily asymmetric (for example Lück and Hofäcker, 2003; Mencarini and Tanturri, 2006; Muszyńska, 2007; Philipov, 2008). The view that women should withdraw from the labour market when children are young prevails in Poland, despite state ideology strongly encouraging the labour force participation of women during the socialist period. However, even during that era, women were considered

Table 11.1 Contextual indicators, Italy and Poland

	Italy	Poland
Childcare provision <sup>1</sup>		
Children aged 0–2	7.4%	2.4%
Children aged 3–6	95%	61.9%
Parental leave <sup>2</sup>		
<i>Duration</i>	6 months	36 months
<i>Benefit</i>	30% of monthly earnings in private sector, and 80%–100% in public sector	Means-tested, flat rate at around 15% of the average wage in the national economy
Proportion of working mothers with children up to age 14 who receive childcare support from kin <sup>3</sup>	40%	42%
Labour market structures <sup>4</sup>		
% part-time employed (aged 25–49 in 2006)	27.9	9.3
% Youth unemployment in 2006	21.6	29.8
% temporarily employed (aged 15–24 in 2006)	38.0	59.0

Source: <sup>1,2</sup> Italy: Neyer (2003) and De Rose et al. (2008); Poland: Matysiak (2011); <sup>3</sup>Eurostat Statistics Database (data from the 'Reconciliation between Work and Family Life' survey 2005); <sup>4</sup>Eurostat Statistics Database (Labour Force Survey data).

to be the main homemakers and care providers, although at the same time they were expected to have paid work (Siemieńska, 1997).

While Italy and Poland share numerous similarities in the cultural and institutional context of fertility and women's employment, they display an important difference in the level of economic development. Despite a clear and continuous improvement in the economic situation in Poland since the early 1990s, its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in purchasing power standards (PPS) is still only 50 per cent of Italy's. There are also clear cross-country differences in the financial situations of households – the annual total disposable income in PPS of a family with two working spouses (each earning the average national salary) and two children in Italy is twice as high as in Poland (Eurostat Statistics Database, 2008), leaving the material aspirations of the Poles unsatisfied to a larger extent.

### Macro-level developments in fertility and women's labour supply

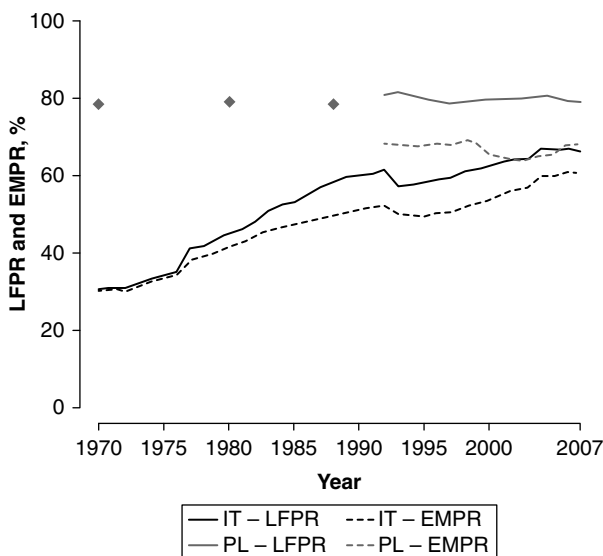
Despite the strong position of the Catholic Church, the attachment to the family and the prevalence of traditional family forms, Italy and Poland have experienced a marked decline in childbearing, and are currently among the countries with the lowest fertility levels in Europe. In Italy, the process of



fertility decline started in the 1970s, around a decade earlier than in Poland, where the first signs were observed after the baby boom of the early 1980s, with the rate of decline accelerating after the onset of the economic transformation. As a result, total fertility (TFR) plummeted to very low levels, reaching a minimum of 1.18 in 1995 in Italy and 1.23 in 2003 in Poland. Although in the following years the two countries experienced a slight improvement in period fertility, the TFR remained relatively low (1.4 in 2009 in both countries).

This downward trend in childbearing was partly driven by the postponement of first births. Indeed, both countries experienced increases in the mean age at first childbearing, although it should be noted that this process was much more pronounced in Italy. Nevertheless, quantum effects also played an important role in the process of fertility decline in the two countries, and the decrease in the two-child family model was claimed to be a major factor responsible for fertility decline in Italy and Poland. In addition, a significant increase in childlessness has been observed. Although the incidence of childlessness in Poland is still lower than in Italy, it should be noted that Poland exhibits the highest incidence of childlessness among the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (Frejka, 2008).

The massive fertility postponement and fertility decline observed in Italy and Poland have often been linked in the literature to the strong tensions between fertility and women's work (Kotowska and Sztanderska, 2007; Kotowska et al., 2008; Vignoli and Salvini, 2008; Vignoli, 2013). Interestingly, the countries display substantial differences in past as well as current level of women's labour force participation (Figure 11.1). Italy has been always described as a country of low women's involvement in the labour market. In 2008, the labour force participation rate of females aged 25–44 stood at 67 per cent, which is around 11 percentage points less than the EU average. It is notable, however, that in the early 1970s the proportion of women in the labour force was half of this, so there has been a considerable increase. In contrast to Italy, the economic activity of women in Poland was already high in the 1960s, when over 60 per cent of women aged 25–44 participated in the labour force. By the end of the 1980s, nearly 80 per cent of Polish women were economically active. This high involvement of women in economic activity was the result of the labour-intensive economy, low productivity and low wage policies, as well as the communist ideology aimed at achieving full employment. The conflict between paid work and childbearing was generally low at that time, thanks to strong job guarantees, the right-to-a-job ideology and public childcare provision. Work–family tensions increased dramatically after the centrally planned economy was replaced by the capitalist system. Employment was no longer guaranteed, job security ceased, public childcare deteriorated, and the importance of education for earning income and achieving personal success increased substantially. Despite these changes, the labour force participation rate of women aged 25–44 remained at the pre-1989 level (interestingly, for men a marked



*Figure 11.1* Labour force participation and employment rates (LFPR and EMPR) of Italian (IT) and Polish (PL) women aged 25–44 years, 1970–2007

*Note:* All persons who were economically active in Poland before 1989 were employed; hence LFPR equals EMPR.

*Source:* Italy (1970–2007) and Poland (1992–2007) – LFS data retrieved from the OECD Employment Database; Poland (1970–1988) – population census data retrieved from the ILO Laborsta.

decrease in economic activity was recorded). Instead, many women experienced unemployment (a phenomenon which had not been present under the centrally planned economy), and the employment rate of females aged 25–44 fell by around 12 per cent at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, without recovering thereafter. Currently, Poland has one of the lowest women's employment rates in Europe, doing only slightly better than Italy (68 per cent versus 61 per cent in 2008). The continuation of women's economic activity at the pre-1989 level, despite the increase in work–family tensions and the rise of women's unemployment, is often interpreted in the literature as an indication of women's determination to participate in the labour force (Sztanderska, 2005; Kotowska and Sztanderska, 2007). This interpretation was supported by various empirical studies conducted at the micro-level (Matysiak and Steinmetz, 2008; Matysiak, 2009a).

### Research hypotheses

On the basis of the context review, we expected to find a strong conflict between fertility and women's employment in both countries, resulting from unfavourable institutional and cultural conditions for combining work and

family. This conflict should be reflected in longer postponement of having a first child among employed women than among those who do not work, prolonged work-career interruptions after the first birth, and, among those women who resumed employment after the birth of their first child, lower likelihood of having a second child. Nevertheless, we also anticipate clear cross-country differences in the fertility and employment course women choose. Given the longer history of women's labour market participation and the dual-earner (even if double burden) family model typical of post-socialist countries, we expect women to invest more effort in combining the two roles in Poland than in Italy.

## **Empirical strategy**

### **Data**

In our empirical investigation, we employed retrospective data from the Household Multipurpose Survey Family and Social Subjects (FSS), corresponding to the Italian GGS, and the Polish Employment, Family and Education Survey (EFES). The Italian National Statistical Office (Istat) conducted the Italian survey in November 2003 on a sample of about 24,000 households and 49,451 individuals of all ages. The Polish survey was prepared at the Institute of Statistics and Demography of the Warsaw School of Economics and carried out in November and December 2006 on a representative sample of 3,000 women born between 1966 and 1981.

Although both these surveys would be suitable for use in a comparative analysis, there are differences between them that limit the possibility of fully exploiting data potentials in a comparative project. In contrast to the Italian survey, the EFES focused on women and was conducted on selected cohorts only. This meant that we could not carry out analyses at the couple level, and limited the opportunities for studying temporal changes in individual behaviour. Conversely, the FSS, unlike the EFES, does not contain sufficient information on unemployment spells and changes in work contracts throughout respondents' employment histories.

Given our data limitations, we focused on women. For Poland, we selected the cohorts born between 1970 and 1981. These women were between the ages of 8 and 19 in 1989, which meant that they started their reproductive years largely under the new political and economic conditions. Taking the same cohorts for Italy as for Poland would mean following the Italian women for a period three years shorter than the period for Poland. For this reason, for Italy we chose cohorts born in the years between 1967 and 1978. As a result, in both cases, the women analysed were 25–36 years old at the time of the interview. Importantly, we did not censor Polish women in 2003. The rationale behind this choice was that fertility postponement in Poland started only recently; thus, the years 2004–06 could provide valuable information.

From the original sample we excluded women with incomplete education, birth or employment histories. Respondents with missing values on other variables (for example parents' education) were retained in the sample, and additional modalities called 'missing' were created for these covariates. As a result, our final Italian sample included 4,238 respondents and the final Polish sample covered 2,300 respondents.

## **Method**

Due to the life-course perspective adopted in this study, event-history techniques were applied. With regard to fertility careers, we specified two equations: one for the transition to the first birth and one for the transition to the second. Each woman was followed from the age of 15 until her first conception and then from the delivery of the first child up to the conception of the second child; cases were eventually censored at the date of the interview. Conception was measured seven months before birth, that is, at the point at which the great majority of women are aware that they are pregnant, and after which this knowledge may influence their subsequent employment behaviours. Piecewise linear hazard models were applied. This type of model makes use of piecewise linear splines for modelling baseline intensities, allowing much flexibility in modelling patterns of duration dependence.

Our key explanatory covariate in the fertility models was the woman's employment status, introduced as a time-varying covariate. In the model for the transition to the first child, this variable was grouped in four categories: 'in education', 'in first non-employment, but out of education', 'employed' and 'in higher-order non-employment'. This specification allowed us to separate women who were still in school from those who had already graduated and faced the decision about whether or not to enter the labour market. It also separated women who had never worked from those who were in their first non-employment spell. In the model for the transition to the second child, the employment status variable was grouped into the following categories: 'entered no work after first birth', 'entered work after first birth, but currently in non-employment' and 'entered work after first birth and currently in employment'. Again, we thus separated non-employed women who had not entered employment after delivery from those who had taken a paid job but either lost it after some time or decided to give it up.

All the models are controlled for the respondent's and their parent's education, as well as for calendar time. The respondent's education is a time-varying covariate. Women who had finished their education were classified into three groups: low, medium and high. The first category consisted of women who had only completed compulsory education (eight years in both countries), as well as those who continued with basic vocational education, lasting three years in Italy and two years in Poland. The medium

educated were those who completed at least four years of education at the upper-secondary level, as well as those who undertook post-secondary, but non-tertiary, education. Women who received a bachelor's or a master's degree were classified as highly educated. Parents' education was divided between 'low' and 'medium-high'.

In addition, we also looked into the patterns of employment entry after the birth of a first child. We compared Kaplan–Meier survival curves for employment entry after birth. The most straightforward approach here would be to observe a woman from childbirth onwards. This was not possible in our case, as women on parental leave were coded as employed in the Italian dataset and, as a result, we could not establish the date when they decided to finish parental leave and re-enter paid work. Given that mothers in Italy can be out of paid employment for no longer than 11 months following birth without losing their work contract, we decided to observe each woman starting with the first birthday of the first child. The resulting Kaplan–Meier estimates of survival curves were corrected by the proportions of women at work one year after the first birth.

## **Results**

In this section we discuss our empirical findings. First, we show results that illustrated differentials in first and second birth risks by women's employment status in Italy and Poland. Then, descriptive information showing the patterns of women's entry into employment after the first delivery is presented. The Results section ends with a summary of our results.

### **Fertility differentials by employment status**

Our findings illustrate clear cross-country differences with respect to the fertility behaviours of working women in Italy and Poland (Table 11.2; see the Appendix for full model results). In Italy, employed women were clearly more likely to postpone entry to motherhood as well as to delay their transition to a second child. More specifically, Italian women were 31 per cent less likely to conceive their first child compared with women who had never worked after completing their education, and 34 per cent less likely than women had who worked for some time after finishing school but then left employment. Similar conclusions can be drawn about differentials in second birth intensities: those women who opted to resume employment after a first birth had an 18 per cent lower second birth chance than women who did not take a paid job after they became mothers. The difference in second birth intensities turned out to be even larger when we compared women who were continuously working after the first birth with those who entered employment after their first birth but left it some time later (32 per cent). These results showed the strong conflict between paid work and childbearing in Italy.

*Table 11.2* Fertility differentials by employment status, Italy (birth cohorts 1967–78) and Poland (birth cohorts 1970–81)

<b>Employment status</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Transition to first birth		
Student	0.27***	0.68***
First non-employment	1.00	1.00
Second or higher non-employment	1.05	1.10
Employment	0.69***	1.06
Transition to second birth		
Did not enter work after first birth	1	1
Entered work and is currently working	0.81***	1.03
Entered work but is not currently working	1.19	0.77

*Note:* Results are controlled for women's age, education level, calendar period and social background (parents' educational level). Significance level of coefficients: \* = 10%; \*\* = 5%; \*\*\* = 1%. Standard errors in parentheses.

*Source:* Own elaboration on FSS (2003) and EFES (2006).

Interestingly, no such result was found for Poland, despite external conditions for combining work and family being no better than in Italy. More specifically, in Poland we found no significant relationship between women's employment and first and second birth intensities. In both the models estimated for this country the employment coefficients were very small, suggesting that the insignificance of the coefficient could be attributed to the lack of association rather than a large in-sample variation. Overall, this might suggest that Polish women try to reconcile paid work and childbearing despite the barriers they face.

### **Timing of employment entry and re-entry after the first birth**

Interesting cross-country differences also emerged when we compared patterns of women's employment entry after first birth. Although employment strongly discourages transition to motherhood in Italy, but not in Poland, Italian mothers resume employment after their first birth more quickly than Polish women (Figure 11.2). Half of the Italian mothers, but only one-third of the Polish mothers, were working one year after the birth. This difference in entry rates might be thought to be due to the differences in parental leave regulations. Interestingly, this is not the case, as the intensity of employment entry in Poland starts to exceed that of Italy after the child reaches 3.5 years of age, which is precisely the time when parental leave expires.

The intensity of employment entry in Italy strongly depends on whether a woman was employed, for some time at least, before the first conception (Figure 11.3), which points to a strong polarization in behaviours. In our sample of Italian women, 58 per cent had some work experience, and 90 per cent of these re-entered employment one year after giving birth. Of those

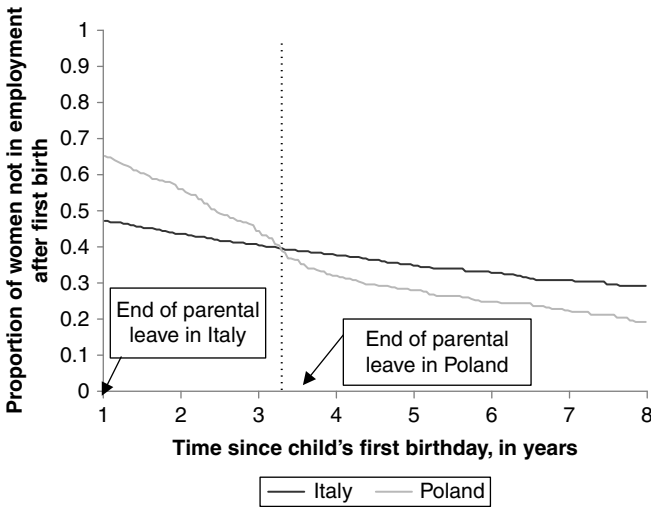


Figure 11.2 Proportion of women, in Italy and Poland, not in employment 12 months after the first birth, Kaplan–Meier survival curve estimates  
 Source: Own calculations on FSS (2003) and EFES (2006) data.

women who had never worked before they conceived, no more than 10 per cent were employed one year after the first birth, and only 20 per cent were still in the job three years later. A similar pattern of re-entry into employment after a first birth in Italy has also been identified in previous research (see, for example, Saurel-Cubizolles et al., 1999; Gutiérrez-Domènech, 2004), although only for the older cohorts. Such strong polarization was not observed in Poland, although women with some work experience (who constituted almost 70 per cent of all women in our Polish sample) were found to be more likely to re-enter paid work after childbirth than those who had never worked.

### Different employment behaviours in connection with childbearing: A summary

In our study, we formulated two research hypotheses. The first assumed the existence of a strong work–family conflict in the two countries. The second expected cross-country differences in women’s employment behaviours in connection with childbearing. Our study does not lend support to the first hypothesis: while our findings suggested strong tensions between paid work and childbearing in Italy, not much evidence for this was found for Poland. Instead, Polish women seemed to combine fertility and paid employment much better than Italian women, despite the conditions for combining work

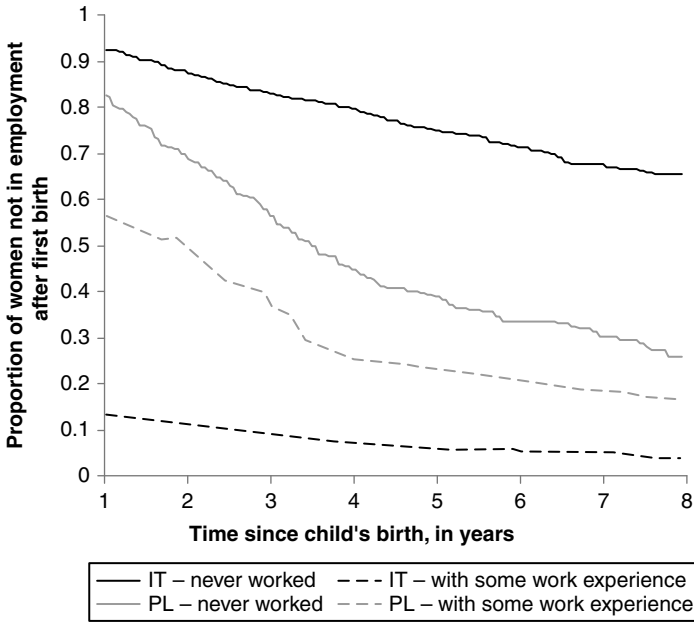


Figure 11.3 Proportion of women, in Italy (IT) and Poland (PL), not in employment 12 months after first birth, by women's employment status at conception, Kaplan-Meier survival curve estimates

Source: Own calculations on FSS (2003) and EFES (2006) data.

and family in Poland being no better than in Italy. We did find clear cross-country differences in women's behaviours, which was consistent with our second hypothesis.

One of our most interesting findings was the polarization pattern we found for Italy. Italian women who do not enter employment progress to their first child more quickly than those who work, few take up a job after birth, and they have the highest intensity of progress to a second child. By contrast, those who decide to work after they graduate are more likely to postpone motherhood, resume employment very soon after birth, and have a lower intensity of extending the family size to two children. These two life courses are clearly predetermined by whether or not a woman decides to pursue a work career. In Poland, where the institutional and cultural setting seems to be at least as unfavourable for combining work and family as in Italy, such a polarization was not observed. The majority of Polish women enter the labour market after graduating, and they are as likely to have their first child as those who do not work. Although they stay out of work longer than Italian women (they are able to do this because parental leave in Poland is much longer than in Italy), the majority return to paid employment, and they are as likely to have a second child as those who do



not work. To conclude, Polish women seemed to strive to combine child-bearing and childrearing with paid employment despite weak institutional support, rigid working hours and traditional social norms about gender roles.

## **Discussion**

In this chapter, we compared women's fertility and employment behaviours at two crucial stages of family formation, that is, around the birth of the first and the second child, in two countries characterized by extraordinarily strong tensions between work and family: Italy and Poland. The main idea underlying this comparison was to better understand how country-specific contexts affect women's employment decisions in connection with childbearing. Although a plethora of research has been conducted on the interrelationship between fertility and women's employment and its cross-country variation, empirical studies focus mainly on the most developed countries. Only recently have some studies been published for CEE, and they suggest that there are also other country-specific factors that govern women's fertility and employment decisions, as well as the country-specific conditions for combining work and family which were so strongly underlined by the literature for Western economies. Our study confirmed this view, by showing that paid employment and motherhood tend to be more often combined in Poland than in Italy, despite similar poor public support for working parents in the two countries. First, Polish women are more likely to give birth to their first child while employed than Italian women. Second, employment after the first birth does not reduce their propensity to have a second child to such a large extent as in Italy. Third, in Poland we did not observe any sign of the polarization between fertility and employment roles that we identified for Italy: Italian women choose to be either mothers of at least two children, with only a small proportion involved in professional careers, or mothers of at most one child, with strong involvement in the labour market.

The most plausible explanation for these findings is that Polish women are much more determined to be part of the labour force, and this explanation is consistent with other research (Kotowska and Sztanderska, 2007; Matysiak and Steinmetz, 2008). There may be two reasons behind this determination. First, it is very likely that the achievement of financial security is a pivotal condition for family formation in Poland, as Polish salaries still lag behind EU standards. A study conducted by Matysiak and Mynarska (2010) shows, however, that apart from the financial aspects, employment is also important for women for other reasons. Being a housewife is generally not appreciated, while participating in the labour market gives Polish women the opportunity to take a break from domestic chores, to meet people, to develop and to do something more interesting and challenging than housework. The interest of Polish women in participating in paid work might be a heritage of the socialist past, when women were supposed to work for pay. This

ideal might have been transmitted from mothers to their daughters, and women might now be socially accepted as income providers. Future research is required to test this hypothesis, as well as to better investigate the reasons behind the differences in women's attachment to the labour market in Italy and Poland.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendix

*Table A.11.1* Full model results for transition to first birth

	Italy	Poland
Age (spline)		
constant	-6.7907*** (0.3636)	-5.5458*** (0.2350)
15-20	0.4010*** (0.0525)	0.4587*** (0.0421)
20-24	0.1814*** (0.0330)	0.1213*** (0.0293)
24-28	0.1578*** (0.0283)	0.0219 (0.0371)
28-32	0.0256 (0.0325)	-0.0417 (0.0642)
32-37	-0.1560** (0.0697)	-0.3754* (0.2119)
Calendar time (spline)		
spline	-0.0437*** (0.0080)	-0.0364*** (0.0076)
Educational attainment (splines)		
<i>Tertiary</i>		
Exiting education (shift)	-1.1099*** (0.3925)	0.1438 (0.1746)
0-4 years (slope)	0.4388*** (0.0981)	0.1420** (0.0650)

Table A.11.1 (Continued)

	Italy	Poland
4+ years (slope)	0.0875* (0.0491)	0.0045 (0.0883)
<i>Secondary</i>		
Exiting education (shift)	-0.5351 (0.3335)	0.8395*** (0.1371)
0-4 years (slope)	0.2716*** (0.0672)	-0.0642 (0.0417)
4+ years (slope)	0.0527** (0.0213)	-0.0284 (0.0376)
<i>Primary</i>		
Exiting education (shift)	0.5607 (0.4452)	1.2090*** (0.1907)
0-2 years (slope)	0.3882** (0.1926)	-0.0321 (0.0937)
2+ years (slope)	-0.0293* (0.0168)	-0.1075*** (0.0225)
Employment status (ref = first non-employment)		
Student	-1.3229*** (0.2740)	-0.3914*** (0.1356)
Second or higher non-employment	0.0525 (0.0722)	0.0908 (0.0926)
Employment	-0.3650*** (0.0526)	0.0568 (0.0636)
Father's education (ref = medium-high)		
Low	0.1829** (0.0921)	0.1912** (0.0753)
Mother's education (ref = medium-high)		
Low	0.0299 (0.1003)	0.1317* (0.0717)

Note: Significance level of coefficients: \* = 10%; \*\* = 5%; \*\*\* = 1%.

Table A.11.2 Full model results for transition to second birth

	Italy	Poland
Time elapsed since first birth (spline)		
constant	-4.7381*** (0.3256)	-3.7922*** (0.2413)
0-1	2.8498*** (0.3103)	1.7160*** (0.2317)
1-3	0.1634*** (0.0590)	-0.0026 (0.0623)
3+	-0.0455 (0.0407)	-0.0919** (0.0448)
Calendar time (spline)		
spline	-0.0178 (0.0123)	-0.0523*** (0.0110)

Table A.11.2 (Continued)

	Italy	Poland
Age at previous birth (ref = 20–22)		
15–20	0.0848 (0.1317)	0.1580 (0.1188)
20–26	-0.0199 (0.0979)	0.2075** (0.0960)
26–30	0.0417 (0.0943)	-0.1143 (0.1425)
30+	-0.1946 (0.1490)	-0.7314* (0.4185)
Educational attainment (ref = primary)		
Tertiary	0.4476*** (0.1691)	-0.3554** (0.1532)
Secondary	0.1260 (0.0781)	-0.2044** (0.0839)
Still in education	-0.3302 (0.2518)	-0.7104*** (0.1775)
Employment status (ref = did not enter work after first birth)		
Entered work and is currently working	-0.2116*** (0.0730)	0.0267 (0.0816)
Entered work but is not currently working	0.1706 (0.2499)	-0.2573 (0.2010)
Father's education (ref = medium-high)		
Low	0.1672 (0.1459)	0.1090 (0.1120)
Mother's education (ref = medium-high)		
Low	-0.2113 (0.1586)	0.1650 (0.1052)

Note: Significance level of coefficients: \* = 10%; \*\* = 5%; \*\*\* = 1%. Standard errors in parentheses.  
Source: Own elaboration on FSS (2003) and EFES (2006).

## Note

1. A subsequent version of the paper was published as Matysiak, A., & Vignoli, D. (2013). Diverse effects of women's employment on fertility: Insights from Italy and Poland. *European Journal of Population* 29(3): 273–302.
2. These regulations were in force until the end of 2007. At the beginning of 2008, some changes were introduced into the parental leave system. We do not refer to them in this paper, since the data we used in our empirical investigation was collected in 2006.

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# 12

## Maternity Leave – Once a Bargain, Always a Bargain? Impact of Care Breaks on Mothers’ Occupational Mobility: The Case of Estonia

*Triin Roosalu and Kadri Täht*

### **Introduction**

There is ample scientific evidence that work and care are gendered, but societies seem to remain blind to this. As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) put it, hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender act as the rules of the gender system, and these beliefs have self-fulfilling effects on perceptions and behaviours that give them a remarkable ability to persist in the face of social change that might undermine them.

Recently, scholars have coined a notion of ‘revolution’ to denote what has been happening in terms of the labour market (LM) participation of women over the last century (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Gerson, 2009). Let us here consider these approaches, since this argumentation forms the core of this study.

According to Esping-Andersen, there is very little to do to finalize the revolution in Europe: educate women and bring them into the paid LM; establish universal maternity leave; and provide affordable public childcare of high quality. Now, this is, obviously, an approach which treats children as something valuable today only because of their potential value in the future. From this point of view, it is the interests of society at large that are served when some resources are invested into individual children, and into women who have the reproductive task. While it is beneficial to study society from the point of view of interests – and this is what Richard Swedberg (2003) suggests we consider when including gender in the studies of economic sociology – it could, perhaps, be asked here whether those interests of society could, or even should, be reconcilable with the interests of the children and of women. One could also initiate a discussion on whether and how one could determine the specific interests of children and women in this sphere. For



example, should it be taken for granted that paid work is the first preference of all, or any, women? We can, however, afford to ask how exactly it would be good for the child that the mother goes into the LM instead of minding her own children. And what about the child's right to spend time with his or her parents?

Leaving these questions aside for now, this approach remains quite insensitive in itself to how exactly, and why, gender egalitarian outcomes should occur if these practices are implemented. However, there is also an aspect of normative employment-centeredness in this approach, already introduced in the earlier work of Esping-Andersen (1990), in which he distinguishes between the levels of commodification as a central dimension to analyse and compare different societies. Why do we, as a society, prefer entitlement to financial rewards (as the problem Esping-Andersen is tackling is presented as improving the chances of those in disadvantaged positions) through (readiness to) work, as opposed to general social support? How does the fact that a mother is employed in paid work automatically lead the family out of poverty, considering the occupational inequalities in the world of work? And what is the likelihood that following these practices will lead to the desired outcomes – less inequality in society with maintained fertility – alongside the change that is expected from fathers in taking up care? Ruth Lister (2009) argues that even the experience of the Nordic countries does not match up to the goals that are set by the countries themselves: using the glass-half-empty perspective, she suggests that, while it is true that in many aspects Nordic countries fare better than others in gender equality measures, they are still far from the gender-egalitarian society that they have described to themselves as desirable. As noted elsewhere (Therborn, 2004: 313), Swedish experience shows high flexibility in the North-eastern European family, combining high rates of singleness, extramarital births and non-married cohabitation with above-EU-average fertility, infrequent single parenting and two thirds of teenagers living with both parents. Therefore, it seems worth making an additional empirical check of the results of such arrangements.

