Social Inclusion
Open Access Journal | ISSN: 2183-2803
Volume 8, Issue 4 (2020)

Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy

Editors

Michael Ochsner, Ivett Szalma and Judit Takács

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion, 2020, Volume 8, Issue 4
Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy

Published by Cogitatio Press
Rua Fialho de Almeida 14, 2º Esq.,
1070-129 Lisbon
Portugal

Available online at: www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion

Table of Contents

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 1–7
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.3619

Editorial

Linking Labour Division within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy

Ivett Szalma [1,2,*], Michael Ochsner [3] and Judit Takács [1,4]

[1] Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, 1097 Budapest, Hungary; E-Mails: szalma.ivett@tk.mta.hu (I.S.), takacs.judit@tk.mta.hu (J.T.)
[2] Corvinus University of Budapest, 1093 Budapest, Hungary
[3] FORS—Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, University of Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland; E-Mail: michael.ochsner@fors.unil.ch
[4] KWI Essen—Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, 45128 Essen, Germany

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 1 September 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
This thematic issue aims to shed light on the various ways of linking division of labour within families, work–life conflict and family policy in Europe. This editorial briefly introduces key concepts and provides a general overview of the published articles.

Keywords
division of labour; care work; family policy; long-term care; non-paid work; work–family conflict; work–life balance; work–life conflict

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

The aim of this thematic issue is to examine the division of labour within couples and families and its relation to work–life conflict from a multilevel perspective. The studies in this issue focus on individual-level factors such as age and gender values, meso-level factors such as employment, work demands and family constructions and macro-level factors such as regions, countries, policy environment and culture. The decisions surrounding how partners share their work are both influenced by these levels and the interactions between them. The main questions this thematic issue proposes to answer include the following: How is the division of labour related to work–life conflict? Which contextual factors can potentially increase equality in the division of labour? What is the role of the situation at the workplace and the labour market? Are there country-specific differences in the division of labour within families and couples and its relation to work–life conflict?

First, we should clarify that labour division is not just an individual decision. The concept of division already incorporates the division with somebody and, thus, we should regard it at least as the partners' common or interdependent decision. However, the partners do not make their decision about labour division in a societal vacuum, but their decision is dependent on attitudes, norms, expectations, opportunities and barriers. Moreover, how labour is divided within families does not only concern the individuals in a family or couple but can have an

impact on the society; for example, predominant patterns of labour division can influence gender inequalities in other life domains, especially in the labour market (Kotowska & Matysiak, 2008; McGinnity & Calvert, 2009) or contribute to decreasing fertility rates (Dommermuth, Hohmann-Marriott, & Lappegård, 2017; Mills, Mencarini, Tanturri, & Begall, 2008; Oláh & Fratczak, 2013).

In this thematic issue we collected eight articles addressing the questions above from different angles, using different theoretical and methodological approaches. In the next section we clarify the basic concepts relevant to this thematic issue.

2. How to Conceptualise Division of Labour in Families?

There is a conceptualisation gap between paid employment and non-paid work: The concept of non-paid work is still vaguely defined. Given the lack of a precise definition of non-paid work, there is still no established definition of division of labour within families. What is non-paid work that is shared within families? According to the OECD, "it refers to the production of goods or services that are consumed by those within or outside a household, but not for sale in the market" (OECD, 2011, p. 10). It is important to note that according to this general definition, the persons dividing labour in the family are not strictly living in the same household nor are they necessarily providing work to persons related by kinship, thus rendering the concept rather diffuse and ambiguous.

At the other extreme in definitions of division of labour within families, researchers define the concept more narrowly, focussing on family members living within the same household and reducing non-paid work within the household to daily routine work, such as cleaning or cooking, and non-routine work, such as repairing and gardening (Hu & Yucel, 2017; Poortman & van der Lippe, 2009; Ruppanner, Bernhardt, & Brandén, 2017). Obviously, in such a narrow definition an important type of non-paid work is missing: care work. Such a narrow conceptualisation is usually due to lack of proper data about caring activities.

Within the bounds of the wide and the narrow definitions, many shades of detail exist. Adding care work to the narrow definition, one has to note that care work itself can have more or less inclusive definitions. Childcare, as the most studied type of care work, is often limited to providing care for children who live with the respondents (see Hank & Steinbach, 2020; Newkirk, Perry-Jenkins, & Sayer, 2017). A more complete conceptualisation would include care for the family's elderly, which is still only rarely the case (Grigoryeva, 2017). Other scholars include a more general concept of family care, i.e., care work for family members who are disabled or are suffering from other temporal or chronic vulnerabilities, as all of us have urgent needs for care at various stages in our lives (Lynch, Baker, & Lyons, 2009).

Family care needs are generally less predictable in terms of timing, duration, intensity, and type of care than childcare, making it an important aspect to consider when examining work–life conflict but also much more difficult to measure. Moreover, with the aging of the European population, elderly care has become an increasingly important component of domestic labour. Still, family care remains almost invisible when non-paid work is examined: We tend to agree with Bouget, Saraceno, and Spasova (2017, p. 175) that the "recognition of 'carer' status, except for that of mothers of young children, is only in its infancy at EU level."

To complicate matters, care work clearly can be divided between family members who do not live together. Even in the case of childcare, care work can be shared outside the household because of partnership dissolution or other reasons, such as working abroad. In these circumstances, children often stay with their mothers and fathers become non-resident parents. Non-resident fathers can be involved in non-paid work such as taking the children to school, doing homework with them and playing with them. Moreover, care work can be given to family members outside of the household or even the family: Child or elderly care can be carried out by siblings, friends or neighbours, thus blurring the boundaries between care work and volunteer activities, such as in the broad OECD definition.

The topics of non-resident fathers and care work outside of the household are missing from most of the cross-national surveys, which can hinder the better understanding of fathers' involvement in family lives and complexities of family arrangements. Existing research shows that, for fathers, divorce can not only be a challenge, but also a new opportunity and a possibility for new kinds of fathering (Collier & Sheldon, 2008). Due to the lack of comparative data, this issue cannot be addressed in this thematic issue either, although the resident fathers' participation in non-paid work is discussed regarding several dimensions.

As already noted, the vague conceptualisation of labour division comes with a limited empirical operationalisation. Many international surveys focus on paid employment. For example, in the European Social Survey (ESS), one of the important comparative data sources at the European level, questions related to paid work are placed in the core module, available for each edition, while questions related to non-paid work were placed in a rotating module, fielded in 2004 and 2010, which already indicates that families' division of non-paid work is perceived as less relevant than that of paid work. The ESS does not stand alone with this practice. The existing general cross-cultural surveys, such as the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the European Values Study (EVS), follow the same strategy: They focus primarily on paid work and only ask about non-paid work on exceptional occasions or in a limited way. The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) is an exception, providing many details about childcare but, surprisingly, much less about elderly or family care.

3. How to Conceptualise Work–Life Conflict?

The concept of work–life conflict, focussing on the incompatibility between certain aspects of "employees' work lives and nonwork pursuits" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 76), has attracted increasing attention from scholars during the last decades (see, for example, Byron, 2005; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; König & Cesinger, 2015; Riva, Lucchini, & Russo, 2019). This can be explained by the profound global changes in private lives and family organisation since the second half of the 20th century leading to increased diversity in the organisation of families and workplaces in the 21st century (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). European countries experienced very different trajectories regarding these changes. North-Western European countries saw a substantial increase in female labour force participation: Women no longer tend to withdraw from the labour market after marriage or motherhood but remain employed until retirement (Thévenon, 2009, 2011). While in the Nordic countries, some institutional reforms started to decrease women's burdens (Björnberg, 2011), elsewhere, including in Southern European countries where female labour force participation started to increase only in the 1990s (Thévenon, 2009), women's additional commitment to work was not complemented with the development of the necessary welfare structures to support family-related work (Thévenon, 2011). At the same time, Central-Eastern European post-socialist countries experienced a substantial decline in female labour force participation throughout the 1990s because of the economic restructuring from state-socialist full employment to market economies (Pignatti, 2016). This transition also brought a rise in work pressure and cuts in welfare services, leaving the burden of care on families, especially mothers (Hobson, Fahlén, & Takács, 2011) in a process of re-familisation (Saxonberg & Sirovátka, 2006).

Despite researchers' and policy makers' interest in work–life conflict, the concept is defined in different ways. Already different terms are used to describe similar issues: work–life conflict, work–life balance, work–family conflict. Here, for sake of simplicity, we use work–life conflict as a term encompassing all connotations of conflicts between the work and life realms.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested in their seminal work that work–life conflict arises from simultaneous pressures from the work and non-work domains that are incompatible in certain aspects. They distinguish between three types of conflict. First, there might be a time incompatibility when one domain asks for attention for too much time to fulfil the obligations in the other (often referred to as time-based work–life conflict). Second, there might be difficulties to comply with demands from one domain because of strain, leading to not being able to pay enough attention to the other domain (often referred to as strain-based work–life conflict). Third, behaviour might be required in one role that makes it difficult to fulfil the requirements of the other role (often referred to as behaviour-based work–life conflict). A meta-analysis on the basis of more than 60 studies identified an important distinction: Conflicts can go in both directions, i.e., there might be interference of work with family (leading to work–family conflict) or interference of family with work (leading to family–work conflict; see Byron, 2005). Recently, a cognition-based approach to work–life conflict was proposed, interpreting "work–life ideologies as an individual-level construct that captures beliefs regarding how work and life are related" (Leslie, King, & Claire, 2019, p. 74). However, empirical studies tend to concentrate mainly on time and strain-based aspects of work–life conflict, as operationalising other (for example, emotional) aspects can be more challenging (Steiber, 2009).

Research comparing issues of work–life conflict across European countries or globally relies mainly on two cross-cultural data sets having fielded thematic modules related to work–life conflict: the ISSP 2012 and its earlier iteration in 2002 (ISSP Research Group, 2016) and the ESS round 5 in 2010 and its earlier iteration in 2004 (ESS, 2012). Their operationalisations are similar, but both come with issues of conceptualisation: The ISSP offers four items, two measuring work–family conflict and two reflecting family–work conflict. However, while work–family conflict includes an item each for time and strain-based conflict, both items for the family–work conflict are strain-based. On the other hand, the ESS provides six items to measure work–life conflict, including work–family conflict and adding work's impact on life more generally and on partnership. However, while interference between family and work (family–work conflict) is restricted to the family realm, the interference of work with the private realm does not address work–family conflicts but rather work–life conflicts in general, i.e., asks not about problems related to family but about free time. Despite these conceptual inconsistencies, the two main data sources for cross-cultural investigation of work–life conflict offer many possibilities to study the phenomenon and hopefully the thematic modules of these surveys will soon be repeated.

Some contributions in this thematic issue rely on ISSP and ESS data and therefore use the conceptualisations of work–life conflict used in these survey projects, coming with the issues described above. But we think that as long as the readers have these issues in mind and are aware of the general difficulties of the conceptualisation and measurement of the concepts involved, the data presented still provides us with valuable insights.

4. Overview of the Contributions

With this thematic issue we aim at linking labour division within families, work–life conflict and family policy. We received a diverse set of articles approaching the topic from many different angles, using different approaches and applying qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Some of the articles are comparative

while others describe one case in detail. The examined countries are also very diverse, including Northern, Western and Central Eastern European countries or a global sample.

In the first article, Theocharis Kromydas pays special attention to the period of the economic crisis after the global financial crisis in 2007–2008. He finds that the level of education is especially linked to work–life conflict in times of crisis. Moreover, women are more affected by the crisis in terms of employment, but also in terms of work–life conflict although education can have a cushioning effect on the increase in work–life conflict during the crisis for women.

However, not only education is linked to work–life balance and labour division; social class too plays an important role. In her article, Daria Ukhova focusses on post-socialist Europe in the period between 1994–2012 because this region is particularly notorious for high inequality in the gendered division of domestic labour. On the basis of the ISSP module "Family and Changing Gender Roles," she finds that the gender division of domestic labour did not change substantially during the post-socialist period. The article also reveals that the widespread argument that post-socialist countries go through a wave of traditionalization is not generally valid when controlling for social class. Traditionalisation seems to be the typical trajectory only for lower class households across most of the analysed countries, while the higher-class households follow similar paths as in other European countries.

Besides class, there are cultural factors affecting preferences for models of labour division within families and couples. Regula Zimmermann and Jean-Marie LeGoff examine differences in preferences for labour division in two regions of Switzerland and show that gender culture can differ essentially even within one country. Using in-depth interviews, the authors reveal that gendered culture plays out before the birth of the child. Before becoming parents, most French speaking women and men consider it ideal to share paid and non-paid work equally as parents, whereas their German speaking counterparts prioritise fathers' breadwinning and mothers' caregiving model. The transition to parenthood, however, reinforces that men should be the main breadwinner—not only in the German speaking part, but also in the French speaking part, couples share labour in a more inegalitarian way than they had anticipated. This surprising result can be explained by policy influence: the organisation of labour division is not only shaped by individual gender norms, but also by the (in)availability of welfare services. Not only in the German but also in the French part of the country, parents face a limited number of places in childcare facilities and have to cope with a rather short maternity leave and the non-existence of paternity leave.

As shown in the qualitative study by Zimmermann and LeGoff, work–family arrangements are not always in line with the examined couple's attitudes. Christina Bornatici and Marieke Heers thus examine the effect that the incongruence between role attitudes and the achieved family arrangement have on work–life conflict for partners in a sample of 37 countries. They find evidence that individuals having egalitarian attitudes and an egalitarian arrangement have the lowest levels of work–family conflict. However, congruence between attitudes and arrangement does not necessarily lead to lower levels of work–family conflict. Somewhat surprisingly, couples having traditional attitudes and a traditional labour division arrangement experience the highest work–family conflict levels. Between the two are the individuals experiencing inconsistency between their attitudes and labour division arrangement. According to the authors, those who have consistent traditional attitudes and arrangements experience more pressure to completely fulfil their role when each partner is mainly (or exclusively) responsible for a specific role. Their analysis also reveals that not just the individual attitudes and arrangements are important, but also the context: Egalitarian attitudes and arrangements can be most efficiently implemented in cultural and policy contexts that support such egalitarian arrangements.

Besides individual attitudes, the meso and macro levels regarding gender norms and work ethic can also influence labour division in a couple. Nikolett Geszler examines how fathers use flexibility to reconcile work–family conflict in a case study using 43 personal interviews with fathers in managerial positions in a Hungarian subsidiary of a Scandinavian multinational company. While Scandinavian societies are well-known for their long-standing policy legacy of promoting gender equality and work–family balance, Hungarian society can be considered as a traditional one. The project investigates whether the organisational culture in a Swedish company can have an influence on division of household labour among manager fathers in Hungary. Geszler's results show how difficult it can be for fathers to take family time even in companies with the Swedish reputation regarding progressive role models. Work flexibility is more likely to be used to improve productivity than to reconcile work–family issues because at the meso level, i.e., at the level of the company or employer, work–life balance is seen as an individual issue while at the macro level, i.e. at the level of Hungarian society, fathers are pushed to invest in their careers to assure their breadwinner roles.

Beáta Nagy complements Geszler's research by focussing on 20 manager women in Hungary. She explores the impact of the use of mobile technology on their work–life conflict. Hungary is an interesting case since the neoliberal change of the corporate sector took place at the same time when refamilisation was promoted by the state. Thus, manager mothers are hit hard by the competing demands of work and family. The interviewees believe that they can manage to build a professional career whilst running a family with the help of mobile devices. What they often forget is that, given the availability of the devices, the companies can demand full commitment at any time. The women take steps to

protect themselves from their job on their own, which for some reduces work–life conflict, however, only at an individual level, not resolving the structural problem of being a mother (or caring father) manager.

