Differences in men's and women's work, care and leisure time

Study for the FEMM committee
Abstract

The economic crisis has profoundly affected the labour market and private life of men and women. This study examines the interrelation of policies with the ways women and men allocate time to paid work, care and leisure and the gendered outcomes produced in different socio-economic and cultural settings. It shows that policies are powerful tools which can contribute to a better work-life balance and transform gender roles in accordance to the targets of EU2020 strategy and EU28 commitment to gender equality.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CJEU  European Court of Justice

EIGE  European Institute for Gender Equality

EP    European Parliament

EU    European Union

Eurofound  European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

FEMM  Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

ILO   International Labour Organisation

TEC   Treaty of the European Community

TEU   Treaty of the European Union

TFEU  Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

UK    United Kingdom
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Europe is going through challenging times. Its demographic situation keeps deteriorating. Ageing-generated needs are on the increase and will continue to be over the next decades. Fertility and child poverty are linked with employment policies, including women’s participation in the labour market, but not necessarily with considerations about gender equality, despite the commitment of the European Union. Precarious employment primarily affects vulnerable and often ‘invisible’ social groups and hits women disproportionately.

When we refer to the notion of work-life balance/reconciliation we mainly refer to the three spheres of a person’s time, namely paid work (public sphere), unpaid work/care (private sphere) and leisure (both private and public). The lines between the three domains have become fuzzy, as what happens in one affects the others, what is known as work-life conflict or spill-over effect.

Major changes in the labour market exacerbated by the recession have brought about a phenomenal rise in unemployment, precarious employment, part-time work and poverty. The workplace is being transformed and flexible work arrangements have been replacing traditional nine-to-five jobs. The spill-over effect and the so-called time crunch (constant time pressure) are just two of the negative consequences which affect everyone.

The crisis and these labour market changes have led to high unemployment and rise in all forms of flexible work arrangements which affect the private life of men and women. Nevertheless, given women’s traditional roles as care-providers in the private sphere to children and older members of the family, and as primarily responsible for all household needs, when they are active in the labour market they persistently remain over-represented in part-time, more flexible, low-paid and precarious occupations. Consequently they are more dependent on the welfare state and at higher risk of poverty, while austerity has exacerbated their situation.

In the light of the aforementioned changes, the fact that career-and family decisions coincide in terms of timing calls for arrangements which would facilitate a harmonious time investment in both and, together with leisure, could contribute to a person’s health and well-being.

States are characterised by particular gender regimes, namely ‘interconnected systems, through which paid work is connected to unpaid work, state services and benefits are delivered to individual or households, costs are allocated, and time is shared between men and women in households, as well as between households and employment’¹. The policies adopted are culturally-specific and informed by their broader context.

The terms used in the social policy domain when this discussion takes place evolve around work, its reconciliation with family life (much less emphasis on personal life) and the welfare of children in a climate dominated by individualisation, ‘choice’, sufficiency, autonomy, independence, which in reality achieve little in terms of gender

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equality. The emphasis of policy-makers is on activation of people to enter employment, on assisting families at risk of poverty, and on investment in children’s early years’ education.

The issue of care, however, is central and policy deals with questions about how it is valued and shared between men and women and between the market, the state, the employers and the family. Care encompasses assistance and supervision provided to both children and older people to enable them to cope with their everyday needs and can be provided in the public and the private sphere. It also comprises an extra dimension, namely the emotional cost which the relationship of the carer with the cared for entails. This dimension spans the public/private distinction, as care can take place in the public sphere through state or private provision of children and elderly care services or the private sphere (the family in its extended form). Even in the labour market men’s presence in the care sector is extremely low.

Leisure equality adds an extra dimension to the usual division between paid and unpaid labour and its gendered implications. Boundaries between care and leisure are harder to draw for women who are care providers of children and adults in the household than it is for men.

There is growing awareness of the need for policy to intervene at the household level so as to enable households to manage care with increasing participation of men in care activities. Gender regimes are changing and policies cannot be seen in isolation but in the intersection of all three spheres. Thinking of men and women as both workers and carers will improve gender equality both at home and at work. Policies need to be seen holistically, as part of the broader economic and social landscape and in the interrelation of family policies with other areas of the welfare state; positive changes in one may impact negatively on others. Social cohesion and regulation in the area of employment are paramount.

The EU has been committed to promoting equal employment opportunities, but has neither contested the division of domestic unpaid work nor promoted enough the involvement of fathers. The EU 2020 Strategy aims at drastic reduction of unemployment and poverty, with emphasis on job creation and inclusion. Policies need to be effective in terms of work-life balance and, otherwise couples’ decisions will continue to reflect the power dynamics within the family and the inequalities in the labour market. Evidence from the Member States which have promoted gender equality has shown that unless policies such as parental leave include a ‘take it or leave it’ part reserved for fathers, flexibility as the remaining time and a high wage-replacement rate, men’s uptake will remain low. Single parents should be allowed to use the entire leave available to couples.

If care is a universal human need\(^2\), then it should be possible for anyone to be able to exercise this choice, which in turn presupposes adequate wages, family policies which can ensure decent living standards, security in employment and work-life reconciliation.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing inequalities as a worldwide trend are often associated with unequal wage distribution. In the EU, there is evidence that wage distribution at the national level has become more unequal in most countries, due to differences in working hours and wage rates in non-standard employment (part-time or temporary), as well as a widening gap in full-time work often related with differences in skills. The weakening of labour market institutions and industrial relations is also closely related. Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies of employment and wage inequality between countries, not least under the current recession. Against this background, women remain disadvantaged, as they are overrepresented in the lowest ranks of the labour market and continue to be the main providers of care.

The EU 2020 Strategy has set the target of lifting 20 million out of poverty by 2020, a goal seemingly unattainable under conditions of financial crisis which has led to 4.8 million more citizens living in poverty in 2013 compared to 2008. The effects of poverty have been felt in different ways by different segments of the population, which makes a comprehensive assessment of the crisis quite problematic.

Part of the Strategy is to enable parents to actively participate in the economy and society. With 75% of the population aged 20-64 aspiring to be in employment by 2020, many Member States will need to find ways to increase female labour supply. Under the growing heterogeneity of living and household arrangements and the diversity of choices over the life course, the success of these employment goals are dependent on the provision of measures to address work-life balance issues (combining work with care and family responsibilities), as well as those to make work pay more for both female and male parents. The European Pact for Equality between women and men 2011-20 also stresses the need to promote work/life balance for women and men and urges Member States to improve childcare services and promote flexible work arrangements.

The European Commission in its recently published Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-19 has expressed once more its commitment to keep pursuing gender equality. Its areas of action include:

- Increasing female labour market participation and the equal economic independence between women and men

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3 Complementary agendas include the European Employment Strategy, the Lisbon Strategy and the European Commission's Social Policy Agenda 2006-2010, which, together with the 2020 Strategy, recognise the effects of job quality on organisational and employee productivity, as well as individual well-being.
7 EIGE (2015).
Differences in men's and women's work, care and leisure time

- Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gap, thus fighting women poverty\(^{11}\)

Family is central in the triptych work-home-leisure, as it both shapes roles and identities (which contribute to the mix between one's market work, unpaid work at home and leisure) provides daily care and meets other household demands. Changes in family structures which have taken place in the last decades, including declining marriage rates, increasing divorce rates, dropping fertility rates, new family arrangements and evolution of social attitudes around these, have contributed to new household types and the reduction in the average EU household to 2.4 members\(^{12}\). At the same time social roles between men and women have also changed.

Changes in the domains of paid and unpaid work also transform the ways one of the most valuable resources is allocated: Time. Reconciling work and life in an constantly shifting landscape blurs the boundaries between the three different domains at the expense of the only of life which is not associated with work and which is highly significant to health and well-being, Leisure.

This study aims at addressing:

- The socio-economic determinants which cause work-life conflict.
- The organisation of time in the domains of paid work, unpaid/domestic work/care and leisure and its gender dimensions. The role of policies in relation to work-life conflict and how they can become instruments of promoting work-life balance.

States are characterised by particular gender regimes, namely ‘interconnected systems, through which paid work is connected to unpaid work, state services and benefits are delivered to individuals or households, costs are allocated, and time is shared between men and women in households, as well as between households and employment’\(^{13}\).

The current crisis has affected families in a number of ways, with large families of three or more dependent children being more vulnerable to crisis conditions. Different family policy regimes, reflected in Member State policies, have provided responses and support which also impact on families in different ways. In 2011, universal cash benefits still accounted for more than half of social expenditure in the EU overall, and were followed by universal in-kind benefits such as childcare services. A general trend, however, has been towards more means-tested support, which might create newly disadvantaged families that would be losing benefits to which they had access before. But there have also been differences in responses among Member States, with some providing support for families to move away from the traditional breadwinner model (for instance cutting cash and tax benefits, but not services and institutions that maintain work-life balance). Others, however, find it increasingly difficult to keep


\(^{12}\) Yet, family remains important in the EU (according to 84% of Europeans). But these emerging arrangements have now been accepted by the majority of European citizens, while childbearing is more of an option than an obligation nowadays. Values related to individualisation gradually replace older and more traditional social values (http://europeanmission.redcliffe.org/).

providing services. In most cases family policy across the EU lacks a coherent framework and cannot successfully reconcile family changes, the pressures for cuts to services and benefits and the need for some fair distribution of the limited resources available\textsuperscript{14}.

When it comes to work, 58% of Europeans consider it very important; still, the importance attached is negatively correlated with the wealth of the country.

\textsuperscript{14} Eurofound (2015a).
1. THE ISSUES

Work, care and leisure are often presented as mutually competitive segments of one’s life. However, their competition is based on the resource that they share: time. In order to make sense of the relationship between work, care and leisure, time needs to be partitioned in its segments, such as maintenance (e.g. sleep), leisure, home work (which includes care), search for market work (the state of unemployment) and finally market (paid) work.\(^{15}\)

However, time is not the only scarce resource in the discussion of work, care and leisure. Money (in the form of net disposable income), expenditure for purchasing goods and services (including the general price index), state support in the form of services of benefits, as well as the presence of private provision of services (e.g. by relatives or friends) are also important parameters in the daily organisation of work, care and leisure.

As the object of the study is gender divisions regarding work, care and leisure, deconstructing the question in the above dimensions and then estimating the amount of resources available sexton men and women could be one way of approaching the problem. However, estimating resources available to women, as opposed to men, is quite hard, as it involves economic and non-economic aspects, such as social roles and attitudes to the provision of care (for children or the elderly). It also involves contingent factors (e.g. the state of health of a child or elderly person, or the work situation of a particular woman or man).

Since women’s labour market participation is more constrained by family and care responsibilities than that of men, flexible working time arrangements may help the combination of these responsibilities; at the same time, however, they can reinforce existing gender inequalities and segmentation in the labour market.\(^{16}\)

Attitudes towards the division of work between husbands and wives (in paid, care and leisure terms) are important. These include attitudes reflecting ideologies which vary substantially across countries. Since culture contributes to such diversity of attitudes, choices between leisure, care and paid work are also likely to differ across national contexts even when the institutions and tax rates are the same.

Still, the choice between market and home work is likely to be affected by many institutional parameters. Some of them are pretty obvious (e.g. availability of free child care, or the minimum wage), while others less so (e.g. the market value for buying certain home work service, such as cleaning or ironing).\(^{17}\)

For instance, the tax wedge is often seen as the reason why some Europeans choose to work less; at the same time, however, the tax wedge makes market substitutes for


\(^{17}\) Blanchard (2006).
home production more expensive and may lead someone to be more inclined to do more housework themselves. Others attribute such a choice to cultural factors\textsuperscript{18}.