We should, perhaps, also check for the dangers American sociologist Kathleen Gerson (2009) mentions in her research: the inability of work organization and labour market practices to provide the conditions for such egalitarian sharing to occur. Kathleen Gerson (1985, 2009) studied reflections of two generations of Americans on their preferred balance of work and family life. Based on their accounts of the flexible and diverse trajectories of their families of origin and their own preferred futures, she suggests (Gerson, 2009) that men and women of the younger generation hope for fulfilling work and intrinsically rewarding relationships. They are clear in envisioning flexible gender roles and the egalitarian sharing of work as care, seeing care as providing time as well as money for those cared for. Gerson warns that it is necessary for society to institutionally provide the

opportunities for both genders to combine both aspects of caring, and at the same time opt for fulfilling careers as well as meaningful relationships. However, her belief that institutions should be designed in a gender-flexible (if not gender-neutral) way relies on her findings that, if young people do not find the soul-mate with whom they will equally share the caring at home happily ever after, they actually prefer different things. The second-best choice for men would mostly be to opt for a (neo)traditional relationship, in which the man's career needs more attention, while the second-best for the women she interviewed was, instead, to lead an independent, self-fulfilling life (Gerson, 2009). This reflects the gender gap in expectations that has also been previously discussed; women's higher relative education, and thus their emancipation, is seen as related to (if not a condition of) structural singleness, because of skewed coupling markets that leave some people excluded or without attractive options (Therborn, 2004: 313). According to Gerson, then, we might see structural singleness as dependent on the perceived or real impossibility, or difficulties, of finding realistic options to coordinate work and private life. However, there have been no accounts claiming that this gender gap in expectations clearly results from the need to settle for second-best options, and hence the suggestive power of Gerson's argument: if societies could manage to prevent rigid choices and, instead, enable and welcome fluid boundaries by gender, she says, individuals could opt for their preferred options. Of course, Gerson is not really saying, as it may sound here, that all women have similar expectations, or that all men do. It is helpful here to be reminded of the argument of the heterogeneity of women (and men) as a group according to their preferences, put forth by Catherine Hakim (2000). Structural, institutional and cultural constraints shape individual choices. What exactly, then, shapes the extent to which childcare leaves are a good policy for enabling equal opportunities?

Estonia is a good case to explore here. Despite the rather high and mostly full-time LM participation of women, during and since the Soviet period, the gender division of household labour has remained rather traditional (Pajumets, 2012; Roosalu, 2014) – it has been primarily women who carry out the routine household tasks and are the primary caregivers when there are children in the household. At the same time, institutional support for combining work and family has stayed modest – flexible and part-time working time arrangements are scarce, and full-time employment is the norm; the availability of nurseries for babies is still rather limited. Although men can also take parental leave (until the child is three years old), predominantly only mothers do. This traditionalism, despite the system, that drives mothers home makes us ask: what is the effect of childcare leave on the later careers of mothers in Estonia? This is the basis of our study.

How many women take childcare leaves when the opportunity is there, but not generally available? How long do they remain away from the LM?

How does this affect women's chances of occupational careers? Has the impact remained stable over time? These are the research questions this chapter asks. We will compare roughly similar political conditions as far as maternity leaves go – while the system changed in 2004, we will limit our cohorts of comparison to those who used the benefits of the previous system. This consisted of up to three years of care leave with almost no financial support, but it maintained jobs and the right to interrupt the care break with a job break at very short notice, and vice versa, until the child's third birthday. It should be mentioned here that since 2004, the job security part of the care break has been maintained, and a compensatory system has been established whereby the caretaker receives state support worth the full average taxed income of the previous calendar year – up to the ceiling of three times the national average. This must make parents consider the additional effects of their decisions, and we decided this was not something we could check in this study; therefore, we only look into the cohorts who had already returned after the care break by 2004.

We will look for differences in women's LM attachment over time by distinguishing different cohorts and comparing their entrance into the LM. In analysing the period, we also look at the effects of the economic cycle on women's participation: we compare times of recession with times of prosperity and stability. For the analysis, we use the Estonian Social Survey. This is a national household survey with a representative sample of over 8,000 respondents. It was first carried out in 2004, and it includes retrospective data on the LM and family events. For the analysis, we use transition rate models in order to assess various LM transitions and the role of individual, but also institutional (macro-level) characteristics, in these events.

In what follows, we will first provide some background information about the theoretical debate and clarify our research agenda. Then we will provide an overview of the Estonian context of work and care. In the third section, we will focus on the research question, present our hypothesis, and thereafter introduce our data and methods. In the next part, the results will be introduced and discussed. We conclude with some theory-relevant notes, explaining the conditions under which the relationships we study hold.

### **Right to care, right to career**

Equal employment as a concept (von Wahl, 2005) relies on a specific understanding of equality as relating to rights, resources and access. Processes shaping the meaning of gender equality can be both intentional and unintentional (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007), and implicit framing of issues may occur, as actors can be driven to shape an issue in a particular way due to unintentional biases of which they are often unaware. Hegemonic discourses can be identified as the background against which specific policy frames are articulated, by setting the borders within which frames can move.

The welfare state typology, including the conservative, liberal and social-democratic states (Esping-Andersen, 1990), with ideas originating from classical approaches (see Holmwood, 2000; Oorschot et al., 2005), has been analytically reformulated into various sets of different gender regimes (Esping-Andersen et al., 2002; Blossfeld and Hofmeister, 2006). Even the concept of gender cultures is developed as intertwined with, but distinct from, that of gender regimes (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). The gender regime models applied in this type of analysis have as their key feature the extent to which the family form invokes women as housewives or breadwinners (for example Bielenski et al., 2002), and define differences based not only on norms but also on the form of the welfare state (see Walby, 2004). Von Wahl (2005) suggests adding further dimensions to the three class-based dimensions of Esping-Andersen (1990) – de-commodification, stratification and state–market relations – such as access to the LM, ability to establish an autonomous household, and personal autonomy. Von Wahl argues that, based on these indicators and their combinations, certain equal employment regimes should be analytically distinguished, to further describe and analyse the appearance of Esping-Andersen’s (1990) concept of a particular LM regime going hand in hand with each of the three welfare state regimes. For von Wahl, then, the act of clustering states according to the equal employment policies they introduce, implement and enforce gives a better insight into women’s inequality in the LM than the general concept of welfare state regime alone. When differentiating between *equal employment* regimes, von Wahl (2005), seeing these as centred around women’s experiences in combining paid work and care work, suggests including certain social policies that enable women’s participation in employment, such as parental leave, in addition to employment-related measures. Employment-related indicators of equal employment include policies and programmes aimed at the removal of different kinds of barriers that prevent women’s full integration into the LM, as well as actual effective practices of employment decisions and processes of hiring, training, wages, promoting and firing. But family policies and parental leave arrangements are part of a wider welfare ideology within a country and reflect the understanding in a country of the division of responsibilities between the state, the market, an individual and the family.

In order to offer her classification, Von Wahl (2005) identifies seven basic models of equal employment policies and locates these within the previous typology, ending up with a convincing description of the liberal equal employment regime, the conservative equal employment regime and the social-democratic employment regime. We thus see that gender equality emerges from different sources and in different domains across the regime types, and some systematic alignment with gender equality in the LM can be witnessed in all the regimes. Nevertheless, Von Wahl’s argument still generates confusion when trying to understand the post-socialist work and care regime.

Estonia is an interesting case to study in this context, and to add to the 'North-eastern European family cluster', geographically speaking, especially as Therborn (2004) suggests that Eastern European post-communist countries will become similar to the rest of progressive Europe as soon as economic conditions improve. We can, however, come up with a different combination of 'good' and 'bad' than Therborn stressed for Sweden. Namely, Estonia is different in its high rates of extramarital births, non-married cohabitation, and unstable relationships resulting in divorces or dissolutions of cohabitation (Kasearu, 2010), making it actually more likely that teenagers do not live with both parents. On the other hand, the importance placed on mothering, when low levels of voluntary childlessness and the availability of childcare leaves and their take-up by mothers are considered, combined with mothers' high education, high full-time LM participation and affordable public childcare for children over three years, makes a case for widespread single-parent families. Even where fathers are (still) in the picture, their participation in childrearing remains in the shadow of the mothers (for an extensive discussion of the reasons, see Karu, 2011).

To better understand the gender issues characteristic of Estonia, one has to keep in mind that for 50 years it was influenced by a Soviet gender ideology. In the Soviet Union, the male breadwinner family model characteristic of the majority of Western countries till the end of the 1950s was seriously challenged. Gender equity in the public sphere was presented as an official ideology. Accordingly, compared with Western countries, female employment rates were remarkably high, facilitated by widely available childcare services. Parental leave and state-subsidized childcare were instituted in socialist countries in order to promote the participation of women in the LM. The choice to embark on a course towards a market economy made by the countries that had suffered under totalitarian regimes seems to have led to the re-evaluation of the previous social order as a whole, together with its constituent project of women's emancipation (for example Dunn, 2004; Fodor, 2004; Weiner, 2007).

The political and economic reforms of the 1990s brought about fundamental changes in Estonian society. One of the major changes was the abolition of the work obligation. As a result, in the early 1990s, researchers noticed a surprising trend in Estonia – instead of a desire for greater gender equality, the early 1990s were characterized by a revival of traditional gender role attitudes and a striving after 'natural' roles of men and women (Narusk and Kandolin, 1997). The right to become a stay-at-home mother was perceived as an equivalent of a Western lifestyle. The trend was supported by a public discourse of idealized motherhood and attempts to recreate national identity based on traditional pre-war family values.

The period of revival of traditional gendered family roles turned out to be short, as the economic situation of Estonian families made it impossible for one of the partners to quit working. Furthermore, well-educated Estonian

women wanted to continue in active employment not only for financial reasons but also for self-realization. At the same time, closer contacts with the Western world, and especially with the Nordic countries, introduced a more egalitarian approach to gender roles and gender relations. Accordingly, the share of women who actually chose the role of stay-at-home mother was relatively small.

In the Estonia of post-socialist times, gender equality is guaranteed by the Gender Equality Law Act, adopted by the Estonian Parliament in 2004, as well as by other acts of labour and family policies. Unlike the Soviet gender ideology, Estonian policy measures are aimed at supporting working parents, not only working mothers, as was the case in the Soviet period. In recent years, ideas of involved fatherhood have been growing in Estonia, and young fathers are more involved in parenting and household chores than their fathers' generation (Pajumets, 2007a). However, in spite of the new acts, empirical research has revealed that traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Pajumets, 2007b, 2012; Karu, 2011), that is, images of 'proper' male and female roles, are still generally accepted. Having made the transition by 2004, Estonia is seen to have become the most neoliberal of the post-socialist states in its policies and practices and, even more, the widely shared dominant ideologies – which have few, if any, visible alternatives in the public sphere. Yet, at the same time, it possesses some traits of one of the most generous welfare states in the social-democratic pattern, still committed to providing good-quality, easily accessible universal childcare. However, the potential ideologically inconsistent impacts lead to a similar solution: to withdraw from the private sphere in order to participate in paid employment.

When we compare Estonia on an international scale, it is still evident that, on the one hand, Estonian women are more likely to be educated than men (see Roosmaa and Aavik, this volume), and they tend to participate in the LM as full-time employees (Roosalu, 2012). On the other hand, they are likely to leave the LM for a period of time in order to have children and take care of them. This, in turn, raises the question of whether women's educational human capital is being harnessed effectively in Estonia. Furthermore, it raises the question of under what conditions long-term care breaks are, indeed, compatible with a career. Scholars such as Esping-Andersen (2009) and Kathleen Gerson (2009) suggest that a childcare break of about one year, with full job security and affordable childcare after that period, would help women's LM chances and would encourage them to become educated for jobs, while at the same time maintaining a level of fertility among the population. In a wider sense, what Esping-Andersen claims is that this would give women more power, and would, in the longer run, lead to a changing work-care balance between men and women. While this seems indisputable, political decision-makers might dare to ask how long is needed for the changes to take effect, and what are the additional aspects to be kept in mind in modelling a successful national care break system.

There is ample evidence from various countries about the way motherhood shapes women's LM conditions.

Evertsson (2012) studied new mothers in Sweden to see how their work commitment changed during a five-year period between 1999 and 2003, showing that women who gave birth during that period were less committed in 2003. She argues that transition to motherhood may lead to a redistribution of priorities and slightly lower work commitment among new mothers compared with non-mothers, but that the negative relationship between becoming a mother and work commitment is restricted to the first few years of a child's life. She interprets this as a way of temporarily adjusting to the difficulties of combining work and family during the early pre-school years.

Kahn et al. (2014) explore whether the career penalties faced by mothers change over the life course. They found that motherhood can be costly to women's careers, but the effects on labour force outcomes attenuate at older ages: children reduce women's labour force participation, but this effect is strongest when women are younger and is eliminated by the forties and fifties. They also suggested that mothers may regain ground in terms of occupational status, while the wage penalty for having children persists across the life course only for women who have three or more children.

Studying women's and men's career interruptions in an enlarged Europe, Musumeci and Solera (2013) claim, nevertheless, that there is clearly a cost to employment discontinuities, either for unemployment or family care, in terms of current and future participation, career opportunities and wages, and that these costs are institutionally and culturally embedded. This approach is interesting, as it proves there is no difference based on the nature of the break – whether from unemployment or care leave – as time away from the LM, according to their analysis, is always harmful. Therefore, the question remains how to outweigh and compensate for the difficulties to those disadvantaged by a break.

Considering the effect of an institutional framework, a comparative analysis of Australian and Finnish policies showed how the extensive right to take paid parental leave and publicly subsidized available childcare significantly decrease the economic and social difficulties related to motherhood (Arun et al., 2004). One might suggest that the better the arrangement of childcare and parental leave, the less a mother's occupational career is penalized by the break. Data from Norway (see Ellingsaeter, 2012) suggests that the existence of a system of parental leave, including a paternity leave quota and universal material support, can eliminate the role of economic factors in individual fertility decisions. Norwegians were still convinced that a two-breadwinner family is the right model, partly because they can expect no loss of income during parental leave from work, and partly because generous childcare possibilities make it realistic to return to work after the children are born.

Although from a different perspective, this was also proven by Martin Klesment (2010), who found that during the period under the Soviet Union,

fertility in young Estonian families was not dependent on increases in family income – one can guess that, since childcare as well as material resources were equally accessible to all, and families got access to their own accommodation when their second child was born, these replaced the possible positive effect of individual income. Studies from the US show, however, that while national (and mostly also state-level) policy does not provide many opportunities to support a parent during childbirth and later childcare, it is more often the more resourceful, higher-educated women who can afford to take a temporary leave from the LM (Yang and Rodriguez, 2009). Correll et al. (2007) convincingly show that in the US, a motherhood penalty extends beyond the wage penalty, as women are regarded on the basis of their gender roles and discriminated against in relation to men in the selection processes for getting a job. We expect this effect also to work in Estonia. While data about this is lacking, we can say that, in the Estonian context, Kazjulja and Roosalu (2011) have found that women are, in general, less often able than men to gain a good job via informal channels, while they are somewhat more successful during economic crises, when formal job competition is used more often to fill higher occupations. Considering, then, that women's and men's social networks work differently and are beneficial in different ways, it is more likely that women are judged based on the biographical information they presented when applying for a job, as there are no acquaintances to put in a word for them. Therefore, the effect for mothers – which remains unstudied – should be even worse than for women in general, if the motherhood penalty works.

The question thus remains: if a country has a system that is quite successful, and if the universal system is accessible to all mothers, can it be that mothers are not worse off than others in developing their careers – or is it more likely that in this situation, employers find ways to push women aside altogether from the more responsible jobs, penalizing them for their potential choice of becoming a mother who will need to be replaced?

### **Women's participation in the labour market and childcare in Estonia: Contextual information**

In 2008, 66 per cent of Estonia's working-age women (ages 15–65) were employed, which is an average figure when compared with other European countries, but, nevertheless, surpasses the goal of 60 per cent set by the European Union for 2010.

The decision to leave the LM and its consequences do not affect all women in the same way. Based on the typology of preferences related to LM participation (Hakim, 2000, 2004), it is possible to speculate that women whose position in the LM is strong can allow themselves a longer absence in connection with parental leave than women who have to prove their dedication to work or have to return to work quickly due to financial reasons. On the



other hand, career-oriented mothers can be expected to be less prone to absence from the LM for extended periods of time compared with mothers who primarily see their job as a source of income and a testament to the inevitability of modern life.

For Estonian women, returning to work while their child is young is closely related to the parents' belief that remaining at home with the child means being left out of society (Pajumets, 2007a, 2007b). Both the LM and state policy view mothers' parental leave as either lost working time, resulting in a loss of profit, or a loss of qualification due to absence from the LM, and thus its benefits for society are rarely mentioned (Arun et al., 2004). This makes it all the more necessary to ask what women's absence from the LM means in Estonia with regard to their further prospects in the LM.

The decision, strategy and duration of absence from the LM are shaped by various institutional factors. These include, in particular, the legislation that makes it possible to take unpaid or paid leave from the LM and requires the employer to guarantee the employees their jobs during the time they are on parental leave. Another important factor is the available childcare system. Such clearly defined conditions are a signal that lets both the employer and the employee know what kind of behaviour is expected from them.

During the Soviet era, state-provided childcare was guaranteed as a political choice, along with everything that accompanied it. During the restoration of Estonia's independence, the traditional family was placed high in the hierarchy of values, and society promoted a family model that was dominant before World War II, in which the man was the breadwinner (Narusk, 1992). The network of childcare institutions was reduced in size, especially with regard to places for children under three, while parents were given the right to take (unpaid) parental leave until their child reached the age of three. However, the call for mothers to stay at home proved to be a short-lived slogan, since most families needed the income of both parents.

Earlier studies (see, for example, Roosalu, 2006) have shown that in Estonia nearly one in two fathers of pre-school children say that their partners are the primary providers of childcare during their working hours, while only one-tenth of the mothers reported that their child was under the care of their partner during their workday. In half of the cases, childcare was provided at kindergartens, and in a fifth of the cases, it was provided by relatives or other people the parents knew. In other words, mothers stay home with small children more frequently than fathers, and children whose mothers work usually go to the kindergarten.

Estonia is distinguished from many other EU countries by the fact that, although it has considerably fewer children under three attending kindergartens than EU countries on average, most children in day care use the full-time childcare service (see Roosalu, 2012, 2013). In 2007, 81 per cent of Estonia's pre-school children who were more than three years old attended full-time child care every week (the EU 27 average was 40 per cent). An even

larger percentage of children received full-time childcare in Iceland and Denmark (91 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively), where women's participation in the LM is comparable to that in Estonia. At the same time, the percentage of children's kindergarten attendance was four or more times lower in several countries with similar levels of women's participation in the LM (21 per cent in the UK, 11 per cent in the Netherlands).

Thus, women participating in the Estonian LM are quite likely to stay at home for a considerable period of time in connection with having a child, but since part-time work is comparatively rare, they either stay home full-time (while the child is a baby) or work full-time. The welfare system in place in Estonia has brought about a general trend of favouring women's absence from the LM before childbirth and during a lengthening period thereafter. Although the legislation offers people who are absent from the LM various guarantees related to retaining their competitiveness after the end of parental leave, the main support mechanism is still the relatively broad childcare system in place for children over three years of age.

It can be said that men and women are equal agents in Estonia's LM until the female employee has a child and goes on parental leave. From that time, mothers (of children below the age of three) are in a worse position with regard to competitiveness in the LM and advancing their career, since their employment history, work experience and skills are surpassed by the men of their generation as well as women without (small) children who have not taken a break from their career.

What opportunities do women on long-term parental leave have to advance their careers compared with women who have not taken parental leave or have spent a shorter period of time on parental leave?

We hypothesize that more resourceful women, such as those with higher education, find a way to reconcile long career breaks and upward mobility; however, in general, the longer the parental leave, the less likely is occupational upward mobility. However, we suggest also that, due to the legal provision, there is not much downward mobility among the group.

### **Data and variables**

The data used for the analysis comes from the Estonian Social Survey conducted in 2004 by Statistics Estonia. The nationally representative sample consists of  $N = 8,906$  individuals (3,996 households) and covers retrospective data on employment, career and family transitions. Selection in the data has to be kept in mind. Of this sample, 7,551 have ever started employment (84.8 per cent of 8,906 individuals), 4,133 of whom are women (84.8 per cent of 4,876 individuals). However, 6,959 of all those aged 25+ have ever started employment (98.9 per cent of 7,034), 3,897 of whom are women (98.8 per cent of 3,945). Thus, it is to be noted that our analysis does not cover about 15 per cent of individuals, who are younger than 25, and those who did not start working. It may be that family-oriented mothers self-select

into continuous childcare 'breaks', while career-oriented women have more work experience from a younger age (right after school, before reaching 25 years old), and that this can explain their later upward mobility. However, we expect this selection effect to be minor, as almost all over 25 had started employment.

We study upward and downward mobility of women aged 25–50 over the historic period from the 1960s to the 2000s. Upward and downward mobility is defined as 10 per cent change on the socio-economic status score (measure by International Socio-Economic Index; see Ganzeboom et al., 1992) between two consecutive jobs. When change is less than 10 per cent, movement is considered lateral. The observed historical time for women's occupational mobility is from the mid-1950s until the beginning of the 2000s. Within this time frame, we differentiate (depending on the analysis) between birth cohorts (women born in 1930–39, in 1940–49, in 1950–59, in 1960–69 and in 1970–79) and time periods of the occupational transition (1960s, 1970s, 1980s, first half of 1990s and from 1997 onwards). Given the relatively modest changes in childcare leave regulation over that period, we are expecting to compare women in rather similar conditions in terms of (financial) incentives to use their entitlement to childcare leave. Next to the birth cohort, the models control for nationality, educational level and various employment/related characteristics such as duration of the job episode, industry of the last occupation and previous breaks due to unemployment. Models also control for family-cycle characteristics such as previous experience of childcare leave and number of children in the household before last childcare break.

We use transition rate models, in which the observation window starts when a respondent reaches age 25 and closes at age 50 or at the time of the interview (right-censored cases). We study all employment episodes, meaning that one individual in the analysis can have several employment episodes.

## Results

### Women's labour market and family transitions before mid-career

Before discussing women's mid-career occupational mobility, we are going to look at some LM entry and family transition characteristics that help in understanding women's LM attachment, on the one hand, and the role of family transitions in it, on the other. The majority of women in Estonia enter the LM and stay there throughout their working age, which means that, even when they take inactivity breaks such as childcare leave, women normally tend to return to the LM and continue working full-time. The data presented in the upper half of Table 12.1 shows that, in general, the LM attachment of women in Estonia has been traditionally high over the whole period of the past 50 years. Most of the women enter the LM, defined as the first work

*Table 12.1* Descriptive indicators for women's mid-life careers and family transitions in Estonia across birth cohorts

	All	Birth cohort				
		1930–39	1940–49	1950–59	1960–69	1970–79
	Observation window (age*)	25–50	25–50	25–45/50	25–35/45	25–25/35
Share of women with LM experience						
LM experience by age 25(%)	96	93	96	97	96	95
Mean age of LM entry (years)	19.3	19.1	19.0	19.3	19.4	19.7
Share of women with at least one child	92	91	94	95	95	78
Mean age of having first child (years)	23.6	25.4	24.6	23.7	22.5	22.0

*Note:* \*for the younger cohorts, the window of observation is smaller.

*Source:* Estonian Social Survey 2004, authors' calculations.

episode that lasts longer than six months, relatively early – 93–97 per cent of women with LM experience have started their professional career before age 25. The mean age for LM entry is around 19 years, regardless of birth cohort.

The data from the lower half of Table 12.1 shows that, as well as early LM entry, women in Estonia also experience relatively early entry into parenthood. Moreover, the vast majority of women (more than 90 per cent in general; note that the birth cohort of 1970–79 is most heavily right-censored and therefore the figure presented here is remarkably low) experience parenthood, which means that most women in Estonia are exposed to the challenge of work–family conciliation and the potential impact of childcare leave (data presented in Table 12.2) on their occupational career. Among the generation born in the 1930s and who entered LM in the early post-war period, slightly over half of the women (52 per cent) had their first child before age 25, and the mean age for the first child for this generation was 25.4 years. For subsequent generations, the entry to parenthood happened even earlier for women who have had a child; in the generation born in the 1960s, 82 per cent had their first child before age 25, and the mean age for the first child dropped to 22.5. Later, the mean age for the first child started increasing again (the data is not presented here).

Table 12.2 LM transitions and gaps between the transitions across time periods

	Time period					
	All	1960–60	1970–79	1980–89	1990–96	1997–2004
Nature of transitions (%)						
No gap	81	78	84	83	75	84
Child care break	14	19	13	16	16	8
Unemployment	5	1	2	1	7	7
Other	1	1	2	1	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Mean number of months spent on childcare leave	36	24	39	26	40	51

Source: Estonian Social Survey 2004, authors' calculations.

### Labour market transitions and career breaks

When looking at all the transitions experienced by female LM participants in different time periods (see Table 12.2), we can see that the majority of transitions (75–84 per cent) that took place during the observed time periods can be characterized as consecutive episodes, that is, without unemployment or an inactivity gap between two occupational positions. The share of no-gap transitions throughout the observed periods has remained quite stable. Only in the early 1990s were there fewer non-consecutive episodes, and this was mostly due to increased unemployment.

The share of unemployment episodes among all transitions was almost non-existent until the 1990s, and since then it has been characterized at around 7 per cent of all occupational transitions. The share of breaks due to childcare has been quite stable over the observed period. A bigger drop can be observed in the 1970s, when 13 per cent of all the transitions were due to childcare leave. Part of the reason for this may be that, instead of having several childcare breaks, women had consecutive childcare breaks without returning to the LM in between. The mean duration of childcare leave in the 1970s is 39 months, while in the 1960s and 1980s it is much lower (24 and 26 months, respectively). The mean number of months spent on childcare leave increased again in the 1990s.

### Women's occupational mobility

According to the findings of the current study (Table 12.3), there is quite a clear pattern regarding the relationship between whether there was a gap, and of what type, between the two work episodes and what the next destination was in terms of occupational mobility. In average, about one-fifth of the observed transitions were upward mobility moves, no matter whether there was no gap, an unemployment episode or a childcare break between

Table 12.3 Occupational mobility of mid-career women in Estonia in 1960–2004

Mobility	Before transition to next occupation there was ...			
	... no gap	... unemployment episode	... child care leave break	... other type of break
Upward	19%	18%	19%	32%
Downward	18%	39%	24%	25%
Lateral	63%	42%	57%	43%

Source: Estonian Social Survey 2004, authors' calculations.

two work episodes. In cases of other types of breaks (about 1 per cent of all the cases), the share of upward moves is noticeably higher, but this is partly explained by the fact that most of the other types of breaks were related to attaining education. Finishing studies during the occupational career facilitated upward mobility, which is a logical association.

A somewhat different pattern can be observed when it comes to downward mobility. While among those who experienced no gap between two work episodes fewer than a fifth (18 per cent) moved downwards, after an unemployment episode the chance of moving downward was twice as high (39 per cent). Also, women returning from childcare leave to employment experienced more likely downward moves compared with those without a gap.

The results of the regression analysis (Table 12.4) show that the probability for upward or downward mobility compared with lateral mobility differed across the observed time periods. Compared with the 1980s, the chances of experiencing upward mobility for women were significantly higher in the 1960s, but increasingly lower in the 1990s. When looking at individual and occupational characteristics, we can see that non-Estonian women have been, on average, less likely to experience upward mobility. Somewhat surprisingly, education has a very moderate effect on upward mobility. The industry of the job of the last episode tends to have an impact on the probability of experiencing upward mobility for women – compared with social services, women in producer services were less likely to experience upward mobility, while women from personal services were more likely to experience it.