Following this contribution is an article dealing with parental leave policies. Jolanta Aidukaite and Donata Telisauskaite-Cekanavice present an original comparative analysis between different models of parental leave policies in two countries, Sweden and Lithuania. They use a mixed methods approach including 30 expert interviews and a population survey to compare parental leave policies from experts' as well as citizens' views. The authors find that while Swedish policies aim at enhancing fatherhood by employing defamilialism, Lithuanian policies focus on financial security of families and on kinship familialism as grandparents are entitled to take parental leave. In Sweden, the policies enjoy enormous support in the population and can be seen as a national pride. The Lithuanian population is more sceptical, in contrast to the experts' opinion who judge Lithuanian family policy among the best in Europe.

Not only do parental policies differ considerably among countries, but so do family policies in general, including care for the elderly or the disabled. As the previous contributions have shown, such policies affect how labour within families and couples is organised. Attila Bartha and Violetta Zentai use fuzzy set ideal type analysis (FSITA) to interpret the configurations of long-term care in Europe. Long-term care is a particularly important issue given the demographic aging all over Europe. The authors find that while the richer Northern European countries can afford generous long-term care policies supporting more equal labour divisions within families and couples, some less affluent countries also find ways to support more equal family arrangements. However, a caveat applies: It is likely that gaining more equal family arrangements has its foundation in externalising family work to migrants, which can reinforce work-situations characterised by increasing gendered inequalities for migrants and their families.

5. Conclusion

In this thematic issue we offer the reader a set of eight articles addressing the link between the division of labour within families, work–life conflict and family policy from different perspectives widening our knowledge on the subject by including several under-researched aspects. We propose the understanding of labour division as a multilevel concept: At the individual level, many contributions include care work in their conceptualisation of labour division in couples; at the meso level, organisational constraints imposed by employers are considered; at the macro level, gender norms (to be understood as interactions between cultural norms and policies, mutually shaping each other) are taken into account, constraining the range of decisions that couples can reasonably take. The eight contributions are complemented by an commentary summarising the thematic issue and pointing to aspects in need of future scrutiny.

We are convinced that this thematic issue can help to develop our knowledge on labour division within families and couples, work–life conflict and family policy further and contribute to a better understanding of the relationships between them. The three points raised by the authors and editors of this thematic issue, i.e., inclusion of care work in the conceptualisation of division of labour—also going beyond the nuclear family—the multilevel nature of the relationship between labour division and work–life conflict as well as the consideration of values regarding labour division and gender at each level will contribute to advancing theories and classifications for family policy and give valuable insights for policy development.

Acknowledgments

The preparation of this thematic issue by Michael Ochsner and Ivett Szalma was supported by the Academic Publishing Workshop Award (H2020 ESS-SUSTAIN). The contribution of Judit Takács was supported by the Academy in Exile Fellowship at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI), Essen.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Bianchi, S. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2010). Work and family research in the first decade of the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *72*(3), 705–725.

Björnberg, U. (2011). Gender and power in families and family policies. Sweden in the Nordic context. *Sociologica*, *1*, 1–16.

Bouget, D., Saraceno, C., & Spasova, S. (2017). Towards new work–life balance policies for those caring for dependent relatives? In B. Vanhercke, S. Sabato, & D. Bouget (Eds.), *Social developments in the European Union 2017* (pp. 155–180). Brussels: ETUI and OSE.

Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work–family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *67*(2), 169–198.

Collier, R., & Sheldon, S. (2008). *Fragmenting fatherhood: A socio-legal study*. Oxford: Hart.

Dommermuth, L., Hohmann-Marriott, B., & Lappegård, T. (2017). Gender equality in the family and childbearing. *Journal of Family Issues*, *38*(13), 1803–1824.

European Social Survey. (2012). *ESS round 5 (Data file edition 3.2)* [Data set]. Bergen: Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, *10*(1), 76–88.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2003). When work and

family collide: Deciding between competing role demands. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *90*(2), 291–303.

Grigoryeva, A. (2017). Own gender, sibling's gender, parent's gender: The division of elderly parent care among adult children. *American Sociological Review*, *82*(1), 116–146. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416686521

Hank, K., & Steinbach, A. (2020). The virus changed everything, didn't it? Couples' division of housework and childcare before and during the Corona crisis. *Journal of Family Research*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-488

Hobson, B., Fahlén, S., & Takács, J. (2011). Agency and capabilities to achieve a work–life balance: A comparison of Sweden and Hungary. *Social Politics*, *18*(2), 168–198.

Hu, Y., & Yucel, D. (2017). What fairness? Gendered division of housework and family life satisfaction across 30 countries. *European Sociological Review*, *34*(1), 92–105. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcx085

ISSP Research Group. (2016). *International social survey programme: Family and changing gender roles IV—ISSP 2012* [Data set]. https://doi.org/10.4232/1.12661

König, S., & Cesinger, B. (2015). Gendered work–family conflict in Germany: Do self-employment and flexibility matter? *Work, Employment and Society*, *29*(4), 531–549.

Kotowska, I. E., & Matysiak, A. (2008). Reconciliation of work and family within different institutional settings. In C. Höhn, D. Avramov, & I. Kotowska (Eds.), *People, population change and policies* (pp. 299–318). Dordrecht: Springer.

Leslie, L., King, E. B., & Claire, J. A. (2019). Work–life ideologies: The contextual basis and consequences of beliefs about work and life. *Academy of Management Review*, *44*(1), 72–98.

Lynch, K., Baker, J., & Lyons, M. (2009). Introduction. In K. Lynch, J. Baker, & M. Lyons (Eds.), *Affective equality: Who cares? Love, care and injustice* (pp. 1–11). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

McGinnity, F., & Calvert, E. (2009). Work–life conflict and social inequality in Western Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, *93*, 489–508.

Mills, M., Mencarini, L., Tanturri, M. L., & Begall, K. (2008). Gender equity and fertility intentions in Italy and the Netherlands. *Demographic Research*, *18*, 1–26.

Newkirk, K., Perry-Jenkins, M., & Sayer, A. G. (2017). Division of household and childcare labor and relationship conflict among low-income new parents. *Sex Roles*, *76*, 319–333. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0604-3

OECD. (2011). *OECD social indicators: Society at a glance 2011*. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2011-en

Oláh, L. S., & Fratczak, E. (Eds.). (2013). *Childbearing, women's employment and work–life balance policies in contemporary Europe*. Basingstoke and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pignatti, N. (2016). Encouraging women's labor force participation in transition countries. *IZA World of Labor*. http://dx.doi.org/10.15185/izawol.264

Poortman, A., & van der Lippe, T. (2009). Attitudes toward housework and child care and the gendered division of labor. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *71*, 526–541.

Riva, E., Lucchini, M., & Russo, M. (2019). Societal gender inequality as moderator of the relationship between work–life fit and subjective well-being: A multilevel analysis across European countries. *Social Indicators Research*, *143*(2), 657–691.

Ruppanner, L., Bernhardt, E., & Brandén, M. (2017). Division of housework and his and her view of housework fairness: A typology of Swedish couples. *Demographic Research*, *36*, 501–524.

Saxonberg, S., & Sirovátka, T. (2006). Failing family policy in post-communist Central Europe. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, *8*(2), 185–202. http://doi.org/10.1080/13876980600682089

Steiber, N. (2009). Reported levels of time-based and strain-based conflict between work and family roles in Europe: A multilevel approach. *Social Indicators Research*, *93*, 469–488.

Thévenon, O. (2009). L'augmentation de l'activité des femmes en Europe: Progrès de la conciliation ou polarisation des comportements? [Increased women's labour force participation in Europe: Progress in the work–life balance or polarization of behaviours?]. *Population*, *64*(2), 235–272.

Thévenon, O. (2011). Family policies in OECD countries: A comparative analysis. *Population and Development Review*, *37*, 57–87.

About the Authors

Ivett Szalma is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence and an Associate Professor at the Corvinus University of Budapest, and the Head of the Family Sociology Section of the Hungarian Sociological Association. Her research topics include the effects of economic crises on work–life conflicts, post-separation fertility, childlessness, non-resident fatherhood, measurement of homophobia and adoption by same-sex couples.

Michael Ochsner is a Senior Researcher at FORS—Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, Lausanne. He is a survey methodologist involved in the implementation of the ESS, the ISSP and the EVS in Switzerland. His research covers welfare policy and legitimacy of the state, work–life conflict, cultural differences in survey research, representation bias and survey modes. He is also a specialist on research quality and evaluation in the social sciences and humanities. Image © felix imhof

Judit Takács is a Research Chair at the Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, responsible for leading research teams and conducting independent research on topics including family practices, work-life balance issues, childlessness as well as social history of homosexuality, social exclusion/inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, HIV/AIDS prevention. Currently she is an Academy in Exile fellow at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI), Essen.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 8–22
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2920

Article

Educational Attainment and Gender Differences in Work–Life Balance for Couples across Europe: A Contextual Perspective

Theocharis Kromydas

MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G3 7HR, UK;
E-Mail: theocharis.kromydas@glasgow.ac.uk

Submitted: 15 February 2020 | Accepted: 20 August 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
The current article aims to explain the interrelationships between the educational attainment of individuals living in households with heterosexual partners, their work–life balance (WLB) and the macro-economic climate of the country they live in, using data from the European Social Survey. WLB is a complex concept, as it is not only determined by factors related to someone's employment or domestic work and childcare responsibilities, but also by decisions informed by personal experiences and circumstances, subjective perceptions and preferences. Moreover, in households with cohabiting partners, this decision-making process involves certain compromises where financial incentives, interests, gender and power dynamics play an important role. Since educational attainment is positively related to labour market outcomes, such as employment and wages, while at the same time more women are participating in education and the labour market, the gender conflict on the division of work and time within households intensifies and traditional gender roles are challenged. WLB is at the heart of this conflict operating as a mechanism through which division of work and time is reconciled on the individual and household level. Results from the current article reveal great heterogeneity between the 17 European countries examined. Perhaps surprisingly, educational attainment can have a detrimental effect on the WLB of spouses and cohabiting partners, especially for women whose level of WLB seems also more sensitive to fluctuations of the macro-economic climate of the country they live in. However, there is an indication that when an economy goes into recession, higher education has a cushioning effect on female's WLB compared to relatively better economic times.

Keywords
division of labour; dual-earner households; gender inequalities; job quality; work–life balance

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

Many studies indicate that over the last decades the male-breadwinner model in Europe has been declining, while the dual-earner model gains momentum (Gornick & Meyers, 2009; McGinnity & Whelan, 2009; Ochsner & Szalma, 2017). However, there is evidence that more equal participation of women in the labour market has neither changed people's perceptions of gender equality significantly nor has it improved much the way unpaid work, such as housework, is divided among couples within households (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016, 2019; Hofacker & König, 2013; Ochsner & Szalma, 2017; Steiber, 2009; Wallace, 2017).

The conceptual framework of this research mainly revolves around existing theories pertinent to labour division in households. Additionally, it is also tangential to theories on work–life balance (WLB). Thus, for clarity, the most relevant theories of both streams will be presented; however, the context of this research lies much

closer to the labour division theories rather than the one related to WLB, and therefore prime attention is given to the former.

Regarding existing theories on labour division, a stream of literature argues that although inequalities among the classic socio-economic factors of social stratification, such as education and class are persistent, they are manifested in different ways across countries. Contrariwise, standard economic theoretical approaches tend to neglect the role of contexts or imply that contexts across countries do not differ substantially (Brines, 1994; Crompton, 2006; Fagan, Lyonette, Smith, & Saldaña-Tejeda, 2012; Wright, 1997). While literature is abundant on the positive effect of education on employability and wages for both genders, its relationship with WLB is not that straightforward to interpret (Dotti Sani & Scherer, 2018; Kalleberg, 2011; Kromydas, 2015; Steiber, Berghammer, & Haas, 2016).

Becker's (1981) rational choice approach to the family is considered as a landmark in family economics. Essentially Becker, departing from Mincer's (1958) human capital theory, sees no real difference in decision making processes between individuals, households, firms or countries where perfect equilibrium is eventually succeeded through utility maximisation where resources are perfectly allocated among individuals or groups such as households. Full information on each member's comparative advantage, opportunity costs and task specialisation is assumed. Eventually, this leads to optimal outcomes not only on the individual but also on the household level. Consequently, the gendered division of labour is determined by differences in comparative advantages and specialisation and are independent of power relations and women's exploitation from men. Although Becker acknowledges that such exploitation exists, it is not seen as a barrier for an efficient division of labour within a household since, when women have no apparent comparative over men in childcare and housework, there is no economic incentive for a division of labour based on gender.

The bargaining theory, on the other hand, acknowledges that within households personal and households' interests can be conflicting and thus bargaining power prevails over all other factors. There is no diversion from human capital theory basic notions of utility maximisation and rational decision making; however its theoretical base is more informed by individual choices and interests, which can in turn conflict with some household's goal as an economic entity (Coltrane, 2000; Crompton, 2006). Time-allocation within households is a decision-making process, where individuals use their bargaining power to split a predetermined amount of time into time allocated to either work or leisure (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Coltrane, 2000; Crompton, 2006; Heisig, 2011; Lundberg & Pollak, 1996; Parsons, 1949).

A different stream of research challenges approaches from economics by shifting the focus on gender roles, perceptions, attitudes and expectations regarding cultural and other societal norms, manifested in the form of gender ideologies that influence individual decision-making processes (Braun, Lewin-Epstein, Stier, & Baumgärtner, 2008; Deutsch, 2007; Heisig, 2011; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). For example, certain time allocation decisions taken in a household context are not always based on equity and fairness (Pahl, 1984; Wallace, 2017). Power relations and social roles that are defined by gender stereotypes can also dictate time allocation and labour division within couples. As a result, the dominant paradigm prevails and, therefore, inequality persists. Inequality especially propagates where task specialisation becomes socially biased, leading to women being in a subordinate position as they are economically dependent on men (Brines, 1994; Lewis, 1992; Sullivan, 2004). Moreover, the 'doing gender' approach coined by West and Zimmerman (1987) treats gender as a social construction. Gender differences are not just natural or biological. The gendered division of work is propagated in public discourses and practices where economic rationality is amalgamated by instrumental and moral factors, which in turn can change during the life course (Duncan, 2005; Naldini & Solera, 2018; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Hakim (2000) focuses on preferences instead, arguing that, at least in modern Western societies, women's choice between working and committing to the household is simply a matter of preference.

Coming to theories on WLB, a number of theoretical models have been developed in the literature. The most common are the ecological systems theory, the positive psychology and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory. The ecological systems theory essentially treats WLB as a multilevel concept where all levels (micro, meso and macro) are constantly interacting and can be equally facilitative or conflictive (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kromydas, 2017). Then, positive psychology focuses more on positively-oriented organisational behaviour, human resource strengths and psychological capacities. This theory is oriented more towards the micro and meso level (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Finally, the JD-R theory defines WLB as the best fit between resources and demands across work and family domains (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Unfortunately, in all these theories the gender dimension and context in the macro level are essentially overlooked. Even though the ecological systems theory implies a relationship between WLB and context in the macro level, it is unclear what the direction of this relationship is and whether people with different characteristics, such as gender, are affected alike.