Welfare states, legislation, economic factors, culture and social partners are crucial to the way labour markets function, as well as the ways individuals arrange their lives. The fuzzy delineations between employment, care and leisure, add to the difficulty of disentangling the interrelated issues. For the purpose of this analysis, the three domains will be examined separately with sporadic references to their interdependence. Finally, concluding remarks and best practices will inform policy recommendations.

2. THE EU LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The introduction of equal pay between women and men (A.119 Treaty of Rome) in 1957 was followed by a series of directives aiming at implementing gender equality in employment, training, promotion, working conditions, equal treatment in social security\textsuperscript{19}. In 1992, a European Council recommendation on childcare suggested that Member States develop and encourage initiatives to enable women and men to reconcile occupational, family and child care responsibilities\textsuperscript{20}.

In the same year the Pregnant Workers Directive 92/85 EEC OJ and in 1996 the Parental Leave Directive 96/34/EC were adopted which set out minimum individual rights to a three-month parental leave for both men and women (in addition to maternity leave). It was supposed to be non-transferable but low remuneration rendered it unappealing to men\textsuperscript{21}. The Part-Time Directive 97/81/EC OJ followed. The European Commission’s recognition that women’s labour market participation and that modernisation of social protection was necessary, in order for gender balance to be achieved, was registered as early as 1997 and a subsequent text emphasised that the familial ideology of the old welfare establishment, which was based on the traditional roles of men and women and the male breadwinner model was detrimental to both labour market supply and family formation\textsuperscript{22}.

The European Employment Strategy after the Treaty of Amsterdam introduced measures for work/family reconciliation and aimed at strengthening equal opportunities in the context of flexible female employment. The Lisbon agenda treated reconciliation as a dimension contributing to a good work environment and facilitated by flexible work organisation\textsuperscript{23}. A new flexicurity strategy connecting social policy

with flexible labour markets, as well as economic with demographic policies, was established.

Since 2005 the issue of increasing fertility has been part of the agenda. The 2002 Barcelona objectives\textsuperscript{24} included encouragement of Member States to improve child care provision for children under 3 but until 2010 only fifteen Member States had acted toward this direction. The role of the European Court of Justice (ECOJ) has been crucial in shaping the EU child care strategy through judgments emphasising the role of caregiver or linking work-life reconciliation with the non-discrimination principle rather than the gender equality one\textsuperscript{25}.

The disproportionate impact of the economic crisis on women has been officially recognised by the European Commission\textsuperscript{26}. The persistence of the gender pay gap in the labour market and the impediments to the adoption of the amendments to the Pregnant Workers Directive, which were passed by the European Parliament and were rejected by the Council a few months later prove that gender equality is secondary to economic priorities\textsuperscript{27}.

A major step toward the right direction was the Social Investment Package\textsuperscript{28}, which comprises two Commission Communications, one on Growth and Cohesions and a Recommendation on ‘Investment in Children’, which shows commitment to gender equality and child care as the only way of promoting the attainability of the Barcelona targets. The basis is again economic-growth-focused but it is a stepping stone toward fighting social exclusion and initiating the debate around care. The emphasis is on children whilst the other aspect of care, that of the elderly is ignored, despite its enormous importance.

In March 2011 the European Council adopted the Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020)\textsuperscript{29} in the context of EU 2020 and in light of Directive 2006/54 EC. The Pact emphasises the need to remove the barriers tp women’s participation in the labour market in order to meet the objective of 75% employment rate for women and men aged 26-64 years, close the gender gaps in employment and social protection, increase participation in education and social inclusion. Promotion of work-life balance for women and men, as well as combatting all forms of violence against women were among the EU reaffirmed commitments.

The Council, following the legislative acquis, acknowledged the reconciliation of work and family life as a precondition for equal participation of women and men in the labour market and urged the Member States to take measures which promote work-life balance, encourages employers to adopt family-friendly measures such as flexible working arrangements, appropriate parental leave provisions and invites the European


\textsuperscript{27} Masselot (2015).


Commission to promote the exchange of best practices between Member States\textsuperscript{30}. In 2014 the Council of the European Union called on the Member States and the Commission to support the economic independence of women through participation in the labour market, to encourage equal sharing of care responsibility and household domestic work, to reduce gender segregation in employment. In addition it recognises the need for work-life balance and social protection for part-time and self-employed women and the importance of improving the quality of self-employment and part-time work for women’s economic independence.\textsuperscript{31}

Overall, the EU childhood policy consists of the legal right to maternity and parental leave, public support for working parents and for early education for all children\textsuperscript{32}. The goal of promoting gender equality has been sidelined and policy has focused on the provision of childcare services, rather than long childcare leaves\textsuperscript{33}. Directives on the regulation of working time and parenthood have started to incorporate the concept of the worker-parent into employment law. However, implementation of EU equality directives is uneven and conditioned on national differences in legal arrangements, political will and different ways of transposing EU law, while care subsidisation rests with the authority of the Member States. In addition, the EU strategy of gender mainstreaming is supported only by "soft" law interventions, i.e. advisory rather than enforceable\textsuperscript{34}.

Attempting to disentangle all the dimensions and interconnected elements of maternity/parental leave benefits is a very complex task, since it involves so many different settings and actors. In this study, "maternity" and "parental leave" will be used almost interchangeably, as in some countries only the latter is used as a gender-neutral term. Moreover, evidence shows that in most countries it is predominantly taken by mothers as a natural extension of maternity leave.

\textsuperscript{33} Lewis (2009)
\textsuperscript{34} Walby (2004); Masselot (2015).
3. WORK AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Gendered patterns in employment are related to earnings, occupational segregation and working patterns, including women’s over-representation in various forms of atypical, part-time and precarious occupations.
- Due to this segregation, women (and more so single mothers) are at risk of various types of poverty.
- Overall, both men and women are negatively affected in regard to their work life balance by long hours and inconvenient scheduling of working time.
- Migrant work introduces further gendered patterns which need to be researched further.

The **European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion**, launched in 2010 and active until 2020, is one of the seven flagship initiatives of EU2020 Strategy and aims at ensuring economic, social and territorial cohesion, including the promotion of social inclusion for women. The EU2020 guidelines encourage Member States to adopt policies ‘to promote active ageing, gender equality and equal pay and labour market integration of young people, disabled, legal migrants and vulnerable groups; innovation in work organisation and affordable care are recommended and actions and measures to support gender equality and to guarantee income security for women, including single and older women, are to be prioritised’.

The **European Social Fund** also contributes to the promotion of women in employment and purports to reduce their poverty risk; however, its evaluation for the period 2007-13 revealed ‘a continuous resistance to acknowledge the fact that poverty is a highly feminised phenomenon’ and that although Member States have specific objectives to increase female employment, those do not come under a gender mainstreaming approach. In 2013, The European Commission adopted a Social Investment Package, an integrated policy framework to promote better targeted social policies and active inclusion strategies on the part of the Member States. The Council Conclusions of 2014 noted that the over-representation of women in part-time work increased their in-work poverty.

### 3.1. Gender differentials in employment

Women’s employment reached its highest percentage in 2014 (64%), while men’s employment despite its reduction due to the crisis was 75%.

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37 EIGE (2015).
Gender differentials in employment have been identified in a number of relevant studies. A recent study on work by Eurofound, based on the fifth European Working Conditions Survey conducted in 2010 identified certain aggregate trends.39

- Women and men are employed in different industries and occupations, under different contracts, often with pay differentials, and spending different amounts of time in paid and care work.
- Men spend on average 37.4 years, while women only 29 years in the labour market, a difference that is substantial when it comes to the compared pension rates achieved.
- There is a notable segmentation between men and women in the labour market: out of the 20 different occupational groups that employ the highest number of workers only 5 present a gender balance, namely: food, wood and garment workers; numerical clerks; legal, social and cultural professionals; business professionals; and personal service workers.
- The public sector is important for female-dominated occupations. Women tend to be over-represented in the public sector, even within the male-dominated occupations.
- Women are also over-represented in part-time jobs, with both positive and negative consequences.
- In terms of the quality of jobs, men's salaries are higher in all occupations, with the disparities being more prominent in white-collar male dominated ones; however, intrinsic job quality differences are less pronounced than other job quality dimensions.40
- Well-being is greater for men across life stages; in addition, the well-being of women who have left the labour market is lower than that of those who have not.
- In terms of time spent on paid work, men work 41 hours, while women work 34 hours weekly. Men are more likely to work longer than the 48 hours set by the EU Working Time Directive, but women in certain occupations (agriculture or the service industry) also work long hours (15% versus 7%); if unpaid work is involved, however, the picture changes dramatically.

Benefits play a central role in alleviating stressful circumstances and often keep people out of poverty. In the present discussion they could be instrumental in improving work-life balance and make more leisure time available. However, the problem of non-take up of benefits (for housing, old age, child, unemployment, disability and care among others) has been identified and should be avoided for reasons of subsistence and fairness. This is due to lack of information, complexity of the application system, ambiguous entitlement criteria, the social stigma often attached to the condition of benefit receipt, or lack of trust in institutions.41

40 Job quality has been measured in the EU in various ways. Subjectivist measurements have to do with the extent to which a job fulfils the employee’s personal preferences. Objectivist measurements focus on the potential for a job to bring beneficial outcomes for the employee, both physical well-being and psychological well-being and positive attitudes. The objectivist view adopted by Eurofound conceptualises job quality as comprising: earning, prospects (security, or career advancement), working time quality and intrinsic job quality, which includes skill use and discretion, social environment, physical and environmental risks and work intensity (Eurofound (2015b). Convergence and divergence of job quality in Europe 1995-2010. A report based on the European Working Conditions Survey. Luxemburg: Publications Office of the European Union.
3.2. Working time and types of employment

Gendered perspectives in employment examine the gendered patterns of working time, segregation and quality of work\(^{42}\).

**Working time** patterns have changed considerably in the last two or three decades due to technological changes, globalisation, economic and business restructuring, changing consumption patterns, changing family and care needs and diversification of the workforce composition, among other factors.

**Flexibility** is a key dimension of working time changes and can be seen as employer-friendly (facilitating business needs across time and space) or employee-friendly (enabling and facilitating workers to combine work with personal, family, care and social needs). The Europe 2020 agenda has recognised the increasing need for both types of flexibility. Flexible arrangements are generally seen as increasing productivity through better alignment of business needs and employee preferences and obligations.

Working time arrangements can be to some extent determined by employees but there are sectoral differences. In retail companies, with higher level of female workers and more individualised patterns employees can have a say, but less so in automotive industries where work is organised collectively and more routinely\(^{43}\).

Women are more likely than men to work **part-time** across all Member States. In the EU28 in 2012, although women represented 46% of those employed, they accounted for a massive 76% of all part-time workers and conversely only 38% of all full-time workers. This distribution has barely changed since 2008, when women represented 78% of part-time workers and 38% of full-time workers. In the EU28, 32% of employed women were part-time workers in 2012, compared to only 8% of employed men. Table 1 shows the unequal distribution of part-time work by gender and different ages across the EU28. By contrast, women remain under-represented among self-employed workers (10% compared to 18% for men in 2012)\(^{44}\).

The distribution of part-time work between women and men is significant from a gender equality perspective, since it both derives from, and reinforces, norms attached to the roles of women and men and how these relate to their participation in the labour force. This analysis is more imperative since, under crisis conditions many part-time employees are trapped in part-time jobs because of lack of full-time employment options.

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\(^{42}\) EIGE (2015).

\(^{43}\) Eurofound (2012b).