Next to occupational characteristics, household characteristics such as presence and duration of childcare breaks and age of children tend to be important predictors for mobility directions for women. An analysis of the effect of career breaks resulting from parental leave on the subsequent LM mobility by time periods revealed that the effect has not always been the same (see Table A.12.1). In the 1960s, parental leave itself as well as the duration of parental leave had a considerable influence on subsequent upward

Table 12.4 Probabilities for upward and downward moves in women's mid-life careers (age 25–50) in Estonia

	Upward mobility				Downward mobility			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Time period of transition (ref = 1980–89)								
1960–69	0.44**	0.32**	0.39**	0.42**	0.24*	0.17	0.24*	0.23+
1970–79	0.06	0.07	0.11	0.09	-0.18+	-0.12	-0.11	-0.08
1990–96	-0.22*	-0.31**	-0.30**	-0.38**	-0.33**	-0.40**	-0.41**	-0.46**
1997–2004	-10.36**	-10.49**	-10.38**	-10.59**	-10.34**	-10.63**	-10.50**	-10.71**
Ethnicity (ref = Estonians)								
Non-Estonians		-0.17*	-0.16*	-0.14*		-0.03	0.00	0.02
Education (ref = higher)								
Basic or less		-0.22*	-0.21+	-0.20+		-0.10	-0.12	-0.11
Vocational		0.00	0.01	-0.01		0.16	0.17+	0.17+
General secondary		0.08	0.08	0.09		0.26*	0.24*	0.24*
Specialized secondary		-0.03	-0.04	-0.03		0.18+	0.18+	0.17+
Duration of last job episode		-0.01**	-0.01**	-0.01**		-0.01**	-0.01+	-0.01**
Industry (ref = social service)								
Extractive		0.30**	0.25**	0.28**		0.23*	0.15	0.18+
Transformative		0.02	0.04	0.05		0.17+	0.18*	0.21*
Distributive service		0.01	0.02	0.03		0.49**	0.46**	0.47**
Producer service		-0.34+	-0.32+	-0.30+		0.43**	0.44**	0.44**
Personal service		0.19+	0.22+	0.22*		0.01	0.03	0.03
Unemployment episode before transition		0.34+	0.26	0.31		0.73**	0.66**	0.74**

Table 12.4 (Continued)

	Upward mobility				Downward mobility			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Duration of unemployment episode (months)		0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00
Childcare break before transition			-0.15	-0.36*			0.23*	0.06
Duration of childcare break (months)			-0.01**	-0.01**			-0.01**	-0.01**
Number of children before transition			0.11**	0.10**			0.13**	0.11
Period* childcare break (ref=1980-89)								
1960-69				-0.37				0.01
1970-79				0.11				-0.30
1990-96				0.50†				0.28
1997-2004				10.72**				10.37**
-2 Log likelihood	16,662.8**	16,038.8**	16,001.8**	15,950.5**	17,607.4**	16,958.4**	16,924.7**	16,878.1**
Number of cases // Number of events		4,624 // 1,131				4,702 // 1,206		

Note: All models control for number of episodes.

\*\*Effect significant at  $p < 0.01$ ; \*Effect significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; †Effect significant at  $p < 0.10$ .

Source: Estonian Social Survey 2004, authors' calculations.



and downward mobility. The time spent on parental leave significantly decreased the chances of further upward mobility. The 'status quo' effect of absence from the LM in connection with parental leave manifested itself primarily during the 1970s and became even stronger in the 1980s. During the 1980s, however, it was the length of the parental leave that increasingly became the differentiating factor – the time spent away from the LM in the case of a longer parental leave increased subsequent LM mobility, in both the upward and the downward direction. At the beginning of the 1990s, the influence of parental leave on further career opportunities weakened, and women's LM opportunities began to be defined more by other structural factors. However, the effect of parental leave was reinstated as the stability of the economy and the LM increased. Since the end of the 1990s, it has once more been apparent that the time spent away from the LM in connection with parental leave has a significant influence on women's subsequent career mobility. At the end of the 1990s, the period of absence from the LM again tended to cause a standstill in women's careers by reducing the likelihood of either upward or downward mobility after they returned to the LM. By the beginning of the current decade, however, parental leave had become a factor that had an adverse effect on women's careers, since absence from the LM significantly decreased the probability of upward mobility, while the duration of parental leave increased the likelihood of downward mobility.

## **Conclusion**

Taking into account the time of mobility as well as other individual and structural characteristics, our findings shows that absence from the LM due to parental leave lasting for more than six months significantly decreases the likelihood of women being upwardly or downwardly mobile in the future in terms of their LM position (compared with the likelihood of remaining at the same position) after returning to the LM. These results allow us to conjecture that career breaks related to parental leave generally keep women in the same spot with regard to the LM position; that is, they do not allow them to move down, while also preventing them from using opportunities for moving up. It is likely that this can, in part, be explained by institutional regulation – in Estonia, mothers have the right to return to their previous job, or a similar job with the same employer, any time after the care break.

Still, more unexpected results confirm that a longer duration of staying away for childcare may actually increase opportunities for upward mobility. This may indicate that only women who feel very secure and competitive in the LM can afford to take longer breaks. Moreover, longer breaks often mean that women had several children and did not return to LM in-between, and this may be a strategy of especially career-oriented women who prefer one extended childcare break over several long breaks. It may also indicate

that only the most career-oriented women return to the LM from long care breaks. However, it is also likely that women with long breaks are quite aware that it is not so easy to return to their previous job, as the work, as well as organizational contexts, will have changed, so they initiate a return to the LM by looking for a new job.

These results, nevertheless, should be considered within their historical context, as the duration of legally provided childcare breaks has changed over time, so the comparison will be within the groups of women with similar conditions.

Despite the right to return to their previous position within three years of taking parental leave, long breaks are more likely to make women occupationally mobile – or to make them look for a new job. This may be because they have more time to do so; they have changed their priorities related to staying home with their child(ren); or they feel pressure from their employer not to return. However, in general, more often than not the care break secures the chance to stay in the same or a similar job even after the care break – an unheard-of security, especially in the context of substantial societal and market-led changes in society during the late 20th century. This would translate into a rather positive implementation of policy for care breaks, while at the same time becoming an additional burden for the employers. Why, then, did the system need to be changed in 2004, when we finish our observations? The system did not, in the end, secure the birth of children or the taking of care breaks. One of the important reasons was its very low remuneration rate. However, just as relevant might be the fact that work is valued so highly in society, prioritized both by employers and by mothers, that the message of encouraging longer care breaks sounded too scary for both parties. Accordingly, the new system still provides the possibility of staying away for three years, and secures the same or a similar job, but, by providing remuneration only for the first 18 months, sends a message discouraging women from staying home longer and, instead, encouraging them to return to the LM sooner.

If we place the results cited above in the context of contemporary political choices, it is apparent that the (temporary) exclusion of women from the LM is a noteworthy declaration of traditional attitudes, which is not, however, accompanied by the flexibility necessary for balancing work and family life. Women who are active in the LM before having a child are in a better position, and probably have more opportunities for combining work and family life according to their own wishes. However, a mother's professional success is usually based on what she accomplished while working full-time and competing with other employees on an equal basis. On the other hand, mothers who are less competitive in the LM cannot afford part-time work, not so much because of career-related reasons, but, rather, due to the need to cope financially on a daily basis. Many families face a situation in which the mother may be forced to stay home longer than she would like to because

of the lack of childcare places available to children under three. On the other hand, children will have to spend longer days in childcare in later years because of the scarcity of good part-time jobs. We should think about the potential broader consequences of these choices at the level of both the individual and society.

Instead of completely detaching women from the LM for as long as possible, perhaps policies as well as theoretical considerations should facilitate more flexible transitions, since the long absence of women from the LM actually has a negative effect on their subsequent LM opportunities. If we start – as Esping–Andersen has – by suggesting the break should be one year, it may feel like too long; if we start – as the Estonian case shows – by suggesting the break should decrease from three years to one and a half years, it may feel too short to some.

It is likely that the new normative regulations included in the parental benefit system currently in place will affect the birth rate as well as women's LM opportunities after parental leave. Although these issues should be discussed and studied in detail, we cannot yet do so based on the data available to us at present. Furthermore, what this study aimed to achieve was somewhat different: to pay attention to the results of the long career breaks due to childcare, and consider under what conditions such a system would be beneficial to mothers.

Thus, absence from the LM due to parental leave actually does affect women's subsequent position in the LM. Nevertheless, being absent from the LM does not always have negative consequences. Instead, it usually means a standstill in the LM position of the person in question. Women's individual resources play an important role in the outcome – research points to the fact that absence from the LM usually does not have negative consequences for women whose position in the LM was strong before going on parental leave, while women whose position was weaker before their absence sometimes cannot even count on the preservation of their job that they are guaranteed by law.

Unfortunately, the available data does not allow us to analyse other aspects related to people's choices, which would certainly be worth taking into account. For example, it would be useful to know to what degree the decision to take a leave of absence from the LM and the decision regarding the duration of that absence are based on personal preferences and to what degree those choices are forced upon people. The analysis also does not take into account people's satisfaction with their own choices, work and family life.

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## Appendix

Table A.12.1 Probabilities for upward and downward moves in women's mid-life careers in Estonia across cohorts

	Upward mobility					Downward mobility				
	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-96	1997-04	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-96	1997-04
Ethnicity (ref = Estonians)	-0.03	-0.13	0.23	-0.38*	-0.47*					
Non-Estonians						-0.40*	0.14	0.23+		-0.13
Education (ref = higher)										
Basic or less	-0.36	-0.14	0.15	-0.25	-0.13	0.60*	0.32	-0.54*		-0.37
Vocational	-0.55	0.29	0.20	0.02	-0.12	0.24	0.46*	0.05		0.19
General secondary	-0.36	0.72**	0.20	0.12	-0.40+	0.67*	0.46*	0.24		-0.10
Specialized secondary	-0.46	0.34	0.25	0.02	-0.35+	0.62*	0.52**	0.21		-0.10
Duration of last job episode	-0.01**	-0.01**	-0.02**	-0.01**	-0.01**	-0.02**	-0.02**	-0.01**		-0.01**
Industry (ref = social service)										
Extractive	0.65*	0.34	0.24	0.51**	-0.55*	-0.29	0.19	0.48		0.02
Transformative	0.40	0.31	-0.15	-0.05	-0.38+	0.53*	0.11	0.08		0.01
Distributive service	0.53+	-0.03	-0.42+	-0.01	-0.03	0.73**	0.33	-0.06		0.75**
Producer service	-0.02	-10.30*	-0.22	-0.30	-0.20	0.52	0.48+	0.24		0.49+
Personal service	10.02**	-0.48	0.12	0.38+	-0.18	0.26	0.09+	-0.15		-0.62+
Unemployment episode	-0.97	-0.09	20.04+	0.24	0.17	0.90	10.17**	0.33		0.56**
Duration of unemployment	0.00	0.00	-0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.02	-0.01*	0.01		0.00
Childcare break	-0.89*	-0.04	-0.31	0.46+	0.59+	-0.42	-0.04	0.74**		10.01**
Duration of care break	-0.01	-0.02*	-0.01	-0.01*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01*	-0.01*		-0.01*
Number of children	-0.12	-0.14+	-0.02	-0.18**	0.51**	-0.01	-0.03	-0.07		0.42**
- 2 Log likelihood	1,644.7	2,187.2	2,368.9	3,231.2	2,560.9	1,748.1	3,096.4	3,773.5		3,113.9
Number of cases	480	693	836	933	1,673	443	884	987		1,726
Number of events	170	212	245	292	212	133	291	346		262

Note: All models control for number of episodes. \*\* Effect significant at  $p < 0.01$ ; \* Effect significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; + Effect significant at  $p < 0.10$ ;  
Source: Estonian Social Survey (2004), authors' calculations

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## **Part IV**

# **Occupational and Social Mobility**



# 13

## Gender Earnings Inequality in Central and Eastern European Countries: The Case of Dual-Earner Couples

*Martina Mysíková*

### Introduction

Within-couple earnings distribution can be of great importance, especially in transition countries. The transition from communist-style compulsory employment (that is, the policy of almost full employment of both men and women) to a diversified labour market with increasing earnings inequality may considerably change the within-household income structure and well-being of spouses.

Since this field has not been examined sufficiently, we know little about within-household gender issues during and after the process of transition. Therefore, this work attempted to fill this empirical gap, and a detailed description of earnings differentials in dual-earner couples (both *de jure* and *de facto*) was produced. I focused on four Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and compared them with their Western European neighbours, Austria and Germany.

The issue of within-couple earnings inequality, especially in international comparisons, is widely influenced by many mutually interconnected variables, such as the total gender wage gap in a country, female human capital, and family relations and the division of roles within couples. In the second section of this chapter, the empirical background to this topic is considered, as are the results that might be expected.

In the third section, the data source applied in this analysis, its quality and limitations, the sample, and the method used to measure within-couple inequality are described. In the fourth section, the characteristic features of the sample of couples are described, as they played a very important role in the international comparison of within-couple earnings inequality. The factors that seemed to be most crucial to the relative earnings within a couple,

namely, relative education, the presence of children, and other individual and job characteristics were considered in the fifth section.

In order to judge the position of cohabiting women from a different perspective, the last analytical section examined the wage gap between single and cohabiting women. Women with responsibilities for a family (and children) might be disadvantaged in terms of wages and potentially discriminated against by employers, who might assume that they will make less of an effort at work and so forth. Apart from this, a woman living in a couple also tends to make different choices in terms of career, type of job and so on than a single woman. For these reasons, the sixth section examined the extent to which the assumed wage gap between single and cohabiting women is caused by the difference in observed individual human capital and job-related characteristics. The final section summarized the findings and highlighted the similarities and dissimilarities within the group of CEE countries and the two Western European countries.

### **General remarks on income pooling and inequality in households**

There is extensive evidence, and a consensus, that employment patterns, especially among women, have undergone significant changes in recent decades. Partnership (family) relations have been changing, too, especially in developed countries. Households of single parents and single people have become an increasingly significant proportion of the population, and the traditional family, a married couple with children, is becoming less common (for example Martin and Kats, 2003). We have witnessed a mismatch between the changing within-family labour supply in favour of women and the traditional division of roles within the family. This may erode the traditional family model and be reflected in demographic development. Here, the economics of the household may deliver some answers of potential social and economic relevance.

Earnings inequality within couples has recently been widely analysed in the context of the economic theory of a unitary model of household behaviour and income pooling in households. Many recent studies have rejected the assumption of income pooling, since income distribution within a household influences, for instance, decision-making, expenditures on consumption, and the satisfaction of individual household members (see, for example, Thomas, 1990; Browning et al., 1994; Lundberg et al., 1996; Phipps and Burton, 1998; Tiefenthaler, 1999; Bonke and Browning, 2003; Heimdal and Houseknecht, 2003; Bonke, 2006; Ermisch and Pronzato, 2008). Therefore, unequal access to financial resources within couples could have a significant impact on the living standard and well-being of both partners.

Drago et al. (2005) claim that today men are less likely to be the sole breadwinners in the family and that dual-earner married couples have become

more common (which has also been confirmed for the US). In many dual-earner couples women still hold the position of secondary earner, although the share of women who contribute equally to the couple's budget, or even earn more than their partners, has been increasing (see, for example, Raley et al., 2006, for US evidence). Winkler et al. (2005) show that in 21–24 per cent of cases women in dual-earner married couples out-earned their husbands in 1999 in the US. They state that this pattern usually applies to childless couples and couples in which the woman has a higher relative level of education. Surprisingly, this phenomenon was not found in younger cohorts.

Analysts show that the highest and the lowest within-couple inequality were found in Southern Europe and Scandinavia, respectively (for example, Bonke, 2006; Figari et al., 2011). One of the main focus areas of this study was the comparison of four CEE countries that are generally missing from recent European analyses and the two Western European countries (WE) occupying a position approximately in the middle of the European within-couple-inequality scale.

Unlike the rich evidence from the US and WE, we know only a little about earnings inequality within dual-earner couples in the CEE countries. Because of the 'full employment policy' under the communist regime, the female employment rate in the CEE countries in the 1990s was much higher than the rate in the WE countries. Ever since then the female employment rate has been steadily rising in the West, but the same cannot be said about the CEE countries, where female employment has been declining in some cases. At the end of the 2010s, the WE countries saw the highest employment rate of women aged 25 to 55 (75–80 per cent), followed by the Czech Republic (around or slightly under 75 per cent). The other CEE countries exhibited lower rates (around 67–72 per cent).<sup>1</sup> Given the gender differences in employment across the analysed countries, earnings inequality in dual-earner couples might reveal a more reliable picture than if all couples were considered.

The analysis of overall gender wage inequality recorded substantial differences among the observed CEE countries (Mysíková, 2012). Although the linkage between the overall gender wage gap and earnings inequality within dual-earner couples is not straightforward, we can expect the female share of dual-earner couple earnings in Hungary and Poland to be higher than in the other analysed countries. Based on the US evidence (for example, Winkler et al., 2005) we can expect that earnings inequality within dual-earner couples is likely to be highly influenced by female relative education and the absence of children.

The human capital of women has markedly increased over recent decades. Einarisdóttir (2002) states that the number of tertiary students has more than doubled in the last 20 years in the EU, and in 1997 more women than men graduated from universities in almost all EU countries. Nowadays the gender

differences in education are related to the subjects studied more than the level of educational attainment (Rubery et al., 2001).

Eurostat data offer several interesting figures related to tertiary education. All the countries analysed in this study saw a rapid increase in the share of women with tertiary education during the 2000s, and the gender tertiary-education gap has been steadily narrowing. In 2010, the Czech Republic achieved an almost equal share of men and women with higher education, and the percentage of women with tertiary education even exceeded that of men in the other CEE countries (up to seven percentage points in Poland). Conversely, in Austria and Germany there are more men with tertiary education than women (three and five percentage points, respectively). Given the effect of education on wage levels, this further underlines our hypothesis of higher within-couple earnings inequality in the Czech Republic (and the WE countries) than in the other CEE countries.

## **Data and methodology**

This analysis was based on EU-SILC 2009 data, which contain annual gross earnings from employment and self-employment for the previous calendar year, that is, 2008. I measured the relative earnings within couples as the female share of earnings out of the total earnings of couples (from both employment and self-employment). In other words, if female earnings are  $A$  and male earnings are  $B$ , then the relative earnings equal  $A/(A + B)$ . Therefore, if a woman and a man contribute equally to the couple's budget, the female share of couple earnings will be 50 per cent.

The sample used in the analysis of within-couple earnings inequality consisted of couples living in the same household, irrespective of the legal status of their partnership. I excluded couples in which at least one member collected a retirement pension and couples who shared their household with other adults. I considered 'other adults' to be those over 25 years of age or individuals between 16 and 24 years old who earned their own income or no longer lived with their parents. Those under 16 years old or between 16 and 24 years old, who do not have their own earned income, live with their parents, and are not in a couple were defined as 'dependent children'. Thus, the sample consisted of households of two adults living in a partnership in which the only possible other members are their dependent children. This is so that, first, the male and female shares of earnings represent the total household earnings and, second, the other household members' economic activity, inactivity or income cannot have any impact on the couple's labour supply.<sup>2</sup>

I set an age limit on the couples so that all the adults were between 25 and 54 years old, that is, they were in their prime earnings age range. I decided to exclude couples in which the male or female gross earnings were negative and in which the couple's total gross earnings were non-positive, since in

those cases I could not guarantee that the relative earnings within the couple would range between 0 and 100 per cent.

This study focused on dual-earner couples only. I considered 'working individuals' to be individuals who were economically active for at least half of the previous calendar year. Some other analysts define a 'working individual' as someone with positive annual earnings. However, the earnings of an individual working one month would hardly be comparable to the earnings of another one working the whole year. In my opinion, by concentrating on the 'prevailing economic activity' rather than simply looking at 'positive earnings', the intensity and stability of employment were better captured and a more accurate picture of earnings inequality within a couple was obtained.

The analysis so far captured annual earnings and ignored the impact of hours worked (or of part-time work). Although recent literature (for example, Winkler et al., 2005) often includes annual earnings, it has also been noted (for example, Drago et al., 2005) that doing so smoothes out and hides earnings fluctuations. However, this analysis aimed to capture actual rather than 'potential' or 'hypothetical' earnings inequality, which is what hourly earnings would provide. Unless the persistence of, or the fluctuations in, within-couple earnings inequality in one year are being analysed, I considered annual earnings to be an appropriate measure of the earnings inequality experienced by couples.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the analysis in the sixth section compared the hourly wages of cohabiting and single women instead of their annual earnings, as this allowed us to examine the difference between these two female sub-groups, and the reasons for the differences, in a better way. The sample analysed in the sixth section no longer includes matched couples; instead, it looked at cohabiting women. The previous restrictions on the couple sample were no longer applied.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it also included a sample of single women to study the wage gap between single and cohabiting women. The sample in the sixth section thus consisted of a sub-sample of all cohabiting women and a sub-sample of single women, aged 25 to 54, irrespective of the presence of other household members.

Hourly wages were derived from the current number of hours worked and monthly economic activity over the whole calendar year, and were computed on the basis of the Eurostat definition of the gender wage gap.<sup>5</sup> Individuals who changed jobs during the income reference calendar year were excluded in order to avoid a situation in which current hours worked and job characteristics were not related to the reported earnings.

Due to its wide coverage of income sources of all family members and its harmonization on the European level, EU-SILC was the most suitable dataset for comparative analysis of within-couple earnings inequality. Despite this, like every household survey, it has some limitations, which might be relevant to gender earnings issues. Although annual earnings provided by

EU-SILC should include main, secondary and all supplementary income, it is probable that real earnings were under-represented in the survey. This is because the survey may have failed to record income from the informal economy and secondary jobs, which often remain unaccounted for, despite taking place in the formal economy.

The unrecorded incidence of activity in the informal economy and secondary jobs could influence the gender-based findings of this study in several ways. First, informal labour is more common among men than women (see Grabowski, 2003, for Poland), and thus the gender disparity in annual earnings might, in reality, have been higher. At the same time, real female employment and women's contributions to the family budget could have been undervalued in the survey, in part because women often work as auxiliary workers in small family firms without receiving an official salary.

Second, the size of the informal economy seems to vary between CEE countries, with relatively higher levels in Hungary and Poland. The few comparative analyses on the informal economy in the CEE countries suggest that the informal economy began decreasing in all four of the CEE countries analysed here as early as the 1990s (Wallace et al., 2004, or Grabowski, 2003, for Poland). However, attempts to measure the informal economy have provided only approximate data and have obvious drawbacks, and it was difficult to evaluate the impact of the obtained data on the findings of this study. Regarding second jobs, EU-SILC seems to record an even higher incidence of second jobs than the Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), while both surveys probably under-report this aspect.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding the unclear influence of under-reported earnings from informal labour and secondary jobs on the findings of this study, a possible bias should be taken into account.

### **Cross-country variation in within-couple earnings inequality**

Germany (34.1 per cent) and Austria (35.5 per cent) led the ranking of countries with the lowest female share in couple earnings, and consequently the highest earnings inequality within dual-earner couples (see Table 13.1). Within-couple earnings inequality was lower in all the CEE countries, with proportions between 39 per cent and 45 per cent.

Note that, according to European studies on a similar topic (Bonke, 2006; Figari et al., 2011), the Western countries included in this study are in no way extreme. Bonke (2006) uses data from 1994 to show that the share of women's income in total personal net household income was about 20 per cent in most Southern European countries, the most extreme of which was Portugal. At the other extreme, we need to go to Denmark, where women's income accounted for around 40 per cent of total household income. Figari et al. (2011) explored the effects of tax and benefit systems on differences in income and on incentives to earn income among men and women within

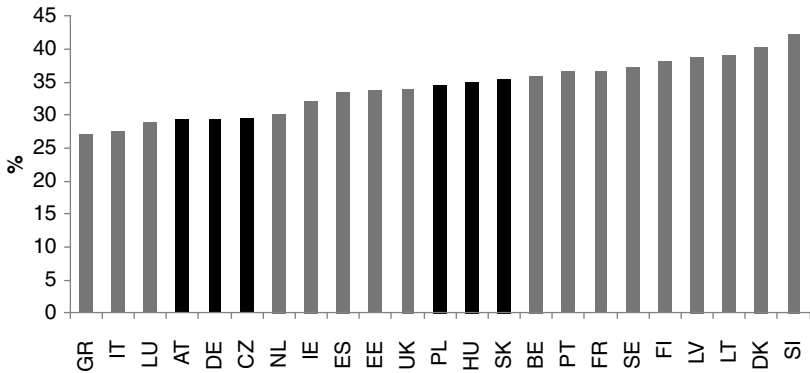


Figure 13.1 Women's proportion (%) of couples' earnings in 23 European countries

Note: Countries of interest of this study are in black.

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2009 – version 2 of August 2011. Author's own calculations.

couples in nine old EU member states in the late 1990s. They found that on the scale of female contributions to pre-tax and benefit income, Greece (19 per cent) ranked lowest and Finland (41 per cent) highest.

For a complete picture of the situation across Europe, see Figure 13.1. It used a broader category of couples in order to show values more comparable to those in the above-cited studies. Despite the differences in data, the definition of income, and the sample definitions applied in recent European analyses, the qualitative results concur. The Figari et al. (2011) study also looked at Austria and Germany. The respective values of 28 per cent and 30 per cent were quite similar to those in this study (see Figure 13.1). With 27 per cent in Greece and 28 per cent in Italy, Southern Europe had the highest within-couple earnings inequality, while the Scandinavian countries had the lowest within-couple earnings inequality, with values ranging from 37 per cent to 40 per cent. Among the countries analysed in this study, Austria and Germany, together with the Czech Republic, are located at the bottom end of the scale, while Poland, Hungary and Slovakia are in the middle. Within-couple earnings inequality in the Czech Republic is higher than in all other European transition countries.

We can assume that in the richest couples the contribution of both partners to the total couple budget should be substantial, and consequently, relative earnings may be rather high. In the Czech Republic, there was no difference in relative earnings between the top and bottom quintiles (see Table 13.1). However, in Hungary, relative dual-couple earnings were even higher in the poorest couples than in the richest couples.<sup>7</sup> Hungarian women in the bottom quintile contributed almost as much as their partners to the family budget. Moreover, 37 per cent of these women out-earned their partners (compared with 18 per cent in the Czech Republic). However, this need not mean that women were more successful in the labour market. The

*Table 13.1* Sample characteristics: Dual-earner couples (% of sample) in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Germany

	CZ	HU	PL	SK	AT	DE
Relative earnings <sup>1</sup>	38.8 (14.6)	44.8 (16.2)	40.8 (20.7)	40.9 (14.5)	35.5 (16.3)	34.1 (19.4)
Relative earnings by quintiles: <sup>1</sup>						
Bottom quintile	37.7 (17.6)	48.0* (16.6)	33.6* (27.8)	42.3 (21.3)	32.5* (19.8)	27.1* (22.5)
Top quintile	37.5 (16.1)	40.1* (18.0)	40.5* (18.9)	38.8 (14.2)	36.6* (15.4)	38.2* (17.1)
Couples in which women out-earn men (% of dual-earner couples)	18.6	33.5	29.2	17.4	16.2	19.6
Man has higher education	11.4	15.4	7.2	12.1	28.6	26.5
Same level of education	76.9	62.1	67.9	73.8	51.1	55.4
Woman has higher education	11.8	22.5	24.9	14.1	20.3	18.1
Older partner aged under 40	47.6	40.9	55.0	42.6	35.6	40.5
Older partner aged 40+	52.4	59.1	45.0	57.4	64.4	59.5
With dependent children (0–16)	61.1	58.7	66.7	59.9	57.2	52.0
Without dependent children (0–16)	38.9	41.3	33.3	40.1	42.8	48.0
Married couple	84.2	82.2	95.1	96.8	77.3	80.7
Not married	15.8	17.8	4.9	3.2	22.7	19.3
N <sup>2</sup>	1606	1343	1972	980	976	2127

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Means, standard deviations in parentheses. Couples' gross earnings quintiles are calculated using the modified OECD equivalence scale. \*Difference of means significant at 5% (t-test). <sup>2</sup>Unweighted.

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2009 – version 5 of March 2013. Author's own calculations.

earnings of both partners are likely to be crucial for the family budget in poor couples. This only suggests that the earnings of both partners are low, but that men's are even lower.<sup>8</sup>

In Hungary and Poland, women earn more than men in almost one third of couples, while this proportion ranged between 16 per cent and 20 per cent in the other countries. Winkler et al. (2005) show that this figure was between 19 per cent and 21 per cent (depending on the data source applied) in the US in 1999.<sup>9</sup> Drago et al. (2005) show similar results for Australia in 2001–02, where around 20 per cent are female-breadwinner couples.<sup>10</sup>

The bottom part of Table 13.1 describes the samples of dual-earner couples. Poland and Hungary had the largest proportion of dual-earner couples in which the education gap favours the woman (25 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively), while the proportion of such couples was extremely low in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (12 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively). In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, educational homogamy appeared to be much higher than in the other countries studied – 77 per cent and 74 per cent, respectively, had the same level of education.<sup>11</sup> Austria and Germany



had the largest proportion of couples in which the man had a higher level of education than the woman (29 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively).

### Determinants of relative earnings in dual-earner couples

There are many factors that influence relative within-couple earnings: family circumstances that drive the choice of job, working intensity and career, especially for women, but also the interaction of partners' individual and job characteristics. This section introduces the results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model, where the explained variable was the female percentage of total couple earnings, ranging between 0 and 100.

In most of the analysed countries, the female education level increased relative earnings, with the strongest effects observed in Austria, Poland and Germany (see Table 13.2). Hungary was at the other end of the scale, where the influence of female secondary and tertiary education on relative earnings was negative. These exceptional findings can be explained by the fact that Hungary was also the only country where the female share in

*Table 13.2* Relative earnings for women (W) versus men (M) – Regression model 1 in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Germany

	CZ	HU	PL	SK	AT	DE
W – secondary education	–3.72*	–6.66***	0.84	0.96	5.45***	3.38*
W – tertiary education	–1.58	–6.70***	8.30**	2.42	9.20***	7.69***
W – higher education than M	2.43**	7.90***	5.03***	7.61***	4.87***	6.32***
W – lower education than M	–4.01***	–9.52***	–3.68*	–4.03***	1.65	–3.74***
Older partner aged under 40	0.10	–2.18**	–1.52	–0.09	0.64	3.89***
W – older by 6+ years	4.75*	3.01	4.12	1.92	–1.14	7.29***
W – older by 1–5 years	–0.43	1.26	1.80	0.26	–0.34	1.53
W – younger by 10+ years	–0.55	–0.23	–2.71	–2.52	1.93	–3.51*
Children aged 0–2	–16.27***	–7.24***	–5.04***	–17.88***	–9.79***	–8.16***
Children aged 3–5	–2.93***	–0.85	–3.37***	–0.69	–7.34***	–5.67***
Children aged 6–15	–4.62***	–2.13**	–1.18	–1.03	–4.22***	–10.45***
Married	–0.31	–0.62	–2.61	–4.30*	–3.25***	–3.94***
Constant	46.49***	53.22***	40.93***	44.98***	34.78***	36.11***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.11	0.07	0.15	0.13	0.21

*Notes:* \*significance at the 10% level, \*\*significance at the 5% level, \*\*\*significance at the 1% level.