Proving or disproving a specific theoretical framework is not the main scope of the current article. Given the wealth and breadth of theoretical models on WLB and the gendered division of labour, such an attempt would have been seriously biased and highly selective. Instead, an alternative, more inclusive approach was followed, where the relationship between the WLB of men and women spouses and cohabiting partners and their

educational attainment is empirically tested in a two-step regression analysis stratified by gender and time. WLB is represented by a composite binary indicator for perceived WLB that focuses on the work-side interference into private life. This is used as the outcome variable in regression analysis. The main predictor variable is years of educational attainment and its statistical association with the WLB indicator is explored separately in 17 European countries. Given the lack of a gender dimension on WLB conceptual frameworks, the current article places the concept of WLB within the broader domain of the gendered division of labour by employing a quantitative strategy that, apart from human capital, can arguably accommodate a number of structural elements of various theoretical models related to WLB and gendered division of labour. These elements are represented by specific proxies (variables or block of variables) that are used as controls in the form of effect moderators to reveal the effect of education on WLB and also whether this differs by gender and countries' macro-economic climates (see Table A1 in the Supplementary File).

The next section of this article reviews the relevant literature. Then, the data and methods used are explained followed by an interpretation and illustration of the results. The article concludes by critically discussing the results in relation to the existing literature and their implications for policymaking.

2. Literature Review

Moving beyond the individual level, existing literature argues that within households a higher-educated male who cohabits with a heterosexual partner is more likely to be involved in more housework compared with a lower-educated one. Hence, given that couples are usually educationally matched, especially in economically developed countries, women within couples that are higher educated, spend less time on housework compared to the lower-educated ones (Coltrane, 2000; Gershuny, 2000; Oinas, 2018). Nevertheless, as with paid work, a specific gender pattern seems to exist that categorises types of housework as 'masculine' or 'feminine' even in high-income gender-egalitarian regimes, such as the Nordic countries (Tammelin, 2018b). While there is some indication of a gender convergence in the amount of time male and female cohabiting partners spend on housework, gender segregation in domestic tasks as reinforced by specific gender ideologies and stereotypes, remains a significant obstacle for achieving an equal division of labour (in terms of both paid and unpaid work) in heterosexual couples (Kan, Sullivan, & Gershuny, 2011).

Previous research has indicated that long hours of paid work for men reinforces the male-breadwinner paradigm. However, this is true when their female partners are working long hours as well (Ciccia & Bleijenbergh, 2014). In that case, the physical and psychological burden for women to balance long hours of paid work and unpaid housework is enormous. Certainly, well-structured public childcare and parental leave systems decreases the burden of housework on women, incentivising them to become more active in the labour market. At the same time, the greatest proportion of parental leaves are taken by women, indicating a social prejudice against them as, in practice, childcare is widely considered as a rather 'feminine' task (Tammelin, 2018b). Thus, generous public childcare policies themselves are important but not enough to tackle gender inequality within households as they need to be accompanied by a culture shift towards more egalitarian perceptions on gender where men share the housework/childcare burden more equally with their female partners.

The literature on the indicators used to capture WLB, regarding geographical and cultural differences, is very limited. The indicators currently used do not include mechanisms with which differences between countries of different levels of economic development or welfare structures can be captured. Furthermore, the focus is rarely on educational or gender differences, albeit considerable evidence showing that women, especially the lower-educated, hold job positions with high levels of insecurity while working unsocial hours and in precarious industries such as call centres and hospitality (Gautie & Schmitt, 2010; Ghai, 2003; Stier & Yaish, 2014). Individual WLB preferences are more straightforward to be defined, but research on the household level and the effect of institutional factors is limited (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Korpi, Ferrarini, & Englund, 2013). Our article attempts to fill these gaps focusing on the relationship between educational attainment and gender division of labour within families, as empirically instrumented by a composite binary indicator for perceived WLB that focuses on the work-side interference into private life. Moreover, the 17 European countries examined are classified under the welfare state regime they belong to, according Esping-Andersen (1990), Ferrera (1996), Fenger (2007), Arts and Gelissen (2010) and Gallie (2013). However, this is only for illustrative purposes, to identify whether there are similarities or differences between countries. The current research acknowledges that the traditional welfare state regime classification is regarded outdated by the most recent literature, as it does not entirely reflect the current reality of family policies and the gender division of labour. More recent developments on the welfare regime literature include a gender perspective, while others challenge the traditional welfare regime classification (especially the Southern and Eastern regimes) in relation to the gender roles they represent since family policies, but also the economic activity rate of women and the incidence of full-time work and dual-earner couples differ significantly across countries (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Saxonberg, 2013; Wall & Escobedo, 2013).

Table 1 replicates a table found in Tammelin (2018b, p. 14). It illustrates three conceptual models on the division of work in families. The male breadwinner model implicitly or explicitly accepts separate roles for each gender where only men are active in the labour mar-

Table 1. The division of work in families: Ideal types.

Division of work	Traditional model: Male breadwinner model	Traditional model: Caregiver parity model	Universal breadwinner model (or adult-worker model*	Universal caregiver model**
Gender roles	Separate gender roles	Traditional gender roles persist but are more equal	Men's and women's equal engagement in the labour market	Equal roles; transforming gender roles inside and outside labour markets
Labour market Outcomes	Males are in paid work Women are not in paid work	Males are in paid work Women are not in paid work (temporarily or long term) or they work part-time hours	Both men and women are in paid work; women are the main carers (dual or triple burden)	Both men and women are in paid work; both do care work Families with long part-time hours

Notes: * Lewis and Giullari (2005); ** Crompton (1999), Gornick and Meyers (2009). Table based on Fraser (1994) and Tammelin (2018b, p. 14).

ket and women do unpaid work (Parsons, 1949; Treas & Drobnič, 2010). Therefore, in societies where such perceptions exist, policies that aim to increase labour market participation for women might have adverse consequences. Instead of alleviating work–life conflicts, they might channel women into jobs that are part-time, temporary and, therefore, low-paid with low-levels of security, leaving the good jobs and career laddering to men, while strengthening and reproducing the traditional role of men as breadwinners and women as mainly being responsible for childcare and household chores (Tammelin, 2018a). The 'moderated' version of the traditional model is the caregiver parity model, where traditional gender roles persist within the household; however, women and men are treated more equally in terms of labour market participation. Although this model (either in its core or moderated version) seems more common to Continental, Southern and Eastern Europe, there are specific countries within these country groups that significantly differ within each other in the implementation of parental leave and childcare policies (Saxonberg, 2013; Wall & Escobedo, 2013). The second stream reflects a framework with a relatively low degree of policy interventions where family issues, such as housework or childcare, are outsourced either to professionals or to relatives. In this case, issues such as the WLB within couples are reconciled more by common agreements between partners domestically, and less by policymaking and related incentives. This is the universal breadwinner model and is mostly associated with the Anglo–Saxon countries; however, recent evidence shows that it can be found in countries such as the Netherlands or Portugal (Wall & Escobedo, 2013). Finally, the third model, known as the Nordic model, concerns an egalitarian culture for paid work and housework as well as caring responsibilities. Some authors argue that in terms of childcare and parental leave policies, Norway and Finland might divert from this model, resembling more to countries in central Europe such as France and Belgium, while others claim that this model does not find application to any country and still remains a utopia (Tammelin, 2018a; Wall & Escobedo, 2013).

Still, welfare regime classifications are very sensitive to the data and the criteria used. Even if more egalitarian childcare and parental leave policies are aiming towards a more gender equal division of work, they are by no means sufficient if not accompanied by similar individual attitudes, behaviours and perceptions. Undoubtedly, policies and perceptions relate to each other but causality in this relationship is still unclear. In any case, this is beyond the scope of the current article, as country classification in welfare regimes has not been used for explanatory but rather for illustration purposes.

Yates and Leach (2006) argue that reforms promoting work flexibility have increased negativity among workers, as well as anger and introversion. Moreover, there has been a continuous decline in workers' willingness to look after their families and to actively participate in communities and this, eventually, has led to an increase in social exclusion. Such a situation is likely to worsen during a recession. Part-time work, temporary employment agency assignments, flexible employment, short-term and contingent work and independent contracting are all examples of non-standard employment that can increase uncertainty and the feeling of job insecurity (Kalleberg, 2011). These are the main employment arrangements that have become increasingly debated in recent years, gradually shaping current trends in modern employment in relation to cultural, institutional and regulatory societal norms. These arrangements demarcate a reorientation in the conceptualisation of work and employment and, along with this, that of WLB (Eurofound, 2017).

Women are disadvantaged in the labour market, having on average lower wages compared to their male

counterparts. Women also work, on average, fewer paid hours and usually do more housework than men (Gautie & Schmitt, 2010). However, it remains unclear whether this leads to lower or higher levels of reported WLB compared to men, especially within households. According to past research on this topic, this also depends on factors such as the number of children living in the household, income levels, employment status, occupation and industry, the amount of working hours, aspects of job quality on regularity and intensity of working life or the identification of clear boundaries between working life and non-working life, and also public attitudes and perceptions regarding gender equality (Anttila, Oinas, Tammelin, & Nätti, 2015; Crompton & Lyonett, 2006; Fagan et al., 2012; Gallie & Russell, 2009; Hofacker & König, 2013; McGinnity, 2014; Muñoz de Bustillo, Fernandez-Macıas, Anton, & Esteve, 2009; Russell & McGinnity, 2013; Tausing & Fenwick, 2001; Wallace, 2017). This article employs a methodological strategy that accounts for these factors by using them in regression models as predictors in the form of control variables. Even if educational attainment is a very important factor that is positively related to labour market outcomes its relationship with WLB is essentially neglected in the literature. Human capital theory and its application to the household level by Becker (1981) treats education as an investment that finds application only to paid work. It is possible though that educational attainment affects practices on the individual as well as on the household level with respect to unpaid work as well, triggering WLB gender differences within the same household. The economic climate is also likely to moderate such effects differently as gender roles might become of a lower importance when the economy dives into a deep recession like the one in 2008, or perhaps the one that is currently looming due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In most European countries, the economic crisis of 2008 triggered a vicious economic downward spiral. People with lower educational qualifications have been affected the most, both in terms of employment and pay (Gallie, 2013; Hurley, Enrique, & Storrie, 2013). However, little attention has been paid to how this has affected WLB on the individual but also on the household level, where gender differences might appear. The current article aims to contribute to the relevant literature by investigating whether the effect of educational attainment on the WLB of ESS respondents who cohabit with a heterosexual partner differs by gender and also across countries with different macro-economic climate, controlling for various variables identified in the literature as determinants of WLB (see Table A1 in the Supplementary File).

3. Data and Methods

The current research uses individual-level data from the European Social Survey (ESS), rounds 2004 and 2010, focusing on 17 European countries. The countries included in the analysis are Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, the UK, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia. The ESS is a biannual survey that aims to capture socio-economic attitudes and values in Europe. Survey questions regarding WLB, working conditions and pay can provide useful insights into respondents' perceptions of their WLB before (ESS Round 2, 2004) and during (ESS Round 5, 2010) the most recent 2008 economic recession. Men and women in paid employment, aged 25 to 70 years old, living with their partners at the time they were interviewed are included in the analysis. Self-employed were excluded due to the very different nature of work and related WLB patterns. Moreover, educational attainment is measured in years of education representing the years of attained education below or above the compulsory level in each country examined. Based on past literature relevant to WLB determinants (Anttila et al., 2015; Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Fagan et al., 2012; Gallie & Russell, 2009; Hofacker & König, 2013; McGinnity, 2014; Russell & McGinnity, 2013; Tausing & Fenwick, 2001; Wallace, 2017), a binary index representing perceived WLB focusing on the work-side interference into private life has been constructed combining the following five variables: (1) *work involves working evenings/nights*; (2) *work involves having to work overtime at short notice*; (3) *work involving working on weekends*; (4) *job prevents you from giving time to partner/family*; (5) *how often do you feel too tired after work to enjoy things you like to do at home?*

Before this index was constructed, all five components were also dichotomised, where the value of 0 corresponds to low levels and 1 to high levels of WLB, meaning that those whose responses include three or more 1 were classified as having a job with high levels of WLB and vice versa. Apart from educational attainment, the final models estimated include other factors that are empirically known in the literature as determinants of WLB. The statistical effect of all these factors is presented in the Supplementary File (Tables A3–A6).

The analysis was performed in two steps. The first step concerned multivariate regression analysis and, particularly, logistic regression models in a fixed-effects format. Effects are presented in the form of Odds-Ratios (OR). Robust standards errors were used to account for heteroskedasticity and clustering of observations. Design and population weights were used as recommended by ESS (Kaminska, 2020). In the first step, three models were estimated and stratified by gender (six in total). The assumption made is that WLB is a function of X_i variables (including the interaction term), commonly used in the literature as potential factors that can affect WLB on the individual level. In Table 2, Models 1a for males and 1b for females refer to the pooled dataset (2004 and 2010). The two models include all control variables and an interaction term between the variables that represent country (C_i) and calendar year (T_i), estimating how WLB levels have changed from 2004 to 2010 (hereafter called ΔWLB).

Table 2. Odds-Ratios estimations for the interaction between country and years of educational attainment variables in Models 1, 2 and 3.

	MODEL 1a—ΔWLB				MODEL 2a—WLB_{ed}—2004				MODEL 3a—WLB_{ed}—2010			
	MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
Countries	ΔWLB (***)	Robust S.E	ΔWLB (***)	Robust S.E	$MWLB_{ed}$ (***)	Robust S.E	$FWLB_{ed}$ (***)	Robust S.E	$MWLB_{ed}$ (***)	Robust S.E	$FWLB_{ed}$ (***)	Robust S.E
Continental												
Belgium (BE)	0.77	[0.041]	0.95	[0.041]	1.11	[0.013]	0.95	[0.027]	0.98	[0.014]	0.92	[0.021]
Germany (DE)	0.78	[0.033]	0.83	[0.066]	1.02	[0.013]	0.92	[0.028]	1.00	[0.021]	0.94	[0.006]
France (FR)	0.89	[0.064]	0.88	[0.060]	1.01	[0.011]	0.99	[0.026]	0.96	[0.012]	0.89	[0.015]
The Netherlands (NL)	0.67	[0.016]	1.21	[0.093]	1.05	[0.014]	0.91	[0.018]	1.00	[0.105]	0.99	[0.013]
Southern												
Spain (ES)	0.99	[0.055]	1.23	[0.062]	0.95	[0.015]	1.04	[0.032]	0.98	[0.009]	0.96	[0.008]
Greece (GR)	0.76	[0.107]	0.48	[0.031]	0.99	[0.021]	0.92	[0.028]	0.97	[0.015]	0.99	[0.014]
Portugal (PT)	1.53	[0.051]	0.64	[0.049]	1.07	[0.015]	0.88	[0.029]	0.90	[0.009]	0.96	[0.022]
Eastern												
The Czech Republic (CZ)	0.55	[0.044]	0.64	[0.044]	1.15	[0.026]	1.00	[0.036]	1.00	[0.043]	1.05	[0.018]
Estonia (EE)	1.59	[0.070]	0.85	[0.081]	0.91	[0.023]	1.05	[0.051]	1.08	[0.029]	0.99	[0.016]
Poland (PL)	0.74	[0.042]	1.71	[0.083]	0.92	[0.013]	0.98	[0.055]	0.97	[0.026]	0.81	[0.011]
Slovenia (SI)	2.08	[0.353]	0.38	[0.031]	1.04	[0.021]	0.92	[0.048]	0.99	[0.029]	0.85	[0.022]
Slovakia (SK)	1.05	[0.111]	1.25	[0.075]	0.93	[0.022]	1.01	[0.015]	1.21	[0.045]	0.98	[0.024]
Anglo-Saxon												
Great Britain (GB)	1.31	[0.088]	1.28	[0.086]	1.06	[0.018]	0.99	[0.021]	1.06	[0.013]	1.03	[0.007]
Ireland (IE)	0.98	[0.064]	0.54	[0.046]	1.05	[0.019]	1.12	[0.020]	0.97	[0.013]	1.05	[0.008]
Nordic												
Denmark (DK)	1.44	[0.029]	1.48	[0.098]	1.00	[0.012]	0.87	[0.017]	0.98	[0.008]	0.92	[0.013]
Finland (FI)	1.09	[0.072]	1.17	[0.074]	1.06	[0.013]	0.97	[0.015]	0.94	[0.016]	1.03	[0.013]
Norway (NO)	1.36	[0.086]	0.98	[0.073]	0.98	[0.012]	1.08	[0.009]	1.07	[0.011]	0.97	[0.014]
N	8,374		7,877		3,805		3,496		3,771		3,702	
Pseudo-R^2	0.18		0.21		0.21		0.24		0.19		0.22	

Notes: ΔWLB denotes difference in WLB between 2004 and 2010, $MWLB_{ed}$ denotes the effect of an additional year of educational attainment for males who cohabit with female partners. FWLBed is the equivalent notation for females who cohabit with a male partner. ΔWLB, $MWLB_{ed}$ and $FWLB_{ed}$ have been found statistically significant at the 99% confidence level. * $p < 0.10$,** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Asterisks in brackets indicate statistical significance for the interaction (joint F-test). Source: ESS Round 2 (2004) and ESS Round 5 (2010).