Table 1: Part-time employment as percentage of the total employment by sex and age, EU 28, 2012

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<td>19.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat, LFS (lfsa_eppgacob)
Part-time work can have significant negative effects on women’s economic independence. Employees working under 20 hours per week have lower earnings and higher risks of occupational segregation, as well as employment instability and lower access to social security benefits. In 2012 38% of women in part-time were working less than 20 hours, (of which 12% less than 10 hours). This percentage represents 68% of all part-time workers working less than 10 hours in the EU28. Moreover, transition to full-time work is difficult: in 2011, 13% of women moved from part-time to full-time, as opposed to 29% of men; the opposite route was taken by 7% of women but only 2% of men.\footnote{EIGE (2014)}

In terms of sectoral segregation, women in part-time employment are over-represented in the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors (81%); public administration, education, health and social work (87%); and financial and insurance activities (88%). By contrast, they are under-represented in construction (44%). With regard to occupational segregation in part-time work women comprise 87% of clerical support workers working on a part-time basis, but only 35% of craft and related trades workers, as well as 38% of plant, machine operators and assemblers.\footnote{Ibid.}

Women’s greater responsibilities for care can represent an important source of involuntary part-time work. In 2012 in the 25-49 age group 25% of women (51% of men) reported that they had selected part-time work because of lack of a full-time option; by contrast 55% of women (12% of men) in the 25-49 age group and 37% of women (20% of men) in the 50-64 age group mentioned care of some other family responsibility as the reason behind their choice.\footnote{EIGE (2014).}

Studies have examined the association between part-time employment and life satisfaction. They problematize the dilemma that on the one hand less working hours help work/life balance and increase life satisfaction, while, on the other, part-time employment is associated with lower earnings and inferior conditions, which decrease satisfaction. A study examining working women in partnerships in Germany and the UK concluded that women who switched from full-time to part-time were more satisfied, particularly if they stay with the same employer; by contrast increasing working hours from part-time to full-time had no evident changes in life satisfaction. Moreover, it indicated that women’s decision to change working hours were due both to childcare obligations, but also other reasons, e.g. limited time for other activities.\footnote{Gash, V., Mertens, A. and Gordo, L. (2010). Women between part-time and full-time work: the Influence of Changing Hours of Work on happiness and life-satisfaction Berlin: DIW.}

Temporary employment is a broad term, which encompasses a variety of non-permanent types of work, such as fixed-term contracts, on-call work, probationary work, work cover for leave absence, or temporary agency work; this list is not exhaustive and can vary across Member States, with obvious problems of comparison. Temporary employment grew by 25% in the EU27 between 2001 and 2012 (compared to 7% for permanent employment), with 50% of new recruits between 2010-2012 being on temporary contracts (compared to 40% in 2002). Poland, Germany, Italy, France and the Netherlands accounted for a great share of this increase, while in 2012 80% of new recruits in Spain and Poland were on temporary contracts. While the trend towards temporary employment was not universal across the EU, temporary contracts are...\footnote{Eurofound (2015h). Recent developments in temporary employment: Employment growth, wages and transitions. Luxemburg: Publications Office of the European Union.}
Increasingly used by employers throughout the EU. Temporary employment contributes to labour market segregation; as a result the countries with high temporary employment rates exhibit a wider wage gap. Additionally, temporary work is often associated with less security and worse working conditions.\textsuperscript{50} A significant question is how different working time arrangements impact on the work-life balance of employees and what their implications for gender equality are. According to a recent ILO report, while not being the only determinant, they seem to play a central role. In assessing these effects it is useful to consider two dimensions, namely volume and schedule of the hours worked; the former indicates how much time is left for other activities, while the latter also determines the combination that can be achieved between work and domestic tasks. In addition, it is analytically useful to think of the mediating variables that affect the link between working time and work life balance: life stage, household composition, job demands, socio-economic level, geographic location and last but not least social infrastructure (benefits, services, policies)\textsuperscript{51}. Studies examining this interplay between working time and family life use both quantitative and qualitative, subjective measures based on self-assessed reports, such as: the degree of compatibility between working time and personal/family life; the extent of work/life balance people feel they have; the mismatch between their actual and preferred working times; negative effects on health and well-being; role conflict and negative or positive spill-over effects from work demands into personal and family life\textsuperscript{52}. Research shows that long working hours increase conflict between work and family. However, there are differences across occupational groups, with professionals and managers having greater work demands but also greater control and resources, while low occupational groups have less control and resources and might be subject to poor working conditions and negative outcomes for work-life balance. In the case of women, paid employment increases well-being, but those who work very long hours and have primary domestic responsibility experience higher work/family conflict. In terms of household composition, dual professional households often experience conflict despite having access to resources. Part-time work eases the pressure but cannot generate adequate income. Therefore its effect on work-life balance is differentiated according to domestic and workplace circumstances.\textsuperscript{53} \textbf{Atypical work schedules} (night shifts, weekends, overtime etc.) seem to have negative health effects, more so on women, possibly due to the increased difficulty of combining these with family responsibilities. Non-standard work schedules increase work life conflict and result in less satisfaction with the quality of time spent on family relationships and domestic tasks. Working short hours in non-standard schedules does not improve the situation much, but control over work schedules is important for managing complicated childcare arrangements and increasing the quality of family time. Teleworking and homeworking seem to be beneficial but also blur the boundaries between work and family and generate spill-overs. In cases where non-standard work is accompanied by low-income and absence of childcare there are greater tensions in parenting and family life\textsuperscript{54}.\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.\textsuperscript{51} ILO (2012) The influence of working time arrangements on work-life integration or “balance”: A review of the international evidence Geneva: International Labour Office.\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
Under conditions of increased flexibility, the regulation of working time is paramount. Significant differences between countries are identified and four analytical regimes have been proposed:

**Unilateral:** Employers have control and legislation plays hardly any role in the definition of working time standards, while bargaining structures are highly decentralised; working time duration and organisation are usually stated in individual employment contracts. It typically encompasses flexibility, labour costs considerations and flexible recruitment, as determined by the employers’ needs (e.g. UK).

**Pure mandated:** Characterised by a strong role for the state in shaping working time practices, with legislation covering the majority of workers; collective bargaining and agreements covering working time duration or organisation are rare (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia).

**Adjusted mandated:** Legislation plays a dominant role in regulating working time practices; however, these are often adjusted through collective bargaining or negotiations at different levels (Croatia, France, Greece, Portugal and Slovakia).

**Negotiated:** Standards are set mainly by collective bargaining agreements, usually at sectoral level; such agreements may be complemented by company-level bargaining on working time issues. It encourages a high stability of working-time practices but also facilitates innovation, through negotiation, in flexible forms of working time that meet the needs of individuals and firms. It offers significant worker control over working time and a high degree of working-time options to meet family and life demands (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Spain and Luxemburg).

More than two thirds of Member States have an adjusted mandated or a negotiated working time setting regime, both of which imply the direct participation of social partners in how working time is defined. The eight Member States with purely mandated regimes are all central and eastern European countries which joined the EU in or after 2004. Figure 1 shows the evolution of working time in different regimes.

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Figure 1: Average collectively agreed working time between 1999 and 2014 (hours)

Source: Eurofound 2016
A growing issue of concern is the alleged, recent increase of unregulated, and frequently unpaid, overtime in a number of countries\(^\text{56}\). There are grounds to expect that informal work during the crisis has expanded and it is unregulated, not only in terms of working time but also regarding the overall working conditions. This issue presents sectoral differentiations and has gendered dimensions, as it makes women workers susceptible to exploitation which sometimes borders on trafficking.

### 3.3. Poverty

Poverty can be measured as **absolute poverty** (the deprivation of basic human necessities) and as **relative poverty** (when someone’s standard of living and income are much below the national or regional standard). Social exclusion is the inability to participate in social activities because of poverty or lack of basic competencies or discrimination.

The **at-risk of poverty and social exclusion (AROPE)** indicator is one of the EU2020 key indicators and it has an income poverty dimension, indicating the share of the population with disposable income lower than 60% of the median equivalised income (the total income of a household, after social transfers and tax and other deductions, that is available for spending or saving, divided by the number of household members converted into equalised adults), as well as an exclusion dimension, measured by material deprivation and/or low work intensity\(^\text{57}\).

Before the crisis, the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion was decreasing steadily. However, during the crisis the numbers of women and men living at risk of poverty and social exclusion has steadily increased. In 2008 there were 116.6 million people at risk in the EU27. But by 2013 (including Croatia) the number was 122.9 million for the EU28 (or 24.7% of the population). Out of these, 65.1 million (25.4% of the population) are women and 57.8 million (23.7% of the population) men (Figure 2)\(^\text{58}\).

In terms of **gender differences**, while in absolute numbers women find themselves in poverty in larger numbers than men, the numbers increased more for men than for women between 2008 and 2013 (3.6 million more men compared to 1.4 million more women). This is mainly due to the fact that industries were men are over-represented, such as construction and manufacturing, have been the most severely affected resulting in unemployment (Perrons 2015).

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\(^{56}\) Eurofound (2016).


The effects of the crisis have not been equally felt across the EU. While in certain countries the number of people at risk was reduced from 2% (France) to as much as 15% (Poland) in others, such as Cyprus and Greece it increased by more than 20% (Figure 3). In 2013, of all young people aged 18 to 24, 31% men and 32.8% of women were at risk of poverty, presenting the highest percentage than any other type of household analysed. As to migrant workers, their risk of poverty rose between 2008 and 2013 in 18 Member States. In Greece this risk was 30.3% higher than that of the native population. In terms of education, 11.8% of those with tertiary education faced poverty compared to 34.8% of those with lower educational achievements⁵⁹.

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Figure 3: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by country, 2008 and 2013

Monetary poverty or in-work poverty (related to disposable income after monetary social transfers) was the most widespread form in 2013, with 83.5 million living at risk after social transfers. Monetary poverty (set to 60% of the national median disposable income after social transfers) mostly affected single parents (32%), large families (about 25%), the lower educated classes and children and the young (about 20%, or more for the 18-24 year old ones)\textsuperscript{60}. In-work poverty involves very complex issues but crucially has gender dimensions. Studies have shown that women’s risk of in-work poverty is more related to their own employment characteristics and low earnings, while for men it is more connected with household factors (including the employment situation of their partner). This means that in-work poverty is associated with institutional factors that have to do with decommodification (i.e. the strength of social entitlements and the degree of immunization from market dependency) and defamilialisation\textsuperscript{61}.

\textsuperscript{60} Eurostat (2014); Perrons (2015).
Material deprivation (which refers to economic strain, durables and housing and living conditions) affected 48.2 million people in 2013, of which 2.2 million more women than men. Overall 9.6% of women and 9.4% of men live in material deprivation. The small increase in material deprivation numbers conceals a large diversity of gender effects: for instance, in Ireland women have experienced an increase of 8.1% (3.9% for men) while in Greece men have experienced an increase of 10.2% (2.6% for women)\(^{62}\). Low work intensity (meaning that working age members of the household worked less than 20% of their potential) also hit 40.2 million people.

About 40 million of people were affected by more than one dimensions of poverty. The index **AROIP (at risk of income poverty)** is used to measure income poverty before and after social transfers. The gender difference is higher on the AROIP before social transfers (4.5% compared to 1% for 2013), which suggests that cuts in welfare make women more vulnerable than men. The use of AROIP before social transfers is exactly to indicate the importance of social transfers and discourage spending cuts that would increase vulnerability, especially of women. The reason why women rely more than men on social provision is the gendered division of labour, particularly regarding care, which has an impact on their labour market participation as well as on vertical and horizontal segregation. And while the gender gap in the AROIP after social transfers has fallen by 0.9% since 2008, the gap before social transfers has widened by a 0.5%. The first is attributed to the deterioration of men’s circumstances, while the latter may be due to deterioration of women’s labour market situation (e.g. flexible contracts, reduced hours etc.). The main increase in terms of in-work poverty affects women on temporary contracts (1.8% in the EU overall but with significant variance across countries)\(^{63}\).