*Source:* EU-SILC UDB 2009 – version 5 of March 2013. Author's own calculations.

couple earnings was the highest in the first quintile (37 per cent of these women out-earned their partners), that is, in the poorest couples, where most women had just a basic level of education. Female education did not prove to have any significant impact on relative earnings in Slovakia.

By contrast, higher relative education achieved by women had a significant and positive impact in all countries. It contributed as much as 7.90 percentage points to the female proportion in couple earnings in Hungary, followed by Slovakia (7.61 percentage points). Conversely, it had only a slight impact in the Czech Republic. The higher educational attainment of men in a couple contributed negatively to relative earnings, and, again, this effect was strongest in Hungary.

The absence of children in a dual-earner couple also brings the earnings considerably closer to gender equality, especially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The presence of children from birth to two years old substantially decreased relative earnings in the Czech Republic, by 16.27 percentage points, and the effect of older children was also very strong. In Slovakia, only the effect of the youngest children was significant (17.88 percentage points). The presence of children had a less profound, but still considerable, negative impact in the two WE countries. However, children from birth to two years old did not represent as much of a constraint on female earnings in any of the analysed countries as they did in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Other factors, such as the age of the people in the couple and the age gap, did not seem to play a significant role, except in Germany. Marriage tended to increase within-couple earnings inequality in all the countries, but had a significant effect in only three of them.

The absolute earnings of both partners determine relative earnings, and these are highly influenced by their job characteristics. Table 13.3 shows the results of the regression model in which a control for job characteristics was introduced.<sup>12</sup> Variables that are expected to have a positive influence on absolute earnings should have the same positive effect on relative earnings when women's job characteristics are controlled for and a negative effect when men's job characteristics are controlled for. Therefore, the coefficients in the middle and bottom sections of Table 13.3 were expected to have opposite signs.

Working in a large company had a positive impact on relative earnings for women and a negative impact for men, and the effect was usually stronger for women. Interestingly, having an unlimited job contract did not have any significant impact on relative earnings for men, but it seemed to be important for women in most countries. In Hungary, Germany and the Czech Republic the effect of women occupying a supervisory position impacted substantially on relative earnings, while in the other countries the effect on relative earnings of holding a supervisory position was significant and stronger among men than women.

*Table 13.3* Relative earnings for women (W) versus men (M) – Regression model 2: Job characteristics controls in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Germany

	CZ	HU	PL	SK	AT	DE
W – secondary education	-2.85	-5.68***	-3.64	-1.03	7.07***	1.51
W – tertiary education	-1.20	-6.19***	-0.88	-1.06	9.30***	2.91
W – higher education than M	0.54	4.93***	1.04	5.92***	4.39***	4.64***
W – lower education than M	-1.46	-7.17***	-4.37**	-4.05**	3.49***	-1.71*
Older partner aged under 40	-0.23	-1.49*	-0.89	0.20	1.40	3.57***
W – older by 6+ years	5.13**	2.25	0.41	1.49	-1.89	4.79**
W – older by 1–5 years	-0.40	1.94*	0.85	-0.49	0.91	1.91**
W – younger by 10+ years	-0.36	1.40	-2.09	0.18	3.02	-3.09*
Children aged 0–2	-13.94***	-7.26***	-3.39***	-16.68***	-8.44***	-3.76***
Children aged 3–5	-2.15**	-1.22	-1.74*	-1.57	-7.74***	-5.58***
Children aged 6–15	-3.81***	-1.92**	-0.03	-0.87	-3.60***	-9.53***
Married	-0.42	-0.92	-2.89	-4.58*	-3.28***	-2.75***
<b>Women's job characteristics:</b>						
Company size 11–49	4.83***	1.17	2.26**	4.09***	4.69***	4.52***
Company size 50+	6.24***	4.50***	5.25***	3.64***	9.32***	8.74***
Unlimited contract	1.57*	1.97*	6.55***	3.35***	3.75**	3.50***
Supervisory position	4.22***	9.17***	0.80	2.34	2.17**	6.60***
ISCO 1	11.37***	0.73	12.21***	12.83***	11.22***	13.17***
ISCO 2	7.81***	4.69**	7.61***	8.69***	5.37**	14.71***
ISCO 3	5.58***	4.85***	7.64***	8.75***	0.99	12.35***
ISCO 4	3.51**	3.23*	3.72*	7.00***	-0.46	7.88***
ISCO 5	1.57	-0.14	2.53	4.63**	-1.06	4.30**
ISCO 6	2.10	-3.44	-32.81***	0.17	2.24	-3.63
ISCO 7	0.79	-1.43	2.66	1.88	4.17	5.69*
ISCO 8	1.32	3.53*	1.64	4.31	-0.12	4.46
<b>Men's job characteristics:</b>						
Company size 11–49	-2.65***	-3.57***	-2.19*	-3.04***	-2.87**	-3.35***
Company size 50+	-4.84***	-8.15***	-4.60***	-3.43***	-6.33***	-6.89***
Unlimited contract	0.60	-1.13	-1.11	-1.19	2.43	-1.71
Supervisory position	-3.56***	-7.33***	-2.44**	-3.04**	-6.23***	-2.34***
ISCO 0	-10.26**	-7.26*	-17.80***	-14.06***	1.46	-
ISCO 1	-16.23***	-3.64	-14.71***	-8.28***	-0.92	-12.21***
ISCO 2	-13.21***	-4.85*	-14.67***	-6.28**	-5.30**	-9.68***
ISCO 3	-13.24***	-3.02	-10.37***	-6.99***	-2.05	-8.59***
ISCO 4	-7.15**	-2.79	-8.17***	-8.37**	0.86	-5.46**
ISCO 5	-11.34***	1.90	-4.75*	-5.94**	1.34	-3.55
ISCO 6	-12.43***	-8.64***	4.89*	5.78	2.72	-3.52

Table 13.3 (Continued)

	CZ	HU	PL	SK	AT	DE
ISCO 7	-9.31***	-2.08	-8.58***	-6.68***	-1.46	-5.92***
ISCO 8	-10.20***	-3.49	-9.03***	-5.96**	0.14	-3.78*
Constant	49.91***	54.18***	50.41***	45.56***	29.32***	32.90***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.27	0.27	0.36	0.25	0.30	0.36

Notes: \*significance at the 10% level, \*\*significance at the 5% level, \*\*\*significance at the 1% level. International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-88): ISCO0 – Armed forces (dropped for women); ISCO1 – Legislators, senior officials and managers; ISCO2 – Professionals; ISCO3 – Technicians and associate professionals; ISCO4 – Clerks; ISCO5 – Service workers and shop and market sales workers; ISCO6 – Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; ISCO7 – Craft and related trades workers; ISCO8 – Plant and machine operators and assemblers; ISCO9 – Elementary occupations (reference group).

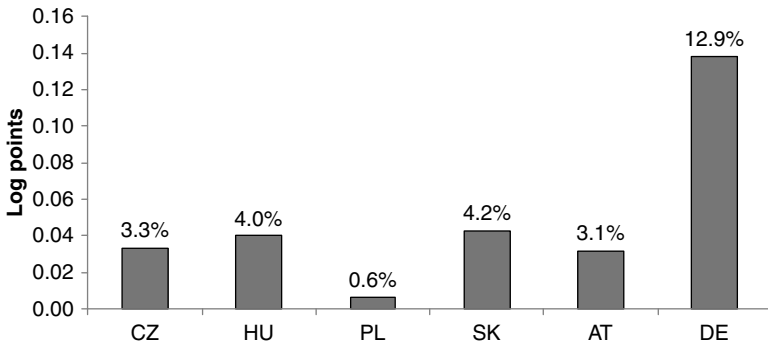
Source: EU-SILC UDB 2009 – version 5 of March 2013. Author's own calculations.

The presence of children seemed to be the factor that separated the Czech Republic and Slovakia from the other CEE countries, and remained influential even when female and male job characteristics were controlled for. This would be a promising direction for future research. I can only formulate a tentative hypothesis at this stage. The high within-couple earnings inequality may be due to the extremely long duration of parental leave in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which can be taken for as long as three years, after which parents can return to their original jobs. This is an exceptionally long period of leave compared with other European countries (for more details, see, for example, European Commission, 2005, 2009).

We could expect children to have a similar impact on earnings inequality in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, countries with a shared history as the former Czechoslovakia, and in which the systems of maternity and parental leave have not experienced any major changes since separation in 1993.<sup>13</sup> There is one difference between the Czech Republic and Slovakia that might play a significant role – the use of childcare services. Kuchařová (2009) states that only 3 per cent of Czech children under the age of three attended childcare institutions in 2004, while this proportion was nearly 18 per cent in Slovakia in 2003.<sup>14</sup> The greater availability and use of childcare services allow women to return to work sooner, and this has a positive effect on the maintenance of women's job skills, their work career and their earnings.

### **Cohabiting women versus single women**

The analysis so far indicated the existence of substantial gender earnings inequality within dual-earner couples. However, so far I have only looked at annual earnings and have completely disregarded differences in work intensity. It is mainly cohabiting women who work part-time or do not work



*Figure 13.2* Raw hourly wage gap between single and cohabiting women (log points and %)

*Note:* Raw wage gap in log points is measured as the logarithm of average wage of single women minus the logarithm of average wage of cohabiting women. Raw wage gap as a percentage is calculated as average wage of single women minus average wage of cohabiting women divided by average wage of single women, multiplied by 100.

*Source:* EU-SILC UDB 2009 – version 5 of March 2013. Author's own calculations.

overtime. Therefore, this section focused on hourly wages. The aim of this section was to find out whether and to what extent women living in a couple were disadvantaged in terms of their earnings compared with single females.

Figure 13.2 shows the striking difference between the average wages of single and cohabiting women. This raw wage gap was the highest in Germany and the lowest, and almost negligible, in Poland. One reason for the existence of wage gaps between single and cohabiting women might be that the individual and job characteristics of cohabiting women put them at a disadvantage compared with single women. This might be due to cohabiting women bearing more responsibility for the family or children, so that their individual and job characteristics might deteriorate or improve more slowly.

Second, it is possible that single women face more equal treatment, while cohabiting women are penalized with lower wages for their greater family responsibilities. However, this kind of possible discrimination was hard to measure, since there are other, unobserved characteristics that could explain the differences between cohabiting and single women.

### Wage gap decomposition methodology

The sub-sample of cohabiting women applied in this section differed from women included in the couple sample analysed in the rest of this study (see section Data and methodology). The estimates obtained using the wage regression model were used to provide a deeper insight into the structure of the wage gap between single and cohabiting women. As a first step, this study applied a standard OLS wage regression model separately for single

and cohabiting women.<sup>15</sup> The dependent variable in the model was the logarithm of the gross hourly wage. The explanatory variables included in the wage equations were as follows: years of education, years of experience and its square,<sup>16</sup> two dummies for the size of the local unit where a woman works, a dummy for an unlimited job contract, a dummy for a managerial position, a dummy for living in densely populated cities<sup>17</sup> and nine dummy variables for occupational groups.<sup>18</sup>

In the second step, the Oaxaca–Blinder decomposition method (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973) was applied:

$$\overline{\ln W^S} - \overline{\ln W^C} = \underbrace{(\overline{X^S} - \overline{X^C})\hat{\beta}^S}_{\text{endowment effect}} + \underbrace{\overline{X^C}(\hat{\beta}^S - \hat{\beta}^C)}_{\text{remuneration effect}} \quad (1)$$

Expressions with a bar signify the mean values, and S and C mean single and cohabiting, respectively. The endowment effect is a component of the raw wage gap that resulted from differences in individual and job characteristics between the two female sub-samples. The remuneration effect is a component that is due to differences in the rewards that the two female sub-samples obtained from their individual and job characteristics (for more on the methodology, see, for example, Mysíková, 2012). If we subtract the endowment effect, that is, the part of the gap explained by the different observed characteristics of single and cohabiting women, from the raw wage gap, we get the ‘adjusted wage gap’, which basically isolates the remuneration effect.

### Wage gap decomposition results

Table 13.4 shows the wage gap decomposition. The endowment effect was positive in most countries, suggesting that the observed characteristics of single women were, on average, ‘better’ than those of cohabiting women. The only exception was Poland, where the observed raw wage gap between single and cohabiting women was already close to zero. In all the other countries, a substantial part of the wage gap (ranging from 48 per cent in the Czech Republic to more than 100 per cent in Hungary) can be explained by differences in observed characteristics.

In Hungary, more than 100 per cent of the wage gap can be explained by the endowment effect, meaning that if we eliminated the differences in

*Table 13.4* Decomposition of the wage gap between single and cohabiting women in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Germany (log points)

	CZ	HU	PL	SK	AT	DE
Wage gap	0.033	0.040	0.007	0.043	0.032	0.139
Endowment effect	0.016	0.043	−0.045	0.028	0.026	0.094
Remuneration effect	0.017	−0.003	0.052	0.015	0.006	0.045

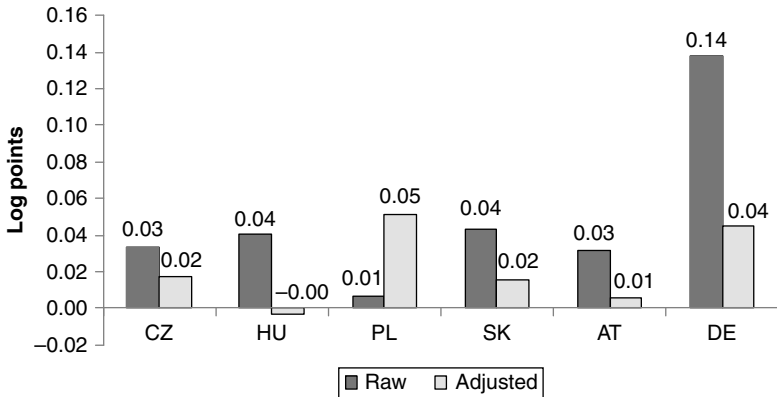


Figure 13.3 Raw and adjusted hourly wage gap between single and cohabiting women (log points)

Source: EU-SILC UDB 2009 – version 5 of March 2013. Author's own calculations.

observed characteristics, cohabiting women would be better remunerated for these characteristics. As Figure 13.3 shows, Hungary was the only country where the adjusted wage gap was slightly negative. In the other countries, single women received better returns on their characteristics than cohabiting women.

Women living in a couple may experience relatively more discrimination from employers than single women because of their greater responsibilities for family and children, or because it is expected that these women will have greater family commitments in the near future. On the other hand, compared with single women, women living in a couple may make different choices in terms of their career or working effort, or may have different unobservable characteristics.

It is important to note that the remaining adjusted wage gap need not necessarily be due to discrimination; it might, instead, be explained by other characteristics not covered by the model applied. Generally, the remaining adjusted wage gap should be considered unexplained. This analysis clearly showed that the differences in the observed individual and job characteristics of single and cohabiting women explain a substantial part of the wage gap and significantly contribute to the wage gap between these two groups of women.

## Conclusion

This study provided an insight into within-couple earnings inequality in four CEE countries and compared their situation with the situation in two WE countries. The within-couple earnings inequality was relatively low in

Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, while it was considerably higher in Germany and Austria.

Based on the sample characteristics and the results of the regression models, some general conclusions can be outlined. First, the factors that were most associated with lower within-couple earnings inequality were the higher relative education of a woman in a couple and the absence of children. Second, there were exceptional features in some countries: (a) extremely low within-couple earnings inequality among the poorest quintile in Hungary; (b) the negative influence of female education on relative earnings in Hungary; (c) the remarkably weaker impact of relative education on relative earnings in the Czech Republic than in the other CEE countries or even in the WE countries; and (d) the extremely strong negative effect on earnings inequality caused by the presence of children in the family observed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The final part of this study considered the wage gap between single women and women living in a couple. There was a raw wage gap in all the countries in the analysis; the largest gap was in Germany, while in Poland there was almost no gap at all. Single women had, on average, 'better' observed characteristics than cohabiting women (except in Poland), and a substantial part of the wage gap between single and cohabiting women can be attributed to this difference. However, the remaining positive part of the gap (except for Hungary) suggests a disadvantage in terms of lower returns to these characteristics for cohabiting women.

This suggests either that women living in a couple were more disadvantaged in terms of their wages or that their unobserved characteristics differ substantially from those of single women. In either case, women who decide to establish a family were highly disadvantaged compared with single women. This is a persistent phenomenon that could further erode the concept of the traditional family and usher in consequences that need to be taken into account in current social and family policy-making.

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## Notes

1. OECD data from the Labour Force Survey.
2. The presence of grandparents in a household could have a significant positive impact on the employment rate of mothers (see, for example, Martin and Kats, 2003).



3. Using the EU-SILC database, it would only be possible to analyse the persistence of within-couple inequality by applying a longitudinal dataset covering more years. That is my next intended analysis in this field of research.
4. Couples living with other adults in the household, couples of which at least one member collects a retirement pension, and couples with total non-positive income were no longer excluded.
5. The hourly gross wage is the usual monthly gross income from a person's main job divided by the quadruple of the number of hours usually worked per week in the person's main job, including common overtime.
6. The Eurostat database utilizing EU-LFS provides information on employment as well as employed persons with a second job. EU-SILC provides information on hours worked in a main job and hours worked in second and other jobs. Compared with the same figures from 2009, both databases showed almost the same ranking of countries in terms of the incidence of secondary jobs (from bottom to top: Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany, Poland). EU-SILC recorded higher values, ranging from 1.8 per cent in Slovakia to 7.9 per cent in Poland.
7. And also in Slovakia, where, however, the difference was statistically insignificant.
8. See Drago et al. (2005) for a discussion of the reasons for the emergence of female-breadwinner families and the existence of two types of female-breadwinner couples – one driven by economic reasons and the second by an ideology of gender equity.
9. Winkler et al. (2005) define standard and alternative categorization schemes of couple types. A couple is called 'non-traditional' if a woman has higher earnings than her counterpart, that is, if the woman's earnings are  $A$  and the man's earnings are  $B$ , then  $A > B$  or  $A/(A + B) > 50$  per cent. A traditional couple is then defined as  $B \geq A$  or  $A/(A + B) \leq 50$  per cent. This categorization was applied in this study too. An alternative categorization avoids defining a couple as non-traditional in situations where, for example, the woman earns only 1 dollar more than her partner. It does this by defining an additional middle category of 'egalitarian' couples if each of the partners earns 40 per cent to 60 per cent of the total couple earnings.
10. Drago et al. (2005) also use a kind of alternative categorization for defining three types of couples: male breadwinner, female breadwinner and 'about equal', with the latter including couples in which the man and the woman earned within 10 per cent of each other. They replicated their results with a 5 per cent cut-off, with minimal effects on results.
11. Večerník (2012) gives a figure of 52.7 per cent for educational homogamy in the Czech Republic. Although his definition of the couple sample differs, the substantial deviation in findings stems from the more detailed structure of education levels in his analysis. Večerník (2012) applies a national dataset of EU-SILC that distinguishes vocational education at the secondary level, while the international dataset does not. As a consequence, a couple in which one partner has vocational education and the other has secondary education is considered heterogeneous in Večerník's study, but is homogeneous with secondary level here.
12. Note that  $R^2$  considerably increases in all the countries.
13. The Czech Republic changed its system of parental leave in 2008; however, the changes only involved introducing three possible lengths of parental leave and receipt of the parental benefit, while the three-year guaranteed return to the same job remained.

14. Note that the only significant negative impact of children on relative earnings in Slovakia was caused by children aged from birth to two years old, however, and that this effect was even stronger than in the Czech Republic (see Table 13.2).
15. This analysis did not consider a sample selection bias. The sample selection bias could occur with respect to women whose participation in the labour market was typically lower than men's, in which case working women might not create a random sub-sample of the female population. The significance of sample selection bias was tested for female sub-samples by using the Heckman selection model (Heckman, 1979). The selection model proved to be only relevant for the Polish and Hungarian sub-samples of cohabiting women; however, the difference between the results of the Heckman and the standard OLS model was negligible.
16. The Hungarian dataset lacks this variable in the majority of observations, so a proxy 'age minus six minus years in education' was applied.
17. A densely populated area is defined as a local unit with a density of more than 500 inhabitants per square kilometre and where the total population in the unit is at least 50,000 inhabitants.
18. The results of the regression models are not presented here, but they are available from the author upon request.

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# 14

## Gender Gaps in Participation in Adult Learning: Estonia Compared with Other European Countries

*Eve-Liis Roosmaa and Kadri Aavik*

### Introduction

In recent decades, the gender education gap in many Western and Nordic countries has gradually reversed in favour of girls and women, in terms of participation in the formal education system, as well as achievement (Ganguli et al., 2011; Ganguli, 2013). This trend also characterizes most post-socialist countries, especially the Baltic countries (Ganguli, 2013), where the gender education gap has become especially pronounced in secondary and tertiary education. For example, while in the European Union countries (EU-27) on average 32 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women have completed tertiary education, in Estonia, tertiary education completion rates are 55 per cent for women and 33 per cent for men, which is the highest gap in the EU (Eurostat, 2013).

Numerous studies indicate inequalities in participation in adult learning in terms of age, educational attainment, labour market position and occupational group (Brunello and Medio, 2001; McGivney, 2001; Kailis and Pilos, 2005; Desjardins et al., 2006; Bassanini and Brunello, 2007; Dieckhoff et al., 2007; O'Connell and Byrne, 2012; Roosmaa and Saar, 2010, 2012; Aavik, 2013a). Trends across Europe are similar: participation in adult education or lifelong learning in general decreases with age, and unemployed, low-qualified and blue-collar workers participate less compared with employed, highly qualified and white-collar workers. However, gender differences in adult learning participation patterns have rarely been discussed (Boeren, 2011) and when they have, no significant gender gaps have been found (Desjardins et al., 2006; O'Connell and Byrne, 2012<sup>1</sup>).

Still, aggregate data reveal gender gaps in many European countries in both formal and non-formal adult learning participation, including job-related and professional training (Eurostat Adult Education Survey, 2007).

Estonia exhibits some of the most pronounced gender gaps in favour of women.

However, while women are equal to or surpass men in participation rates in formal and non-formal adult education and training in several European countries, and particularly in much of post-socialist Europe, this has not translated into any considerable improvement in their position in the labour market. The average gender pay gap in the EU is 16 per cent (Eurostat, 2012). Again, in this respect, Estonia stands out as the country with the largest gender pay gap of 30 per cent (Eurostat, 2012). In addition, the Estonian labour market displays the highest gender segregation, compared with other EU member states (Bettio and Verashchagina, 2009: 32).

Considering the disparities outlined above, Estonia makes an interesting puzzle: rather large structural gender inequalities exist in the labour market, yet women's participation rates in adult learning exceed those of men. We thus take Estonia as a case to study participation in *formal* and *non-formal adult education and training* from the gender perspective. We regard education provided in formal school systems as *formal*, and any organized learning activities that take place both within and outside of educational institutions as *non-formal*. Although not exact synonyms, we also refer to formal and non-formal adult education and training jointly as adult learning or lifelong learning.<sup>2</sup>

We understand *gender* as a social construct, a binary classification system based on assumptions about biological and anatomical differences between women and men. Research on gender inequalities usually focuses on documenting and explaining the disadvantages of women in different social contexts compared with men. However, this approach normalizes and reproduces implicit male norms and leaves unexamined how the privilege of certain groups is constructed, such as that of ethnic majority men. Thus, moving the focus from women and shifting it to men leads us away from examining why women choose to participate in education towards exploring how men participate in adult learning. Men's participation, or lack of participation, in adult learning can be viewed as part of doing masculinity or positioning oneself in relation to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Therefore, we can ask: how do specific structural conditions and gender representations in a particular local context, such as Estonia, favour or inhibit men's participation in further training, and how is this participation or non-participation related to doing masculinity and positioning oneself in relation to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity for differently positioned men and groups of men?

In this chapter, based on quantitative data, first we demonstrate gender gaps in adult participation in formal and non-formal education and training in European countries classified as having different kinds of welfare systems, which create structural conditions likely to influence gendered

participation patterns. In interpreting our results, we took Estonia as our case study and compared participation rates in Estonia with other European countries which represent different welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Ferrera, 1996): the UK – liberal; Germany and Austria – conservative or corporatist; Sweden and Finland – social-democratic; Italy and Spain – Mediterranean or familistic. Our special interest was in studying how gendered patterns of participation in adult learning in Estonia related to patterns in other welfare regimes and other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, which have often been regarded as one regime type: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia.

We then supplemented this analysis by illustrating, based on qualitative data, meanings given to participation in non-formal education by a group of ethnic Estonian male managers. Thus far, qualitative studies have not sufficiently focused on exploring the reasons behind the participation of privileged groups (despite having access to training) and the meanings that they give to further education. It was one of our aims to explore how successful men in Estonia construct *learning* in this context, where men in general participate less in initial education, as well as in adult learning, than women. In analysing and interpreting our data, we paid particular attention to intersectionality, recognizing that along with gender, other socially constructed categories and their intersections have an impact on people's experiences. Our qualitative analysis drew on narratives of a particular intersectionally privileged group in the Estonian labour market – ethnic majority male managers – in terms of work position, as well as gender and ethnicity: a positioning that gives particular advantages to this group, in the context of the labour market, in relation to other groups. Positioned as an 'unmarked' group in terms of these categories in most labour market situations, these men are able to render their own (discursive) practices as normal and ordinary.

### **Theoretical approaches to explaining gender gaps in formal and non-formal learning**

Various theoretical perspectives explain labour market outcomes and inequalities differently, depending on which factors they emphasize in their explanations. When analysing and explaining gender gaps in adult participation in formal and non-formal learning, we can, for example, rely on explanations that emphasize individual rational choice, as envisioned by the human capital theory, which attempts to explain how individuals seek to maximize their economic value by making investments in their human capital. Contrary to this individual perspective, other theoretical explanations focus on institutional and structural conditions that constrain or enable individual choices. In the following section, we give a short overview of both approaches, and, in doing so, we view gender as the central element. In our

view, any theoretical explanation that focuses solely on either individual choice or structural factors is inadequate.

### **Individual perspective: Human capital theory**

The human capital approach (Becker, 1975), suggests that gender differences in participation in education and training activities are related to gender differences in labour force participation. This theory focuses on the supply side and places emphasis on individual behaviour and the choices of rational actors in determining labour market outcomes. If we apply this theory to participation in work-related training and the outcomes of such training to the labour market success of workers, the theory predicts that 'training investments result in higher productivity and higher income of workers' (Burgard, 2012). Human capital theory suggests that women's investment to increase their productivity via training might be hindered due to their reproductive commitments and greater share of childcare. Therefore, they tend to have longer periods of absence from the labour market than men, which reduces the time that they can use to profit from skills and knowledge obtained via education and training. Thus, theoretically, women who are planning to have children should have a lower likelihood of participating in training, as knowledge obtained before going on parental leave might not be relevant after they return to work.

Employers offering training follow the same rationale. Not having exact information about female employees' plans to have children, they tend not to invest in training women of reproductive age, regardless of their actual reproductive behaviour or preferences (Dieckhoff and Steiber, 2011). However, these practices constitute direct or indirect gender discrimination in most EU countries. It can also be hypothesized that a longer childcare leave may influence a particular woman's future training possibilities. Long-term inactivity reduces the bonds with the labour market, thus resulting in an employer being less willing to invest in a woman's human capital in the form of training. However, an opposite effect may also occur: in order to upgrade skills and knowledge, the employer might even intensify training (Puhani and Sonderhof, 2008).

An increase in individual knowledge and skills and, thus, productivity – that is, participation in adult learning – should result in upward occupational mobility or a wage increase. Some studies indicate that training does result in higher wages (Albert et al., 2010; O'Connell and Byrne, 2012<sup>3</sup>). Economists have found that, for instance in the 1970s, women tended to profit more from training than men (Ashenfelter and Card, 1985). However, the opposite could also be assumed, as several more recent studies show men profiting more from training (Evertsson, 2004; Gosling, 2009). That is to say, employers provide training, which in turn results in promotion and increased wages, to employees who are more likely to stay with the company (Lazear and Rosen, 1990). Women are considered to be more likely to leave

the company, even if on a temporary basis. There are studies indicating that men tend to be promoted more often than women with the same qualifications (Kalleberg and Reskin, 1995), or that the probability of promotion is the same, yet women receive the lower-end wage of the next pay grade (Booth et al., 2003).

In the context of non-formal learning, we distinguish between training that provides specific knowledge and skills and that offering general knowledge and skills. The human capital approach suggests that employers are more willing to invest in job-specific training, whereas employees are more interested in general skills and knowledge. However, O'Connell and Byrne (2012) have demonstrated that employers are also willing to invest in general skills and knowledge.