Particularly, for an individual *i*, Models 1a and 1b are represented by Equation 1:

$$\begin{aligned} WLB_i = a + \exp(b_1)\, YEd_i + \exp\left(b_{2,4,5\ldots19}\, X_i\right) + \\ + \exp(b_{20})\, C_i + \exp(b_{21} T_i) + \\ + \exp(b_{22}\, T_i\, C_i) + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Here, X is a vector of 19 control variables, $T_i\, C_i$ denotes an interaction term between calendar year and country and YEd_i years of educational attainment centred at the compulsory level in each country. In the same equation interaction's constitutive terms are also included, representing the effect of the one term when the other is on its reference category. In terms of the country variable, the Netherlands has been selected as the reference category because it is the country with the highest levels of WLB on average for both genders in 2004 and 2010 and therefore C_i shows OR differences from the highest performing country in terms of WLB in 2004, while the interaction shows OR differences again from the Netherlands in 2010. For the T_i variable the reference category is 2004. The OR for T_i shows how much higher or lower the odds of having a job with high levels of WLB (WLB = 1) are in the Netherlands in 2010 compared to 2004. Thus, it shows ΔWLB for the Netherlands only. The effect of the interaction term shows how much the effect of living in 2010 on WLB differs between the Netherlands and other countries. Then, since this is a logistic regression where OR are calculated and relationships between variables take a multiplicative form, the product of the country variable and the interaction term ($C_i \times T_i\, C_i$) shows how much the odds of having a job with high levels of WLB in 2010 change compared to 2004 for each country separately, which is the ΔWLB term, mentioned above. For Models 2a, 2b and 3a, 3b, represented by Equations 2 (2004) and 3 (2010), apart from all control variables, an interaction is also included between YEd_i and C_i ($YEd_i\, C_i$) using the same reference categories as in (1) to compare the effect of education across the 17 countries examined. Similarly to Equation 1, the constitutive terms of the interaction are also included. Since regressions are run for 2004 and 2010 separately, T_i is now missing from Equations 2 and 3. The interaction shows the effect of an additional year of education on WLB in the reference category separately for men (2a, 3a) and women (2b, 3b). The effect for each country is then calculated through a multiplication between the interaction term and each value of C_i that represents countries ($C_i \times YEd_i\, C_i$). $MWLB_{ed}$ refers to the value of $C_i \times YEd_i\, C_i$ for males while the equivalent notation for female is $FWLB_{ed}$. The ε_I represents the error term in all three equations.

$$\begin{aligned} WLB_{2004i} = a + \exp(b_1 YEd_i) + \exp(b_{2,4,5\ldots19}\, X_i) + \\ + \exp(b_{20}\, C_i) + \exp(b_{21} YEd_i\, C_i) + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

$$\begin{aligned} WLB_{2010i} = a + \exp(b_1 YEd_i) + \exp(b_{2,4,5\ldots19}\, X_i) + \\ + \exp(b_{20}\, C_i) + \exp(b_{21} YEd_i\, C_i) + \varepsilon_i \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

In the second step, all OR that correspond to the two aforementioned statistical interactions are regressed in a bivariate manner over three variables that can arguably represent a country's economic climate. These are the GDP growth and unemployment rate, which are the indicators most commonly used in the literature, to define whether an economy is an expansionary or recessionary business cycle (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2010). The relationship between estimations from the first step and the three macro-economic indicators used is presented illustratively in graphs. Graphs are drawn only for the relationships that are statistically significant. Their actual effect size and associated statistical significance are presented in the Supplementary File (Table A5). Because of the dynamic nature of these two macro-economic indicators, it was decided that single-year comparisons (i.e., 2004 vs. 2010) are unsuitable to capture this effect, and therefore, four-year averages prior to 2004 and 2010 were used (Ostry, Berg, & Tsangarides, 2014). Additionally, a variable that shows the subjective judgements of ESS respondents on the state of the economy in their residence country is also used for 2004 and 2010. This variable has values from 0 to 10 where 0 reflects complete dissatisfaction and 10 complete satisfaction. In this way, perceptions of the economic climate were also captured. This variable has been aggregated on the country level for the purposes of the analysis.

4. Results

Table 2 shows all three interaction's effects as explained in Section 3. Results from Model 1a indicate that reported WLB for both genders do not follow a consistent pattern across the welfare state regimes. WLB in the Nordic countries increases from 2004 to 2010 for both genders, apart from females in Norway, where their WLB is marginally lower compared to 2004. Then, in the Anglo-Saxon countries, WLB increases in the UK for both genders in a rather balanced manner, whereas in Ireland it decreases slightly for men and considerably for women. In the rest of the countries WLB falls for both genders in 2010 compared to 2004, with the exceptions of Portugal, Slovenia, Estonia and Slovakia where it increases only for males and Poland, Slovakia, the Netherlands and Spain only for females. With regards to the variable that shows years of educational attainment, when differences between countries are not taken into account, it was statistically insignificant for males while, for females, it was significant but negatively correlated, implying that higher educational attainment is a disinvestment to their WLB levels (the term is not shown in Table 2, as it is part of the vector of control variables [X_i] in Equation 1, but its estimation can be found in the Supplementary File, Table A3).

Models 2a and 3a in Table 2 account for cross-country differences in educational attainment between 2004 and 2010 through an interaction between years of education and country, which was jointly significant for

both genders and years. However, the effect is rather small in most countries implying that educational attainment is not such a strong determinant of WLB. Looking at males in 2010 compared to 2004, the effect remained or became positive in the Netherlands from the Continental countries, in none from the Southern countries, in Estonia and Slovakia from the Eastern countries and in Norway from the Nordic countries. For females, the effect remained or became positive only in Ireland, Norway, Finland and the Czech Republic, suggesting that in most countries WLB was negatively affected by educational attainment. In general, WLB is even more weakly identified by educational attainment in 2010 compared to 2004 for both males and females, especially for females.

Results for the second step of the analysis showed a conflict between genders, since, when the GDP growth in a country is relatively high, WLB for female tends to follow suit as Figure 1a shows. For men, the equivalent statistical effect is insignificant. In terms of temporal changes from 2004 to 2010 (Figure 1b) for women, an increase in GDP could have a positive effect on their WLB. The unemployment rate itself seems unrelated to WLB; however, women seem more sensitive to unemployment temporal changes, since a temporal decrease (increase) in the unemployment could lead to an improvement (deterioration) of their WLB (Figure 1c). Similarly, females that live in countries with, on average, more positive perceptions on the state of the economy enjoy higher WLB levels (Figure 1d). For men, all the above relationships were estimated as statistically insignificant, implying that economic climate is not associated with how their WLB levels are determined.

The effect of educational attainment on WLB seems diverse among countries and between genders. In 2004, high educated males compared to lower-educated, are

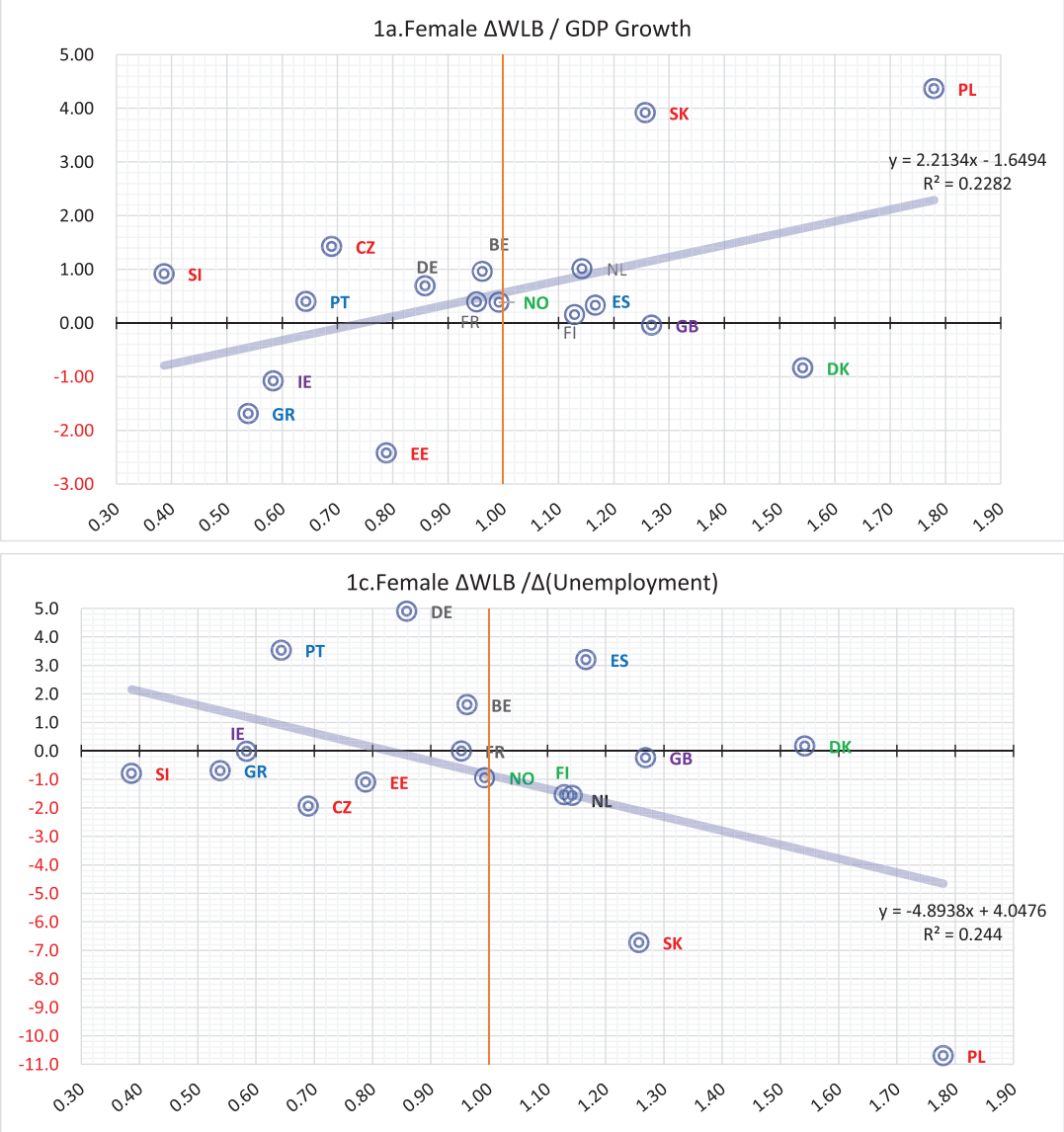

Figure 1. Statistically significant bivariate linear regressions (Female ΔWLB, second step). ΔWLB denotes difference in WLB between 2004 and 2010, Δ denotes difference.

Figure 1. (Cont.) Statistically significant bivariate linear regressions (Female ΔWLB, second step). ΔWLB denotes difference in WLB between 2004 and 2010, Δ denotes difference.

better (worse) off in terms of WLB in countries with low (high) unemployment (Figure 2a). For females who cohabit with male partners, unemployment rates do not affect $FWLB_{ed}$ but its relationship with the GDP growth rate is statistically significant in both years examined (Figures 2b and 2c). Yet, it appears that whereas in 2004 (Figure 2b) in countries with relatively higher GDP growth rates, $FWLB_{ed}$ was also higher, the relationship becomes negative in 2010 (Figure 2c). This bi-directional relationship across time implies that the associations among educational attainment, WLB and GDP is not that straightforward to interpret and might be attributed to other unobservable confounding factors. Perceptions of the state of the economy were found insignificant for both genders and years.

Regarding the GDP growth and unemployment rates' temporal changes between 2004 and 2010, an additional year of education leads to an improvement of WLB for females when GDP growth rates fall (Figure 3a), and unemployment increase (Figure 3b). Thus, when a country moves from growth to recessionary periods, education has a rather 'cushioning' effect on females' WLB. However, in most countries $FWLB_{ed} < 1$ and therefore educational attainment is still a drawback rather than an advantage for their WLB. The effect in recessions is still negative, but rather weaker compared to high-

Figure 2. Statistically significant bivariate linear regressions (MWLB$_{ed}$ and FWLB$_{ed}$ 2004 and 2010, second step). MWLB$_{ed}$ denotes the effect of an additional year of educational attainment for males who cohabit with female partners. FWLB$_{ed}$ is the equivalent notation for females who cohabit with a male partner.