A persistent gender pay gap and the high representation of women in precarious employment is noticeable but varies across countries. Table 2 provides an overview of the gender-based earnings gaps in employment, which are a reflection of gender inequalities. Women (particularly migrant women and women heading single-parent households) still generate a much lower proportion of income on the labour market than men. Women in employment, especially mothers, are much more likely to work part-time\(^{64}\) and are paid on average 16% less than men per hour of work. As a consequence, the gender overall earnings gap during active years has reached 41% with an obvious resulting gap in pensions (currently 40%).

### Table 2: Gender earnings gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>BASELINE: EU-AVERAGE (YEAR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender pay gap</td>
<td>16.5 % (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender overall earnings gap</td>
<td>41.1 % (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender segregation in economic sectors and occupations(^{65})</td>
<td>Sectors: 18.9 % Occupations: 26.9 % (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender pension gap</td>
<td>40.2 % (2012)(^{65})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Coverage gap in pensions</td>
<td>6.8% (2012)(^{66})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-work poverty of women and men</td>
<td>Men: 9.3 % Women: 8.4 % (2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{62}\) (Eurostat 2014); Perrons (2015).

\(^{63}\) Perrons (2015).

\(^{64}\) EIGE (2015).
At-risk-of-poverty rate and social exclusion in old age (65+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men: 11.4%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women: 15.6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Single-parent households at risk of poverty or social exclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>49.9% (2013)</th>
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</thead>
</table>


Low work intensity, the third dimension of poverty, is also important and it often means low income; in 2013, the most vulnerable groups were single parents and single people generally. In terms of gender and age, women aged 25 to 59 are the most affected group. Unemployment is the major driver of monetary poverty and material deprivation. In 2013 46.5% of unemployed people were at risk of poverty. But in-work poverty is also significant and due to, among else, type of contract, working time, wages and type of household.

Single parents are those at the highest risk. Overall, all three dimensions of poverty primarily affect the same groups: children, young people, single parent households, households with three or more dependent children, people with low education and migrants. Older women are much more at risk of poverty and social exclusion than older men and no mitigating trends have been observed in recent years.

Thinking in family terms, a recent study has used two measures, namely the at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) index, in addition to a subjective indicator on ‘difficulty making ends meet’ to examine the profile of disadvantaged families in the EU. The study has found that regarding both indicators there has been a great divergence among Member States. In the case of the AROPE, in Denmark and Finland, for instance, large families have less than 10% risk of poverty or social exclusion, while in Bulgaria this risk reaches 80%. The equivalent for the UK, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta and Romania, is at least 60% for large families or lone parent ones. If the subjective indicator is used, the difficulties appear more extreme: for instance, 92% of large families in Bulgaria and 91% of lone parent families in Greece report difficulties in making ends meet.

Lone parent families and large families are the most vulnerable household types. Lone parents rely on a single income and do not have a safety net. Some have reported more difficulties than those suggested by the AROPE measure, with Poland, Latvia and Greece among the most extreme cases. Moreover, in many countries single parent families have reported a deterioration of their situation from 2007 to 2012.

Most of the indicators used are based on data at the household level, which assumes that income is shared equally in the household. This is, however, does not seem to reflect reality. Questions of economic power differentials in the family or co-residence of members of the extended family may change the distribution of income within the household.

Disaggregating family types according to their employment status can be revealing as to the family types in which intervention is necessary. Employment patterns contribute a great deal to the situation those families. In Greece, Italy and Spain, the male breadwinner model dominates, i.e. one parent (male) working; these have been hit hard by the crisis and their percentage of jobless families is among the highest. In Greece 47% of large family households have only one full-time income and as a result 81% report difficulties in making ends meet.

In any case, the effects of poverty have been examined in numerous studies. A recent one measuring positive mental health of about 44,000 participants (almost equal numbers of...
men and women) from 34 European countries in 2014 found that the strongest association with poor mental health for both genders were material deprivation, unemployment and lower education level.\textsuperscript{71}

### 3.3.1. Minimum Wage

Austerity policies adopted by the EU have driven wages down and have resulted in more wage inequality. Figure 4 shows the minimum wages by country in 2014, many of which are below subsistence levels.

The discussion about a European wide minimum wage policy goes back quite some time and is based on the argument that a more egalitarian wage structure, is both fair and economically sensible, as it would boost aggregate demand because the propensity to consume of low wage earners would be much greater. According to a Eurofound study of 2010, 16\% of all employees would have benefited from the introduction of a European minimum wage norm (set for example at 60\% of the relevant national, regional or sectoral level).\textsuperscript{72} In the UK, a \textit{living wage} is introduced in April 2016 (see Annex 1 for a discussion).

### 3.3.2. Migrant work

The principle of free movement of European workers in the European area was established with Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Mobility and migration are also important aspects of employment as they both respond to labour market demands and entail the issue of rights for workers who move. Internal mobility is also an issue as it is not taken up by workers.


**Figure 4: National Minimum Wages per Hour (2014*) (in Purchasing Power Standards, PPS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Minimum Wage per Hour (2014*) (in Purchasing Power Standards, PPS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>8.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany**</td>
<td>8.37</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
<td>7.33</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>5.47</td>
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<td>Malta</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>6.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>2.86</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>Estonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As of January 2014, converted into PPS at the purchasing power parities calculated by Eurostat for private household consumption for 2013.
** Assuming a minimum wage of 8.50 euros (from 1 January 2015).

Source: Schulten (2014)

The impact of mobility and the increasing presence of migrants in public services and benefits has been the subject of an ongoing debate, with ‘welfare tourism’ being at the centre of the discussion. The other side, however, is the situation of these migrants, often EU citizens themselves, and the extent to which they can have access to the services that can enable them to balance work, home work and leisure. Recent research has shown that in the case of migrants from the 10 Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 who work in nine host countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK), their take-up of welfare benefits and services (particularly disability and sickness benefits, social housing and pensions) is lower than that of the nationals of the Member States in question. Employment-related benefits’ take-up is higher than that of the native people, which is explained by the increasing share in employment of these migrant workers and their lower earnings. In terms of education, take-up is increasing, particularly in compulsory education.

Understanding the gendered patterns of migration is important, not least under the current feminisation of migration. Women migrate to work as carers, something that changes the dynamics of care work. Exploitation of workers is an issue and in many European countries where the social partners are favourable towards immigration try to establish ways to protect minimum wage and prevent exploitation of both native and immigrant workers. A large

74 Ibid.
75 EIGE (2015).
76 Eurofound (2015d).
percentage (29.9%) of domestic workers is excluded from the national labour legislation, as they operate in the informal economy. They are in their vast majority (83.3%) women, often migrants, and this lack of regulation makes them susceptible to abusive treatment. It is noteworthy that no Member States have hitherto signed the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families. Cultural attitudes of emigrants towards work are shaped by their country of origin. Research has shown a positive correlation between emigrants from countries with higher labour preferences and their probability of being employed in their destination country. However, home country labour preferences have a much smaller impact than destination country institutions and policies (unemployment insurance, taxation, unionisation).

More research is required into migrant work and the contribution of immigrant workers to the economy, as this category is particularly vulnerable and prone to stereotyping and negative portrayal. This is even more topical, given the refugee crisis and the rising xenophobia in Europe.

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77 ILO (2013)
4. CARE AND DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Family policies constitute an important tool which can be used for income redistribution and for addressing the challenges of an ageing society.
- Parental leave policies can contribute to gender equality both in the labour market and provision of care. They can transform gender roles, if designed properly, to attract non-carers into care. However, cross-national evidence shows clearly that parental leave should have a high rate of compensation, be an individual entitlement and flexible, and be accompanied by services, such as child care, in order to be effective.
- Maternity leaves at high wage-replacement rates, alongside the absence of childcare provisions as additional support, have a socially conservative effect, as they create economic incentives for women to stay out of the labour market during childbearing with obvious implications for experience and promotions.
- Unless parental leave is universal, some vulnerable groups will not be covered. It is important to bear in mind the difference between *de jure* coverage and actual take up.
- Elderly care is the most embedded from in the socio-cultural context of each state and cannot be detached from the clients it addresses. Active participation of the elderly in the policy design process is required. The introduction of filial leave would facilitate carers to reconcile work and care.

Care is a multi-faceted concept, central in welfare and gender literature. It has been defined in many different ways which focus on particular aspects. Care is a form of labour with many dimensions. The setting in which it is provided makes it either a ‘labour of love’ (when the caregiver and cared for are related, for instance parents looking after their children and vice versa), or when this relationship does not exist in which case it is an occupation.

Yet it still differs from other forms of paid work because there is the element of interdependence between the carer and the care recipient. There is cost involved which is not purely economic but also emotional. Whether it is caring for children or caring for the elderly, this role has always been female and has given rise to different ideologies. The current picture of gender disparities in employment across the EU28 dictates that the overwhelming amount of child and elderly care is provided by women; at the same time, men are deprived of the opportunity to participate equally in care.

With respect to time spent on paid work at the EU level, in 2013 men worked 41 hours, while women worked 34 hours weekly, as mentioned above. If unpaid work is included in the analysis, the picture changes significantly. When paid working hours are combined with hours spent in commuting and unpaid work time, women worked on average 64 hours a week compared to the 53 hours of men; the difference is due to the fact that women spend 26 hours, on average, on caring activities, whilst men only 9 hours\(^79\). These figures have

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only changed slightly in the more recent sixth European Working conditions survey\(^{80}\). Generally speaking, there is an unequal gender distribution of unpaid care work\(^{81}\), which is also implicated in decisions of women and men reflected in the shares of the two sexes in paid employment. These are summarised in Table 2, which also demonstrates the interconnectedness between the public and the private sphere in relation to time spent on work and care.

**Table 2: Gender employment and care gap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>BASELINE: EU-AVERAGE (YEAR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender employment gap (20-64 years)</td>
<td>11.5 pps (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender employment gap (20-64) in full-time equivalents</td>
<td>18.1 pps (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender gap in part-time employment among parents</td>
<td>34.8 pps (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in unpaid care work per week, by gender(^{82})</td>
<td>Men: 8.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women: 26.4 % (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involuntary part-time work due to looking after children or incapacitated adults, by gender</td>
<td>Men: 4.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women: 27.2 % (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children cared for under formal arrangements as a proportion of all children in the age- group (0-3 years and 3 years to mandatory school age)</td>
<td>0-3 years: 27 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-school age: 82 % (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of active population (50-64 years) caring for elderly or disabled relatives at least several days a week, by gender</td>
<td>Men: 10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women: 17 % (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender gap in employment rates among non-EU nationals</td>
<td>19.5 % (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender gap in employment rates among recent non-EU nationals</td>
<td>22.3 % (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of research-performing organisations that have adopted gender equality plans(^{83})</td>
<td>36% (2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** European Commission (2015)

The shifting gender balance in the labour market and the increase of people at risk of poverty have given rise to debates about the state/family division of child care responsibility\(^{82}\). State intervention has involved both the (paid) employment and the (unpaid) care work sides and has blurred the boundaries between cash and services\(^{83}\).

Social investment has been dominant on the EU agenda. The term ‘social investment state’\(^{84}\) was proposed as an alternative to the traditional welfare state to emphasise investment in human capital. It is supposed to serve three goals: fight the long-term effects of child poverty; help parents balance work and family; prepare children for the labour market of the future and offer them equal opportunities regardless of background, as well as prevent anti-social behaviour and poor citizenship in the future. Investing in children’s schooling will help make them well-prepared workers and responsible citizens,

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\(^{81}\) EIGE (2015).