However, the human capital and rational choice approaches have been criticized from various perspectives. For instance, they assume perfect competition in the labour market, without taking into account institutional, structural or other factors that benefit or disadvantage particular groups, for instance, in gaining access to training.

We focus here on criticisms from feminist and gender perspectives, which point out that the human capital approach fails to adequately explain why men and women make different human capital investments. An important criticism is that the theory considers workers as genderless individuals and relies excessively on the individual choices of 'rational actors' in explaining labour market inequalities; also, that it does not sufficiently take into account structural factors and socially constructed categories, such as gender, class, ethnicity and so on, which contribute to inequalities in the labour market. Even when paying attention to gender and women's disadvantaged labour market opportunities due to their reproductive commitments and more time devoted to care work, the human capital approach fails to challenge the implicit male norm, according to which women are judged as employees (Acker, 1990) and citizens. As long as the male norm is not problematized, women are constructed as deficient or inadequate employees. This leads researchers to examine women's lower participation rates in further learning, while leaving men's practices (which contribute to upholding the implicit male norms) unquestioned. Also, human capital theory does not examine the structural and institutional factors (such as welfare state regimes) that construct conditions in which women are seen as primary caregivers. Not taking structural and institutional factors, as well as symbolic representations (of gender, for example) in particular social and cultural contexts, adequately into account makes the human capital and rational choice approaches rather context-insensitive, while attempting to offer universal explanations.

Therefore, it is important to consider other explanations, which move beyond women and men as individual actors making choices to increase their market value and focus on constructions of gender on levels beyond the



individual, which affect men's and women's learning experiences. Human capital-based theories explain different labour market outcomes, including the disadvantages of women and minorities in the labour market, by their lower investment in their human capital as a result of individual choice. Other approaches emphasize structural inequalities or cultural factors that prevent certain groups from gaining equal access to human capital, and, in doing so, provide a contextual background against which to understand different participation rates. Thus, human capital theory should be supplemented by examining the factors, not necessarily only related to the market, that create and sustain gender gaps in participation in adult education.

### **Beyond individual choice: Structural and institutional factors shaped by welfare state and production regimes**

Various structural and institutional factors shape how individuals, positioned differently in terms of gender, ethnicity and so on, participate in formal and non-formal adult education and are able to rationalize their participation. These structural conditions are set by welfare and production regimes and their gendered assumptions. Welfare regimes set the logic of social policy and encompass institutions that provide welfare, and in this way they set the conditions for different groups to take part in adult education and training.

Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) state that the particularities of welfare state regimes influence participation in adult education by posing structural constraints or enabling participation, which determines why some groups participate more than others. They (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009: 191) use the theoretical perspective of bounded agency to explain barriers to participation. Taking Sen's (1999) capability approach as a basis, they argue that 'the welfare state regime can affect a person's capability to participate through the way it constructs the material, social, and institutional environments and the way these result in situational and institutional, or structural, barriers as well as a person's internal state of readiness as expressed in dispositional barriers' (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009: 197). They highlight links between individually perceived barriers and social structures, claiming that 'structural conditions play a substantial role in forming the circumstances faced by individuals and limit the feasible alternatives to choose from, and therefore they can "bound" individual agency' (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009: 196). Although gender is not a central perspective in the bounded agency approach (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009), it is mentioned in discussing barriers to participation, that is, family-related responsibilities, which are most often cited as barriers by young and middle-aged adults, especially by women. Their implicit focus tends to be on those groups whose access to adult education is difficult, and thus the assumption is that these barriers are experienced overwhelmingly by both women and other groups facing more explicit barriers. Yet, in the case of Estonia, it is men as a group

who participate less in learning than women. While the understanding of dispositional barriers could also be useful in exploring and explaining the lower participation of the more privileged groups, Rubenson and Desjardins' (2009) bounded agency approach does not discuss the formation of such special kinds of dispositions, or their wider implications. These practices, admittedly, are culture-specific and could be explained based on a specific case. However, when aiming to explain cross-country variations in gendered participation in education and lifelong learning, their approach points to the applicability of welfare state typology, most widely introduced by Esping-Andersen (1990). In criticizing the original typology of welfare regimes for not sufficiently taking into account gender, especially unpaid work, still disproportionately undertaken by women, some feminist scholars have developed their own conceptualizations of welfare state regimes, in which gender is present as a central element (see, for example, Lewis, 1992, 1997; Orloff, 2009). Lewis (1997) states that paid work, unpaid work and welfare, and their relationship, constitute central dimensions of welfare regimes, which then also have an impact on the participation of women and men in education and training. These conceptualizations of welfare regimes do include gendered assumptions about roles and behaviours considered appropriate for men and women, which form the basis of social policy (Lewis, 1997: 161), so they could be suitable for our purposes. However, such typologies differ in terms of which countries they include in their classification (for example, they often do not include post-socialist countries), as well as which aspects or dimensions of welfare they take into consideration.

Instead, extensions of the varieties of capitalism (VoC) literature (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Ebbinghaus and Manow, 2003) – bridging welfare, labour market and production regimes – do offer some systematic explanations for country differences in gendered labour market inequalities (Estévez-Abe, 2005). The VoC approach aims to explain how the production and social protection systems<sup>4</sup> are intertwined, and distinguishes between two efficient institutional equilibriums: liberal (LME) and coordinated market economies (CME). LME economies (Anglo-Saxon countries and Ireland) are based on deregulated, free market mechanisms, while CME economies (Scandinavian countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Benelux countries<sup>5</sup>) are based on mutual cooperation between economic actors. This translates into differences in skill formation: in LMEs the education and training system focuses on general competences and skills, whereas in CMEs the focus is on industry or firm-specific skills (Estévez-Abe et al., 2001). Here, VoC builds on the human capital approach by illustrating how different skill-formation regimes are located in certain institutional frameworks.

Following this logic, Estévez-Abe (2005) introduces a skill-based approach to gender segregation. She contrasts specific skills with general skills, and indicates how different social policies exacerbate or mitigate gender bias in skills. In the CMEs, institutions support long-term commitments between

the two actors: strong employment protection legislation and high unemployment benefit replacement rates encourage specific skill investments. Lack of these institutional arrangements in the LMEs leads to investment in general skills, which provide more flexibility in less regulated labour markets. Estévez-Abe maintains that specific skills are more biased against women; since they are acquired via on-the-job training or apprenticeships, early career interruptions due to having children can jeopardize the process of obtaining these skills. Thus, women prefer to obtain the more easily portable general skills. Moreover, if specific skills are valued, employers, bearing the costs of recruiting and training new or substitute workers, have less incentive to hire women. However, general skills qualifications can be acquired independently of employers (Estévez-Abe, 2005). Hence, there should be more women in occupations requiring general skills, and women's career advancements should be more favourable in the LMEs. Still, a skill-based approach distinguishes between CMEs: in Scandinavian or social-democratic countries there are generous social policies for working women that reduce gender bias to some extent, but do not reduce gender segregation in terms of a female-dominated public sector versus a male-dominated private sector. In the context of this chapter, we could also argue that, in LME countries and social-democratic CME countries, female adult learning participation rates should be at least as high as those of males when compared with other CMEs.

VoC studies do not usually consider CEE countries, yet in recent years several approaches argue that the institutional configuration in the CEE region is unique (Stark and Bruszt, 1998; Bohle and Greskovits, 2007; Nölke and Vliegthart, 2009; Roosmaa and Saar, 2010, 2012). For instance, according to Bohle and Greskovits (2007, 2012), we can differentiate between three types of transnational capitalism emerging in CEE: a neoliberal type in the Baltic States (a 'thin' welfare state with very liberalized markets and an institutional framework supporting the market; closest to the UK, and thus an LME), an embedded neoliberal type in the Visegrad states (that is, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia), and a neocorporatist type in Slovenia (with the relatively strong role of the state and specific corporatist elements; closest to Germany and Austria, and thus a CME). Saar and colleagues (Saar et al., 2013a: 11, 2013b) have distinguished between two groups of CEE countries in their typology of lifelong learning models – post-Soviet and post-socialist. We discuss the gendered outcomes of these two groups.

The ways in which welfare state regimes are configured and the gendered assumptions they make influence the participation of men and women in the labour market and education. In interpreting our results, it is thus important to consider how the welfare regimes of the countries we have included in our analysis have constructed institutional environments that create different gendered constraints or barriers to participation in formal and non-formal learning. As our focus was on the participation of men and women in adult learning in Estonia, we briefly describe each of these elements in

the Estonian context. Thus, in the next section, we outline some important institutional arrangements regarding paid work, unpaid work and welfare, focusing specifically on the provision of childcare and parental leave policy.

### **Overview of gender gaps in the central components of the welfare regime in Estonia**

In the introduction to this chapter, we outlined some significant gender gaps in the sphere of paid work in the Estonian labour market – the gender pay gap and segregation of the labour market. Regarding paid work, it should be emphasized that in Estonia, the employment rate among 20–64-year-olds is 67.7 per cent for men (below the EU average) and 65.7 per cent for women (above the EU average) (Eurostat, 2010).

Large gender gaps also exist in unpaid work (including housework and care work) undertaken by men and women in Estonia. The Estonian Time Use Survey (2009/10) suggests that women and men engage almost to the same extent in paid work (men 4.4 hours per day on average, women 4 hours per day on average). Women are significantly more involved in unpaid work (housework and caring for family members: men 2.8 hours per day on average and women 4.5 hours). On average, men have 5.6 hours of leisure time per day, compared with only 4.3 hours for women.

Compared with many other European countries, Estonia has a rather generous parental benefit system, whereby a parent is entitled (since 1989) to 36 months of parental leave, of which (since 2004) the first 18 months are paid (Chapters 3 and 10, this volume). However, while this policy is seemingly gender neutral, it actually helps to perpetuate gender inequality (Karu, 2011), as the vast majority of the recipients of the benefit are mothers (the benefit cannot be shared between the parents), who often find it difficult to return to the labour market.

An important aspect concerning welfare state regimes, which should be taken into consideration when discussing men's and women's participation in lifelong learning and training, is the availability of state-subsidized childcare. This has a positive impact on the opportunities for women in particular to reconcile work and family life and participate in training. Hence, the investment of welfare state regimes in affordable and accessible childcare is of crucial importance in creating more equal opportunities for both genders to participate in lifelong learning. Throughout Europe, childcare provision differs considerably. In Estonia, 'only 11.3 per cent of children up to 1 year are in a childcare facility, while more than half of 2-year-olds make use of such facilities' (Plantenga and Remery, 2009). Most kindergartens in Estonia operate on a full-time basis (Plantenga and Remery, 2009). In Estonia, there are regional disparities in the availability of childcare, and this is mostly a problem in urban areas (Plantenga and Remery, 2009). Estonia is among a group of EU countries where parents pay the smallest share of childcare costs (12 per cent) (Plantenga and Remery, 2009).

Compared with other EU countries, the employment impact of parenthood is rather high for women (Plantenga and Remery, 2009: 70). In Estonia, 78 per cent of children from the age of three up to the mandatory school age are cared for in formal childcare facilities for 30 or more hours per week, which, compared with most European countries, is a rather high proportion (Plantenga and Remery, 2009: 78; Roosalu, 2012).

The gender gaps in the labour market and some important features of the welfare regime outlined above have important implications in terms of gender. Prevalent attitudes still see women as primary caregivers, and most parents who receive parental benefit are women, meaning that women have longer absences from the labour market compared with men, whose careers are more likely to be uninterrupted. In fact, men with small children in Estonia work more hours than other men (Karu, 2009). Thus, women in Estonia are still the primary caregivers and men do considerably less unpaid work than women, which suggests that men would have more time to participate in further learning. However, is it necessary for them to do so?

Previous analyses (Kazjulja and Tamm, 2009; Tamm and Kazjulja, 2010; Saar et al., 2014) reveal that, although participation in adult learning is quite high in Estonia, the participation pattern seems to increase inequalities. Less well-educated individuals, people not engaged in the labour market, lower occupational groups, and employees of small and micro-firms (that is, the people who most need the training and education) have a lower chance of participating. Therefore, adult learning has a cumulative effect and increases inequality. Results regarding labour market outcomes indicate that women are more likely to experience upward occupational mobility after participation in adult formal education (Saar et al., 2014), which contradicts the results of most previous studies looking at other countries. In the Estonian labour market, women feel pressure to increase their level of education as much as possible in order to be competitive (Veldre, 2007), whereas men in higher occupational positions might get ahead even without higher education (Saar et al., 2014). In Estonia, labour market success is substantially determined by the previous work history of individuals and their social networks (Kazjulja and Roosalu, 2011). However, due to the expansion of higher education, higher education degrees seem to be regarded as a social norm and a prerequisite for access to higher occupational groups, especially for women (Unt et al., 2013). Unlike in most liberal countries, formal adult education in Estonia is less flexible (Saar et al., 2013c). The education system is limited in its diversity. This means that adults who are interested in participating in formal education have few choices in terms of both the education institutions that offer formal adult education, and finding programmes that meet their needs in terms of the intensity and duration of studies. Quite high participation rates among women in formal adult education are encouraged by state policies, as new qualification requirements have been introduced in some typical female occupations (Saar et al., 2014).

## Data and method

For the quantitative analysis we used the Eurostat Adult Education Survey (AES) 2007, which provides detailed information on formal and non-formal education and training over the previous 12 months. This survey is part of the EU Statistics on lifelong learning and is coordinated by Eurostat. The target population in the survey were people aged 25–64. Respondents marked any course activity within the national qualification framework or the system of schools (both full-time and part-time) as formal education or training. Non-formal education and training was measured as participation in any organized and sustained educational activity taking place both within and outside educational institutions, such as private lessons or courses (including open and distance education), seminars or workshops, and guided on-the-job training. In general, these are of short duration, and one respondent could have participated in several activities during one year.

In Europe, non-formal education and training tends to be largely job-related – 84 per cent in EU-27 in 2007. For context information on the education levels, occupational distribution of the population, and labour market position (employment rate), we also used aggregate data from other Eurostat surveys (Labour Force Survey, Statistics on Income and Living Conditions).

Gender differences in formal and non-formal education and training participation rates are presented in cross tabs. In addition, the gender participation gap was measured using a ratio: the rates of females were divided by those of males; hence, a ratio with a value of 1 would indicate no differences or inequalities between gender groups, and divergence from 1 would indicate how many more times females participated in education and training than males. A drawback of ratios is that if small rates are compared, the difference in relatively few percentage points will be significant (for instance, the ratio between 3 per cent and 2 per cent, and also between 30 per cent and 20 per cent, is 1.5). The analysis was also conducted at the level of highest completed education: up to general secondary (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)<sup>6</sup> 0–2), upper or post-secondary (ISCED 3–4) and highest education (ISCED 5–6).

We supplemented our quantitative analysis with qualitative data, which helps to explain our results and to convey meanings that a particular intersectionally privileged group – ethnic majority male managers – attribute to participation in non-formal learning. In many studies aiming to document and understand gender gaps in various spheres of life, researchers have sought explanations from focusing on different groups of women. We aimed to change this emphasis by studying men's perspectives on participation in non-formal learning.

We drew on in-depth interviews conducted with 15 ethnic Estonian male managers (mostly those who have undertaken higher education or

vocational higher education) holding managerial positions in the Estonian labour market, in both the public and the private sector. The above-mentioned interviews were collected and analysed in 2012–13 by one of us (Kadri) using a narrative method and an intersectional approach.

## Results

### Participation in education and training: Cross-country comparison

Figure 14.1 indicates that in the countries investigated here, in general, women tended to participate more than men in both formal and non-formal education and training. However, the differences were more pronounced regarding formal education and training. At the European Union level (EU-27), differences between males and females in both types of education and training were minimal, and in the case of non-formal learning the ratio was actually in favour of males.

To begin with formal learning, we found the most pronounced gender participation gap in two of the Baltic countries – Estonia and Latvia – where women were more than twice as active as men. Participation gaps were notable in Sweden and the UK as well, with women participating 1.5 times more than men. So, on the one hand, gender differences were notable in countries with a medium overall participation rate (5 per cent in Estonia and Latvia) and, on the other hand, in countries with a more flexible formal adult education system and relatively high overall participation in formal learning (13–15 per cent in the UK and Sweden). At the other extreme were Germany and Austria, where women were less active in formal learning than men. In Austria, the difference between women and men was not significant (3.8 per cent and 4.2 per cent, respectively), but in Germany men participate 1.5 times more frequently in formal learning than women. This might partly be explained by the overall pattern that those with higher initial education are also more likely to participate in lifelong learning. In the countries observed, in general, women hold higher levels of education, but in Austria and Germany the trend is opposite (see Table A.14.1). In addition to Austria, differences between male and female participation in formal education and training were practically non-existent in Spain, Slovenia and Italy, although the ratio favoured females somewhat.

With regard to participation in non-formal education and training, we again observed the most apparent differences in Estonia and Latvia, but also in Lithuania, where women were up to 1.5 times more active. The gender gap was also significant in Finland, with a participation rate for men of 46 per cent and for women 57.7 per cent. Male participation in non-formal learning was only notably higher in the Czech Republic (38.2 per cent versus 29.4 per cent), where – as opposed to Austria and Germany – the highest completed education is higher for women than men. Another noteworthy aspect about non-formal learning was that women less often than men reported this to

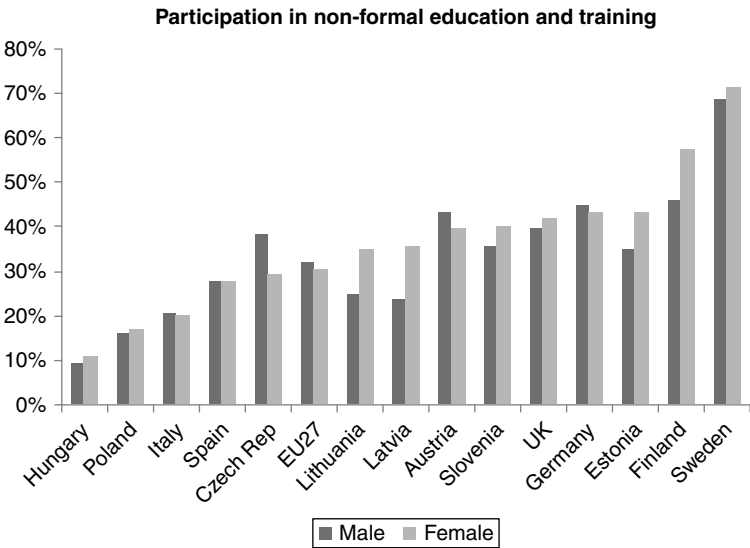
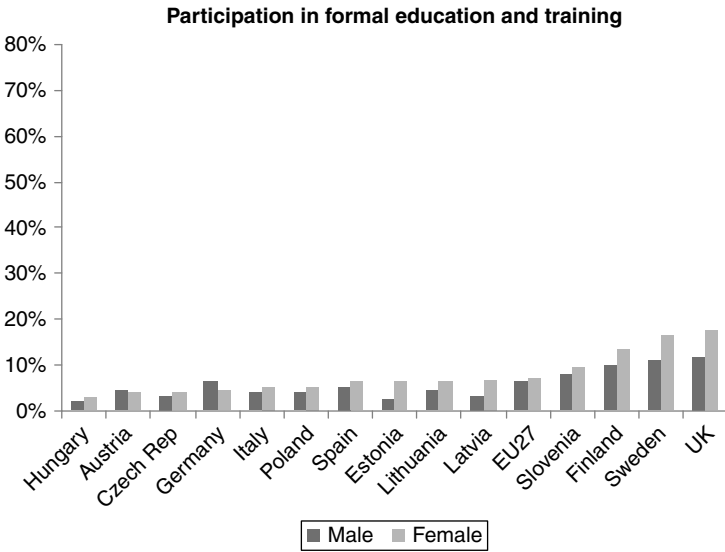


Figure 14.1 Participation in formal and non-formal education and training by gender (%)

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat Adult Education Survey 2007.



be mainly a job-related activity (EU-27: 79.9 per cent and 88.8 per cent, respectively) or an employer-sponsored job-related activity (EU-27: 37.7 per cent and 46.6 per cent, respectively). Yet Estonia was one of the outliers, with more women than men recognizing training to be employer-sponsored (64.8 per cent versus 55.9 per cent). This has most likely to do with labour market segmentation via economic sectors – women are over-represented in education, public administration and the healthcare sector, where participation in training is mandatory and funded by the employer, that is, the state. However, this could also indicate that in Estonia women are less able either to pay for training themselves or to participate during off-work hours.

### *Initial education in relation to adult learning by countries*

Next, we examined gender participation patterns with regard to the highest completed education level. It appeared that, in the countries where the participation gap in formal education and training was highest, the participation gap tended to decrease with the level of education, that is, gender differences in participation among those with higher education were smaller than among those with lower levels of education (Table 14.1). Thus, for

*Table 14.1* Gender differences in participation in *formal* education and training by the level of highest completed education (%), countries ordered by the ratio of female/male participation among those with higher education

	General secondary education			Upper or post-secondary education			Higher education		
	Male	Female	Ratio of F/M	Male	Female	Ratio of F/M	Male	Female	Ratio of F/M
Germany	3.7	2	0.5	6.5	4.2	0.6	6.9	5.8	0.8
Slovenia	2.3	3	1.3	11.3	13.9	1.2	13.4	12.5	0.9
Spain	1.6	2	1.3	7.8	9.4	1.2	11.6	13.3	1.1
Italy	0.6	0.7	1.2	5.4	7.4	1.4	13	15.1	1.2
Hungary	0.6	0.8	1.3	4.4	4.3	1.0	5.8	7	1.2
Poland	0.7	0.9	1.3	5.2	4.6	0.9	13.8	16.7	1.2
Sweden	4.1	9.4	2.3	11.5	16.9	1.5	21.4	26	1.2
Lithuania	1	3.1	3.1	3.5	3.5	1.0	10.1	12.5	1.2
Finland	3	4.2	1.4	11.5	15.2	1.3	11.4	14.7	1.3
Austria	1.4	0.7	0.5	4	3.8	1.0	6.3	8.3	1.3
United Kingdom	7.2	11.9	1.7	12.2	23.3	1.9	16.8	23.4	1.4
Estonia	0	2.9	2.9	2.1	5.2	2.5	6.4	9	1.4
Czech Republic	0.6	0.8	1.3	4.7	5.4	1.1	7.8	11.8	1.5
Latvia	0.6	0.5	0.8	2.6	4.2	1.6	8.2	16.1	2.0

*Note:* Ratio of F/M indicates how many more or fewer times females participate in educational activity compared with men.

*Source:* Own calculations based on Eurostat Adult Education Survey 2007.

instance, in Estonia we found the widest gender gap among those who have obtained up to general secondary education, as there were 2.9 per cent of women participating in formal learning but no men. Among the population with upper or post-secondary education, women were 2.5 times more active than men, whereas the ratio dropped to 1.4 among those with higher education, though still in favour of women. Similar trends were observable in Lithuania, the UK and Sweden (but not in Latvia). This trend was apparent in Germany as well, although there women participated less than men in non-formal learning. However, the situation was reversed in the case of Austria, where differences or inequality in participation increased somewhat with the level of education. Among those with up to general secondary education, men were twice as likely to participate in formal education and training; in the group of upper or post-secondary education, there were no gender differences; and among those who obtained higher education, women showed somewhat higher participation. So, in Austria, the slight male 'advantage' observed in Figure 14.1 was actually evident only among those with a low initial level of education. Another country displaying similar tendencies was the Czech Republic, where women with higher education were considerably more active in formal education and training than men holding degrees of the same level.

The results in Table 14.2 indicate that in most countries, among the group with low educational attainment, men were more active in non-formal education and training. This was especially evident in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Poland, where men participated at least twice as much as women, but also in Italy, Slovenia, Estonia and Hungary. Only in Finland were women (36 per cent) engaged more often than men (30.2 per cent) in non-formal learning among the low-educated group. In the group of upper or post-secondary education, women took part in non-formal learning more frequently in the case of Finland, Latvia and Lithuania. Gender differences, all in favour of women, were more pronounced in non-formal education and training participation among groups with high levels of education. The differences were most notable in Latvia, where 65 per cent of women compared with 47 per cent of men were participating in some form of non-formal learning. In Lithuania and Hungary, women participated 1.3 times more than men in non-formal learning activities. Gender differences in participation rates were also significant in the UK, Slovenia, Austria and Estonia.

In general, it appeared that the gender participation gap was wider in countries where a greater proportion of women than men have higher levels of education (Baltic countries, Slovenia, Sweden and Finland; see Table A.14.1), especially in regard to participation in non-formal education and training, which is largely job-related. There were some outliers as well: the UK and Austria. In the former, the same proportion of men and women hold higher education degrees, yet in the latter women actually have lower

Table 14.2 Gender differences in participation in *non-formal* education and training by the level of highest completed education (%), countries ordered by the ratio of female/male participation among those with higher education

	General secondary education			Upper or post-secondary education			Higher education	
	Male	Female	Ratio of F/M	Male	Female	Ratio of F/M	Male	Female
Czech Republic	31.1	13.7	0.4	41.6	39.3	0.9	56	55.6
Germany	19.7	20.3	1.0	42.6	42.5	1.0	59.1	61.3
Sweden	56.2	60.1	1.1	74.4	71.6	1.0	83.9	87.7
Spain	19.2	17.2	0.9	32.2	33	1.0	43.7	46.6
Italy	9.8	7.2	0.7	27.1	27.8	1.0	45.4	49.5
Finland	30.2	36	1.2	41.3	51.1	1.2	65	71.5
Poland	8.6	4.2	0.5	18.6	16.1	0.9	41.4	47.1
United Kingdom	29.9	31	1.0	46.7	47.3	1.0	48.3	56.1
Slovenia	22.1	17.8	0.8	38.8	41.3	1.1	58	67.4
Austria	19	18.3	1.0	41.7	39.9	1.0	59.9	70.3
Estonia	23.7	19.7	0.8	33	35.4	1.1	51.7	60.9
Lithuania	10.5	4.3	0.4	20.2	24.8	1.2	49.4	63.1
Hungary	5.7	4.6	0.8	12.5	13.7	1.1	19.4	25.2
Latvia	12.8	12.4	1.0	21.8	30.2	1.4	47.5	65.1

Note: Ratio of F/M indicates how many more or fewer times females participate in educational activity compared with men.

levels of education than men. Hungary<sup>7</sup> was also somewhat atypical, as there was a rather high gender inequality in participation in non-formal learning among those with higher education, but in the overall population the difference in the proportions of men and women with higher education degrees is not that substantial, although the proportion of women is slightly higher.

### *Education and employment*

In addition to the education level achieved, some labour market patterns should be considered. As earlier studies on Estonia have revealed, the effect of the achieved education level is stronger for men, as men with vocational, general secondary and lower levels of education very rarely continue their formal education (Saar et al., 2014). Due to the fact that there are fewer men than women with at least secondary education in the population, these men are in a much better situation than women with secondary education in terms of competition in the labour market. It is easier for them to distinguish themselves from other candidates (who are mostly women), meaning that there is no need for these men to attain a higher level of education.

As noted above, the majority of women and men stated that their non-formal education and training was job-related. We found the highest employment rates for women – over 70 per cent – in Sweden, Finland and the Baltic countries, but rates were also quite high in Slovenia and the UK, that is, mainly in countries where participation in formal and non-formal learning activities was significantly higher for women than for men, or very high for both gender groups (Sweden and Finland) (see Figure A.14.1). Occupational position is another good predictor of participation in adult education and training. Again, in the Baltic and Nordic countries and the UK, the proportion of women in managerial or professional positions is highest, ranging from about 14 per cent to 11 per cent (Table A.14.2). However, in the Nordic countries and the UK the ratio of women and men working in managerial or professional occupations is more or less similar, while in the Baltic countries women are somewhat more represented in the higher occupational groups. The same tendency is observable in Poland, but this advantageous position of women has not translated so clearly into higher formal and non-formal learning participation rates as in the countries mentioned above.

### **Pronounced gender gap versus silent male privilege: The case of Estonia**

The highest gender gap in Estonia in participation in non-formal education and training was among men and women who have obtained higher education (Table 14.2). In this section, we present how a group of successful ethnic Estonian male top and middle managers explain their participation in non-formal adult training, which for them mostly took place as short

training courses. The group of men interviewed participated quite actively in non-formal adult learning. Their opinions and attitudes towards training, based on their own experience, help to explain why men with higher education in middle and top management in Estonia might not see themselves as benefiting directly from training. Thus, this could explain why men might not feel the need to participate in non-formal learning as much as women with higher education. Furthermore, we suggest that, because of their own managerial roles, how they constructed the meaning of training based on their experience may give some additional insight into the reasons why the education and learning of women does not translate into visible gains in the labour market.

The interviewed managers admitted to regularly receiving large numbers of training offers, mostly via email. Overwhelmingly, they made the decisions themselves about whether to participate at all in training courses or which particular training to choose and attend, reflecting their privileged position to make decisions regarding their jobs and careers.

The managers differentiated between types of training courses in terms of content and skills obtained. A distinction was made between more practically oriented training courses, focusing on a specific skill or set of skills, and those that provided more general or non-specific knowledge. The courses providing more practically oriented training were attended by those managers who had a more practical component to their work, for example managers of quite small firms who, besides managing, also had to actively participate in the work in which the company specialized (for example, engineering or telecommunications). This type of practically oriented training, where specific skills would be learned, for example, how to use specific computer software necessary for work, was deemed useful and directly improving those particular skills. In turn, managers whose tasks were mostly related to leadership tended to participate in training that could be classified as providing more general knowledge, for example management and team-building training, or sales, marketing and time management.