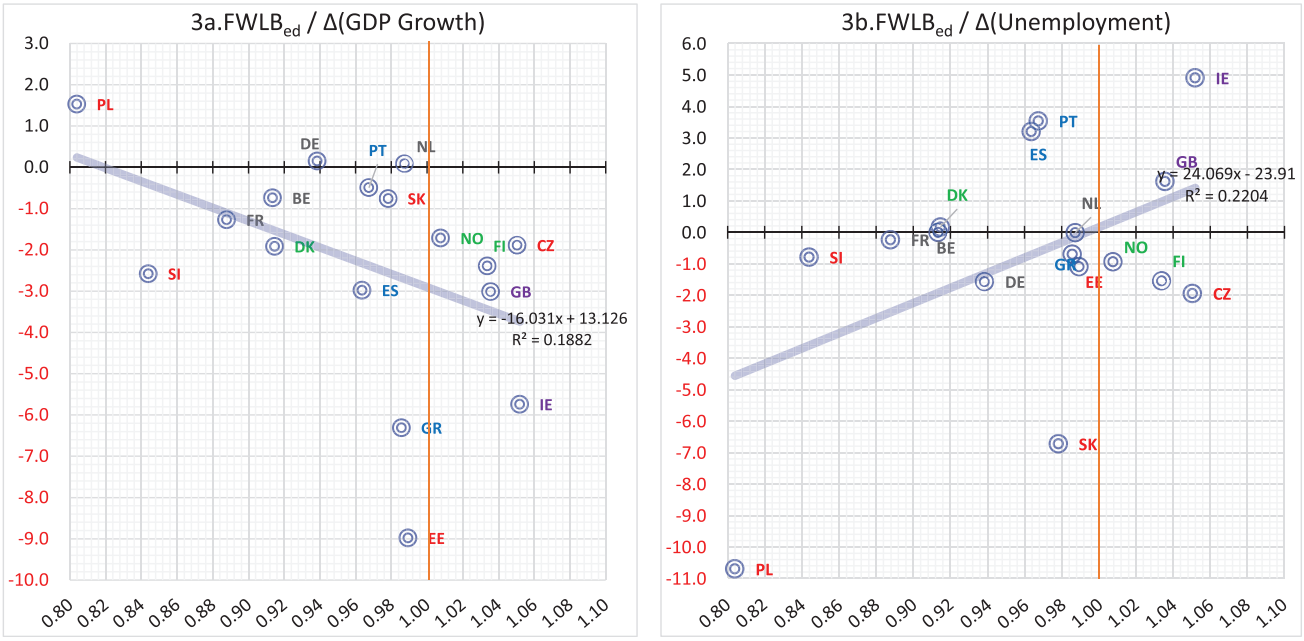

Figure 3. Statistically significant bivariate linear regressions (MWLB$_{ed}$ and FWLB$_{ed}$ 2004 and 2010 Temporal changes, second step). FWLB$_{ed}$ denotes the effect of an additional year of educational attainment for females who cohabit with a male partner.

growth, low-unemployment economic times. Comparing these results with those in Models 1b and 2b and considering that dual earner couples are gradually becoming the norm as well as that the 2008 recession halted full-time employment growth exacerbating the creation of part-time and atypical jobs that are more likely to be taken by low-skilled women, then the above 'diminishing' negative effect seems plausible, but also calls for further research to generate knowledge that can be used in future recessions in the form of mitigating measures. Moreover, the relationship between the 2004–2010 temporal changes in subjective judgments on the state of economy and MWLB$_{ed}$ or FWLB$_{ed}$ levels is statistically insignificant.

Finally, for sensitivity analysis purposes six gender models have been constructed, as in Steiber et al. (2016), based on specific ESS variables that refer to both respondents' and partners' amount of working hours, employment status and employment mode (part-time or full-time). Using the total average across all 17 countries as a threshold, it appears that there is no clear welfare regime pattern that holds in both 2004 and 2010 for all countries apart from the Nordic group (perhaps with the exception of Norway) where the dual-breadwinner is dominant, and the male-breadwinner model is weak (see Table A2 in the Supplementary File). Yet, in all 17 countries, women spend consistently much more time than men in housework activities. In line with Tammelin (2018b), the supplementary analysis performed showed that the difference is large and statistically significant in all countries indicating that in reality there is no such a thing as a Universal caregiver model. In Nordic countries though the difference in the mean hours spent on housework is smaller but still significantly different between men and women.

5. Conclusion

Results suggest that the effect of education on WLB is diverse across the 17 European countries examined, but in most cases, it is weak for both genders. In most countries the effect in 2010 turns negative, especially for women. In terms of welfare state regimes, no common temporal pattern has been identified. These results are in line both with Gallie and Russell (2009) and Strandh and Nordenmark (2006), who argue that production regimes or welfare institutions of a country cannot explain how WLB and the division of labour between paid and unpaid jobs can be determined within households, and with Ciccia and Bleijenbergh (2014) and Tammelin (2018a), who claim that gender models are not distinct across countries and welfares state regimes; they rather coexist, even within the same country. Moreover, a considerable heterogeneity is observed on the country level, as no consistent temporal pattern was observed on how educational attainment affects the WLB of males and females. This heterogeneity seems to persist even when results are displayed over more recent welfare state classifications such as those found in Saxonberg (2013) and Wall and Escobedo (2013) where the type of childcare and parental policies are taken into account.

Research is still limited on the determinants of the division of labour and WLB gender differences within households when the economic climate deteriorates. The current research addressed this gap by including three country-level measures. Looking on individuals

who cohabit with a heterosexual partner, GDP growth rates are positively related to the WLB of females but not for males, while the former were also more likely to improve their WLB when unemployment was falling. When educational attainment was taken into account, there was no specific pattern for both genders that was significant in both 2004 and 2010; however, for 2004 $FWLB_{ed}$ was likely to be stronger in countries with relatively higher GDP growth, but for 2010 the direction of this relationship changes. When temporal changes between 2004 and 2010 are examined, there is an indication that when an economy goes into recession, higher education has a cushioning effect on female's WLB compared to relatively better economic times.

Moreover, the analysis performed by this article showed that Becker's application of human capital in households is rather problematic. The effect of education on WLB is not uniform across gender, countries and different macro-economic climates. Since higher levels of education lead to lower levels of WLB, especially for females, then the human capital theory seems invalid in household arrangements and perhaps theories where gender roles are influenced by perceptions, attitudes and expectations regarding cultural and other societal norms, manifested in the form of gender ideologies that influence individual decision-making processes, are more applicable (Braun et al., 2008; Deutsch, 2007; Heisig, 2011; Pfau-Effinger, 2004).

In strict business terms, numerous studies indicate that a job of good quality and WLB increases productivity (Fields, 2003; Gunderson, 2002; ILO, 2003; Kalleberg, 2011). However, a gender perspective in which women are treated equally to men with respect to not only paid work but also to unpaid work, such as housework, remains absent. Equality should not be restricted within workplaces but should find application within households, as well. Otherwise, gender equality in workplaces could result in widening gender inequalities as a whole.

With regards to policy, European policymakers are not indifferent to identifying the qualitative elements of employment. Although during periods of economic crisis policymaking is directed more towards finding ways to decrease the number of unemployed people, job quality and WLB are also important, as it has close ties with job stability and labour market sustainability (Muñoz de Bustillo et al., 2009). Having a good quality job associated with good WLB can significantly boost people's sense of well-being. Moreover, well-being is closely associated with sustainability, equality, economic development and standard of living and therefore good levels of WLB can improve these indicators, as well.

In European policymaking agendas, WLB and gender equality are placed very high. However, in essence, little progress has been made on improving job quality and the WLB, particularly for women. Instead, female participation in the labour market seems to increase, while at the same time WLB arrangements in the household level become more complicated, as even if traditional gender roles are constantly becoming obsolete in the labour market, it is still unclear if this stands with the division of unpaid work within households. At the same time, childcare provision and long parental leaves are indeed helpful for couples; however, if not implemented wisely, they could implicitly incentivise and perpetuate the male-breadwinner model. Certainly, such policies promote equality, but they could become more effective if they were also aiming at cultivating a public understanding that the male-breadwinner model is no longer sustainable. Moreover, technological evolutions in the labour market make gender division in job tasks rather indistinguishable. Unfortunately, attitudes and perceptions within households on labour division have not evolved at the same pace. This creates a significant barrier for women, who cannot exploit their full potential even though relevant technological means, certainly exist.

This research was conducted during a period where homeworking arrangements were quite limited across all European countries examined. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 and the associated social distancing and lockdown measures are likely to make working and home environments less distinct and thus WLB might need to be examined under a different conceptual framework where home-working is considered a mainstream practice. Certainly, social distancing is rapidly transforming working arrangements and household relationships on many levels. The division of work among household members enters a new era of conflict, where boundaries are extremely hazy, and this poses huge challenges for future research related to WLB, where new theoretical developments are expected to emerge.

In conclusion, the division of labour among couples of different genders and decisions on WLB seems to be determined by arrangements made on the household and not on the country level or even the gender model each country can be classified under in the relevant literature. Moreover, women appear to be more sensitive than men are to negative changes in the economic climate. In most countries, educational attainment is not beneficial in terms of WLB.

Acknowledgments

I thank all editors and reviewers for their valuable and detailed feedback. I strongly believe they have contributed significantly to the publication of this article.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

References

Anttila, T., Oinas, T., Tammelin, M., & Nätti, J. (2015). Working-time regimes and work–life balance in Europe. *European Sociological Review*, *31*(6), 713–724.

Arts, W. A., & Gelissen, J. (2010). Models of the welfare state. In F. G. Castles, S. Leibfried, J. Lewis, H. Obinger, & C. Pierson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the welfare state*. Retrieved from https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199579396.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199579396-e-39?result=8&rskey=h0kkr3

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *22*(3), 309–328. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115

Becker, G. (1981). *A treatise on the family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bianchi, S. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2010). Work and family research in the first decade of the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *72*(3), 705–725.

Bianchi, S. M., Milkie, M. A., Sayer, L. C., & Robinson, J. P. (2000). Is anyone doing the housework? Trends in the gender division of labor. *Social Forces*, *79*(1), 191–228.

Braun, M., Lewin-Epstein, N., Stier, H., & Baumgärtner, M. K. (2008). Perceived equity in the gendered division of household labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *7*, 1145–1156.

Brines, J. (1994). Economic dependency, gender, and the division of labor at home. *American Journal of sociology*, *100*(3), 652–688.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development. Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ciccia, R., & Bleijenbergh, I. (2014). After the male breadwinner model? Childcare services and the division of labour in European countries. *Social Politics*, *2014*(Spring), 1–30.

Coltrane, S. (2000). Research on household labor: Modelling and measuring the social embeddedness of routine family work. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*(4), 1208–1233.

Crompton, R. (1999). *Restructuring gender relations and employment: The decline of the male breadwinner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crompton, R. (2006). *Employment and the family. The reconfiguration of work and family life in contemporary societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crompton, R., & Lyonette, C. (2006). Work–life balance in Europe. *Acta Sociologica*, *49*(4), 379–393.

Deutsch, F. M. (2007). Undoing gender. *Gender & Society*, *21*(1), 106–127.

Dotti Sani, G. M., & Scherer, S. (2018). Maternal employment: Enabling factors in context. *Work, Employment and Society*, *32*(1), 75–92.

Duncan, S. (2005). Mothering, class and rationality. *Sociological Review*, *53*(1), 50–76.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Esping-Andersen, G. (2009). The incomplete revolution: Adapting to women's new roles. Cambridge: Malden.

ESS Round 2. (2004). *European social survey round 2 data* [Data file edition 3.6]. Bergen: Norwegian Centre for Research Data. https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS2-2004

ESS Round 5. (2010). European social survey round 5 data [Data file edition 3.4]. Bergen: Norwegian Centre for Research Data. https://doi.org/10.21338/NSD-ESS5-2010

Eurofound. (2017). *In-work poverty in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Fagan, C., Lyonette, C., Smith, M., & Saldaña-Tejeda, A. (2012). *The influences of working time arrangements on work–life integration or 'balance': A review of the international evidence*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Fenger, H. J. M. (2007). Welfare regimes in Central and Eastern Europe: Incorporating post-communist countries into a welfare-regime typology. *Contemporary Issues and Ideas in Social Science*, *3*(2), 1–30.

Ferrera, M. (1996). The southern model of welfare in social Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *6*(1), 17–37.

Fields, G. S. (2003). Decent work and development policies. *International Labour Review*, *142*(2), 239–262.

Fraser, N. (1994). After the family wage. Gender equity and the welfare state. *Political Theory*, *22*(4), 591–618.

Gallie, D. (2013). *Economic crisis, quality of work, and social integration: The European perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gallie, D., & Russell, H. (2009). Work–family conflict and working conditions in Western Europe. *Social Indicators*, *93*(3), 445–467.

Gautie, J., & Schmitt, J. (Eds.). (2010). *Low-wage work in the wealthy world*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gershuny, J. (2000). *Changing times. Work and leisure in postindustrial society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ghai, D. (2003). Decent work: Concept and indicators. *International Labour Review*, *142*(2), 113–145.

Gornick, J. C., & Meyers, M. (2009). *Gender equality: Transforming family divisions of labor*. London: Verso.

Grunow, D., & Evertsson, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Couples' transitions to parenthood: Analysing gender and work in Europe*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Grunow, D., & Evertsson, M. (Eds.). (2019). *New parents in Europe: Work-care practices, gender norms and family policies*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Gunderson, M. (2002). *Rethinking productivity from a workplace perspective* (CPRN Discussion Paper). Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks Research Report. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED468467

Hakim, C. (2000). *Work–lifestyle choices in the 21st century: Preference theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heisig, J. P. (2011). Who does more housework—rich or poor—a comparison of 33 countries. *American Sociological Review*, *76*(1), 74–99.

Hofacker, D., & König, S. (2013). Flexibility and work–life conflict in times of crisis: A gender perspective. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 33(9/10), 613–635.

Hurley, J., Enrique, F. M., & Storrie, D. (2013). *Employment polarisation and job quality in the crisis: European jobs monitor 2013*. Dublin: Eurofound.

ILO. (2003). *Global employment trends*. Geneva: ILO.

Kalleberg, A. (2011). *Good jobs, bad jobs: The rise of polarized and precarious employment systems in the united states, 1970s to 2000s*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Kaminska, O. (2020). Guide to using weights and sample design indicators with ESS data. *European Social Survey*. Retrieved from https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/methodology/ess_methodology/data_processing_archiving/weighting.html

Kan, M. Y., Sullivan, O., & Gershuny, J. (2011). Gender convergence in domestic work: Discerning the effects of interactional and institutional barriers from large-scale data. *Sociology*, *45*, 234–251.

Korpi, W., Ferrarini, T., & Englund, S. (2013). Women's opportunities under different family policy constellations: gender, class, and inequality tradeoffs in Western countries re-examined. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, *20*(1), 1–40.

Kromydas, T. (2015). *Higher education and labour market dynamics in crisis: A European comparative study* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde.

Kromydas, T. (2017). Rethinking higher education and its relationship with social inequalities: Past knowledge, present state and future potential. *Palgrave Communications*, *3*(1), 1–12.

Lewis, J. (1992). Gender and the development of welfare regimes. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *2*(3), 159–173.

Lewis, J., & Giullari, S. (2005). The adult worker model family, gender equality and care: The search for new policy principles and the possibilities and problems of a capabilities approach. *Economy and Society*, *34*(1), 76–104.

Lundberg, S., & Pollak, R. A. (1996). Bargaining and distribution in marriage. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *10*(4), 139–158.

McGinnity, F. (2014). Work–life conflict in Europe. In A. C. Michalos (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 7233–7236). Amsterdam: Springer.

McGinnity, F., & Whelan, C. T. (2009). Comparing work–life conflict in Europe. Evidence from the European social survey. *Social Indicators Research*, *93*(3), 433–444.

Mincer, J. (1958). Investment in human capital and personal income distribution. *Journal of Political Economy*, *66*(4), 281–302.

Muñoz de Bustillo, R., Fernandez-Macıas, E., Anton, J. I., & Esteve, F. (2009). *Indicators of job quality in the European Union*. Brussels: European Parliament.

Naldini, M., & Solera, C. (2018). When husbands and wives don't agree, who 'wins'? Value/practice dissonance in the division of work around parenthood in Italy. In R. Musumeci & A. Santero (Eds.), *Fathers, childcare and work: Cultures, practices and policies* (pp. 45–76). Bingley: Emerald.

National Bureau of Economic Research. (2010). *Business cycle dating committee*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from http://www.nber.org/cycles/sept2010.html

Ochsner, M., & Szalma, I. (2017). Work–life conflict of working couples before and during the crisis in 18 European countries. In M. J. Breen (Ed.), *Values and identities in Europe. Evidence from the European social survey* (pp. 77–99). Abingdon: Routledge.