\(^{83}\) Lewis (2009).

\(^{84}\) Giddens (1998).
which will benefit society on the whole.\(^{85}\) However, it is equally important to make sure that the present well-being of the children, rather than their future prospects, is given more serious consideration and that policies enable them to flourish.\(^{86}\)

Two approaches to care can be identified from the perspective of policy. On the one hand, policies strengthening the traditional gender arrangements, including the expansion of the rights of carers through cash transfers and social security benefits for informal carers. On the other, policies challenging traditional arrangements through the provision of state-sponsored day care centres, alongside generous rights to maternity, paternity and parental leave which facilitate care-sharing responsibilities.\(^{87}\)

**Familialism** is an ideology promoting family as a way of life and social integration. A way of assessing the degree to which different member states facilitate work/family reconciliation is the concept of **defamilisation**, meaning the extent to which the welfare state promotes women’s economic independence of the family,\(^{88}\) using the criteria of female labour participation, maternity leave compensation and average female wage. The results have shown high defamilisation scores for the Nordic countries, which treat women as workers but also make allowances for care work for single or partnered women.\(^{89}\)

Family policies are an amalgam of policies, programmes and laws targeting families. State support for families can be of the following form: direct and indirect subsidies for parents (family allowances, childcare benefits, vouchers, tax benefits); provision of childcare and education services in public nurseries, pre-schools etc.; parental leave policy (maternity, paternity, parental and child-rearing leaves), direct and indirect subsidies for private services provided by individual, NGOs, enterprises (grants, tax benefits and credits).\(^{90}\)

Family allowances may be universal (awarded on a per-child basis) or selective (income- or means-tested and providing more support to certain types of families, such as single-parent ones); they may be based on the social insurance principle and awarded on the basis of the employment of the parents; they can be at a flat rate, or earnings-related. They can also follow population policies, e.g. be pro-natal and reward families with more children.\(^{91}\)

Cash benefits are too complicated to assess in general. Context matters and they have several dimensions interwoven with other policies, such as leaves or tax and pension credits. In the area of elderly care some countries (Germany, Ireland, UK, Finland) have introduced similar credits to those who look after an elderly family member. Such measures enhance traditional family roles of women as carers. Gender equality is not favoured by policies basing entittlements on households, families, married or cohabiting couples, in general as Daly puts it ‘the individual with family bonds’.\(^{92}\)

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\(^{87}\) Leira (1998).


\(^{91}\) Ibid.

4.1. Parental leave

Work-life balance has become a ‘hegemonic value’, a functioning in advanced industrialised societies, the lack of which can affect one’s health and well-being. Unlike work-family reconciliation, work-life balance refers to individuals and encompasses many more types of modern living arrangements than the typical notion of family.

Leave arrangements can be seen as one of the measures states use to help parents meet the challenges of combining work, care and other activities, responsibilities and complexities of contemporary life, by creating primarily time for childcare or as enabling attachment to work. Maternity leave has been the case all over Europe. Aiming at a more equal division of unpaid labour between women and men has led to the adoption by many welfare states of ‘parental leave’, time off work granted by the state to parents to share as they wish. Since the aim of this study is the division of time, the term parental leave will be used *lato sensu* to include all types of leave parents can use to reduce work-life conflict and the gender implications their uptake may have.

**Figure 5: Comparison of the combined maternity and parental leave duration per Member State in weeks**

In many European countries, parental leave is time off work after childbirth which parents can enjoy while maintaining job security and minimising the risks of losing one’s job.

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There is no simple formula to estimate the optimal length of leave as the socio-economic and cultural context is hugely relevant.

State regulation of the relationship between the family and the market responsibilities has shaped maternity leave legislation and parliamentary representation of women can among other factors explain variations in paternity leave arrangements, as well as the deployment of them in different countries. Cultural parameters, such as attitudes to family or religious dispositions, can also mark the profile of the state/family relationship and will interact with contemporary cross-country tendencies (often emanating from the EU), e.g. the promotion of gender equality. Such cross-national differences deserve special attention, not least because of different social constructions of motherhood, fatherhood and childhood, which have an ‘important bearing in our understanding both of leave policies themselves and how and why leave policies are used’.

As Sen has argued, the market works better when it is supported by a framework of social entitlements (education, health etc.), which protect individuals and ensure well-equipped and productive workers. Studies have shown that work/family conflict for women is related to health problems, higher healthcare costs, lower organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

4.2. Welfare regimes using care as criterion

One way to approach family policies is through the perspective of the “caring dimension of the welfare states”. Relevant questions in this respect include: whether care is private or public responsibility, whether it is paid or unpaid, whether it contributes to the dependence or independence of caregivers. Nancy Fraser argued that the way towards a fair distribution of paid and unpaid work would be the idea of a universal caregiver. Drawing on this, different scholars developed typologies of welfare states.

Using care as an analytical category, Haas classifies the EU15 welfare states in four main clusters. In the privatised care model care is a privatised responsibility, primarily of mothers or extended family members, while men are oriented towards the labour market; private and public spheres are starkly differentiated. Fathers are not encouraged to take leave (because either it is unpaid, or non-transferable or not guaranteed in all companies). In the family-centred care model family values are central, the preservation of the family is important to policymakers, women’s contribution is more recognised but men are still held responsible for the family income. Fertility is promoted and there is public support for care-giving. Parental leave can be seen as childbearing leave and can theoretically be taken by either parent, while some incentives are given to fathers to take leave. In the market-oriented model parental leave policies are limited and there are no incentives for fathers to take unpaid parental leave. Instead of designing state policies to financially

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support employees (childcare, paid maternity leave, paid paternity leave), these countries have been working on convincing employers to become more involved in helping employees combine work and family through flexible work arrangements. Finally, the valued care model implies that care is a joint public/private responsibility, gives parents the opportunity to take parental leave in order to care for young children, offers financial compensation and guarantees job security as well as affordable care services and encourages fathers to take parental leave so as to help divide care responsibilities equally.

Another approach uses fuzzy-set ideal type analysis as a tool which lends itself to the analysis of very complex and multidimensional issues four categories of welfare states: a) the male breadwinner model which reproduces traditional roles, b) the caregiver parity model which does not challenge traditional roles but values them equally, c) the universal breadwinner or adult worker model in which both women and men are fully employed and care work must be outsourced and d) the universal caregiver model which recognises work and care as obligations of both genders in equal shares and promotes gender transformative policies. This does not exist yet in its pure form, so it can be called a limited caregiver one.

The ambiguous function of family benefits, often maintaining the segmentation between labour market employment and domestic care work and the associated gendered divisions, has often been stressed. Many scholars argue that generous maternity leaves in the absence of childcare provisions as additional support, have a socially conservative effect, as they create economic incentives for women to stay out of the labour market during childbearing with obvious implications for experience and promotions.

The post-communist countries are of particular interest, as they are following quite different trends, despite their common past. At the point of transition, labour market participation rates of women were quite high. Social assistance schemes became central in the process of their transformation into market economies. After the collapse of communism, a male breadwinner model was assumed to be the dominant model and state policies included the closing down of childcare centres and the withdrawal of financial support. Refamilialisation has been emphasised as the common feature in the former communist countries, but diversity of policies have started to be also an object of study. Great support was provided to large families for demographic purposes.

In the current economic climate, austerity-stricken South-European Member States have managed to protect their statutory leave systems, in spite of the unprecedentedly high

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unemployment, the shrinking public sector and the falling minimum wage. The EU has been backing such policies, as they are considered necessary for adaptation to the new family forms and dual-earner couples. Nevertheless, the benefits which were offered by regional or local authorities have still been affected by austerity and in the domain of work/life reconciliation have undergone important transformations.

Statutory leaves remained generous promoting an ‘extensible early return to work’ and parental leave (6-12 months) with part-time options. Portugal and Spain have done more in early school education but Spain is more conservative in terms of gender equality, as it clearly encourages part-time work through unpaid parental leave during childhood. Portugal encourages full-time employment for women and it has the highest take-up of parental leave by fathers (24%) in the South European group. The case of Portugal’s recent reform of parental leave in 2009 is worth highlighting as a very progressive step toward gender equality, as it contains a father quota but allows flexibility and offers incentives to parents to share it equally. A Scandinavian turn in the South European context paves the way for the other three Member States to follow.

Greece has been classified as one of the most generous and gender-egalitarian systems of reconciling work and family among 21 countries. In the public sector the leave is 12 months (100% replacement rate), whereas the private sector in theory can offer options of taking the six-month extension of the leave (minimum wage level) or 3.75 months on full pay. The severe austerity and continuous cuts and income reduction may affect the private sector arrangements. Another problem in Greece is the lack of coverage of certain categories of women who are not visible in the labour market. Finally, Italy scores lower in terms of gender equality leave policies in the last ten years. Emphasis is given to early years’ education of children.

4.3. Child care and gender equality

Female earnings are expected to help families stay out of poverty and make a contribution to rising welfare costs. Maternity leave arrangements should work towards the same effect. Family policies are an important tool to reduce the risk of poverty for families with children, redistribute income from childless households to those with children and also grant recognition to families for the societal benefits that children generate. Policies about family and work have also demographic dimensions to the extent that they have been regarded as tools addressing the challenges of an ageing society and the falling fertility rates.

Child day care is important both in terms of socialisation and learning and as a tool for children’s general welfare, having positive impact on survival, growth, development and learning. Overall, according to European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) 2011 data, 59 per cent of those trying to use childcare services reported cost as the main obstacle to using them.

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111 Lewis (2006).
Women across the EU work fewer paid hours than men at all stages of their life. Still the parenting phase is one where the gender gap increases, with employed women spending twice as many hours on care and house work compared to employed men. When entering the parenting phase women reduce their paid work by four hours and increase their unpaid work by 25 hours, while men increase their unpaid work by 12 hours. High child care costs have been found to keep certain women from joining the labour market, while making others leave their job prematurely; child care benefits result in women being more likely to enter the labour market, as well as being more likely to be employed full-time. Limited public responsibility for childcare costs brings income problems, time poverty, gender inequality, problematic childcare arrangements and poor outcomes for the children. Since dual-earner families are common, women should be granted entitlements as individuals, rather than mothers or wives.

Some scholars dissociate the trend of mothers to not return to work from maternity leave policy and attribute it to broader social and political circumstances and that maternity leave has very small long-term effects on subsequent earnings of mothers, or that it does not have a significant negative impact on subsequent employment. Others link the reduced returning to work for mothers to general attitudes about motherhood which may function as social pressures keeping mothers at home.

Parental leaves by involving fathers in child care can contribute to gender equality, as they can potentially change gender roles and, if they are not too long, lead to an earlier return of mothers to work. The rules and conditions of cover are extremely complicated and vary greatly among EU28 Member States. Unless they include a ‘use it or lose it’ clause for fathers and offering a high replacement rate their take up is low. High take up rates of parental leave by fathers are found in the Nordic countries. Nevertheless, evidence shows that the use of parental leave, when transferable, is used by women.

Another criterion to consider is the universality of parental leave and the proportion of population that is excluded. This can lead to disadvantage of low-income women, agricultural workers, people active in the informal economy, to name but a few. It is important to bear in mind the difference between de jure coverage and actual take up.

The norm is that women use their entire leave unless it is very low-paid. Behaviour is influenced by the policy design and shows the real gender equality deficit in each country. Therefore individuality and non-transferability are essential elements of leaves promoting gender equality. Availability of childcare services contributes to fathers’ take up of parental leave.