However, those who attended both types of courses, but especially managers of larger organizations, had different experiences and views regarding the purpose and usefulness of the general training for their work and careers:

Mihkel<sup>8</sup> (35): There are two types of training. In some, we learn how to install specific products [...]. And then you have the other type of training, which relates to work management. It's those project management trainings [that I participate in]. I've also been in some teamwork trainings, which are very popular: they release you somewhere in the forest and make you do some things [laughs]. I have rather taken these team trainings more like entertainment. It's great to do these string entwining exercises, where you have to coordinate with six people to step left

and right ... I mean, these trainings have been fun, but actually you never apply these in your work.

The way Mihkel distinguished the two types and how he presented the second type of training, more as entertainment and relaxation than serious training where useful skills are taught, was representative of the sample.

However, while the direct and practical usefulness of these kinds of training courses was questioned, at the same time they were presented as necessary in other ways, for example in order to relax and build good relationships with co-workers:

Allan (35): It can be offered under the name of training, but it can actually be a relaxing evening or whatever. You need something like this.

Interviewer: So, you attend mostly trainings that offer relaxation, not to, let's say, gain new knowledge?

Allan: Well, no, most trainings rather also include the knowledge component.

It was interesting and telling how Allan presented this training as entertainment with a touch of knowledge. An important function that the respondents attributed to these types of training was the opportunity for social networking, which, as this reference suggests, might often happen in a gender-segregated space, excluding women:

Ivar (36): These common events [with colleagues] are very important, so that people could communicate in a more unrestricted environment and feel good. Well ... and it's like in business apparently, that bigger and more important decisions are made in the sauna.

While some managers were no longer interested in participating in such training courses, others still valued them for the same reason that others dismissed them – the general knowledge that they provide, which was seen to help personal self-development and offer inspiration:

Toomas (43): I try to participate with some regularity in some bigger conferences. I do this only for inspiration. I do not consider them educationally relevant, but inspiring [...]. And it's also a place for networking, you have to stay in the networks you know [...]. So if I see even one or two speakers or topics that seem interesting or inspiring to me, then I'm willing to go.

Tõnis (60): For me, the value of training becomes evident when it creates some kind of process or idea in me ... or provides a solution to a situation or problem ... well this is the biggest value of training.

Alo (45): Well, I rather try to get some training that gives me something. A la *Excel* training is not for me, you know.[...] Lately I have started to look outside of my own sphere, for something that would develop my perspective and understanding, to understand what the rest of the world thinks [...] If you develop yourself, you don't become encapsulated....

The views on non-formal learning expressed by the interviewed Estonian male managers suggest that these men do not often see an immediate or practical need to attend work-related training. However, these training courses might contribute to building and maintaining the career success of this already privileged group in other ways.

The views that this group of men were articulating on participation in non-formal education originate from a particular privileged labour market position (Aavik, 2013b), and this is reflected in how they talked about participating in training courses and the uses training had for them. First, they admitted not attending training out of immediate necessity and being mostly free to decide whether and which training courses to attend. Second, while they saw practical value in the more specific hands-on training courses, they openly admitted the functions that the general types of training had for them: entertainment, networking, inspiration and personal development, with a component of knowledge.

These views on participation in non-formal training provide some clues as to why men with higher education and in managerial positions in Estonia have lower participation rates compared with women in the same category. Participation in non-formal education was not often seen as adding extra value to the human capital of this group of successful ethnic majority men, including by themselves. Given the current labour market situation in Estonia, attending training might be seen as something that could be done on an optional basis, for other purposes. This suggestion is similar to Rubenson's claim. In his overview of qualitative studies focusing on indifference towards participation in adult education, Rubenson (2011: 218) suggests that, for successful groups, 'nonparticipation becomes a highly rational act' and meaningful only when 'adult education results in better and higher paying work'.

## Discussion and conclusions

Our quantitative analysis explored the variety in the sizes and directions of gender gaps in participating in adult learning in Europe, with a focus on Estonia. We discussed gender differences in participation in formal education as well as those in non-formal education and training, and we studied the relationship between initial education and labour market position to participation in lifelong learning as an adult. It needs to be stressed that

the analysis conducted here is bivariate and, therefore, the results should be regarded as tentative.

The results from the selected countries, representing different welfare regimes, indicate that, in general, women participate in adult learning more than men, especially in formal learning, but that there are significant country variations. The formal education participation rates of women exceeded those of men most notably in Estonia, Latvia, Sweden and the UK, whereas this trend was quite the opposite in Germany. Hence, women participated more in the most time-consuming form of lifelong learning, that is, formal education, which should be a challenge considering that caregiving is still largely the responsibility of women, but with public or affordable childcare arrangements, raising young children could well be reconciled with studies (see also Roosalu et al., 2013: chapter 5). A closer look at formal education participation revealed that gender differences tended to decline with the rise of the initial education level, thus confirming previous results and partly the human capital argument, which indicates that initial education is a strong predictor of participation in adult learning. A more flexible adult education system and employers with learning-affirmative dispositions could increase the involvement in training of those with low and medium qualifications.

The gender pattern of non-formal education and training participation was less straightforward, but women's participation was significantly higher in the Baltic countries and Finland. Examining non-formal adult learning participation by educational attainment indicated that, in countries with relevant gender differences, among those with lower levels of education, men tended to participate more or equally, whereas among those with higher education, women participated more. In Estonia, this most likely reflects the training opportunities offered in the public sector – education, healthcare and public administration. It has been found that in the education and healthcare sectors participation in training was less likely to lead to occupational advancement (Evertsson, 2004), and this could partly explain the persistence of the gender pay gap. Moreover, we assume that, compared with men, women participated more in non-formal and formal adult learning in Estonia because of the greater expectations for women to obtain higher education and additional qualifications in order to compete with both men and other women in the labour market (Veldre, 2007). The assumption here is that men participate less because they perceive less need and pressure to use participation in education and training to secure (highly paid) employment.

The higher employment rate and relatively good occupational positions of women in Estonia corroborated our results on women's higher lifelong learning participation. Our results also lent some evidence to the skill-based extension of the VoC theory: the Baltic countries rely mostly on general skills, which are less gender biased compared with specific skills, on relatively generous maternity and parental leave, and on public childcare, all of which should facilitate the participation of women in adult learning. The results for the Scandinavian countries (Finland and Sweden) also fitted the skill-based



approach: relying on specific skills, women-friendly social policies, and employment in the public and service sectors encourages high adult learning participation rates among women. However, Austria, with its emphasis on specific skills, was a somewhat peculiar case, showing relatively high female participation rates in formal and non-formal learning compared with men, although this was evident only among those who had undertaken higher education. Our results support evidence that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania constitute a separate cluster within the CEE countries (Bohle and Greskovits, 2012; Saar et al., 2013a), having some similarities, in terms of gendered adult learning patterns, with the UK, a country that relies on general skills (although overall participation rates were not at a comparable level).

As our analysis demonstrated that the largest disparities in participation in non-formal learning in Estonia were found between men and women with higher education, the qualitative analysis of the Estonian male managers' articulation of their participation in training provides some explanation for these disparities. We would like to stress, however, that the meanings that these men, who are positioned as intersectionally privileged, attach to adult learning could help set normative standards regarding the value of training for other groups as well, and, as such, could be significant in enabling or constraining learning opportunities for them.

We suggest that the interviewed male managers perceived no direct or immediate need to attend training in order to retain their managerial positions or move up the organizational hierarchy. However, their comments on the more general type of training courses suggested that there was value for them in these training courses beyond the immediate and direct skills that they learned. They acknowledged that such training opportunities provided a way to maintain and develop social networks as well as constituting a source of inspiration and self-development, both of which help to build and maintain work motivation and build self-image as a male manager. These functions served as ways to uphold their privileged position in the organizational hierarchy and in the labour market more widely, as well as to position themselves in relation to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, participation in adult education contributed to the work-related success of these male managers in an indirect way.

The bounded agency model (Rubenson and Desjardins, 2009), referred to earlier, is useful in thinking about structural barriers to participation in adult education, as set by welfare regimes, thus linking individual agency to structural factors in shaping the participation of individuals. However, Rubenson and Desjardins' model does not consider *gender as a structural factor in itself* interacting with individual choices. If we explicitly bring gender into the (currently conceptualized as gender-blind) model of bounded agency, as well as taking other social categories intersecting with it into account, this enables us to consider the power relations and hierarchies between differently positioned social groups. We can then understand their participation in adult education and how these are constituted by gender itself, as a

social structure (Risman, 2004) and institution (Lorber, 1994; Martin, 2004), located 'at the center of transformations of welfare states' (Orloff, 2009: 335). Considering welfare regimes as deeply gendered and, as such, shaping structural conditions, policy measures and individual dispositions as elements of bounded agency enables us to see that the meanings that differently positioned individuals and groups attribute to participation in further learning largely depend on, and are shaped by, their position in the job hierarchy and the power resources at their disposal, as well as, importantly, their location in the larger social hierarchy. This has important implications for our conclusions concerning gender gaps in participation in training. That is, the ability to present participation in training as something done primarily for inspiration, self-development and networking is not available to all groups equally, but, rather, to those positioned as intersectionally privileged in relation to other groups. Referring to these functions of training suggests that engaging in further learning for these purposes might function as a source of self-validation for the respondents *as male managers*, which helps them to aspire to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity. For other groups, who might see participation in further learning as a more immediate practical need, these aspirations might be a luxury they cannot afford to expect or articulate. For example, for unemployed Russian-speaking women with higher education in Estonia, participation in further training was perceived as an immediate practical necessity to survive in the labour market (Aavik, 2013a).

Barriers to participation for all groups, including those positioned as intersectionally privileged, must always, then, be thought of as deeply structured by gender (and other intersecting social categories). This is likely to change what barriers mean and the ways in which they could be conceptualized if experienced by differently positioned groups.

To help expose the often invisible norms set by privileged groups, we suggest that in studying gender gaps in participation in adult education, the focus should be shifted from those whose access and participation are seen as somehow 'problematic' to thinking about the relationship of privileged groups, such as successful male professionals unmarked in terms of gender and ethnicity, to adult education. This new perspective has the potential to reconsider and develop the theoretical concepts and approaches used to study participation in adult education.

For further analysis, we also propose to study the content and length of adult learning that different groups of men and women undertake in more detail, as this might shed light on the different outcomes of learning and the reasons why some groups participate more. Gender segregation, including gendered participation in lifelong learning, is a multifaceted social phenomenon (Estévez-Abe, 2005); thus, there are important aspects not captured by this chapter, for instance the effects of the (adult) education system (including the gendered difference in educational tracks and fields of study), labour market institutions and trade unions, to mention a few.

## Appendix

Table A.14.1 The level of highest completed education by gender (%)

	General secondary education		Upper or post-secondary education		Higher education	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Austria	13.6	26.0	66.0	59.2	20.4	14.8
Germany	12.6	18.6	59.6	60.6	27.8	20.8
Czech Republic	6.1	12.8	79.0	74.6	14.8	12.6
EU27	27.9	30.8	48.8	45.4	23.3	23.8
United Kingdom	23.5	29.8	44.9	37.7	31.6	32.5
Spain	49.8	49.4	21.7	21.2	28.5	29.5
Italy	48.4	47.0	39.1	38.3	12.5	14.7
Hungary	17.1	24.2	66.4	56.2	16.4	19.6
Poland	13.0	14.3	71.0	64.4	16.0	21.3
Finland	21.7	17.3	47.2	41.1	31.1	41.7
Lithuania	12.8	9.5	62.6	57.6	24.5	32.9
Sweden	20.5	20.8	52.7	43.2	26.8	36.0
Slovenia	16.0	20.5	65.3	53.7	18.8	25.8
Estonia	13.0	9.0	60.9	51.3	26.1	39.7
Latvia	18.7	11.8	63.7	61.2	17.7	27.0

Note: Countries are ordered according to difference between females and males with higher education.

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2007, target population 25–64.

Table A.14.2 Distribution of population by occupation and gender (%)

	Males			Females		
	Managers	Professionals	Total	Managers	Professionals	Total
Austria	4.8	2.8	7.6	1.7	3.4	5.1
Czech Republic	2.6	4.1	6.7	1.1	4.2	5.3
Germany	3.2	7.2	10.4	1.1	4.5	5.6
Spain	3.2	5.0	8.2	1.4	4.6	6.0
Italy	4.2	4.3	8.5	2.9	3.8	6.7
EU27	4.2	5.8	10.0	2.3	5.6	7.9
Hungary	3.0	3.9	6.9	2.3	6.1	8.4
Slovenia	3.3	5.0	8.3	1.6	7.7	9.3
Poland	2.7	3.9	6.6	1.9	7.8	9.7
Latvia	3.1	3.5	6.6	2.8	7.8	10.6
Finland	7.2	7.7	14.9	2.7	7.9	10.6
United Kingdom	7.6	7.1	14.7	4.6	6.2	10.8
Sweden	2.9	9.1	12.0	1.4	9.8	11.2
Estonia	5.9	3.8	9.7	4.3	9.2	13.5
Lithuania	3.7	4.6	8.3	3.0	10.7	13.7

Note: Countries are ordered according to female managers and professionals in total.

Source: Own calculations based on EU-SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) 2007, target population 18 and over.

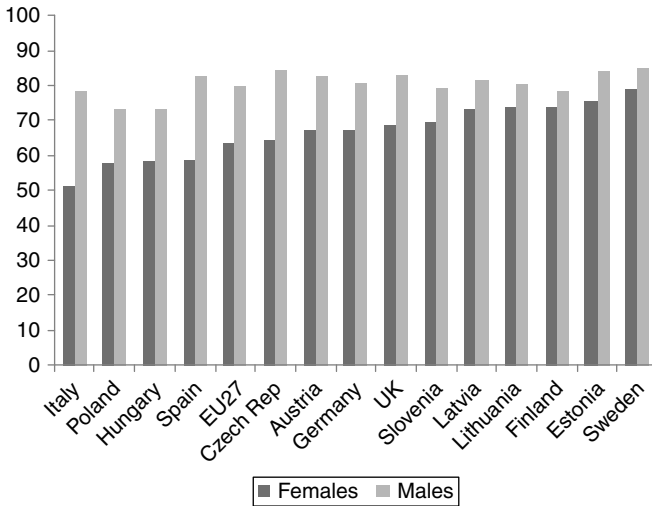


Figure A.14.1 Employment rates by gender

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2007, target population 25–64.

## Notes

1. Gender difference in participation in training (in favour of men in the case of Ireland) is eliminated by adding job characteristics to the regression model.
2. Furthermore, we differentiate between initial education (the educational level one obtains before leaving the education system for the first time) and further training and education (any formal or non-formal learning episodes after leaving initial education). Given that the main interest of this chapter lies in adult education, we use the term 'further training' to mean any courses or training in which a person participates; and the learner-centred approach leads us to prefer to use the term 'further learning' (for detailed overview on different learning-related definitions see Jarvis, 2010).
3. Here the authors find significant returns only to general and not to specific training.
4. For instance, employment and unemployment protection, wage protection, but also paid maternity and parental leave.
5. France, Italy and Spain share many features of CMEs, but lack cooperative industrial relations, and hence should be treated as a special case of CMEs (Estévez-Abe, 2009).
6. UNESCO-devised International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO 1997).
7. The AES 2007 was carried out mostly as a stand-alone survey, while in Hungary it was an ad hoc module of the Labour Force Survey. (The AES survey was also not a stand-alone survey in Italy, France and the Netherlands.) In addition, some of the non-formal learning activities were not listed in the questionnaire, thus significantly underestimating overall non-formal education and training participation

rates (Eurostat metadata). Therefore, the results for Hungary need to be interpreted with caution.

8. We use pseudonyms to refer to our interviewees.

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# 15

## Differentiated Educational Pathways and Gender Inequalities in the Estonian Labour Market: What Is the Impact of the Systemic Change?

*Ellu Saar and Jelena Helemäe*

### **Introduction**

Estonia is an interesting country in which to study gender segregation, especially when comparing different historical periods. The main features of the Estonian situation during the Soviet period were the higher female educational level, gendered secondary education tracks, male concentration in the primary and secondary sectors, gender pay equity and high female labour force participation. The social and economic changes at the beginning of the 1990s have had an enormous impact on gender differences in the labour market. Despite the feminization of higher education, Estonia is faced with an increasing gap between male and female wages, which is now among the highest in the European Union, new discriminatory structures in employment practices and the feminization of poverty (Narusk and Kandolin, 1997; Hansson and Aavik, 2012; Roosalu, 2013).

The persistence of gender segregation in the education and labour markets has been discussed and analysed extensively in academic research, because gender segregation is viewed as the mechanism accounting for many forms of gender-based advantage and disadvantage. However, gender segregation is a multifaceted and complicated phenomenon. Several authors indicate that it is useful to separate vertical and horizontal segregation (Charles and Grusky, 2004; Estevez-Abe, 2005). Vertical segregation refers to the under-representation of women in high-status occupations and their over-representation in low-status occupations. Horizontal segregation refers to the division of occupational activities by sector. These two forms of segregation are connected (Mandel and Semyonov, 2006).

Existing research on gender segregation in Estonia has mostly concentrated on the post-socialist period (see Anderson and Vöörmann, 1997;

Kazjulja and Roosalu, 2007; Vöörmann, 2009, 2011), and the two forms of segregation are usually studied separately. However, to understand the time variation in the patterns of gender segregation, we should take account of the institutional context within which the segregation regime is embedded, and the potential role of the state in mediating the effects of market and family relations on the economic status of women (Chang, 2000). It has been suggested that several social, demographic and economic forces, such as the education system and labour market structure, affect the structure of gender segregation (Charles and Grusky, 2004). Other important mechanisms are gender culture and the welfare system.

Our main research questions were:

How do horizontal gender differences and vertical inequalities in education and in the labour market *develop over time*? Particularly, are gender differences and inequalities in educational attainment and occupational outcomes converging or diverging over time?

Do the different *educational pathways* of young men and women *account for* horizontal and vertical gender inequalities in the labour market? In other words, do educational pathways partly explain the gender gap? Moreover, do gender differences and inequalities vary across educational pathways, that is, is the gender gap different for different educational pathways?

We compared birth cohorts that entered the labour market at very different times, from the 1960s to the first half of the 2000s. We used data from the Estonian Social Surveys 2004 and 2005.

## **Theoretical considerations**

### **Theories explaining gender segregation**

Different families of theories that explain gender segregation in the labour market have been identified: (1) economic theories; (2) cultural theories; (3) institutional theories; (4) hybrid approach (see Estevez-Abe, 2005).

*Economic theories* include human capital theory and statistical discrimination theory. Human capital theory is based on the assumption that better-educated, more experienced workers are more productive. This theory attributes gender segregation to lower levels of education and skills among women. Men are more productive than women because men make greater investments in their human capital (Becker, 1964). Women are expected to withdraw from the labour market to raise children (Mincer and Polachek, 1974). This expected discontinuity of women in the labour force affects their educational and occupational choices. Statistical discrimination theory focuses on the behaviour of employers (Phelps, 1972). Employers avoid

hiring women, because they assume that women are more likely than men to quit for family-related reasons. This means that the average characteristics of women as a group are assigned to all women, and as a result women are excluded from higher-level positions.

*Cultural theories* emphasize the role of non-rational factors, such as cultural norms and employers' tastes. Charles and Grusky (2004) indicate that gender segregation reflects two cultural tenets: gender essentialism, representing women as more competent than men in services, nurturance and social interaction, and male primacy, representing men as more status-worthy than women and, accordingly, more appropriate for positions of authority. Some approaches are focused on the role of formal and informal workplace practices as mechanisms for the selection of workers (Bielby and Baron, 1986). Other authors have looked into the process of socialization that affects women's career choices (Correll, 2001). Children internalize the sex-typed expectations of others, converting these expectations into sex-typed aspirations and preferences, as well as subsequent investment decisions.

Charles and Grusky (2004) developed a *hybrid theory* of sex segregation, incorporating cultural and structural explanations. They separate two causal mechanisms: gender egalitarianism and post-industrialism. Gender egalitarianism reduces vertical segregation, but post-industrialism, involving the expansion of the service sector, increases the horizontal segregation of women into non-manual sectors.

*Institutional theories* concentrate on institutional contexts, paying attention to education systems, welfare state regimes and laws designed to promote and protect women (for example, equal opportunity law) (Chang, 2000; Charles et al., 2001). In the next section we discuss these approaches more thoroughly.

### **Institutions, economic structure and gender segregation**

Several authors indicate that the presence of vocational education within the education system might exacerbate sex-stereotyped career choices, and thus might increase horizontal gender segregation and promote the concentration of men into male jobs, because vocational training programmes tend to be male-dominated (Rubery and Fagan, 1993; Charles et al., 2001). These authors assume cultural sex stereotyping as a mechanism by which vocational schools sort girls and boys into different fields. Estevez-Abe (2005) provides an alternative explanation. Her arguments are based on the separation of general and firm-specific skills. The limited portability of firm-specific skills makes such skills unattractive for women who plan to interrupt their careers, and employers valuing firm-specific skills have greater incentives to discriminate against women. Statistical discrimination denies the acquisition of firm-specific skills to women and creates a gender gap in human capital. General skills are more gender-neutral. When job qualifications are

based on skills acquired at school, women will have a better chance of moving up the occupational hierarchy (Estevez-Abe, 2005).

The size of the tertiary education system and female tertiary participation might also affect gender distribution across occupations. Female participation in higher education appears to be accompanied by a rebalancing of the workforce towards female jobs as well as an increase in horizontal gender segregation (Charles and Bradley, 2002; Smyth and Steinmetz, 2008).

The rise of the welfare state has led to the substantial expansion of public employment (for example, in health, education and social services). As a provider of public services, the state has become a major employer of women. By offering many care and service jobs, the public service sector facilitates women's entry into the labour force. It has been found that high female labour market participation and a large service sector increase horizontal gender segregation, as well as generating relatively high levels of vertical segregation in the non-manual sector, feminizing the lower non-manual sector and concentrating women into 'pink-collar' occupational ghettos (Charles and Grusky, 2004; Mandel and Semyonov, 2006). Hence, the expansion of the service sector is likely to increase gender occupational segregation.

What are the impacts of two types of women-friendly policies on gender segregation? Paid maternity leave guarantees a mother's return to the job she held before childbirth. However, it has been argued that this leave actually removes mothers from paid employment for several months. A long absence from paid employment may discourage employers from hiring women to positions of authority and power (Mandel and Semyonov, 2006). Paid leave also potentially widens the female-male gaps in the number of years worked and does not help women's acquisition of firm-specific skills (Estevez-Abe, 2005). The wide availability of public childcare protects women from loss of income due to childrearing and from the risks of skill depreciation by decreasing women's time off work (Chang, 2000).

The absence of legislation promoting gender equality within the labour market, coupled with the cultural value placed upon women's roles within the home, is also considered to be a factor that prevents women from participating in positions of authority (Chang, 2000).

## **The Estonian institutional context**

### **The Soviet period**

#### *Gender culture and the welfare state*

A basic tenet of state socialism was gender equality (Anderson and Vöörmann, 1997). Men and women were equal in their rights as well as their obligations in paid work. The perennial labour shortage, coupled with anti-family ideology, led to a state policy that supported the entry of women into the labour market. However, the official social policy obliged women,

and only women, to take care of the household and family work. The state and employers formally supported the implementation of this obligation (for example, by providing childcare facilities, different kinds of maternity leave and so on). However, in reality, this support was scarce and unevenly distributed (Narusk, 1995). The dual role expected of women encouraged discrimination by employers. Soviet ideology did not expect men to take part in childrearing or daily chores at home. The legislation favoured a traditional division of gender roles: for example, childcare leave was only available for mothers. Although the Soviet system was strongly egalitarian, the egalitarianism was directed largely towards reducing class-based inequality, while the commitment to gender-based inequality was relatively superficial.

### *The education system*

Until 1959, men with higher education outnumbered women in the working-age population, while women comprised the majority of employees with general and secondary specialized education. In 1979 and 1989, Soviet census data reported that the female education level was higher than that of men. This higher education level of women is attributed to the gendered secondary education tracks in Soviet Estonia (Saar, 1997). In Soviet Estonia, graduates from basic school had three options: (i) general secondary school, (ii) secondary vocational school and (iii) secondary specialized schools. However, the choice of options was quite formal, and a settled institutionalized framework and widespread stereotyping left students with few real options. In addition, general secondary schools preferred girls, as they were both better students and less trouble for the teachers. As a result, a female majority in general secondary schools and male students' preference for vocational schools were prevalent over this period. Although the three types of secondary education were formally considered to be equal, general secondary schools gave their graduates the best chance of continuing their studies at university, while vocational schools were educational 'dead-ends'. Thus, the gender-specific pattern was repeated for higher education as well, and the composition of higher education institutions became feminized. Previous results indicate that the socialist education policy, which was directed towards an increase in vocational education and was intended to increase the educational opportunities for under-privileged social classes, has had no effect on class inequalities, but has increased gender differences in educational opportunities (Saar, 1997, 2010). There was clear gender segregation by fields of study as well, as young men and women were being prepared for the different fields considered to be men's and women's work (Helemäe et al., 2000).

However, it is possible to separate different periods in the development of gender-specific educational trajectories in Soviet Estonia. An important feature of the late 1960s was the development of secondary education, when universal secondary education was proclaimed as a goal. Secondary education enrolment therefore increased steadily in the 1970s, during which time

the network of vocational schools was developed (Helemäe and Saar, 2011). At the end of the 1970s and the start of the 1980s, the general secondary school continued to dominate as the place to attain secondary education, but the proportion of that school type in the structure of secondary education slightly declined (mainly due to the rapid development of vocational schools). The period from the middle 1970s to the end of the 1980s could be characterized by a hierarchical differentiation within secondary education.

### *The labour market*

Structural changes in the Estonian economy after World War II strongly influenced demand within the labour market. The culmination of the industrialization of Estonia occurred at the beginning of the 1960s. The most important feature of the 1960s was the increase in the labour force participation of women (Puur, 1993). The labour force participation rate for working-age women increased from 69 per cent in 1959 to 86 per cent in 1970, and stayed at that level until 1989 (Helemäe et al., 2000). There were no differences in the labour force participation rate between men and women after the 1970s. While the male labour force participation rate in Estonia was comparable to the rates in most European countries, the female participation rate was much higher, partly as the result of official policies aimed at offsetting the growing labour shortage, and also reflecting economic pressures: wages were too low to support a family on the income of a single breadwinner. The redistribution of employment from agriculture to industry had taken place and most new jobs were created in industry, but with a bias towards white-collar rather than blue-collar jobs (Helemäe et al., 2000). Despite the rapid increase of female labour market participation in the 1960s, the proportion of people employed in the service sector remained quite low. At the end of the 1980s, the proportion of people employed in finance and insurance was quite small, and the percentage of employees in manufacturing and agriculture was large (Ahde and Rajasalu, 1993). The proportion of blue-collar workers (especially industrial and agricultural workers) in the labour force was much larger than in the developed European countries.

The policy of full employment meant not only an absolute guarantee of employment but also strong job security, as dismissals were exceedingly rare. Leaving a job was almost exclusively voluntary, as the closed employment relationship made it impossible to dismiss workers. As the level of employment protection was very high, jobs were stable, and the shortage of labour, not jobs, was dominant (Helemäe and Saar, 2011).

### **The post-socialist period**

#### *Gender culture and welfare state*

At the beginning of the 1990s in Estonia, there was a call for a return to the gender ethos of the 1930s, with its focus on maternalist policies and the

re-domestication of women (Põldsaar, 2008). This shift can be interpreted as a rejection of Soviet-style gender equality, and it was consistent with the general political attitude in Estonia, which was to re-establish the pre-war state (Narusk, 1995). However, returning to the past traditional gender roles proved impracticable for several reasons. The male breadwinner model was economically unsuitable for many families, in which women's labour force participation was necessary for family survival. The traditional gender roles were also eroded by the transformation of the Estonian value system towards greater achievement, which encouraged both men and women to pursue success in careers and public life (Vihalemm and Kalmus, 2008). However, gender role attitudes among the Estonian population have remained quite traditional compared with most European countries (Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, 2006). As a concept, gender equality remains something alien to most Estonian people (Põldsaar, 2008). This concept is associated with the Soviet period, and the desire to leave the Soviet legacy behind means that gender equality is interpreted as a remnant of the socialist period. The regulations concerning gender equality are presented as potentially restricting business freedom and profits, as well as a sign of government interference going against the neoliberal ethos that dominated Estonian politics during the two decades of independence.

The network of childcare institutions was reduced in the 1990s, especially with regard to places for children under three, while parents were given the right to take parental leave until their child reached the age of three (Saar and Lindemann, 2008). This meant that working women were quite likely to stay at home for a considerable period of time in connection with having a child, but since part-time work was comparatively rare, they either stayed home full-time or worked full-time. The otherwise quite liberal Estonian welfare system has aspects of familistic regimes, including one of the longest paid maternity leaves (Helemäe and Saar, 2006). However, the temporary exclusion of women from the labour market was not accompanied by the flexibility necessary for balancing work and family life (Roosalu, 2007, 2008; Kazjula and Roosalu, 2010; Roosalu and Täht, 2010).