Oinas, T. (2018). The division of labour within households: Men's increased participation? In M. Tammelin (Ed.), *Family, work and well-being*, *emergence of new issues* (pp. 21–33). Cham: Springer.

Ostry, M. J. D., Berg, M. A., & Tsangarides, M. C. G. (2014). *Redistribution, inequality, and growth*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund.

Pahl, R. (1984). *Divisions of labour*. Oxford: Basil-Blackwell.

Parsons, T. (1949). The social structure of the family. In R. Ashen (Ed.), *The family* (pp. 241–74). New York, NY: Hayner.

Pfau-Effinger, B. (2004). *Development of culture, welfare states and women's employment in Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Russell, H., & McGinnity, F. (2013). Under pressure: The impact of recession on employees in Ireland. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *52*(2), 286–307.

Saxonberg, S. (2013). From defamilialization to degenderization: Toward a new welfare typology. *Social Policy & Administration*, *47*(1), 26–49.

Seligman, M. E., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). Positive psychology: An introduction. In M. Csikszentmihalyi (Ed.), *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 279–298). Dordrecht: Springer.

Steiber, N. (2009). Reported levels of time-based and strain-based conflict between work and family roles in Europe: A multilevel approach. *Social Indicators Research*, *93*, 469–488.

Steiber, N., Berghammer, C., & Haas, B. (2016). Contextualizing the education effect on women's employment: A cross-national comparative analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *78*(1), 246–261.

Stier, H., & Yaish, M. (2014). Occupational segregation and gender inequality in job quality: A multi-level approach. *Work, Employment and Society*, *28*(2), 225–246.

Strandh, M., & Nordenmark, M. (2006). The interference of paid work with household demands in different social policy contexts: Perceived work–household conflict in Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. *British Journal of Sociology*, *57*(4), 597–617.

Sullivan, O. (2004). Changing gender practices within the household: A theoretical perspective. *Gender & Society*, *18*(2), 207–222.

Tammelin, M. (Ed.). (2018a). *Family, work and well-being, emergence of new issues*. Cham: Springer.

Tammelin, M. (2018b). Work, time and family: Is it possible to identify European family working time regimes? In M. Tammelin (Ed.), *Family, work and well-being, emergence of new issues* (pp. 11–20). Cham: Springer.

Tausig, M., & Fenwick, R. (2001). Unbinding time: Alternate work schedules and work–life balance. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, *22*(2), 101–119.

Treas, J., & Drobnič, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Dividing the domestic: Men, women, and household work in cross-national perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wall, K., & Escobedo, A. (2013). Parental leave policies, gender equity and family well-being in Europe: A comparative perspective. In M. M. Almudena (Ed.), *Family well-being. European perspectives* (pp. 103–129). Dordrecht: Springer.

Wallace, C. (2017). From the Isle of Sheppey to the wider world. In G. Crowand & J. Ellis (Eds.), *Revisiting divisions of labour. The impacts and legacies of a modern sociological classic* (pp. 140–149). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, *1*(2), 125–151.

Wright, E. O. (1997). *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yates, C. A., & Leach, B. (2006). Why "good" jobs lead to social exclusion. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, *27*(3), 341–368.

About the Author

Theocharis Kromydas (PhD) is a Research Associate currently working at the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow. His main research interests lie in the quantitative analysis of social phenomena related to health and social inequalities, job quality, work–life balance, work trajectories and social inclusion.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 23–34
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2972

Article

Gender Division of Domestic Labor in Post-Socialist Europe (1994–2012): Test of Class Gradients Hypothesis

Daria Ukhova

Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences, University of Bremen and Jacobs University, 28359 Bremen, Germany; E-Mail: dukhova@bigsss.uni-bremen.de

Submitted: 29 February 2020 | Accepted: 20 April 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
This article analyzes changes in the gender division of domestic labor (GDDL) in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), an under-researched region characterized by high levels of inequality in GDDL from 1994–2012. Drawing on the literature on class gradients in the contribution of the genders to domestic labor and their change over time, the article answers two questions: How has GDDL (operationalized as men's relative involvement into routine housework) changed in CEE in the post-socialist period? What has been the role of class (operationalized as respondents' education and household income) in shaping GDDL in CEE in the post-socialist period? Data for the article comes from the 1994, 2002, and 2012 waves of the International Social Survey Program on Family and Changing Gender Roles from six CEE countries, i.e., Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia. The findings suggest that net of individual and interactional-level factors, inequality in GDDL in the CEE region did not change substantially during the post-socialist period. The analysis also shows, however, that trends of inequality in GDDL among different classes were idiosyncratic, and this underlay the overall lack of movement towards greater equality.

Keywords
CEE; domestic labor; gender inequality; housework; post-socialism

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

Domestic labor remains unequally divided between women and men in mixed-sex households in all countries in Europe, further perpetuating gender inequality in access to paid work, political representation, and leisure (Beneria, Berik, & Floro, 2015). Certain regions and countries, however, are particularly notorious for high inequality in the gender division of domestic labor (GDDL) but have received comparatively little attention from researchers. The study focuses on one of such regions, i.e., Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

In several recent cross-sectional comparative studies on GDDL, CEE comes up as a special case because, when considering net of individual and couple-level characteristics, there appears to be more "severe domestic inequality" in that region (Aboim, 2010, p. 197) than in Western Europe that such comparisons usually include (Aassve, Fuochi, & Mencarini, 2014; Aboim, 2010; Treas & Tai, 2012). What remains unclear, however, is the development of this phenomenon over time (Klenner & Leiber, 2010). Some studies have recently analyzed changes in GDDL (Altintas & Sullivan, 2016; Geist & Cohen, 2011; Hook, 2006, 2010), but trends in CEE countries have not been specifically considered in any of them. Has the stalled socialist gender revolution (Lapidus, 1978) persisted in the post-socialist period? Or has there been a move towards greater equality in

GDDL, as suggested by aggregate level analyses that have focused on the first post-socialist decade (Crompton, Brockmann, & Lyonette, 2005; Saxonberg, 2014)? Or, rather, has there been a neo-traditionalist turn, as predicted by some commentators (Watson, 1993)? This is the first set of questions motivating this study.

Focusing on GDDL in the CEE region also has an important theoretical implication. Studies on individual- and interactional-level determinants of GDDL demonstrate that models applied to Western countries often have a significantly poorer fit in the CEE (Fuwa, 2004; Mikucka, 2009). For example, such factors of GDDL as time availability and gender role attitudes have been shown to have low explanatory potential in the region (Fuwa, 2004; Mikucka, 2009). Currently evolving research on class gradients (education—and income-related) in men's and women's contribution to domestic labor (Gupta, Evertsson, Grunow, Nermo, & Sayer, 2010; Heisig, 2011; Schneider & Hastings, 2017), and their change over time (see, for example, the changing differences approach in Sullivan, 2010) could provide an additional explanatory perspective relevant for CEE. With its experience of unprecedented growth of economic and social inequalities in the post-socialist period (see Table 1 in the Supplementary File), CEE provides a valuable case for further testing of these theories. In this article, I draw on and aim to contribute to this emerging literature.

To summarize, this article aims to answer the following questions: How has GDDL changed in CEE in the post-socialist period? What has been the role of class in shaping GDDL in CEE in the post-socialist period?

In the next section, I provide an overview of the theories of GDDL. This is followed by a discussion of what we know so far in this respect about changes in CEE. I then discuss the methodology of this study. The following section presents the results of the analysis by first focusing on the regional trends of inequality in GDDL and then on the country-specific ones. The findings suggest that net of individual and interactional-level factors, inequality in GDDL in the CEE region did not change substantially in the post-socialist period. The analysis also shows, however, that trends of inequality in GDDL among different classes were idiosyncratic, and this underlay the overall lack of movement towards greater equality.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Routine Housework as a Cornerstone of Inequality in GDDL

In this study, I analyze GDDL through the lens of gender division of routine housework. Routine housework remains strongly 'feminine-defined' across countries, with women spending most of their domestic labor time on this type of tasks, while men continue focusing on less mundane and time-consuming 'masculine' non-routine housework, such as DYI, garden work, etc. (Kan, Sullivan, & Gershuny, 2011). This segregation of domestic tasks has been shown to represent the key barrier to further gender convergence in time use and improvements in gender equality in the domestic sphere (Kan et al., 2011).

Changes in GDDL are best investigated with the help of time-use diaries and time-use surveys (Sullivan, Gershuny, & Robinson, 2018). In the absence of time-use data (which is the case in the 1994 wave of ISSP), changes in men's relative involvement in routine housework tasks, however, could serve as a good indicator of changes in inequality in GDDL (Crompton et al., 2005).

2.2. Theorizing Inequality in GDDL

Most of the research on GDDL to date has been cross-sectional and focused on four key individual- and interactional-level explanations (Davis & Wills, 2014; Drobnič & Ruppanner, 2015). First, gender ideology acquired through socialization has been shown to influence GDDL, with men and women that hold more egalitarian gender-role attitudes distributing domestic labor more equally (Aassve et al., 2014; Aboim, 2010). Second, several studies have suggested that partners divide domestic labor according to the time they have available from their work outside the household (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000; Davis & Greenstein, 2004). Third, partners' relative resources (e.g., income) have been shown to play a role in bargaining about the performance of housework, i.e., the greater the relative advantage of a partner is, the less time he or she would spend on such work (Bianchi et al., 2000; Evertsson & Nermo, 2007). Finally, the performance of domestic labor has been theorized as a way of 'doing gender' (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003; West & Zimmermann, 1987). No real consensus in the literature, however, has emerged regarding the relative explanatory potential of these theories (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). In the CEE context, as indicated above, these theories appear to have quite low explanatory power (Fuwa, 2004; Mikucka, 2009).

A relatively more recent stream of research on GDDL has focused on so-called class gradients (education- and income-related) in men's and women's contribution to domestic labor. Higher levels of education have been shown to be associated with more egalitarian GDDL (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Hook, 2010). The effects are usually interpreted in terms of more egalitarian attitudes, values, and ideologies of higher-educated men and women. Differences in the time spent on domestic labor by women and men from lower and higher-income households are explained mainly by differing outsourcing opportunities and differing access to time-saving technology (Gershuny, 2000; Gupta et al., 2010; Heisig, 2011; Schneider & Hastings, 2017). These studies have primarily analyzed class gradients in housework hours *among* women rather than differences in GDDL across classes.

Research on changes in GDDL over time has also focused on class gradients in the performance of domestic labor. Sullivan has introduced the term "changing

differences" to refer to "different changes over time in the contributions to family work of those from different socio-economic and demographic subgroups of the population" (Sullivan, 2010, p. 716). In this article, following Sullivan, I will conceptualize the changing role of class in shaping GDDL as changing differences in GDDL by respondents' education and household income.

In her study, Sullivan (2010) analyzed changing differences in men's contribution to domestic labor and childcare by men's education. She demonstrated that, in the UK and US, over time, lower-educated men caught up with higher-educated men in terms of their contribution to domestic labor. Sullivan interpreted changing differences in differently-educated men's contribution to domestic labor as empirical confirmation of Bourdieu's account of behavioral social changes as originating in the upper strata of society and over time trickling down the socio-economic spectrum (Bourdieu as cited in Sullivan, 2010).

In contrast to changes in education-related differences, assessing the changing differences in GDDL by household income seems to have been neglected. Drawing on the cross-national and cross-sectional studies reviewed above, it is reasonable to assume that the effect of household income on GDDL could be interpreted in terms of the differing outsourcing opportunities, as well as differing access to time-saving technology for households with different incomes. The levels of overall economic development (Gershuny, 2000) and economic inequality (Heisig, 2011; Schneider & Hastings, 2017) have been shown to moderate those relationships. Significant changes in these macro-level parameters could, thus, be expected to lead to changing differences in men's and women's contribution to domestic labor by household income.

Notably, the studies focusing on class gradients in the division of domestic labor and their variations across contexts and time so far have not focused on CEE. With its experience of rapid economic transformation and acute growth of economic and social inequalities in the last 30 years (for an overview of socio-economic trends in CEE, see Table 1 in the Supplementary File), the region represents a good case for this type of analysis.

3. Regional Context and Hypotheses

3.1. GDDL in Post-Socialist CEE

The problem of women's double burden of paid and unpaid work is well-documented in the literature on state-socialist countries (Einhorn, 1993; Gal & Kligman, 2000; Saxonberg, 2014). Although CEE socialist states achieved significant levels of socialization of care (especially, in comparison with their Western neighbors), domestic labor mostly remained a remit of families, and primarily of women within them.

In the first post-socialist decade, a predominant view established in the literature was that unequal GDDL had persisted or even worsened during the market transition. This increased inequality was attributed to certain macro-level changes in the region, such as women's mass withdrawal from the labor market, increasing job demands on those women who did not withdraw, and the state's retrenchment from the provision of care services and social benefits that took place during the 1990s (Ashwin, 2006; Pine, 2002; Pollert, 2003). Among the analyzed countries, the above trends were most visible in Russia (which also experienced the largest recession in that period), and least in Slovenia (see Table 1 in the Supplementary File). Some scholars also argued that calls for 're-traditionalization' coming from the new political leaders could have impacted gender attitudes and gender relations and led to more unequal GDDL (Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2002; Takács, 2013; Watson, 1993). This assumption about increased gender inequalities in the domestic sphere, however, has been underexplored in a comparative quantitative manner.

In the 2000s, there was hardly any research on GDDL in CEE (Klenner & Leiber, 2010). We know, however, that some of the negative macro-level trends that were thought to underpin the increase of inequality in GDDL in the first post-socialist decade significantly slowed or even reversed (see Table 1 in the Supplementary File). Women's participation in the labor force, public spending on family benefits, and the percentage of children enrolled in pre-school institutions in 2012 were higher than in 2002 in nearly all of the analyzed countries. The Gender Inequality Index shows that, in the 2000s, at least in Russia and Bulgaria, a move towards lower macro-level gender inequality, which has been shown to be related to more equal GDDL (Fuwa, 2004), also accelerated. It is reasonable to assume that all these changes combined with the relatively increased prosperity of the households could have alleviated the burden of domestic labor for CEE households and reduced the extent of gender inequality in its division. This leads me to hypothesis 1:

> Net of individual and interactional-level factors, inequality in GDDL in CEE increased during the first post-socialist decade and subsequently decreased during the 2000s.

3.2. Class Divisions in Post-Socialist CEE and Domestic Labor

There is almost no research on the role of education concerning domestic labor in the socialist period. We do know, however, that the ideology of *kulturnost* ('culturedness'), a principal marker of educated class habitus under socialism (Salmeniemi, 2012), encompassed a set of values and practices, including patterns of consumption, personal hygiene, etc., which could have impacted volumes of domestic labor and its division. In one Polish study from the 1970s, partners' education was, indeed, shown to be an important factor of men's contribution to

domestic labor, and couples with higher education had the most egalitarian GDDL (Lobodzinska, 1977).

Whether education has remained a factor of GDDL in the post-socialist period has not been researched so far. However, a study on attitudinal change in Russia has suggested that educational differences in preferences for male breadwinner/female caregiver model increased during the post-socialist period, with highly educated being increasingly less likely to endorse this model than lower educated (Motiejunaite & Kravchenko, 2008). It is reasonable to assume that under the condition of increased social and economic inequalities the importance of education—as a source of social distinction—has likely increased also concerning actual GDDL.