114 Eurofound (2012a).
4.4. Flexibility and work-life balance

Around 80% of the third EWCS reported that their working time fits well with their family and social commitments; male employees were slightly less satisfied on this issue than their female counterparts. However, women in all country clusters, apart from the northern European ones, reported significant difficulties in combining work and family life, in particular during parenting, despite favourable working time and family-friendly arrangements. The northern countries exhibit the lowest gap in time allocation, which is put down to the active mainstreaming policies that promote gender equality and help work and family life reconciliation\textsuperscript{124}.

Flexible leave arrangements enable parents to stay close both to their children and to their jobs, which has benefits for both the employees and the employers. Some countries, permit parents to be on parental leave and collect full benefits while working part-time, e.g. the UK’s up to 10 ‘Keep in Touch’ days during maternity leave. Flexible arrangements reduce barriers to take leave, as well as employers’ resistance. Leave benefits in most cases are financed through social insurance schemes; as a result, costs are distributed across all employers, rather than paid by individual employers (who might otherwise discriminate against leave-takers). Further, they are administered at the national and regional level so that individual employers do not have to pay benefits directly to each employee\textsuperscript{125}.

Not only is flexibility compatible with the increasing salience of individual decision-making, autonomy and reflexivity in late modernity\textsuperscript{126}, but it might also prove to be rewarding from the point of view of employers, if parental leave takers achieve emotional and personal fulfilment through their time out of work and return to work rejuvenated and happier. Flexible labour market arrangements combining work with leave arrangements might be the way forward for employers, employees, children, families and communities. Having said that, the state needs to set limits and give incentives to parents, so that not too much of negotiation is left between employees and employers\textsuperscript{127}. The compulsory parental leave quota for fathers improves their negotiating position vis-à-vis employers\textsuperscript{128}.

Policies to promote the reconciliation of work and life in reality help reproduce and consolidate women’s responsibilities as primary carers\textsuperscript{129}. In this sense, it becomes a crucial question whether women should be given the choice to do care work, rather than paid work, although the former might be arresting the evolution of their career and their pension entitlements. This becomes a more complicated policy question if men choose not to care and thus constrain women’s choices\textsuperscript{130}.

Work/family policies are framed in both economic and social terms. In economic terms, the consideration is to increase employment in ways that encourage growth and competitiveness, which means taking into account the viewpoints of employers and businesses. In social terms, the family is given priority and employment is seen as a means for social inclusion and children welfare. The two logics are in conflict, e.g. regarding the time to work and the time spent with the family and the process of negotiation is quite

\textsuperscript{124} Eurofound (2012a).
\textsuperscript{128} Leira (1998).
\textsuperscript{129} Stratigaki (2004).
\textsuperscript{130} Lewis (2009).
Differences in men’s and women’s work, care and leisure time

intense and involves the state, employers and employees (or parents); the resulting policy packages are contentious and often ambiguous regarding their gender equality aspiration and effectiveness\textsuperscript{131}.

Social conceptions of gender and parenthood play an important role in the paternity and parental leave arrangements across national contexts. Leave schemes themselves contribute to social constructions of motherhood and fatherhood and create norms as to what it means to be a good parent\textsuperscript{132}. The parameter of gender culture is important in examining the different social understandings of men’s and women’s roles, which underpin the organisation of family and work across different national settings\textsuperscript{133}. A longitudinal study of post-pregnancy work outcomes demonstrated that women’s return to employment was conditioned by income, the level of support provided by the employer, but also their emotional and physical condition\textsuperscript{134}.

The decision to take parental leave is a family decision that is dependent on a number of factors. If the amount of compensation is minimal in relation to the wages (of both parents) then the couple might go for a shorter leave period. By contrast, if the parental benefit compares favourably to the foregone income (to which a potential day care cost should be added) then one of the couple (in most cases the woman, who tends to have lower wages) will probably opt for taking longer periods of leave. Logistically the decision might be complex, but in any case the compensation rate is an important parameter to consider, not least because it puts into consideration the issue of whether men should take advantage of paternity and parental leaves. This unravels the gender dimensions of the economics of the household, as it concerns both the future employment prospects of the woman, as well as the chance of the man to learn how to be a father. In addition, both men and women risk losing their job, even under good job protection conditions, while they might also face discrimination from employers, particularly if the leave arrangements are generous in time and/or remuneration\textsuperscript{135}.

\textsuperscript{132} Rostgaard (2002).
\textsuperscript{134} Houston, D. M. and Marks, G. (2003). The role of planning and workplace support in returning to work after maternity leave. British Journal of Industrial Relations 41: 197-214.
\textsuperscript{135} Rostgaard (2004).

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The introduction of the daddy quota in Scandinavia represents the institutionalisation of the right of employed fathers to care for their children and signals a state intervention in employment arrangements with the intention of influencing the gendered division of caring responsibilities. The portion of leave reserved exclusively for fathers and the level of wage-replacement ratio of parental leave are the main criteria used in assessing the gender equality of policy. If parental leave for fathers is of limited duration and/or does not replace a substantial portion of fathers’ earnings then it is the mothers who will tend to take leave, rather than the fathers. The period in which parental leave is available also influences father’s uptake of leave; flexibility increases uptake. Single parents have the right to use the full share of paid leave of two parents in Sweden but in other country cases they try to balance concerns about extended leave periods, particularly of mothers, with concerns about child welfare. In the EU28 countries, where compensation rates are earnings-related, the take up of paternity and parental leave is high. Lower uptake of paternity or parental leave by fathers in less secure and poorly regulated occupations proves the importance of financial considerations in the question of leave-taking. Infants in poor households may experience less parental involvement than those whose parents enjoy paid job-protected leave.

Single parents are overrepresented among the disadvantaged and there is doubt as to whether benefits in kind indeed alleviate their circumstances. Although evidence has shown considerable improvement of lone parents’ employability through provision of in kind child care services, it remains obvious that transfers also have a poverty reduction effect. Paid

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137 O’ Brien, Brandth, B. et al. (2007).
Differences in men's and women's work, care and leisure time

parental leave is clearly positive, whereas family allowances have an employment-supressing effect.

4.5. CARING FOR THE ELDERLY

The share of population over 65 years of age in EU28 is estimated to almost double by 2060 (from 87 million in 2010 to 152 million in 2060)\textsuperscript{138}. Simultaneously, life expectancy has risen, pensionable age has gone up because of the recession and hence prospective carers of older people will also be getting older. Ageing population and the needs of care for older people are dominant themes in economics and policy literature in gloomy scenarios of collapsed social arrangements. The ‘aged’ are presented as a different and uniform social category, more linked to the past than to the future, mostly passive rather than active authors of their own life. When it comes to care of older people often policies are based on imagined client identities, with exaggerated attention to their health problems and weaknesses and underestimation of their contribution and individuality. In this way their care needs can fit into the current demographic and socio-economic settings. On the other hand, there is the concept of ‘active ageing’ and large numbers of officially elderly people contributing to the community and living independently\textsuperscript{139}.

Social care is defined as assistance and surveillance provided to adults by family members in their everyday life activities. The carers can be either professionals or non-professionals and it can take place within the public or the private sphere. If carers are professionals paid by public authorities, care becomes formal. Informal care services involve family members and friends.

The number of working adults currently providing care for an older relative was 16% (3% full-time and 13% part-time), while 40% of them had to provide care in the past or will have to provide care in the future. The proportion of women among the carers (providing care at least once a week) is higher by 4 percentage points than that of men (16% and 12% respectively in the age group 18-64). Among workers 50-64 18% of men and 22% of women provide care at least once a week. These figures, however, do not capture the number of carers who are not visible because of informal work arrangements. Other research has shown that of working age carers, 50% of full-time and 70% of part-time carers are also in employment\textsuperscript{140}.

Care within the household has to be regulated and protected by anti-racist and employment legislation. Particular attention needs to be paid to the inequalities that ‘affordable care’ for EU citizens may be causing in non-EU countries. From a gender equality point of view, it is relevant because it constitutes different treatment of women, whereas from a feminist perspective it creates inequalities among women of different ethnicity and exploitation of their work by members of their gender.

The ways in which Member States provide long-term care vary greatly. Commonalities include the centrality of family as an institution and main provider of unpaid care, the increasing need for provision of formal care and services, the overrepresentation of women among the carers and the fact that a big part of this type of work is unregulated.

Legal protection of carers and the cared for can be derived from the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Article 25 protects the right of elderly people and people with


\textsuperscript{140} Eurofound (2015f).
Disabilities to lead an independent life with dignity. Non-discrimination legislation also applies and through protection by association can cover carers but only in cases of harassment and direct discrimination. Another avenue toward protection of carers would be through their characterisation as ‘vulnerable social group’ on the basis of the physical and mental health risks associated with their caring role.\textsuperscript{141}

Pickard identifies two main issues related to intergenerational care of the elderly: the availability of children to provide care and the propensity (ability and willingness) to provide it.\textsuperscript{142} Both are affected by general trends, such as the falling fertility, the rising participation of women in the labour market and decline in co-residence of the older people with their children. Although spouses partially compensate for the lack of care by the children, the oldest old (85+) are in clear need of care. Meeting the rising needs in terms of unpaid care will primarily impact on women’s employment, as demand for spouse carers will rise substantially over the next two decades.

Maintaining their job and combining work and care is vital to carers in terms of job satisfaction, inclusion and self-esteem. Planning and increase in the provision of services in the formal care sector need to be intensified through universal long-term care services based on thorough research.\textsuperscript{143} Female carers aged 45-64 are more likely to be involved in elderly care which impacts on their career, namely going part-time subsequently income reduction and loss of training opportunities.\textsuperscript{144}

On the EU level, the European Commission in 2010 proposed a new type of leave, filial leave, for working adults who need to care for elderly relatives. 19 Member States have some type of leave in place for urgent family reasons (Parental Leave Directive) and 18 allow for flexible working hours but in most cases at a lower wage replacement rate. It also suggested pension credits for the time allocated by working relatives to care for older dependants, while in 2012 the Commission emphasised the risk that support offered to carers may take into account the gender aspects of caring.\textsuperscript{145}

Policy design has to be based on research on ageing and needs which will include the elderly self-expressed views on their needs and care within the cultural context of the country they live in as this form of care is the most influenced by cultural and emotional bonds and expectations. Policy instruments which would enhance the combination of care and working life include public provision of services which would assist carers and simultaneously social partners can play an important role through collective agreements, as in the case of Germany. Practical considerations around the feasibility of such initiatives in a climate of severe austerity in some Member States require particular attention to the effects at the policy-design stage. The European Parliament recognised this need in July 2013 when cuts to social care were being discussed.\textsuperscript{146}

The carers’ right to work-life reconciliation makes the introduction of workplace legislation for carers necessary on the EU level; such legislative steps should be informed by the carers’ diverse needs and the interdependence which the caring relationship entails for both parties and be expressed in a clear way which would make adoption by national legislators easier.

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Horton (2015).
\textsuperscript{145} Eurofound (2015f).
\textsuperscript{146} Horton (2015).
5. LEISURE

**KEY FINDINGS**

- Leisure includes a number of activities, personal and social, some of which cross the line with work and care in both the private and public spheres.
- The question of leisure equality adds a dimension to the usual division between paid and unpaid labour as boundaries between care and leisure are harder to draw for women who are care providers of children and adults in the household than it is for men.
- The domain of leisure becomes more difficult to define due to increasing work flexibility which permeates the private sphere.
- Leisure is a need which has become a luxury for certain groups, with health implications.