### *The education system*

The social changes of the early 1990s left the education system relatively intact compared with other institutions, as it retained a similar degree of stratification to the Soviet period, although the proportion of basic school graduates opting for a vocational track decreased somewhat (Saar, 2010). During the 1990s, Estonian higher education underwent rapid expansion, and this was accompanied by differentiation. Among the most notable tendencies in higher education was the increasing number of female students; in the 1993/94 academic year 51 per cent of all students were women, and this figure had grown to 60 per cent by 2010/11 (Tönisson, 2011). Of those who graduated from university in 2009, more than two-thirds (69 per cent)

were women, which is more than in any other developed country (50–60 per cent). There was also a strong gender differentiation in terms of subject area. Men still dominated in engineering, manufacturing and technology (although the proportion of women has been increasing), and in sciences, where the proportion of men has remained more or less static since 2000. In recent years, the proportion of women in services and in health and welfare has been increasing particularly rapidly (Saar and Möttus, 2013).

### *The labour market*

The 1990s were characterized by a strong fall in the employment rate. Estonia experienced a ‘passive’ structural change towards a service economy, which was not so much a result of real growth in the service sector as, rather, due to the enormous shrinkage of the primary and secondary sectors. The service sector’s share of total employment increased from 41.8 per cent in 1990 to 60.7 per cent in 2005 (Saar and Lindemann, 2008).

This brought potential advantages for women, who had been disproportionately employed in the service sector during the Soviet period. Fodor (1997) has even suggested that in the era of globalization educated women should be the winners, because service jobs are becoming more important. However, despite this advantageous starting position for women, men were the winners in a new situation: their share in expanding ‘female’ sectors increased rapidly. The female activity rate remained roughly 10 per cent lower than that of men (Saar and Lindemann, 2008). Another potentially favourable factor for women was the increase in the returns to education. As there were, and are still, fewer men than women with at least secondary education, in terms of competition in the labour market, those men are in a much better situation than women with secondary education (Veldre, 2007). Vertical gender segregation increased at the beginning of the 1990s, but after that decreased somewhat and stabilized (Vöörmann, 2009). The index of horizontal gender segregation decreased slightly, but then started to increase again (Narusk, 1995; Vöörmann, 2009).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that general labour market regulations and hiring and firing rules in Estonia are quite liberal (OECD, 2003). In the strict legal sense, this is not always the case, but it is true when considering the application of these regulations (see also Eamets and Masso, 2005).

### **Data and method**

The Estonian Social Survey (ESS) was established in the framework of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC) project, with the main aim of providing information on social exclusion and income. The nationally representative sample of households randomly selected from the updated Population Census 2000 database



Table 15.1 Compared birth cohorts in Estonia

Birth cohort	N	Historical period when the birth cohort reached 30 years
1940–49	781	1970–79
1950–59	1,001	1980–89
1960–74	888	1990–2004

initially included approximately 4,500 households and 10,000 individuals. All household members aged 15 years or older were interviewed. In total, 3,996 households and 8,906 individuals were interviewed. The response rate was 89 per cent.

In ESS 2004, there is a separate section providing an overview of the events in an individual's life, such as studies, family, working life, and changes of place of residence. The ESS data enabled us to analyse and compare the cohorts at exact points of their life course. In this chapter, we analyse educational transitions and educational attainment for four birth cohorts between 1940 and 1985 and occupational attainment for three birth cohorts between 1940 and 1974, comparing their educational and occupational attainment at the age of 30 by gender (see Table 15.1).

The information on educational attainment is retrospective, starting with the first choice after basic school graduation. The alternatives are to leave school or to begin studies at a general secondary school, at a specialized secondary school (until 1997) or at a vocational secondary school. After the second transition point, graduation from a secondary education institution, there are four choices: to leave school or to begin studies at a vocational school, at a specialized secondary school (until 1997) or at a higher education institution. Students were followed up until 2004 (that is, when the youngest respondents were 20 years old). For all choices, we know which track the student chose. The respondents' educational attainment was coded into six categories: (i) primary education; (ii) basic education; (iii) vocational education; (iv) general secondary education; (v) specialized secondary education; and (vi) higher education.

We included social origin in the logistic regression models as the control variable. Social origin is measured as the higher of the mother's and father's social class. The occupations of the respondents and their parents were converted from their original codes in the three-digit version of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) to a five-category version: managers; professionals; semi-professionals; clerks and service workers; and blue-collar workers. This class schema captured the essential features of social stratification in socialist and post-socialist countries.

We present dissimilarity indices to unravel segregation and track its change over time. The Duncan dissimilarity index, despite its limitations,

is the most frequently used and clearly understood. The index value can be readily interpreted to indicate the percentage of the female (or male) labour force (or educational track) that would have to change occupation (or track) in order for the segregation to disappear. We used logistic models that included social origin, birth cohort and gender as explanatory variables. Trends in the impact of gender were tested by the inclusion in the model of the interaction of gender and cohort.

## Results

### **Educational attainment and educational transitions**

During the Soviet period, the share of youngsters who left the education system after obtaining basic education was decreasing and was similar among men and women. However, this trend had changed by the youngest cohort (1975–85), in which the proportion of those who had not continued with education after obtaining basic education was higher compared with the two previous cohorts, and a clear gender difference had emerged: 13 per cent of men and 7 per cent of women did not move on to the next level of education. As to transitions from basic education, there were clear gender differences in educational behaviour after obtaining basic education in all studied cohorts (Table 15.2). Girls tended to stay at general secondary school more often than boys, while boys left for vocational or specialized secondary schools more often than girls. Dissimilarity indexes show that gender differences in destinations of transitions from basic education were substantial, and varied to some extent across cohorts, but there was no clear trend in these fluctuations.

The results of the multinomial logistic regression, in which social origin was included as the control variable, supported the conclusion above: boys were more likely to leave general school (Table 15.3). In all but the 1950–59 cohort, the destinations of all possible transitions (and leaving the education system) compared with the transition to general secondary school were more likely for boys than for girls. For the birth cohort 1950–59, the only statistically significant gender difference in pathways after basic education was the transition to vocational school compared with the transition to general secondary school. Thus, Table 15.3 shows that birth cohorts differed in terms of which kind of transition from basic education compared with the transition to general secondary school, which turns out to be over-represented among boys compared with girls. Gender differences in the probability of interrupting studies after graduation from basic school have increased for the youngest cohort. The boys' probability of interruption was significantly higher than the girls' probability. However, the overall gender effect on the transitions from basic education was hardly different across cohorts: the R square of model with interactions of gender and cohort was almost the same as that of the model without interactions (see Table A.15.1).

Table 15.2 Transition, in Estonia, from basic education to secondary education by cohort and gender (%)

Birth cohort	Gender	Transition from basic education				Dissimilarity index
		No transition	... to vocational secondary school	... to specialized secondary school	... to general secondary school	
1940–49	Men	15	31	19	34	0.200
	Women	15	15	16	55	
1950–59	Men	6	37	14	44	0.165
	Women	6	20	16	58	
1960–74	Men	6	33	19	42	0.170
	Women	4	22	15	59	
1975–85	Men	13	27	10	51	0.195
	Women	7	18	5	70	

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004, 2005.

Table 15.3 Gender effect on transitions, in Estonia, from basic education to secondary education, multinomial logistic regression<sup>1</sup> (odds ratios)

Birth cohort	Transition from basic education <sup>2</sup>		
	No transition	... to vocational secondary school	... to specialized secondary school
All cohorts	1.66***	2.51***	1.76***
1940–49	1.79***	3.83***	1.98***
1950–59	1.56	2.82***	1.18
1960–74	1.96***	2.06***	1.78***
1975–85	2.86***	2.29***	3.75***

Notes: \*\*\*Significant at level < 0.001.

<sup>1</sup>The model includes social origin as the control variable.

<sup>2</sup>Reference group: transition from basic education to general secondary school.

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004, 2005.

Transitions from general secondary school were less gender specific than those from basic education (Table 15.4). The dissimilarity index showed that the range of gender differences in post-secondary educational transitions was widest for the cohort 1960–74 (due both to the higher percentage of boys who left the education system after secondary education compared with girls, and to the higher percentage of girls who proceeded to vocational or specialized secondary school). At the same time, gender differences in terms of transition to higher education were minor. The results of the logistic analysis supported this conclusion. The R square of the model with interactions

*Table 15.4* Transition, in Estonia, from general secondary education to tertiary education (%)

Birth cohort	Gender	Transition from general secondary education			Dissimilarity index
		No transition	... to vocational or secondary specialized school	... to higher education institution	
1940–49	Men	34	25	41	0.060
	Women	38	27	35	
1950–59	Men	39	17	44	0.130
	Women	33	30	37	
1960–74	Men	45	17	38	0.185
	Women	31	36	34	
1975–85	Men	31	14	55	0.070
	Women	24	19	57	

*Source:* Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004, 2005.

of gender and cohort was almost the same as that of the model without interactions (Table A.15.1). There were no gender differences in the odds ratios of transitions from general secondary school to higher education across all birth cohorts (Table A.15.2).

Due to the highly gendered differentiation of educational paths after basic education, there were substantial differences between cohorts in terms of the attained level of education as well as the related gender differences (Table 15.5). For all cohorts, the main gender differences were related to the higher share of men with vocational secondary education compared with women. Due to the high probability of transition from general secondary education to higher education for both girls and boys, and given the over-representation of girls in general secondary education, in all cohorts there was a higher proportion of women than men with higher education. It is interesting that these gender differences were higher in the cohort 1960–74 than in previous cohorts. Time will tell whether the same will be true for the youngest cohort (born in 1975–85) by the time they reach 30 years old. At the time of the survey, a substantial proportion of them were still in the education system. The gender differences in the attainment of higher education in the 1975–85 cohort will be important for the conclusions about whether the increased gender difference in the 1960–74 cohort is about cohort or (post-Soviet) period effect. There were important gender differences at the middle of the educational scale, that is, within groups with vocational secondary and specialized secondary education. Boys have a higher probability of undertaking vocational or specialized secondary education on the basis of basic education, while girls have a higher probability of undertaking general secondary education.

Table 15.5 Educational level, in Estonia, by cohort and gender (%)

Birth cohort	Gender	Educational level						No. of respondents	Dissimilarity index		
		Primary		Specialized secondary		Higher					
		Basic	General secondary	Vocational secondary	Specialized secondary	Through general secondary school	Through vocational or specialized secondary school			Total	
1940-49	Men	3	19	13	32	18	12	3	15	545	0.190
	Women	4	18	23	14	22	17	2	19	686	
1950-59	Men	1	7	21	37	17	16	2	18	723	0.155
	Women	1	8	22	21	26	21	1	22	902	
1960-74	Men	1	10	22	36	18	11	1	12	990	0.150
	Women	1	6	22	26	27	18	1	19	1143	
1975-85	Men	5	27	31	24	7	5	0	5	896	0.140
	Women	1	24	40	17	7	10	0	10	835	

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004, 2005.

As a result, the level of education of men was lower than that of women, and gender differences in educational attainment were substantial in all cohorts. There were only small changes in the extent of gender differences in educational attainment across cohorts, despite the clearly different patterns of the overall distribution of education within the cohorts.

So, the gender differences in educational attainment are the complex outcome of the interaction of opportunities that students face after graduating from basic and general secondary education. At the point of graduation from basic school, the main difference is to stay or not to stay at general school. The girls' choice was to tend to stay, while boys' choice was to tend to leave and to proceed to vocational school. The result was the high level of gender differences over all cohorts. Only a small increase in gender differences can be seen in the youngest cohort compared with the oldest cohort (see dissimilarity indexes in Table 15.2). At the point of graduation from general secondary school, the main question was whether or not to go on to higher education, and this question was answered by girls and boys in a rather similar way across all cohorts. At this point, gender differences in educational paths revealed themselves among those who did not proceed in higher education. Across all cohorts, girls more often than boys took up the vocational or specialized secondary school options, while boys more often than girls quit the education system, but the extent of these differences varied across cohorts. This was a larger variation than the variation of gender differences across cohorts in transition from basic school. Thus, temporal changes in terms of gender differences in educational paths occurred, first of all, at the point of transition from secondary education. However, given that the education system is highly gender selective at the earlier point, that is, graduation from basic school, these changes had only a modest impact on the overall high gender differences in educational paths and attainment. Moreover, gender differences were particularly high for the 1960–74 cohort, contributing to increasing the gender gap, not decreasing it. While women increasingly tend to opt to continue their studies after general secondary school, the men of the 1960–74 cohort had the lowest rate of transition to higher education and the highest rate of no transition.

All in all, it seems that there was no stable trend of convergence or divergence of gender differences in either educational transitions or educational attainment. We concluded that, while the overall pattern of educational attainment tends to be influenced by the changes in the Estonian education system, these changes did not seem to change gender balance or misbalance, in terms of either educational transitions or attained levels of education. The case of the youngest cohort showed what was changing: first of all, it was the reaction of the whole cohort to the altering circumstances, while the gendered peculiarities of this reaction remained the same.

### Occupational attainment

As mentioned above, it is suggested that the expansion of higher education contributed to rebalancing the workforce towards female jobs, as well as increasing gender segregation. However, the data in Table 15.6 showed that the overall picture in Estonia has tended to be quite stable in terms of both the occupational structure of cohorts at 30 years old and their gendered distribution.

At the same time, Table 15.7 shows that there were certain changes in the gender differences in the way occupational distribution matched educational attainment. However, just as in the case of education, there are no signs of an overall trend towards decreasing or increasing gender differences over successive cohorts. For all cohorts, gender differences in occupational attainment were the lowest at the extremes of the educational scale (primary or basic education at one end and higher education at the other). In both cases, this is due to the concentration of the employment of the respective educational groups at the poles of the occupational structure. This pattern is shown most clearly in the youngest cohort. The situation of the occupational attainment of people with intermediate levels of education was more complex. Here, gender differences were higher than at the extremes of the educational scale in all cohorts, but there was no clear change across cohorts.

Given the widely discussed concern about the glass ceiling that women face when trying to succeed professionally, the way women's advantage in terms of educational attainment turns into disadvantage in the labour market was of special interest. We focused on the vertical gender differences, that is, the under-representation of women in high-status occupations, particularly in the case of women who have obtained higher education. The data in Table 15.6 provided us with an argument to compare the youngest cohort with the birth cohorts 1940–59 (those born in, who learned during, and were 30 years old in Soviet times).

First of all, Table 15.8 reminds us that the cohorts were very similar in terms of their occupational attainment by 30 years of age. For both cohorts, higher education was a very important precondition for holding a managerial or professional position: only one in ten working members of the cohorts held top positions without having obtained higher education. At the same time, it seems that people without higher education in the youngest cohort were slightly more successful compared with the same category in the older cohort. As a result, compared with the older cohort, fewer women who had obtained higher education in the younger cohort secured professional positions and fewer men who had undertaken higher education secured managerial positions. Correspondingly, the over-representation of men in managerial positions decreased: while in the 'Soviet cohort' the percentage of men who were managers was three times as high as that of women, in the post-Soviet cohort this ratio was two.

Table 15.6 Occupational structure, in Estonia, for 30-year-olds by cohort and gender (%)

Birth cohort	Gender	Occupational group					N	Dissimilarity index
		Managers	Professionals	Semi-professionals	Clerks, service workers	Blue collars		
1940–49	Men	13	6	8	2	71	534	0.445
	Women	9	14	25	22	30	639	
1950–59	Men	13	7	5	2	73	712	0.495
	Women	8	14	26	23	29	838	
1960–74	Men	13	5	8	6	68	902	0.474
	Women	9	12	25	29	25	910	

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Survey 2004.



Table 15.7 Gender differences, in Estonia, in occupational attainment of educational groups (dissimilarity indexes)

	Educational level				
	Primary or basic	General secondary	Vocational	Specialized secondary	Higher
Cohort 1940–49	0.205	0.612	0.530	0.453	0.391
Cohort 1950–59	0.300	0.508	0.498	0.554	0.396
Cohort 1960–74	0.187	0.535	0.451	0.511	0.307

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Survey 2004.

Table 15.8 Attainment of high-level occupational position, in Estonia, by 30-year-olds, depending on having attained higher education or not (%)

Cohort	Level of education	Gender	Manager	Professional	Other occupation	Total
1940–59	Without higher education	Men	7	1	92	100
		Women	7	2	91	100
	Higher education	Men	46	34	20	100
		Women	15	61	24	100
	All	Men	13	6	81	100
		Women	9	14	77	100
1960–74	Without higher education	Men	10	1	89	100
		Women	7	3	90	100
	Higher education	Men	37	33	30	100
		Women	17	52	31	100
	All	Men	13	5	82	100
		Women	9	13	79	100

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Survey 2004.

Thus, the conclusion in terms of vertical gender segregation depends on the definition of a high-status occupation. Women were under-represented among managers, but they were over-represented among professionals. The results of the logistic regression models that include controls for social origin confirmed this for both cohorts (Table 15.9). When both managers and professionals were taken into account, women were represented to the same extent as men. This held true for people with and without higher education and for both post-Soviet and Soviet cohorts.

*Table 15.9* Gender effect on managerial or professional position, in Estonia, binary logistic regression<sup>1</sup> (odds ratios)

	Managers	Professionals
Cohort 1940–59	1.36 <sup>+</sup>	0.52**
Cohort 1960–74	1.94***	0.55*

*Notes:* <sup>1</sup>In addition to cohort and gender, the model includes level of education (lower than higher versus higher education) and social origin.

\*\*\* Significant at level  $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* Significant at level  $p < 0.01$ ; \* Significant at level  $p < 0.05$ ; + Significant at level  $p < 0.1$ .

*Source:* Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004.

*Table 15.10* Variation of gender effect on attainment of top occupational positions, in Estonia, by cohort and education (binary logistic regressions)

	Nagelkerke R square
Attainment of managerial position	
Basic model <sup>1</sup>	0.218***
Basic model + cohort × gender	0.219***
Basic model + gender × education	0.225***
Attainment of professional position	
Basic model <sup>2</sup>	0.634***
Basic model + cohort × gender	0.635***
Basic model + gender × education	0.634***

*Notes:* <sup>1</sup>The basic model includes cohort, level of education (lower than higher versus higher education), social origin and gender.

<sup>2</sup>The basic model includes cohort, level of education (lower than higher versus higher education), social origin and gender.

\*\*\* Significant at level 0.001.

*Source:* Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004.

The results of the logistic regression models, presented in Table 15.10, confirm the inferences made from the cross-tables: gender differences in the probability of attaining managerial or professional positions did not differ between cohorts.

At the same time, gender interaction with education (measured here as whether or not the individual has obtained higher education) matters (in that it added descriptive power to the model and was statistically important). Returns to higher education in terms of the attainment of managerial positions were substantially higher for men than for women. Therefore, in terms of managerial positions, our analysis confirmed the existence of the glass ceiling.

## Conclusions

In all the cohorts examined, girls had a higher chance of obtaining higher education, due to the fact that they were more likely to undertake their secondary education in a general school. For boys, vocational schools presented an attractive alternative to prolonged learning after the attainment of basic education. There are a number of reasons for this gender-specific pattern in secondary education. First, the income policy worked in favour of manual workers. Second, more programmes were created for boys than for girls in vocational schools, especially those based on basic education. However, gendered transition to secondary education was strongly associated with gender-specific transitions to higher education. Our results also indicated that for the cohorts born from 1940 to 1974 the selection process in the education system was organized differently for boys and girls. For boys, the first crossroads of the education system (graduation from basic education) tended to be of decisive importance, while for girls the selection proceeded in a more continuous way by transition to the next educational level (see also Saar, 1997). This pattern has changed for the youngest cohort (born in 1975–85): boys who graduated from general secondary school have lost their advantage in their transition to higher education. If this ‘transitional’ disadvantage is followed by a disadvantage in the rate of ‘higher education attainment’ among men, the outcome will be an increased gender gap compared with previous cohorts and an overall trend of (slightly) increasing gender differences in the attainment of higher education in the younger cohorts compared with older ones.

The educational advantage of women is helpful in the labour market for securing senior positions. Previous studies show that women with tertiary education secure lower positions compared with men (Gangl and Müller, 2003). Our results were in line with this conclusion with regard to securing managerial positions. In this sense, the glass ceiling did exist in Soviet Estonia and does exist in post-Soviet Estonia. Gender differences in the returns to higher education, in terms of securing managerial positions, are lower in the birth cohorts 1960–74 than the Soviet-period cohorts (1940–59). Interestingly, this was due to the decreasing returns to higher education among men in the post-Soviet cohort 1960–74 compared with men in the Soviet cohorts. That is, the proportion of men who secured managerial positions among those without higher education was higher in the younger cohort than in the Soviet-period cohorts, indicating the appearance of new paths to managerial positions – independent of having obtained higher education.

At the same time, the proportion of women employed as professionals is higher than among men, so if both managerial and professional positions are taken into account, we cannot refer to vertical gender segregation. An

important question for further analysis is: to what extent might the different composition of managerial versus professional positions among people with higher education be explained by horizontal segregation and more hierarchical occupational structures, that is, a higher proportion of managerial positions in the 'male' sectors than the 'female' sectors?

There has been an assumption that the faster educational expansion among women might have put them at a greater risk of educational inflation (displacement processes). Our results did not confirm this hypothesis. Gender differences were larger for those with secondary education (general or vocational).

To reveal the mechanisms behind these processes, further research should take into account horizontal gender segregation both within educational domains (the selected field of study) and between employment sectors. Further research should also reveal the role of public sector employment and cultural factors in the existence of the glass ceiling in post-Soviet countries. The question of whether women do not consider 'boss-jobs' to be an option for women, or whether they just seek more secure jobs in sectors where 'managerial' positions are structurally limited, remains to be answered.

## Appendix

*Table A.15.1* Variation of gender effect on educational transitions, in Estonia, by cohort (binary logistic regressions)

	Nagelkerke R square
Transition from basic education to secondary education	
Basic model <sup>1</sup>	0.176***
Basic model + cohort × gender	0.183***
Transition from secondary education to higher education	
Basic model <sup>2</sup>	0.249***
Basic model + cohort × gender	0.250***

*Notes:* <sup>1</sup>The basic model includes cohort, social origin and gender.

<sup>2</sup>The basic model includes cohort, social origin, type of secondary education and gender.

\*\*\*Significant at level < 0.001.

*Source:* Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004, 2005.

Table A.15.2 Gender effect on transitions from secondary education to higher education, in Estonia, binary logistic regression<sup>1</sup> (odds ratios)

All cohorts	1.13
Cohort 1940–49	1.26
Cohort 1950–59	1.32
Cohort 1960–74	1.07
Cohort 1975–85	0.90

Note: <sup>1</sup>The model includes social origin as the control variable.

Source: Own calculations based on Estonian Social Surveys 2004, 2005.

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# 16

## Polish Women for Gender Equality: Leaders of Women's Movements on Problems of Female Employees

*Stawomira Kamińska-Berezowska*

### Introduction

The way women in Poland and worldwide entered the labour market differed from the way men entered the labour market. Trade unions, belonging to the so-called 'old social movements' (Offe, 2005) were established as organizations mainly for men, and thus mainly took care of their interests.

Feminist and women's movements mainly raised the issues of improving employment and social position. However, despite their efforts and struggles, even a basic degree of equality between men and women could not be achieved until a law was passed. Fidelis (2010) points out that socialist and post-socialist workplace trade unions have each used their own rhetoric and policies to construct and reshape the concept of gender in ways that would help maintain the traditional gendered division of work. Even when joining forces on women's issues, such as in limiting women's access to certain jobs on health or physical grounds, men were more often than not following their self-interests as a privileged group of male workers (for example, Milkman, 1987). A recent study based on expert interviews with trade union leaders and company-level women unionists in both the private and the public sector (Mrozowicki and Trawińska, 2013) suggests that women's efforts to reclaim control over their working lives create a grass-roots potential to revitalize trade unions. However, these developments are constrained by cultural and organizational factors that limit the full access of women to decision-making bodies, even in the largest Polish trade union confederations.

The aim of this chapter is to further analyse the approach of Polish women's organizations towards women's issues in the labour market.



The nature of activity and struggle for gender equality can be accounted for by the historical and economic determinants affecting a united identity. In Poland, due to the long period when the country was not independent, priority was given to the struggle to keep the country's identity and regain independence. Maria Janion (1996) considers that Polish literature, and poetry in particular, also supported this idea. Among other things, this is illustrated by the concept of 'the Polish Mother' sacrificing her own existence and her children for the sake of her country. Thus, to some extent, history has been determined by the priority of national identity over gender identity. After 123 years, Poland regained its independence in 1918, and Polish women, as a result of their efforts and the support of Marshal Pilsudski, gained voting rights. This was a significant step towards gender equality, but the process was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II, which resulted in regaining independence once again becoming the Polish priority. After the war, Poland was influenced by communist Russia, although the authorities declared both the country's independence and full gender equality. However, metaphorically speaking, it was Orwell's language, in which words were deprived of their real significance and meaning. The situation was similar in other post-communist countries, and this is, in Raewyn Connell's (2013) view, why it is so difficult to promote and implement the ideas of the equality of men and women in these countries.

As a result of the efforts of a number of people, in particular those involved in the social movement *Solidarność* (Solidarity), after 1989 Poland began another period in its history, and set an example of regaining freedom to other countries dependent on communist Russia. With hindsight, it can be observed that the struggle united men and women, and the issues of gender equality were of secondary importance (Penn, 2003). For a long time the Polish struggle for national identity was supported by Catholic identity, because the vast majority of the Polish people were Catholics (Tymowski et al., 1991). The pilgrimages of John Paul II, the Polish pope elected in 1978, to Poland were a significant source of support in the struggle for national independence. These pilgrimages provided spiritual support and an alternative to the communist ideology, and also enabled millions of people to realize their actual existence and potential. The social teachings of the Church are still referred to by Solidarity – one of the biggest trade unions. This causes a certain moral conservatism, sometimes interpreted as a kind of obstacle to the full partnership of men and women (Środa, 2009). Thus, due to historical determinants, national and religious identity took priority over gender issues.

My considerations in this chapter focus on the question of whether, 20 years after the Polish political and economic transformation, the issue of gender equality in the labour market can finally be treated seriously, and, if so, is this at last the time for its implementation and monitoring? The key issue analysed in this chapter is: how do female leaders of women's

organizations and initiatives perceive the current market-related problems of women? I have narrowed my sample to cover organizations in the Silesia district. The considerations in this chapter are based on qualitative sociological research.

## **General characteristics of women's employment situation in Poland**

Contemporary statistical analyses systematically show women's lower professional levels, higher unemployment rates in all age categories, lower remuneration and more difficulties with promotion (Lisowska, 2008; Mazur-Łuczak, 2010).

### **Unemployment and equal treatment**

The introduction of the market economy in Poland led to a number of new, long-awaited opportunities, but it was also connected with some risks to everyday existence. On the whole, women were more affected by the risks and dangers related to the neoliberal market rules, so they are regarded as a losing group, or, at least, the group encountering most difficulties (Desperak, 2009). First of all, women were more affected by unemployment, which was particularly conspicuous throughout the whole period after 1989. The most significant differences between men's and women's unemployment rates were observed during the first period of the transformation in the 1990s and from 2000 to 2001. These differences remained, although reducing: for example, in the fourth quarter of 2012 the unemployment rate was 11.1 per cent for men and 9.3 per cent for women (Aktywność ekonomiczna, GUS, 2013: 42). In the Silesia district, the highly urbanized Polish region dominated by mining and heavy industry, unemployment figures expressed in absolute numbers have been particularly high. Restructuring programmes in this district focused mainly on mining, where they were particularly painful due to large-scale lay-offs. With hindsight, it can be observed that the protection programmes accompanying restructuring for employees who were made redundant in mining were addressed mostly to men. This was because the majority of women in the restructured mines were administrative workers, not employed in the underground mining positions that were regarded as the priority in the protection programmes (Wódcz and Klimczak-Ziółek, 2010).

The first protection programmes for long-term administrative workers were seriously delayed. Consequently, during the first period of transformation, female employees who were made redundant after long-term employment in the socialist economy had to cope with a new reality and search for new sources of income on their own.

Furthermore, support for feminized light industry was not given priority, although it was also forced to undergo restructuring and adapt to the

competitive rules of the market economy. Therefore, the causes of the higher unemployment rates of women were complex and varied, because they related to both economic factors and social awareness. The latter refers to a negative stereotype of women, seen as having alternative sources of income, being less productive or being less interested in work because of being a wife and/or mother (Reszke, 1999). Due to these stereotypes, employers did not treat female job applicants or current employees as individual candidates, but saw them as members of a category for whom professional work was less important. In addition to this, women's professional functioning at work became more difficult because of the limited care services that accompanied the development of the market economy (Drozdowski, 2002). To a large extent, the responsibility for bringing up children and taking care of the elderly and dependants was treated by the state as an individual problem of families (Waniek, 2010). Such an approach to social policy was in accordance with the public promotion of neoliberal discourse, and, at the same time, it criticized the achievements of the welfare state.