In contrast to education, income was hardly an important factor of class difference in the socialist period due to highly compressed wage structures. In the post-socialist period, however, when countries of the region have witnessed an unprecedented growth of income inequality, income and economic capital, in general, have become important class markers (Gapova, 2002). While all the analyzed countries witnessed significant relative growth of economic inequality in the post-socialist period (see Table 1 in the Supplementary File), it is important to note that the increase was much more tangible in Russia, Bulgaria, and Poland.

The role of income in organizing and dividing unpaid work in post-socialist CEE has started being discussed in the literature only recently. In the early 2000s in Russia, household income was shown to be strongly associated both with the volume of domestic labor and the level of gender inequality in its division—poorer households did substantially more of their domestic work, and women in such households shouldered a greater relative share of it than women in the richer households (Balabanova, 2005). Studies on outsourcing of domestic labor and care among the new middle classes in Slovenia, Czechia and Russia (Humer & Hrznjak, 2015; Redlová, 2012; Rotkirch, Tkach, & Zdravomyslova, 2012) suggest that when domestic workers and nannies are hired, they take over the part of unpaid work carried out by women.

The above leads me to suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a: Over the post-socialist period, the positive effect of education on the level of equality in GDDL has increased.

Hypothesis 2b: Over the post-socialist period, the positive effect of household income on the level of equality in GDDL has increased.

4. Method

Data for this article come from the 1994, 2002, and 2012 waves of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) on Family and Changing Gender Roles. The ISSP is a unique repeated cross-sectional survey that allows analyzing changes in GDDL in CEE over the period of interest. A total of six post-socialist European countries participated in all three waves, i.e., Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia.

I restricted the sample to those respondents who had a co-resident partner. Because partner's sex is not reported in ISSP, I treated all couples as mixed-sex. I further limited the age group to 18–65 (prime working age) and excluded those who reported that they or their partner were in education (because I could not reasonably control their workload outside the home) or had a permanent illness or disability (in such households distribution of domestic labor is likely to be strongly affected by the physical condition of the partner—but the number of such households was too small to draw any reliable conclusions about this specific group). Multiple Imputation procedure in SPSS 26 was used to estimate values for missing data, following best practices in the field of family research (Johnson & Young, 2011). Pooled across years and countries, the non-weighted analytical sample size was 11,730 (for country samples see Table 2 in the Supplementary File).

Following the approach used by Kunovich and Kunovich (2008), in the pooled regression, I applied external weights, the goal of which was to equalize the sample sizes across countries within each wave, so that each country would contribute equally to the estimation of slope coefficients. No weights were applied in the country-specific regressions.

4.1. Dependent Variable

I used the index developed by Geist and Cohen (2011) to account for changes in the GDDL. The index is based on answers to three questions about routine daily tasks usually performed by women, i.e., laundry, cooking dinner, and shopping for groceries. Only these three questions were consistently included in all three waves analyzed. Respondents stated which partner and how frequently (always, usually, about equal) they performed the task or whether the task was outsourced/performed by a third person. Following Geist and Cohen (2011), I coded the answers as follows:

- −2 "task is always done by the woman"
- −1 "task is usually done by the woman"
- 0 "task is equally shared" OR "done by a third person/outsourced"
- 1 "task is usually done by the man"
- 2 "task is always done by the man"

I then added values for all three tasks. As a result, I obtained a measure of a degree of male relative involvement in routine housework with possible values ranging from minus 6 (*all tasks performed by the woman*) through 0 (*all tasks equally shared*) to plus 6 (*all tasks performed by the man*). Because in all the country-years, mean values of the index were below 0, in what follows,

I use men's relative involvement in routine housework and the level equality in GDDL as synonymous terms.

4.2. Independent Variables and Controls

The first key variable of interest was the *survey year*. I used year dummies to analyze changes in the prevalence of couples with different patterns of GDDL over time.

Further key independent variables that should have captured the effects of class on GDDL were *household income* and *respondent's level of education*. Household income was measured as the bottom 20% vs. middle 60% vs. top 20% of the country-specific household-size equivalized income distribution (calculated by dividing household income as reported in ISSP by the square root of the household size). Respondent's level of education was measured as low vs. medium vs. high corresponding to ISCED 2011 categories 0–2, 3–4, and 5–6 respectively. Because the 1994 ISSP wave (for all countries) and the 2012 wave (for Russia and Bulgaria) did not include questions on the partner's level of education, I had to use the respondent's education as a proxy of the household's educational level. Where data on both partners' level of education was available, educational homogamy, however, was high (Spearman's coefficient was at least 0.5, but in most country-years exceeded 0.6).

In addition to the above variables, I also included in the models the measures of other individual—and interactional-level factors of GDDL reviewed in the theoretical section. Relative resources were measured by the *woman's share of income. Employment statuses of both partners* were used as measures of time availability. I differentiated between those working full-time, part-time, and not working for pay. Respondents who were employed full-time and whose partner also worked full-time were the reference category in the models. Respondent's *gender role attitudes* were captured with an index of gender egalitarianism (Treas & Tai, 2016) composed of answers to five questions about the level of the respondents' agreement with the following statements: 1) A pre-school child is likely to suffer if their mother works; 2) family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job; 3) what most women want is a home and children; 4) being a housewife is as fulfilling as working for pay; and 5) a man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family (Cronbach's alpha = 0.73). In the original survey, the answers to each question were given on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). Thus, the higher values of the index (which ranges from 5 to 25) indicate more gender-egalitarian attitudes.

I controlled for the sex and age of the respondent, as well as for the household size. Controlling for sex of the respondent allowed to account for potential differences in men's and women's reporting of the gap between their own and their partners' contributions to household labor (Lee & Waite, 2005). Information on the presence of children in the household was not available in the 1994 wave, and, therefore, was not included. Age, age squared, and household size variables, however, should have captured the 'child' effect, at least, to some extent.

4.3. Analytical Strategy

I estimated a series of OLS models. After analyzing the descriptive statistics, I pooled all three waves for all the countries together applying external weights (discussed above) and ran several OLS regressions. My decision to pool the countries together was theoretically driven by Pascall and Kwak's (2010) post-socialist gender regime approach that sees the CEE countries in a homogenized way. I regressed GDDL index on time variables (year dummies), class characteristics (respondent's education and household income dummies), interactions of class characteristics with time variables, and a set of control variables to account for compositional changes in the samples over time, as well as for alternative individual- and interactional-level explanations. In the last pooled model, I also included country dummies to control for potential national differences in the level of inequality in GDDL and for unobservable variables at the national level that could be correlated with IVs and control variables. Also, I ran country-specific regressions (see Tables 5 and 6 in the Supplementary File) to examine whether the effects of time, class, and other variables on GDDL differed substantially among the analyzed countries.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Regional descriptive statistics for the dependent variable are provided in Table 1 (for full regional and country-specific descriptive statistics see Tables 3 and 4 in the Supplementary File). At the regional level, one could observe an increase in men's relative involvement in the performance of routine housework tasks (GDDL index increasing) between 1994 and 2012. This finding is in line with the results of aggregate-level analyses for the 1994–2002 period discussed above (Crompton & Lyonette, 2007; Saxonberg, 2014).

Analysis of group-specific means of GDDL by respondent's education and household income, however, suggests that the patterns and trends of GDDL were different for these groups. While in less-educated households the level of men's relative involvement in routine housework appears to have remained unchanged between 1994 and 2012, in the highly-educated households—in which it was already substantially higher in 1994—it seems to have increased throughout that period, primarily between 1994 and 2002. The aggregate increase in equality in GDDL over the analyzed period, thus, appears to have been primarily driven by highly-educated households. Descriptive statistics also suggest that richer households had more equal GDDL than poorer ones al-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, dependent variable, CEE Region (N = 11,730).

			1994		2002		2012	
	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Index of GDDL	−6	6	−3.25[a] [−3.30; −3.19]	1.83	−3.17 [−3.24; −3.10]	2.14	−3.07 [−3.14; −3.00]	2.16
• low educated	−6	6	−3.42 [−3.50; −3.34]	1.90	−3.52 [−3.63; −3.41]	2.14	−3.41 [−3.55; −3.27]	2.18
• highly educated	−6	6	−2.91 [−3.05; −2.77]	1.70	−2.62 [−2.79; −2.44]	2.19	−2.60 [−2.74; −2.46]	2.13
• poor/bottom income quintile	−6	6	−3.39 [−3.51; −3.27]	1.86	−3.61 [−3.76; −3.46]	2.06	−3.33 [−3.49; −3.17]	2.13
• rich/top income quintile	−6	6	−3.08 [−3.19; −2.96]	1.73	-2.80 [−2.95; −2.65]	2.10	−2.87 [−3.03; −2.71]	2.10

Notes: All values are weighted using a combination of external weights and post-stratification weights provided by the ISSP. [a] 95% confidence intervals for dependent variable in brackets.

ready in 1994. The income gradient of inequality in GDDL appears to have further significantly increased during the first post-socialist decade. While high-income households in that period managed to decrease inequality in GDDL, in low-income households the opposite appears to have occurred. By 2012, however, the income gradient appears to have narrowed again due to an increase in men's relative involvement in routine housework in poorer households and, possibly, some decrease of such involvement in richer ones.

Descriptive statistics do not take into account significant compositional changes, such as education, employment, or breadwinning that can be related to GDDL. Only multivariate analysis, thus, could shed light on trends in GDDL net of individual- and interactional-level factors.

5.2. Determinants of GDDL, 1994–2012

Models 1–5 (Table 2) highlight the factors of GDDL at the regional level, with a specific focus on time and class effects. The models have relatively low R^2, which is in line with what has already been shown in the literature (Fuwa, 2004; Mikucka, 2009)—conventional individual- and interactional-level theories of GDDL have less explanatory power in the CEE region. It is important to note, however, that adding class variables and accounting for the changing effect of these variables over time through the use of interaction terms improves the model's explanatory power.

Model 1 captures the aggregate change in the levels of inequality in GDDL at the regional level over time. In this model, I use only a basic set of controls (gender, age, age squared, and size of the household), and the results mirror the findings from the descriptive analysis. Men's relative involvement in routine housework increased between 1994 and 2012. In Model 2, I introduce education and household income variables. Model 2 suggests that the level of education and the level of household income have a significant positive effect on the level of equality in GDDL in the CEE region.

In Model 3, I add variables accounting for partners' employment statuses, their relative incomes, and respondents' gender ideology, which allow me to both account for alternative theoretical explanations and control for compositional changes in my sample over time. Importantly, the effects of education and household income in Model 3 only slightly diminish in comparison with Model 2. Model 3, contrary to Hypothesis 1, suggests that, controlling for individual- and interactional-level characteristics, there were no statistically significant changes in men's relative involvement in routine housework during the 1990s and the 2000s.

In Model 4, in which I introduce the interactions of education and household income variables with time variables, however, a more complex picture of (the lack of) change emerges. Model 4 clearly shows that changes in GDDL were very class-specific. In line with Hypothesis 2a, the educational gradient, which had already been significant in 1994, significantly increased during the 1990s and remained at that level during the 2000s. Income gradient, which was insignificant in 1994, increased significantly by 2002 but disappeared again during the 2000s. Hypothesis 2b is thus confirmed for the 1994–2002 period but rejected for 2002–2012.

Model 4 also allows understanding which class processes underlay changes in the gradients. Education/income group-specific change is calculated by summing the end of the period year coefficient and that specific group-year interaction term (for a similar approach see Treas, Lui, & Gubernskaya, 2014). In the 1990s, all the other parameters kept constant, lower-educated households experienced a significant decrease in men's relative involvement in routine housework, while higher-educated ones did not. During the 2000s, the persistence of the educational gradient was related to a different process. In that period, equality increased among all educa-

Table 2. Determinants of GDDL, CEE region, 1994–2012 (pooled data, OLS).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	β	*(SE)*	*B*	*(SE)*	*β*	*(SE)*	*β*	*(SE)*	*β*	*(SE)*
Year (ref. category: 1994)										
2002	0.07	(0.04)	0.05	(0.04)	0.02	(0.04)	−0.36***	(0.11)	−0.34**	(0.11)
2012	0.14**	(0.05)	0.07	(0.05)	0.03	(0.05)	−0.02	(0.12)	−0.02	(0.12)
Education (ref. category: Low Education)										
Medium Education			0.25***	(0.04)	0.21***	(0.04)	0.14*	(0.07)	0.14*	(0.07)
Higher Education			0.63***	(0.06)	0.53***	(0.06)	0.34***	(0.10)	0.34***	(0.10)
Medium Education*2002							0.20*	(0.10)	0.18^{+}	(0.10)
Higher Education*2002							0.27^{+}	(0.14)	0.24^{+}	(0.14)
Medium Education*2012							0.02	(0.11)	0.02	(0.11)
Higher Education*2012							0.29*	(0.14)	0.27^{+}	(0.14)
Income (ref. category: Low Income)										
Medium household income			0.16**	(0.06)	0.14*	(0.06)	0.04	(0.08)	0.03	(0.10)
High household income			0.22***	(0.07)	0.16*	(0.07)	0.07	(0.11)	0.06	(0.11)
Medium household income*2002							0.27*	(0.12)	0.28*	(0.12)
High household income*2002							0.38*	(0.16)	0.39*	(0.16)
Medium household income*2012							0.02	(0.14)	0.02	(0.14)
High household income*2012							−0.10	(0.18)	−0.10	(0.18)
Man's employment status (ref. category: full-time)										
Man employed part-time					0.25*	(0.11)	0.25*	(0.11)	0.26*	(0.11)
Man not employed					0.18**	(0.06)	0.19***	(0.06)	0.16**	(0.06)
Woman's employment status (ref. category: full-time)										
Woman employed part-time					0.03	(0.08)	0.03	(0.08)	0.05	(0.08)
Woman not employed					−0.31***	(0.05)	−0.31***	(0.05)	−0.33***	(0.05)
Woman's income share bigger					0.34***	(0.05)	0.34***	(0.05)	0.33***	(0.05)

Table 2. (Cont.) Determinants of GDDL, CEE region, 1994–2012 (pooled data, OLS).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	β	*(SE)*	*B*	*(SE)*	*β*	*(SE)*	*β*	*(SE)*	*β*	*(SE)*
Egalitarian gender role attitudes[a]					0.03***	(0.01)	0.03***	(0.01)	0.02***	(0.01)
Female respondent	−0.61***	(0.04)	−0.61***	(0.04)	−0.63***	(0.04)	−0.63***	(0.04)	−0.63***	(0.04)
Age[a]	−0.04**	(0.01)	−0.06***	(0.01)	−0.08***	(0.01)	−0.08***	(0.01)	−0.08***	(0.01)
Age squared	0.02^{+}	(0.01)	0.05***	(0.01)	0.07***	(0.02)	0.07***	(0.01)	0.07***	(0.02)
Household size[a]	−0.11***	(0.02)	−0.09***	(0.02)	−0.07***	(0.02)	−0.07***	(0.02)	−0.08***	(0.02)
Country (ref. category: Russia)										
Bulgaria									−0.02	(0.06)
Czechia									−0.10	(0.07)
Hungary									0.16*	(0.07)
Poland									0.03	(0.07)
Slovenia									0.26***	(0.07)
Intercept	−2.85***		−3.24***		−3.20***		−3.06***		−3.10***	
Adjusted R^2	0.031		0.046		0.063		0.065		0.068	
F for change in R^2	58.46***		44.55***		34.46***		3.57***		7.77***	

Notes: N = 11,710. All values are weighted using external weights. [a]Age centered at 40, household size centered at 3, gender role attitudes centered at 15. $^{+}p \leq 0.1$ *$p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$.

tional groups (model with 2002 as a reference category is not shown). But in highly educated households the increase was much steeper than among the rest. All the other parameters kept constant, highly-educated households in 2012 had more equal GDDL than in 1994. For the less educated, the levels of GDDL index in 2012 were not statistically different from 1994.