Leisure is a subjective term which denotes all the activities that an individual likes doing, which can include anything from physical exercise to social and cultural activities, participation in political, community or religion-related activities among others. Leisure is the residual of 24 hours when time spent in personal care (sleeping, eating and grooming), paid work and domestic labour (housework, DIY, gardening, shopping, childcare, pet care) is deducted. Leisure time can be allocated to socialising, establishing and maintaining relationships (friendship and intimate relationships), all forms of entertainment, sport, hobbies, participation in political and community life and volunteering.

Leisure activities have exhibited a reduced gender gap between 2005 and 2010, due to the reduced involvement of both men and women, but most prominently of men. Given the differences across the EU28 in terms of employment regulation and care arrangements, it comes as no surprise that some inter- and intra- country differences exist, as official leave arrangements and public holidays, as well as time allocated to leisure vary. Such differences in leisure (time, type and quality) reflect gender, class and status. Even more constraints exist when it comes to parents’ free time, in particular that of mothers.

The last decades have been characterised by a rise in work-life spill-over and time crunch. The latter denotes the time pressure that hectic lifestyle, the organisation of both the public and the private spheres impose on us, so that there is a constant feeling of being rushed. Leisure can act as a buffer and alleviate stress.

Leisure time can be used for relaxation, recreation or for personal development. The latter includes learning new skills, enhancing one’s cultural capital to improve one’s social status. Values studies can reveal the parameters which influence people’s choice which can be attributed to individual circumstances but also to broader socio-economic and cultural factors which often produce gendered outcomes. Verbakel examined the importance of ‘relaxing’ and ‘learning something new’ for Europeans in 46 countries. Her findings show that people with much more time pressure in their everyday life tend to value relaxation more, whereas the younger ones with high level of education prefer to use their leisure time to learn new things. Culture in a country’s context appears to be relevant.

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147 EIGE (2015).
We can talk about **leisure equality**, which adds a dimension to the usual division between paid and unpaid labour and its gendered implications. Boundaries between care and leisure are harder to draw for women who are care providers of children and adults in the household than it is for men. It is safe to assume that couples with children will have less leisure time than childless couples, as well as single people more than couples.

Ideas about good parenting and quality time spent with children are part of public debate, they are bound to influence some parents’ time allocation and their choice of activities. The terms **contamination** (leisure time in the presence of children) and **fragmentation** (interruption to care for children) are often used in literature when gender comparisons in the domain of leisure are made. The institutional context is also relevant. Research conducted in five different countries (Denmark, US, Italy, Australia and France) with different gender regimes and looking for cross-national differences and similarities, as well as for differences in quantity and quality of parental leisure, shows that Denmark scores best due to its woman-friendly childcare policies and an equal division of care work. Both genders have more and better quality leisure and more child-free leisure time. American and Australian mothers spend most of their leisure time with their children, whereas French and Italian mothers less. This difference can be explained by the lower level of childcare services’ provision available to parents in liberal welfare regimes and popular views about parenting in these countries. Overall, women have less leisure time, more fragmented and less child-free than men. Leisure inequality does not necessarily mirror gender divisions of labour. An important finding is that improving women’s work prospects and presence in the public sphere without challenging the division in the private sphere is not enough to improve leisure equality and their overall wellbeing.

According to a recent survey, at the EU level labour status has an impact on the degree of satisfaction with time use: retired people, those in training and education and those working part-time reported greater satisfaction levels regarding their time use compared to the full-time and the self-employed. Those in higher education reported lower satisfaction, although they had higher incomes; this is explained by the increased level of responsibilities and overall more demanding jobs that leave less room for enjoyment of private life and time.

The report showed a clear negative link between the average weekly hours spent at work and satisfaction with time use, as working hours affected work life balance and the amount of time free for leisure activities. The analysis also showed that the EU Member States with the highest spending on leisure and the lowest working time did not systematically report the highest satisfaction with time use; other factors, such as cultural attitudes and social context played a role in devoting time and money to participate in leisure activities and thus contributed to the degree of satisfaction with time use. The study also showed a very slight gender effect, with a mean at 6.8 for men and 6.7 for women; this might be due to the fact that women undertake unpaid work on household duties and caring for children; this ‘double shift’ tends to limit their free time, explaining their slightly higher share of reported low satisfaction (28.7% versus 27.5% for men).

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151 Ibid.
5.1. Work-life conflict and health

The ways poor work-life balance impacts on people’s mental health have been the topic of several studies. Data from the 2010 European Working Conditions Survey in 27 European countries have produced some interesting results on the impact of the working time element of work-life imbalance on their health. Work-family conflict is strongly linked with occupation and welfare state regimes. Scandinavian welfare states scored high in terms of work-life reconciliation, while Southern and Eastern European ones low; moreover, the type of welfare regime had a stronger effect on men’s work-life balance than on women’s. A possible explanation is that women adjust their working hours more and are highly represented in part-time and temporary work. Regulation of working time was also strongly associated with work-life balance. Men and women working on temporary contracts, low-skilled jobs and very large firms reported the highest work-life conflict.

The increase of workplace flexibility adds to the work-life spill-over, as new technologies allow for teleworking. This may come at the expense of opportunities to invest time in friendship at workplace, defined as sharing of experiences and interests or activities, which vary in terms of level and frequency of communication, contact and socialising. A study of friendship at work showed that parents had the least time to devote to friendship and in order to maintain relationships with friends they often crossed the work-family borders and organised activities, which enabled them to combine different roles at the same time. This demonstrates the need of people to relate and the value they place on friendship. Workplace friendship can increase work-life integration and productivity and wellbeing of employees which often extends beyond the workplace.

The gendered division of labour, the lower income of women as a category, gender stereotypes and traditional lifestyle choices are also reflected in women’s high physical inactivity rate among EU citizens which impacts on both their physical and mental health, as it is associated with much higher risks of developing chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, as well as certain forms of cancer and several psychological disorders. Lack of regular physical activity is considered one of the most important public health burdens. A recent piece of research using data from 27 countries interestingly looked into the country-context and macro-economic factors and their influence on women’s more sedentary lifestyles. This is clear in the cases of Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands which scored the highest, as they have a very small gender gap in terms of physical inactivity; their welfare regimes are woman-friendly and allow for people’s control over the division of their time. Women must not only be encouraged through media campaigns but also facilitated through public provision of services to embrace a more physically active and healthy lifestyle.

A growing volume of research suggests that the domain of leisure has shrunk due to increasing work flexibility which permeates the private sphere. Some people do not ever have the chance to ‘switch off’ work and focus on leisure. This deserves more attention as stress-related and mental health conditions have been on the increase. The negative effects of work-life conflict affect both genders. Nevertheless, status and job satisfaction are not unrelated. The satisfaction for people who choose to work constantly in order to achieve their career goals is bound to be qualitatively different from the work-life conflict of people in precarious situations and at the intersections of multiple forms of exclusion. Approaching such topics requires caution, as gender and class are hugely relevant.

Better working conditions, equal division of unpaid work between the genders are going to lead to an overall improvement of people’s health.
6. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND POLICY POINTERS

If the Member States are to realise the EU2020 goals combined with gender equality, macro-economic policies need to be connected with social objectives. In a number of countries austerity has generated increased poverty without reducing the debt that it purported to¹⁵⁵.

Macro-economic policies which target fiscal consolidation should be subjected to gender mainstreaming in order to assess how they produce different outcomes for men and women as well as for different income groups¹⁵⁶. Gendered poverty needs to be tackled through a holistic approach that sees it as a structural, as opposed to an individual problem; policies need to address the links between the family, labour market, social security, and the political and social for women to escape the poverty trap¹⁵⁷.

**Gender mainstreaming** has been suggested as a dimension that should be included in the fiscal space analysis (which might include the financing instruments and relevant policies to provide resources, together with the enabling governance, institutional and economic environment for these instruments/policies to deliver specific objectives). Perrons thus defines fiscal space as 'the available financing, designated by policy choices, to provide the necessary resources for a specific set of social, economic, and environmental objectives, taking into account the specific needs of marginalised groups using race, gender and class impact analysis'¹⁵⁸. Alternative economic policies exist and can reduce poverty; for instance, the state as 'employer of last resort' and the deployment of state expenditure to provide both social (e.g. social care) and physical infrastructure.

**Family policy** in circumstances of crisis needs to be integrated and coherent. Efficient allocation of resources demands coordination and careful structural changes. Participation of all stakeholders in these processes is imperative. Different institutional and government levels (national, regional, local) should be part of these responses, so that they strengthen family organisation and its links with formal and informal social organisations and the community¹⁵⁹. Within the specific contest of each Member State, social and family policies should provide both men and women with real choices regarding whether they would like to work or not and regarding the pattern of work they would prefer¹⁶⁰.

Further research will be needed to understand more the gender effects of the economic crisis and of poverty, as well as of the diverse and emerging needs of reconciliation of work, family life and leisure, together with the necessary means to achieve these needs for diverse groups of women and their different household and life circumstances.

Existing welfare models should be extended to include a care model that is suitable for the current circumstances. This should be a universal carer model so as to deal with the individual child care and elderly care needs.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.
¹⁵⁹ Eurfound (2015a).
¹⁶⁰ Gash, Mertens and Gordo (2010).
Parental leave policies can contribute to gender equality both in the labour market and the provision of care. They can transform gender roles, if designed properly, to attract non-carers into care. However, they can also have the opposite effect, if restricted to mothers only. Policies that divide leave and payments between mothers and fathers on a non-transferable basis work towards gender equality in terms of roles and labour market participation. They also provide fathers with the opportunity (and possibly the financial support) to care for and spend time with their children. Cross-national evidence shows clearly that parental leave should have a high rate of compensation, be an individual entitlement and be flexible, if fathers are to use it.

Leaves can work together with other instruments, notably state-subsidised affordable child care services day care, to ensure that mothers can remain active in an increasingly competitive labour market. School scheduling in accordance with working hours which need to be regulated and reduced, after-school services, flexible parental leave, but also flexibility of place (teleworking) and of contractual conditions, all can be used as devices to maximise people’s control over their life.

If care is a universal human need, then it should be possible for anyone to be able to exercise this choice, which in turn presupposes adequate wages, family-friendly policies and secure work and family conditions. The nature of the policy package and the parameters of male and female entitlements, compensation rate and duration should be considered carefully for genuine choices regarding paid and unpaid work and care to be materialised, as the way a policy is shaped often determines whether it can be taken. The politics of time and money are also a considerable dimension to be looked into.

Daly suggests individualisation as the most adequate tool of analysis of policies with emphasis on gender and family arrangements, identifying four dimensions: treatment of people as individuals, their preferred location of care and its construction as paid or unpaid, the treatment of family as a living arrangement and how and where gender inequality is problematized. Treating women as individuals would lead to revealing the gendered outcomes that the encouragement of women to undertake part-time work in terms of reconciling work and family.

A life course perspective is needed and policies will be based on one’s life work as part of their citizenship rights. New forms of leave can facilitate work/life reconciliation. A very innovative development is the Belgian career break/time, a leave available to all workers at a flat rate that can be drawn in parts over one’s working life and is something between paid and unpaid leave.

Work-life balance is a key pillar in these responses. Full-time employment should be facilitated, which necessitates more support towards higher quality and less costly childcare services, not least for lone parents who are more vulnerable. High levels of labour marker participation need not be incompatible with high levels of family support, as the case of

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161 Ciccia and Verloo (2012).
163 Lewis and Campbell (2007).
166 Hibson, Fahlen et al. (2010).
167 Lewis and Campbell(2007).
Portugal has shown\(^{170}\). Investment in social infrastructure (for provision of childcare, elderly care and other community services) is necessary and can also have beneficial economic effects, generating (female) jobs that are stable over time\(^{171}\).