### **Gender wage gap and segregation**

Another characteristic aspect of women's employment was their lower remuneration. Data from the Main Statistical Office (GUS) showed that women's average gross remuneration, for example, in 2010 was 3,256.06 Polish *złoty* (PLN), whereas men earned 3,831.73 PLN (Rocznik Statystyczny; GUS, 2012: 235). Thus, average monthly, annual and, consequently, total lifetime income would be markedly lower for women than for men. The lower income cannot be justified by women's level of education, which was comparable to men's, though it was more humanities-oriented. To a certain extent, it could be explained by the higher part-time employment rates for women. In the fourth quarter of 2012, 137,000 men and 206,000 women were part-time employees (Aktywność ekonomiczna, GUS, 2013: 39). Another explanation for women's lower remuneration could be horizontal segmentation in the less profitable sectors and professions. In Poland, the list of feminized professions includes jobs almost symbolic of feminization, such as nurses or teachers. As for the feminized sectors, these include education, the health service and retail. Typical male professions include miners and electricians, and the masculinized sectors are connected with mining, construction and transport (Domański, 2011; Sarata, 2011). The reasons for horizontal segregation involve cultural determinants such as school education and different behaviour patterns that are 'appropriate' for each gender.

Women's employment problems are also related to the glass ceiling, that is, a set of barriers to accessing the highest positions of authority, in economic, political, scientific and social organizations. Polish literature on the subject provides a detailed description of this problem (Titkow, 2003), but it has still not been satisfactorily solved. The Polish parliament made an

attempt to solve this problem by implementing a quota system that would guarantee at least 35 per cent of women's representation on the electoral lists of all political parties running for parliamentary seats. However, the quota system did not prove effective without the obligatory alternation of women's and men's names on electoral lists. Still, the fact that should be emphasized is that the system was implemented due to women's initiatives, namely the Women's Congress.

### **Contraception, fertility and childcare**

The higher women's unemployment rate, lower remuneration, concentration in less profitable sectors and positions, and limited access to higher authority positions contribute to the feminization of poverty. In addition, it is affected by the increase in the number of one-parent families. In Poland, women bear the burden of parental duties and household jobs (Titkow et al., 2004), and in most cases in one-parent families women usually take care of children.

Another important factor affecting women's presence in the labour market is access to contraceptives and reproduction laws, because these enable women to control their own sexuality. After 1989, Poland introduced one of the most restrictive laws in Europe limiting abortion, colloquially called the 'anti-abortion law'. This happened despite the protests of women's groups in trade unions, including the Women's Section within NSZZ *Solidarność* (Solidarity trade unions) led by Małgorzata Tarasiewicz (1993). In the process of constructing a new capitalist economic deal, reference was made to traditional unequal gender relations set by the patriarchal deal. Raewynn Connell (2013) states that this was also typical of other post-communist countries and was seen as a way of going back to 'normal'. A Polish researcher, Marta Trawińska (2007), observes that there are still not enough analyses investigating mutual relationships between neoliberalism and patriarchy. The introduction of the anti-abortion law became one of the motivating forces for the renaissance of the Polish women's movement. Currently, Poland faces two major problems: an ageing society and a total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.382 (Rocznik Statystyczny, 2011: 194). The low TFR and the ageing society pose problems for the development of the economy, but so far no effective incentive for women to have more children has been created in Poland. Women, however, are unwilling to have more children, and they demonstrate in this way that they are not interested in bearing the personal costs leading to the loss of attractive work positions or opportunities for self-realization or being eliminated from the market. The quoted fertility rates suggest that it is not possible to effectively guarantee increased reproduction through restrictive limitation of legal abortion, which is still in force, despite the protests of women's organizations and movements (Czerwińska and Piotrowska, 2009).

## Studying views of female leaders of women's movements – Methodological issues

Female leaders of women's organizations and initiatives differ in the scope of their interests, ideology and types of activity, and the variety of their viewpoints is the topic of this chapter.

Investigating social movements is not a simple task, as, for example, contacting appropriate respondents poses a problem (Malinowska, 2002). One of the basic problems in my research was connected with the problem of how to determine who represents the female leaders of the women's movement in the Silesia district, and which formal and informal organizations constitute this movement. I followed theoretical sampling, which considered a variety of types of organizations as well as variety by education, age and family status among the interviewed women. I decided to contact well-known participants of the women's movements in Silesia, whose activities are commonly known and described in the feminist press although they are mainly involved in the activities of informal women's groups.

The choice of female respondents was made on the basis of the data provided in the *Information Bulletin on Women's Organizations and Initiatives in Poland* (FCPK, 2005). The purpose was to select female leaders of women's organizations and initiatives in the Silesia district who focused on supporting women in the labour market as one of their activities. In this way, representatives of the following 13 organizations were reached: *Demokratyczna Unia Kobiet* (Democratic Union of Women), *Dąbrowskie Stowarzyszenie Rodzin w Kryzysie* (Dąbrowa Association of Families in Crisis), *Liga Kobiet Polskich* (Polish Women's League), *Stowarzyszenie im. Marii Niepokalanej na Rzecz Pomocy Dziewczętom i Kobietom* (St Mary's Association for Helping Girls and Women), *Zabrzańskie Stowarzyszenie Kobiet i ich Rodzin* (Association of Women and Their Families in Zabrze), *Stowarzyszenie Aktywne Kobiety* (Active Women Association), *Kongres Kobiet* (Women's Congress), *Stowarzyszenie Kobiety Obudźcie się* (Women 'Wake up' Association), *Koło Gospodyń Wiejskich* (Rural Women Circle), *Centrum Wspierania Dzieci i Dorosłych* (Confidence Support Centre for Children and Adults), *Śląska Strefa Gender* (Silesian Gender Zone), *Lady Zone* and *Grupa Inicjatyw Genderowych* (Group for Gender Initiatives). From my research sample I deliberately excluded one of the activists, who supported the women's movement but was formally involved in one of the trade unions and not the movement that I sampled. After the selection of respondents, 34 unstructured thematic interviews were conducted.

Steinar Kvale (2010) states that it is very important to conduct thematic interviews appropriately. Therefore, I conducted some of them personally, and the rest were conducted by specially trained students of the Sociology Department at the University of Silesia in Katowice. The leaders of

particular organizations were contacted, and they selected the activists to be interviewed. All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The data was collected in 2010–11. From the very beginning, the research was assumed not to be representative of all women's organizations and initiatives in Silesia because its scope only covered organizations and initiatives interested in supporting women's professional activity in the labour market.

The ages of the women participating in the research varied ( $N=34$ ), but participants aged over 40 years accounted for the majority (six participants aged over 60 years, ten participants 50–59, nine participants 40–49, eight participants 30–39 and one under 29). There was a marked dominance of participants who had undertaken higher education (two participants had PhDs, 17 had Master's degrees, six Bachelor's degrees and only nine participants had not completed higher education; of the latter nine respondents, six had completed secondary education and three had vocational education). Despite involvement in women's organizations and initiatives, the majority of participants were not involved in trade union activity. Only 11 respondents were members of a trade union, while 23 of them were not. There were 22 married respondents, eight were single women, two were widows, one was a divorcee and one was separated. Seven of the respondents did not have any children, 13 had one child, one had two children and three respondents had three or more children.

The research was generally approved by the majority of the leaders of the women's organizations and initiatives, although in one case more encouragement was needed to persuade the respondent to take part in the research, and in many cases there was a problem with setting the time and place for an interview. The difficulties connected with conducting qualitative research were compensated by the advantages, particularly that qualitative research allows concentration on and exploration of the ways of perceiving social reality by the respondents, and, thus, it is possible to make certain practices more 'visible', which might easily have been omitted in quantitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2009). Free thematic interviews are one of the most common techniques recommended, particularly when the research aims at gaining in-depth information on respondents' attitudes and behaviours. Thus, the interviews allowed more detailed insight into the nature of people's motivation. Babbie (2003) also emphasizes that qualitative research generally facilitates obtaining more reliable results, as it provides an opportunity to observe the nuances of people's attitudes and actions.

These topics considered in this chapter present only a part of the research conducted, and they focused on the respondents' perceptions of: lower levels of professional activity; women's employment problems and ways of preventing them; various approaches and perceptions of trade unions

and possibilities of cooperation with them; and an approach to celebrating Women's Day in March and setting a value on the word 'feminist'. For the analysis, I applied the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2009), and in this way, by applying appropriate coding, I identified categories for the collected statements. Therefore, in my further considerations, in accordance with the adopted methodology, I presented the categories of problems generated in coding but not their qualitative presentation; that is, I deliberately did not refer to quantitative data.

## **Women's employment problems as seen by female leaders of women's organizations**

### **Discourses explaining low labour market participation**

Generally, the female leaders participating in the research confirmed their awareness of this state of affairs in terms of women's employment in the labour market, but they also indicated a number of the observed determinants and mutual connections affecting it.

The female leaders of women's organizations who specialized in analysing employment problems were asked about the causes of women's lower activity in the labour market. The causes mentioned by respondents can be divided into the following categories of problems:

- difficulties connected with combining professional and family roles because raising children is still the responsibility of women;
- problems with finding and keeping a job because women are treated as a 'reserve army of employees' and they are offered jobs, or the jobs are lost, depending on the economic situation in the market;
- women's learned passivity, which they acquire in the process of socialization, directing their interests to private, not professional or public life;
- unwillingness of women to have a professional life if they have alternative ways of supporting themselves, and in this way creating a specific 'response' to their main responsibility for household functioning.

The categories of causes listed, referring to the lower professional activity of women, frequently overlapped, and the respondents strongly emphasized their cumulative nature. Their statements usually started with the question, well known in the literature on the subject, of contradictory family and professional roles, and they emphasized the unrealistic levels of activity expected of women. Due to the limitations of these considerations, I decided to quote only one of the statements emphasizing the contradictory roles of women.

One of the respondents referred to practicalities:

We had some different professional projects for women where in the project we took care of children, that was one of the form of support, then when the project was over, they were looking for a job, they couldn't leave children, they brought these children here to take care of them as they couldn't do anything about it. Erm, ... there were too few places for kids in kindergartens or kindergartens were open there only till 3 p.m. and, well ... Also women can't work shifts as they have to look after children as it is only women's duty. I think that here, the lack of men's involvement in upbringing children causes that women have a much lower position on the professional job market [...]. By all means, women want to work but they have no possibility because they have all sorts of household duties. They are overloaded. But, erm, ... well ...

I know only few women who don't want to work. Every woman would like to be independent, have her own money, erm, ... decide about her holidays and expenses. Well, it's not that ... simple. Sure, for sure it's good to try to increase women's activity but through guaranteeing women conditions which will make it possible as it's not the point to blame here anyone who does not work. This person doesn't work as ... , as there's no such a possibility or ... such a person has no such expectations. Some women stay at home with children to only or as much as possible take care of the home, for some this work means not much, for some it's a lot, but it's also because many people were brought up this way. But it's changing. I think that each woman would rather work. (R.7)<sup>1</sup>

The above statement emphasizes a common Polish problem of the malfunctioning of the policy referred to as 'pro-family', which, in fact, does not fulfil its role. The common problems that were mentioned in a number of the interviews included the lack of affordable nurseries and kindergartens providing satisfactory childcare. In the case of older children, there was a lack of after-school care facilities, and in the case of gymnasiums (that is, Polish school at the lower secondary level), a lack of hobby groups, as well as a lack of protection against potential forms of violence from peers in this age group. Women who decided to focus on raising children in the first stages of their lives could easily be trapped and removed from the labour market due to the necessity for already taking care of much older children. The issue of family and household duties had been marginalized in sociological considerations for a long time, but the recent research conducted by Anna Titkow, Danuta Duch-Krzysztozek and Bogusława Budrowska (2004) shows that it is still predominantly a problem for women, as they bear the main responsibility and burden in this area. It is worth noting that in Poland, after they have devoted time to taking care of young children who finally



become independent, women face another problem, that is, taking care of elderly dependent family members. Thus, in this context, as the respondents ironically said, the question is why women's activity is even so 'high', not so 'low'.

### **Functioning in the professional world**

Particular attention should be paid to the perception of the whole situation in the professional work market. In this area, the female leaders of women's organizations focused on the following categories of problems:

- lack of women's work continuity related to their role in the reproduction process, which causes problems with finding and keeping a job;
- opportunities and traps related to flexible forms of employment for women, which, on the one hand, enable any kind of work at all and, on the other hand, lead to worse working conditions and forms of employment, lack of promotion prospects and lower remuneration;
- entering jobs in the grey zone: in the area of care, cleaning or illegal jobs;
- negative stereotypes of women which make their successful functioning in the labour market difficult in a number of ways: getting promoted, recruitment or participation in employee training;
- low remuneration, which causes difficulties with supporting oneself financially.

Due to space limitations, I focused in more depth on the two of the categories above: lack of women's work continuity and entering the grey zone. As for the lack of women's work continuity, literature on the subject shows that there is a well-known conflict between production and reproduction (Reszke, 1991). One of the respondents describes the situation regarding care-related career interruptions as follows:

Keeping a job after returning from a maternity leave apparently isn't that easy and I know it from my own experience. Though I didn't have such problems, as I somehow managed to go through it without bigger problems. Employers very often don't wait for a return of a young mother-employee. Very often the employer takes on a new employee in the mother's place. So there's no place for her to come back to after the leave. But the employer is not always a problem. For some time some tendency has been observed in the case of women, especially the young ones who find out about problems at work, or if they knew that they were just about to lose their jobs, they deliberately got pregnant and immediately took a sick leave despite the lack of symptoms. And all this they did not to lose the job. So it can be observed that there is more than one guilty party but both of them are somewhat guilty. There must be some kind

of solution but since women behave this way, employers don't want to employ women, young women, to be more precise. (R.17)

As the above statement concerning the role of women in the process of reproduction suggests, a specific game<sup>2</sup> between employers and female employees can be observed, and it is a game in which more or less fair strategies using the rights resulting from the Labour Code are used. The whole game is related to the women's situation in the labour market, including their disappearance from the professional job market. From this perspective, children are treated as a women's problem, although this is about delivering new members of society, which is a process significant to the whole economy. Women's work discontinuity due to maternity leave or childcare leave is, on the one hand, understandable and guaranteed by the Labour Code, but, on the other hand, subject to abuse, particularly by employers and managers, as their reaction to their fears of increasing their labour costs.

Informal work in the shadow economy was another important feature defining women's work. Entering the grey zone can be seen as reacting to imperfections in the legal job market. This problem has been always present, which is illustrated by the statement of one of the respondents:

Well, I have sort of two pictures about this issue. On the one hand, there is a picture of the woman who has no job but has a family and she 'goes to the street'. Here in her view, she does this 'job' to support her family. And the moment we take her off this way and she starts a normal professional activity, then further activities, emotions or situations appear in which she may feel she can't cope and is being taken advantage of in a different way. As they 'go into the street' on the one hand, they do it against themselves but they know they have to do it for their family. Sometimes they think they will do 'it' for a year or two and then they will stop and start a small shop and be a good mother and wife. This is, however, only imagination, as it is very difficult to quit prostitution. But when they quit it, and start a professional activity, it's hard for them to combine it with being a wife and a mother as the labour market today is difficult so even if you get the job, the woman is being taken advantage of for example 12-hour non-stop working time, the question is still pending: what about the kids? (R.14)

As can be seen from the respondent's statement, employment in the grey zone can be related to the illegal employment of housewives, cleaning and cooking help, childminders and people taking care of the elderly or the disabled, but it also included prostitution. Literature on the subject offers a number of definitions of 'work', but in the mainstream it is emphasized

that the notion of *work* refers only to activity which is purposeful, deliberate, conscious, utilitarian and connected with fulfilling people's needs and providing financial support, which is socially significant and indicates a social position. Occupations such as procurer, thief or prostitute are excluded (Król and Ludwiczynski, 2007). However, these are paid occupations that provide financial means for an individual person, and sometimes also for their family. In the view of female leaders of women's organizations, this issue should not be neglected.

### **Preventing women's problems and viewing trade unions as a possible actor**

On the whole, in the respondents' opinions there are numerous symptoms of women's employment problems; they are complex and frequently overlap one another, and therefore preventing them is not easy. As far as activities conducted by non-governmental groups and informal groups are concerned, the female leaders emphasized the importance of individual counselling and support, which still seemed to be very popular with women, and attempts to work out systemic solutions. Systemically addressed support is related to the issue of women's participation not only in professional life but also in social and political life. It is connected with developing a strategy for changing social awareness of gender issues. In this context, the interviewees were asked about the issue of looking for trade union allies and for their opinions of trade unions.

The perception of trade unions by the female leaders of women's movements was polarized: positive and negative interpretations of trade unions were clearly seen. The following statements illustrate these two different views:

As for my experiences from those days I think that trade unions don't help women. [...] I even think that many decisions were taken behind women's backs, for example shifting to another work position and women learnt about it only later and it was men who took decisions as men are usually in union authorities and they took decisions [...] And this shifting to a lower position..., surely lower.... By far it's been same, nothing has changed, it's the same and, I believe that... well,... a lot of education is needed here. (R.25)

I'm not much of an expert on trade unions but I happen to know some women in mining and trade unions in Tesco, this has changed my views on trade unions that I had somehow at the back of my head, still connected somehow with Solidarity and stereotypical thinking of them and regarding them as some fossilised structure. Many people take problems into their own hands, and that would be great if unions could represent everybody, not only some part of people, as unfortunately, that was

my impression. That's why such women's trade unions are founded. It is justified in these feminized jobs. On the other hand, women see that there's something wrong and they start to take care themselves of their own needs, and this, by all means, I support and I think they can do a lot. (R.2)

Positive perception of trade unions increased with the presence of interest in women's employment problems and with the presence of female leaders, perceived as those focused on feminist values. Positively perceived trade unions mentioned included *Ogólnopolski Związek Zawodowy Pielęgniarek i Położnych* (Polish Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives), *WZZ Sierpień 80* (August 80 Free Trade Union), *Związek Zawodowy Kobiet* (Women's Trade Union), *Związek Zawodowy Górników w Polsce* (Miners' Trade Union in Poland) and *Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego* (Polish Teachers' Association) – the latter in connection with defending a teacher who publicly revealed her homosexual orientation. The trade union leaders mentioned Elżbieta Fornalczyk, who was the first person to organize a strike of a female-dominated group of employees working in one of the supermarkets belonging to a big corporation. She also publicly announced 'We are the feminists' while talking about members and activists of her trade union (Surmiak-Domańska, 2008: 12). In the respondents' statements, trade unions are described as 'male' and 'female' depending on the sector in which they operate or whether women are in positions of authority within them. The formation of *Związek Zawodowy Kobiet* (Women's Trade Union) was a protest against the marginalization of women's employment problems in the 'male trade unions' in mining. The formation of this organization was supported by the plenipotentiary for equal status of men and women in the Silesia district, Dorota Stasikowska-Woźniak (Kamińska-Berezowska, 2010). The respondents mentioned the formation and functioning of *Związek Zawodowy Kobiet* as an example of a trade union interested in women's problems. The respondents also positively assessed *Związek Zawodowy Górników w Polsce* as they appreciated its initiatives and projects aimed at supporting gender equality, particularly the support for the appointment of a regional plenipotentiary for the equal status of men and women. *Ogólnopolski Związek Zawodowy Pielęgniarek i Położnych* was also very positively assessed and seen as the 'female' trade union. It was particularly respected by the respondents for a well-known protest called 'the White Town' in 2007 in Warsaw, which took place in front of the prime minister's office, asking for the participation of women in demonstrations (called *manifas*) at the country and regional levels in the Silesia district.

What seemed interesting about this situation, in my opinion, was that the women's movements and trade unions united in the pursuit of common purposes. The common scope of the desired purposes declared by the trade unions and women's movements was very broad and concerned, for

example, increasing occupational safety and women's professional activity in a broad sense. It was interesting how this issue was perceived and interpreted in practice by the female leaders of the women's movements. Thus, the respondents were asked whether they saw any common ground for activities of women's movements and unions. The categories of responses obtained could be generally divided into two groups: the first confirming existence of the common scope of activities and the other refraining from replying to that question. As a result, even the most negative attitudes did not negate the common scope of some activities. However, some respondents admitted not having sufficient knowledge of trade union functioning, so it was difficult for them to express their opinions concerning this issue. Some also added that, so far, they had not taken into consideration the option of cooperation and but found it well worth considering.

The following statement illustrated the categories confirming the common scope of interests of women's organizations and trade unions:

Absolutely, absolutely. I think that it's a very good combination. All kinds of associations, trade unions. Meetings of trade unions and women's organizations at such forums and conferences is good as they cause that the problems not noticed so far become noticed... And trade unions are very powerful, much bigger than women's organizations. Trade unions have the power of trade unions... They are capable of using economic factors in order to provoke some behaviours. Which means that they're much stronger than participation in demo's (called *manifas*) or other demonstrations, aren't they? That means that if there is a strike action concerned with the improvement of women's situation, then it will be organized and will have financial consequences, which simply means that Employer is bound to notice it. S/he won't listen to petitions. Trade unions have the power which women's organizations don't have. Therefore their cooperation can cause concrete actions. But the question is, whether unions authorities will be interested in it... As it isn't very popular. (R.34)

The respondents indicated that socially advantageous solutions could be worked out by the trade unions and women's organizations working together, and they stressed the power and experience of the trade unions. They indicated that trade unions are significant because of their presence in workplaces, knowledge of particular employee problems, and access to some institutionally guaranteed resources and legal support. The women's organizations themselves claimed that their 'contribution' to cooperation with trade unions was the possibility of increasing trade union membership and improving the image of trade unions, presenting them as lively modern organizations, not old-fashioned or fossilized. Some respondents also pointed out that there was already some cooperation between the

two movements, expressed through their common presence at conferences, training, congresses and women's *manifas*.

### Women's Day as an act of doing gender

One of the last questions that respondents were asked was whether and how to celebrate 8 March, the day in the socialist economy period that was officially regarded as Women's Day. The respondents' statements indicated that the day is worth celebrating, but their attitudes to it and the suggested ways of celebrating varied significantly. On the one hand, informal ways of celebrating the day emphasized that it should be a nice day for meeting friends, going to the cinema, receiving a flower from their brothers, partners, husbands, sons and so on, going out for a coffee or just celebrating me-time. On the other hand, more official ways of celebrating focused on the current situation of women, mainly through organizing demonstrations (that is, *manifas* – see <http://www.manifa.org/> website). The following statement illustrated this suggestion:

In 2005, due to these different, separate activities I mentioned a while ago, it was possible to organize the first Silesian *manifa*. If it is to be some symptom of a women's movement, well, ... we can say that the *Manifa* is some sort of big achievement and becomes symbolic in a given area for some number of women and people thinking differently about women's participation in social, political and economic life and so on. And the *Manifa* was such a situation. Well, it wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for all the events that happened before. However, I want to stress that Dorota Stasikowska-Woźniak didn't take an active part and women in her group didn't participate in the *Manifa*. That means that it was possible to observe in Silesia what is characteristic of all Poland, I mean differences of opinion between women [...] I think it would be worthwhile to make people aware of the source of this anniversary, wouldn't it? That means to remind people that women haven't been long in the labour market. When they started to work, they were treated very badly and ... And at the same time they were becoming a bigger and bigger work force. In those days nobody offered them solutions related to combining professional and family roles. And they themselves had to work it out. [...] then, on the one hand, they showed that they can also constitute a social force, completely new and separate. This fact is important as it shows Europe and the United States that in these emancipation movements that happened more than a hundred years ago, women's participation was significant that looked as if women wanted to change history. These very women, employees who went to streets to protest, reversed existing so far patriarchal history and that's it. (R.33)

Another respondent emphasized that the celebrations are not meant to be nice:

Kiss on hand, kiss on cheek and a pair of tights<sup>3</sup> – these were old times! This was a holiday that was established because seamstresses protested and they were closed in a plant and more than 200 women were killed and this is a holiday commemorating this event. (R.30)

Thus, it can be said that this is an anniversary that requires serious consideration of the situation of women and that it should commemorate those who caused women's rights to be recognized as human rights. One of the first organizers and coordinators in the Silesia district was Małgorzata Tkacz-Janik (Banot, 2007). During the period of the Third Polish Republic (RP III), the beginnings of this phenomenon go back to 2000, to an initiative of female leaders of the women's movement in Warsaw, including Agnieszka Graff (Walczevska, 2005). The motto of the first Polish *manifa* was 'Democracy without women is only half-democracy.' The *manifas* were assumed to be 'impolite' to an extent that would allow for an analysis and change the discourse of naturalization of inequality in gender treatment. This, on the one hand, offered an opportunity to appear in the media, but on the other hand, aroused certain controversies among the recipients. Initially, *manifas* mainly referred to non-economic oppressions, but this gradually changed and the focus was shifted to employment issues (Erbel, 2008). Women's employment problems were raised by *manifas* held in Warsaw in 2010 and 2011. The motto of the *manifa* held in Warsaw in 2010 was 'Solidarity in the Crisis, solidarity in the Struggle' and in 2011 it was 'Enough of Exploitation! We give notice' and the following trade unions were present at the *manifas*: OZZPiP (Polish Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives), OPZZ (All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions), WZZ *Sierpień* (August 80 Free Trade Union) and ZNP (Polish Teachers' Association). Celebrating the women's holiday as *manifas* was approved and gained the support of some trade unions. The motto for the *manifa* held in Silesia was 'Power of diversity. Women inspire!' However, there were some problems with attendance at the Silesian *manifas*: on the one hand, socially they were becoming clearer and more acceptable, but, on the other hand, devoting time to *manifas* and having the moral courage to attend them were regarded as the stigma of the feminists, which did not encourage people to participate in them. Time will tell what the future of the *manifas* will be, and whether the efforts made by those who want to commemorate women's history and interest in equal gender status have been worthwhile.

### **To be or not to be a feminist?**

The respondents had different associations with the word 'feminist'. They were positive or ambivalent or had no opinions, as illustrated by the following statements:

Well, I am a feminist. This can't create any negative associations as we tell everyone that we're feminists. Today's feminism simply means taking

care of women's problems, ensuring equal status in work, politics and authority positions. This is the modern, contemporary feminism, and we all working here, by all means, are feminists. (R.4)

I wouldn't say it's negative, because as I said I participated in various meetings at the state central level I also took part in Pink Ribbon Marches (marches connected with campaigns related to prevention of breast cancer – explanation S. Kamińska-Berezowska) feminists are present there and we have some contacts here... Men speak of us very negatively, but it's not quite like that, well, I'm not negative. (R.23)

Feminist... I don't know. None (R.25)

Sometimes positive associations with this word were connected with emphasizing one's own identity. However, some respondents stressed that stating they were feminists also had negative consequences and they felt the hostility of some groups, sometimes being suspected of aggression, hatred of men, breaking up families or homosexuality. On the basis of the feminism syndrome described by Ślęczka (1999), it can be assumed that all the female leaders of the women's movement are feminists, because they realized women's harmful situation in social life and that through their activities they could improve this, which they actively do. However, the respondents did not always define themselves as feminists, and sometimes they even kept a deliberate distance from feminism, but explaining why this was the case would require further research.

## **Final remarks**

I analysed women's employment problems in Poland from the perspective of the female leaders of women's organizations and initiatives in the highly urbanized Silesia district. The brief analyses presented here were focused on issues related to women's lower professional activity, their problems with functioning in the labour market, ways of preventing gender discrimination, and the possibility of the potential integration of the women's and trade union movements. The study emphasized the diversity of women as a social category and clearly illustrated that there are no easy, effective solutions that would improve women's functioning in the labour market or that would raise social awareness of gender discrimination. It is hard to anticipate whether integrating the efforts made by women's movements and trade unions will intensify the activities aimed at improving the employment situation of women on the current market.

However, according to the Western researchers Bradley (2008) and Connell (2013), this may be caused by the fact that women's employment problems follow certain patterns in different countries, which pose challenges for the broader integration of activities aimed at their solutions. In this way, the



opinions of Polish feminists going back more than a hundred years take on a new meaning and significance, and further activities are required in order to create real gender equality and to constantly monitor this phenomenon. This analysis of the opinion of the leaders of women's movements in Poland on the problems women face in the labour market showed two significant aspects. The first concerned the importance of women's studies, the second the inadequacy of the *homo sociologicus* model construction, which was described by R. Dahrendorf (1968).

I think it should also be emphasized that the *homo sociologicus* model is not perfect because it incorporates the human being as a 'neuter', which is obviously an oversimplification. Distinguishing *femina sociologica* and *mas sociologicus* would definitely help observe the diversity of sociological life (in particular, the Latin word *homo* means *human* and *man* in the gender-neutral sense). People exist as females and males, and already 'only' this fact has an enormous impact on their life cycles and their chances of self-realization. This is because, apart from *sex*, which denotes biological characteristics differentiating males and females, there is also *gender*, which refers to social distinctions of masculine and feminine behaviour. What is more, Dahrendorf (1968), who writes about *homo sociologicus*, refers mainly to 'Herr' not to 'Frau' Schmidt. Probably theoretical models in sociology are responsible for this androcentrism (Titkow, 2007). The problems of female employees, according to the presented analysis, are characteristic of women, and the leaders of the women's movements, who took part in the research, clearly highlighted the differences between the way men and women function.

## Notes

1. The interviewees were coded in order to protect their anonymity. In the coding (R point number), the number differentiates the interviewee.
2. For a definition of 'game', see Norbert Elias (1984).
3. This is an ironic slogan describing the way of celebrating Women's Day at work. Tights in the socialist economy used to be unavailable in the market – explanation S. Kamińska-Berezowska.

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