The new Polish law on childcare services for children under three and the Toddler programme introduced in 2011 is a good example of co-financing between state and municipal authorities has resulted in facilitating access to families of two or more children and has been very successful as it grew from 571 children’s crèches and clubs in 2011 to 2294 in December 2014. It has had a significant positive impact on work and care balance, which has been expressed by the users themselves, and of which employers seem also supportive. The day care centres and kindergartens in Greece, where enrolment is made using a voucher and where the European Social Fund has contributed under the extreme austerity conditions of 2013-14, has also had important effect in facilitating women’s access to the labour market\(^{172}\).

**Civil society** is notably involved in supporting the most vulnerable families. The Ramada Parish Community Centre NGO in Portugal provides a variety if services, such as a day care centre for elderly people, a temporary shelter for children at risk, a canteen and a centre for counselling and legal advice. The Odivelas movement, also in Portugal, is a citizens association to help disadvantaged families in the Odivelas region. In Spain, the regional government of Andalusia operates the Andalusia Solidarity and Food Plan to support families at extreme risk of poverty by integrating food-bank networks, employment creation measures and long-term care assistance. In the UK, the Oxford City Council reform support team provides advisory services that help people to deal with the significant changes in the benefit system, but could be more organised if it had some input from the voluntary sector\(^{173}\). In Greece, the Solidarity for All Campaign has provided a website offering a number of services and skills and acting as a support, training and mobilisation resource, while the Omikron project gives a relatively up-to-date catalogue of mainly informal citizen-based organisations providing solidarity and support, including medical centres, food banks, legal advice and education provision. Such initiatives among many operate in conjunction with local authorities and municipalities and are only a fraction of the extensive solidarity-based economy which has compensated for the annihilation of state provision since 2011.

Smaller and more peripheral benefits (e.g. transport) are also significant under crisis conditions. Adequate information on entitlements, as well as straightforward access to these benefits and services is imperative. Informal employment should be discouraged and avoided by providing adequate income support, which currently is in many Member States below the at-risk of poverty threshold\(^{174}\).

**Job quality** does not improve automatically with economic development, technological advancement or sectoral change, therefore policy efforts are needed. National policies may be helpful in this, e.g. by supporting trade unions or employment. Improving working conditions and raising earnings are also part of the agenda. Transformation of the workplace is essential in changing gender attitudes to care. Working hours and workplace culture have to adopt the ‘universal caregiver model’ of worker and a different work

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\(^{171}\) Perrons (2015); ILO (2012).

\(^{172}\) Eurofound (2015a).

\(^{173}\) Ibid.

\(^{174}\) Ibid.
Evidence suggests that very short paternity leaves or longer unpaid ones have been ineffective in changing gender attitudes. Flexibility in taking piecemeal parental leave is gender-neutral and can lead to increase of fathers’ use but the fact that it is up to negotiations with mothers and employers may raise difficulties in practice.

Minimising the non-take up of benefits is important for reasons of improved quality of life and fairness across the segments of the population that are entitled to benefits. Policy directions include improving administrative procedures (including using more the information technologies available), providing the right information in clear and unambiguous ways, raising awareness at various government and administrative levels, and finding ways of reaching those who should be claiming and they are not.

When it comes to migrant workers, who increasingly occupy a larger share of the EU28 population, policy-makers need to be aware that migrants are faced with the same socio-economic concerns as the EU nationals. European funding through the European Integration Fund for migrants should be provided at the local level to finance migrant activities through the local authorities. Migrants should also have access to benefits and services through a universal model that is not related to insurance contributions and employment history.

The imposition of a common model across the EU may be non-feasible, due to the mosaic or practices, institutional traditions, attitudes and behaviours. However, in a climate of economic crisis and rising immigration and given the EU28 commitment to gender equality, social investment and the EU2020 Strategy, achieving common denominators and guaranteeing citizens decent living standards, are realistic and socially beneficial prospects. As Zygmunt Bauman says: “The carrying power of a bridge is not the average strength of its pillars, but the strength of the weakest pillar.”

175 Moss and Deven (2015).
176 Eurofound (2015c).
177 Eurofound (2015d).
REFERENCES


Differences in men's and women's work, care and leisure time


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ANNEX

1. LIVING WAGE


The living wage has been a key concept in the discussion about low pay and in-work poverty. It is seen as a margin over the poverty line, and has been rejuvenated as a concept and given rise to a number of debates recently. A difference in principle lies in whether it should be of a level that would be sufficient for a full-time worker to sustain themselves and their family without recourse to means-tested benefits and tax credits; or, whether it should be expected to provide sustainability, if accompanied by those in-work benefits and credits.

The living wage is notoriously difficult to calculate. Central considerations in the calculation include: what kind of household the living wage should support; how many earners there are and how many working hours they work; what should be done about certain variable costs,

Feminist critiques in the 1980s argued against basing the living wage on the male breadwinner model of a household, usually with children, as this assumed that if the main earner’s money could support the family, then it would not be a problem for the other earner (in most cases the wife) to be either out of work or to work very part-time. Feminists are in favour of a gender-neutral family sustaining wage. The living wage is clearly affected by government policies. Inflation, direct taxes, benefits and tax credits are straightforwardly related, but they can also complicate the issue, as any increase in benefits and/or reduction in tax would lower the level of living wage.

Finding an accepted definition of a living wage is difficult because all definitions make assumptions about types of families which, as a result, leave out some types of families, therefore the model is not generalizable. In any case, Bennett argues that ‘seeing low pay through the lens of household poverty...can only ever provide a partial solution, because it does not place inadequate wages in the context of the unequal structure of labour market rewards and the persistent under-valuation of certain forms of paid (and unpaid) work’ (p.60). In this case, employers might argue that they need to just support those workers who have family responsibilities when they have them, as opposed to providing support, through a living wage, to all workers according to their diverse needs averaged at different times and situations. These needs are better met through paid maternity/parental leave, or government policies such as social protection or affordable housing.

2. RECENT FAMILY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES AT A GLANCE

Family policy since 2010 has had a significant contribution in the family situation in different countries, and has presented divergent patterns, according to a recent Eurofound study:\(^\text{179}\):

Austria has presented a policy pattern which targets families with higher earnings (e.g. the introduction of the income-dependent childcare benefit and the tax deduction of childcare costs), while paying less attention to the more socially vulnerable families; at the same time, the expansion of public childcare can support all family types and facilitate take-up of employment.

\(^\text{179}\) Eurofound (2015a).
Finland has improved the existing schemes, such as fathers’ leave entitlement. However, its family policy presents major shifts in their tradition: restriction in the freedom of choice of childcare and in the principle of universality by changing the logic of the home care allowance and the universal right to day-care services.

Greece has changed orientation from its pro-natalist policies, which used to provide extra benefits to families with three or more children, or helped women with early retirement. Since 2012, it has targeted families at risk of poverty (unemployed, low-income, single parent, large families) in means-tested manners.

Italy has been characterised by limited and fragmented policies; the National Fund for Social Policies has been reduced and the cost is shifted to municipalities, which have in turn reduced financing of educational services and services for the disabled or the elderly and as a result have made these inaccessible to many families.

Latvia has developed a new family support policy, aiming at promoting a family friendly environment, to target low fertility and declining population, as well as the shrinking of families with an increasing number of children born to single mothers. However, it has also witnessed severe budget cuts for family policy.

Poland seeks to target large families and mostly low-income families through means testing. It has provided better circumstances for work and life reconciliation through providing incentives for fathers to take up parental leave. It has also generally taken measures to facilitate a gender neutral family policy in support of a dual earner and dual carer family model, with better availability of childcare and reduced costs. Total family policy expenditure has increased in response to low birth rates and large families and low-income ones have been especially targeted.

In Portugal, the main aim of family policy has been to target the very low income families by maintaining cash benefits only for them through means testing, to introduce support in kind through social canteens and to increase benefits for families with children where both parents are unemployed; however, eligibility criteria have become stricter and the amounts of benefits have been reduced, while the new measures reach only a very low number of disadvantaged families. Overall the conditions of life and work have become more difficult, especially for disadvantaged families, while poverty, material deprivation, work intensity, fertility and child well-being reveal a bleak picture. Civil society and the social sector have provided support but cannot compensate for the retrenchment in support for vulnerable families.

Slovenia has seen an overall shift from family policy to social policy; allowances have been strictly means-tested and target only the most disadvantaged groups. Provisions have been effective in mitigating poverty risks for the most disadvantaged families, including child poverty. Still, the unfavourable conditions of the labour market, with low work activity cannot be compensated by social transfers, and single parents have been the most affected. Austerity measures have had a negative impact on middle class families, lowering benefits and salaries in the public sector, and have resulted in the middle classes becoming on a par with the low income families.

Spain has introduced a double-track approach to family policy: on the one hand structural reforms have affected the labour market, health, education, long-term care, which means that the most disadvantaged families have been seriously affected; on the other hand, there have been budget constraints and reductions in measures that used to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

The UK has been showing serious social cuts, including in the generous 1997-2010 family policy. Tax credits, family allowances and public funding of childcare have by and large been reduced and re-orientated towards the lowest-income families.
3. WORK, CARE AND NO LEISURE: THE CASE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

The issue of migrant care workers links three types of regimes: care regimes, employment regimes and migration regimes which impact mainly on women. The global care chain, given the rising intra-EU migration of workers, blurs the boundaries between ‘sending’ and ‘receiving countries’, as the same EU citizens are in the paradoxical position of belonging at the same time to the category of carers in the receiving country and that of wage-earners in the sending country. This combined with the stronger tendency of shifting care to the labour market to enhance women’s employment chances, produces gendered effects when it comes to migrant carers, as commodification of care confines them to very low-paid, home-based care jobs (domestic helpers or carers).

This phenomenon of feminised migration of workers who leave their families behind to fill the care gap in countries in which there is a cultural expectation that younger relatives (children or others) will have to provide care to older family members at home, namely the South of Europe, Germany, Austria or Cyprus. When it comes to child care, such arrangements are very common in other countries such as the UK, France, Denmark or Sweden. So, a substantial part of elderly care is provided by migrant female workers, many of whom are undocumented.

Research in Austria on the provision of elderly care shows that 80% is provided at home and women represent 80% of carers. The estimate of migrant women involved in this form of care is 40,000.

Migrant workers are overrepresented also in the formal labour market in all care sectors, including health and community care. Other forms of policy (immigration, discrimination, anti-racist legislation, naturalisation) as avenues to accessing rights) play a pivotal role in the protection of those workers whose unregulated, low-paid work does not entitle them to any welfare benefits and are at great risk of poverty.

On another level, the fact that migrant women ‘free’ their female employers from their unpaid work at home enhances the ‘adult worker’ model. Simultaneously, there are effects on gender roles in their country of origin (often another EU Member State), as fathers take over a share of the childcare together with other family members, including older children. In terms of gender equality this may be positive as it undermines the traditional roles and leads to other forms of mothering in which the meanings of caring for children and caring about children are dissociated.

The emotional repercussion on migrant mothers who work as care workers is enormous and epitomises the complete lack of work-life balance, as the limits of paid work and care are blurred and there is a very significant spill-over effect on leisure which is the only time they have available to communicate and care at a distance for their own family. The way the precariousness of their existence and their emotional drain affect their health and wellbeing calls for further research. There are new needs in terms of work-family reconciliation in the sending countries which availability of state-provided child care can meet. Finally, new

181 Weicht (2013), p.188.
182 Williams (2012).
divisions and disparities are created among EU female citizens as a category, which needs to be addressed and repaired through policy.
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