The appearance of income gradient by 2002 and its subsequent disappearance by 2012 was driven primarily by changes in GDDL in poor households. Between 1994 and 2002, men's relative involvement in routine housework among poorer households decreased. Between 2002 and 2012 (model with 2002 as a reference category is not shown), however, it increased back to the 1994 levels. All other parameters kept constant, richer households did not experience statistically significant changes in GDDL, neither in the 1990s nor in the 2000s, although data suggest that there might have been an increase in inequality among high-income households in the 2000s. These findings suggest that the trajectory of change implied in Hypothesis 1 (initial decrease of equality, followed by a subsequent increase) was characteristic of lower classes only.

In Model 5, I add country dummies. I use Russia, a country where the state-socialist gender regime originated from, as a reference category. The effects of all independent variables and controls are robust to the inclusion of country dummies. Coefficients of only two country dummies, i.e., Slovenia and Hungary, are statistically significantly different from the reference category.

Country-specific regressions (see Tables 5 and 6 in the Supplementary File) show that trajectories of net change in GDDL were quite diverse among the analyzed countries. Only Hungary and Bulgaria experienced a net change in GDDL in line with Hypothesis 1, i.e., an initial overall increase in inequality followed by an overall decrease during the 2000s. In the remaining countries, there was either no change in either decade (as in Czechia); an initial decrease of inequality was followed by a subsequent increase (Poland and Russia); or a decrease was followed by stagnation (Slovenia). Notably, however, by 2012, most of the countries (with the possible exception of Bulgaria and Slovenia) had the same level of inequality in GDDL as in 1994.

Idiosyncratic trends of inequality in GDDL among different classes observed at the regional level, however, characterized developments in all analyzed countries, even if to different extents. In line with Hypothesis 2a, over the post-socialist period, the positive effect of education on the level of men's involvement in routine housework increased in all countries except Russia (where it, nevertheless, remained positive). Only in Slovenia did the effect of education eventually disappear between 2002 and 2012, since lower-educated there caught up with higher-educated. As for household income, during the first post-socialist decade, its importance as a factor of more equal GDDL increased in all countries of the region (except Slovenia), primarily due to (stronger) decreases in men's involvement in routine housework among the poor. Between 2002 and 2012, however, in all countries except Russia, the income gradient either significantly diminished or even reversed.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

My first hypothesis—that, net of individual and interactional-level factors, inequality in GDDL in the CEE countries increased during the first post-socialist decade and subsequently decreased during the 2000s—received confirmation in two countries only. Analysis of trends of inequality for different classes, however, showed that this was a rather typical trajectory for lower-class households across most of the analyzed countries. This finding partially supports a view established in the literature that gender inequalities increased in the early years of post-socialist transition (Ashwin, 2006; Pine, 2002; Pollert, 2003), but points out an often-overlooked class-specificity of this argument.

My hypothesis about the increased positive effect of education on equality in GDDL received confirmation at the regional level and across most of the countries. However, contrary to the theoretical assumption that an increase in educational gradient would be driven by highly-educated embracing more egalitarian patterns of GDDL first (Sullivan, 2010), at least between 1994–2002 across most of CEE this was not the case. In that period, the gradient increased primarily due to increased inequality in GDDL among lower-educated. Only in 2002–2012 was the persistence of educational gradient in several countries, indeed, related to the relatively faster change towards greater equality among highly-educated, as was suggested in the Western contexts (Sullivan, 2010). This finding emphasizes the importance of applying a class lens to the post-socialist re-traditionalization argument, as has been already pointed out by anthropologists working on the region (e.g., Kalb, 2018).

Finally, my hypothesis about the increased positive effect of household income on equality in GDDL was confirmed in relation to the 1994–2002 period across most of the countries. However, contrary to my expectation, an increase in income gradient was driven primarily not by the rich, but rather by the poor experiencing a significant reduction in equality in GDDL. The latter was probably caused by the impact that welfare retrenchment and economic crises had on volumes of unpaid work within poorer households, as was shown in ethnographic studies (e.g., Pine, 2002). Indeed, in the 2000s when the countries entered a period of economic growth and welfare expansion, the trend for the poor also reversed.

The principal limitations of this study stem from the nature of the data used for the analysis. First, the focus of the research was on the relative distribution of the burden of routine housework and equality within the couple rather than on time use. Second, using 1994 as a starting point for analysis of post-socialist transition could have resulted in an underestimation of the extent of changes

in the first post-socialist decade, as by that moment the countries analyzed had already been 'in transition' for 3–5 years. Thirdly, this data does not allow to account for the effects of the 2008–2009 financial crisis, which has been shown to have had some negative gendered impacts in several of the analyzed countries (Szalma & Takács, 2013). Finally, having information on both partners' education would have likely improved the fit of the model, taking into account the impact of educational homogamy on GDDL (Esping-Andersen, 2009).

In conclusion, it is important to note some insights that the experience of post-socialist CEE offers to the wider study of GDDL. First, the findings of this study lend further support to the claims made recently in the scholarship on change in GDDL about the need to consider the extent of stall and progress for different socio-demographic groups (Sullivan et al., 2018). As shown, in CEE, class represents an important explanatory factor which must be accounted for if we are to understand the lack of progress on equality in GDDL in the region in the post-socialist period. This lack of progress was primarily related to significant setbacks in gender equality among the lower-class households during the period of market transition in the 1990s, which they only managed to offset during the 2000s. Second, my findings highlight the importance of considering changes in GDDL among lower classes not only as a result of 'catching up' with trends emanating from higher classes (Sullivan, 2010), but also as a consequence of their greater vulnerability to impacts of socio-economic crises that may lead to increases in shares of unpaid work carried out by women. Finally, this study provides empirical evidence that household income may have a positive effect on relative gender equality in the division of domestic labor (cf. Heisig, 2011). It, however, also demonstrates that this effect may be a temporary phenomenon. Further studies are needed to reveal the exact mechanisms underlying this relation.

Acknowledgments

This research was carried out as part of an ongoing doctoral project funded by a scholarship granted by the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (BIGSSS) to the author. The author wishes to thank Sonja Drobnic, Olaf Groh Samberg, Eva Fodor, Ania Plomien, Sarah Ashwin, doctoral students at BIGSSS and the LSE Department of Gender Studies, Michael Ochsner, Ivett Szalma, Judit Takács, and two anonymous peer reviewers for their feedback.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

References

Aassve, A., Fuochi, G., & Mencarini, L. (2014). Desperate housework: Relative resources, time availability, economic dependency, and gender ideology across Europe. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(8), 1000–1022. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X14522248

Aboim, S. (2010). Gender cultures and the division of labour in contemporary Europe: A cross-national perspective. *Sociological Review*, *58*(2), 171–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2010.01899.x

Altintas, E., & Sullivan, O. (2016). Fifty years of change updated: Cross-national gender convergence in housework. *Demographic Research*, *35*(August), 455–470. https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2016.35.16

Ashwin, S. (2006). The post-Soviet gender order: Imperatives and implications. In S. Ashwin (Ed.), *Adapting to Russia's new labour market: Gender and employment behaviour* (pp. 30–51). London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Balabanova, E. S. (2005). Domashnyi trud kak simvol gendera i vlasti [Domestic labor as a symbol of gender and power]. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*, *2005*(6), 109–120.

Beneria, L., Berik, G., & Floro, M. S. (2015). *Gender, development and globalization: Economics as if all people mattered* (2nd ed.). London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Bianchi, S. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2010). Work and family research in the first decade of the 21st century. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *72*(3), 705–725. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00726.x

Bianchi, S. M., Milkie, M. A., Sayer, L. C., & Robinson, J. P. (2000). Is anyone doing the housework? Trends in the gender division of household labor. *Social Forces*, *79*(1), 191–228.

Bittman, M., England, P., Sayer, L., Folbre, N., & Matheson, G. (2003). When does gender trump money? Bargaining and time in household work. *American Journal of Sociology*, *109*(1), 186–214. https://doi.org/10.1086/378341

Crompton, R., Brockmann, M., & Lyonette, C. (2005). Attitudes, women's employment and the domestic division of labour: A cross-national analysis in two waves. *Work, Employment & Society*, *19*(2), 213–233. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017005053168

Crompton, R., & Lyonette, C. (2007). Occupational class, country and the domestic division of labour. In R. Crompton, S. Lewis, & C. Lyonette (Eds.), *Women, men, work and family in Europe* (pp. 116–132). Basingstoke & New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Davis, S. N., & Greenstein, T. N. (2004). Cross-national variations in the division of household labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *66*(5), 1260–1271.

Davis, S. N., & Wills, J. B. (2014). Theoretical explanations amid social change: A content analysis of housework research. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(6), 808–824. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X13513020

Drobnič, S., & Ruppanner, L. (2015). Gender inequalities in the home. *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0141

Einhorn, B. (1993). *Cinderella goes to market: Citizenship, gender and women's movements in East Central Europe*. London and New York, NY: Verso.

Esping-Andersen, G. (2009). *The incomplete revolution: Adapting to women's new roles*. Cambridge: Polity.

Evertsson, M., & Nermo, M. (2007). Changing resources and the division of housework: A longitudinal study of Swedish couples. *European Sociological Review*, *23*(4), 455–470. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcm018

Fuwa, M. (2004). Macro-level gender inequality and the division of household labor in 22 countries. *American Sociological Review*, *69*(6), 751–767. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240406900601

Gal, S., & Kligman, G. (2000). *The politics of gender after socialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Gapova, E. (2002). On nation, gender and class formation in Belarus…and elsewhere in the post-Soviet world. *Nationalities Papers*, *30*(4), 639–662. https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2002.10540511

Geist, C., & Cohen, P. N. (2011). Headed toward equality? Housework change in comparative perspective. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *73*(4), 832–844. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00850.x

Gershuny, J. (2000). *Changing times: Work and leisure in postindustrial society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gupta, S., Evertsson, M., Grunow, D., Nermo, M., & Sayer, L. C. (2010). Economic inequality and housework. In S. Drobnič & J. Treas (Eds.), *Dividing the domestic. Men, women and household work in cross-national perspective* (pp. 105–122). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Heisig, J. P. (2011). Who does more housework: Rich or poor? A comparison of 33 countries. *American Sociological Review*, *76*(1), 74–99. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122410396194

Hook, J. L. (2006). Care in context: Men's unpaid work in 20 countries, 1965–2003. *American Sociological Review*, *71*, 639–660.

Hook, J. L. (2010). Gender inequality in the welfare state: Sex segregation in housework, 1965–2003. *American Journal of Sociology*, *115*(5), 1480–1523. https://doi.org/10.1086/651384

Humer, Z., & Hrznjak, M. (2015). When the state steps in: An experiment of subsidised hiring of domestic worker in Slovenia. In S. Marchetti & A. Triandafyllidou (Eds.), *Employers, agencies and immigration: Paying for care* (pp. 169–189). Farnham and Burlington, NJ: Ashgate.

Johnson, D. R., & Young, R. (2011). Toward best practices in analyzing datasets with missing data: Comparisons and recommendations. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *73*(5), 926–945. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00861.x

Kalb, D. (2018). Upscaling illiberalism: Class, contradiction, and the rise and rise of the populist right in post-socialist Central Europe. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, *11*(3), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-018-0221-3

Kan, M. Y., Sullivan, O., & Gershuny, J. (2011). Gender convergence in domestic work: Discerning the effects of interactional and institutional barriers from large-scale data. *Sociology*, *45*(2), 234–251. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510394014

Klenner, C., & Leiber, S. (2010). Introduction: Welfare states and gender in transformation. In C. Klenner & S. Leiber (Eds.), *Welfare states and gender in Central and Eastern Europe: Continuity and post-socialist transformation in the EU Member States* (pp. 9–32). Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.

Kunovich, R. M., & Kunovich, S. (2008). Gender dependence and attitudes toward the distribution of household labor: A comparative and multilevel analysis. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *49*(6), 395–427. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715208097787

Lapidus, G. (1978). *Women in Soviet society: Equality development and social change*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Lee, Y. S., & Waite, L. J. (2005). Husbands' and wives' time spent on housework: A comparison of measures. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *67*(2), 328–336. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2005.00119.x

Lobodzinska, B. (1977). Married women' gainful employment and housework in contemporary Poland. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *39*, 405–415.

Mikucka, M. (2009). Division of household labor between spouses: How do Central and Eastern Europe differ from the West? *International Journal of Sociology*, *39*(1), 76–94. https://doi.org/10.2753/IJS0020-7659390105

Motiejunaite, A., & Kravchenko, Z. (2008). Family policy, employment and gender-role attitudes: A comparative analysis of Russia and Sweden. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *18*(1), 38–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928707084453

Nikolic-Ristanovic, V. (2002). *Social change, gender and violence: Post-communist and war affected societies*. Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media.

Pascall, G., & Kwak, A. (2010). Gender regimes in transition: Gender equality in CEE countries? In C. Klenner & S. Leiber (Eds.), *Welfare states and gender in Central and Eastern Europe: Continuity and post-socialist transformation in the EU Member States* (pp. 117–150). Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.

Pine, F. (2002). Retreat to the household? Gendered domains in postsocialist Poland. In C. Hann (Ed.), *Postsocialism. Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Euroasia* (pp. 95–113). London and New York, NY: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203428115

Pollert, A. (2003). Women, work and equal opportunities in post-communist transition. *Work, Employment*

& Society, *17*(2), 331–357. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017003017002006

Redlová, P. (2012). Employment of Filipinas as nannies in the context of post-socialist Czech Republic. *Urban People*, *2*, 185–215.

Rotkirch, A., Tkach, O., & Zdravomyslova, E. (2012). Making and managing class: Employment of paid domestic workers in Russia. In S. Salmenniemi (Ed.), *Rethinking class in Russia* (pp. 129–148). Farnham and Burlington, NJ: Ashgate.

Salmeniemi, S. (2012). Rethinking class in Russia. In S. Salmenniemi (Ed.), *Rethinking class in Russia* (pp. 1–22). Farnham and Burlington, NJ: Ashgate.

Saxonberg, S. (2014). *Gendering family policies in post-communist Europe: A historical-institutional analysis*. Basingstoke and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schneider, D., & Hastings, O. (2017). Income inequality and household labor. *Social Forces*, *96*(2), 481–506. https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/PWNY5

Sullivan, O. (2010). Changing differences by educational attainment in fathers' domestic labour and child care. *Sociology*, *44*(4), 716–733. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510369351

Sullivan, O., Gershuny, J., & Robinson, J. P. (2018). Stalled or uneven gender revolution? A long-term processual framework for understanding why change is slow. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *10*(1), 263–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12248

Szalma, I., & Takács, J. (2013). Should men have more rights…? Gender-role-related attitudes before and during the 2008 crisis. In G. Johnsson & K. Stefansson (Eds.), *Retrenchment or renewal? Welfare states in times of economic crisis* (pp. 207–233). Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence Nordwel.

Takács, J. (2013). Unattainable desires? Childbearing capabilities in early 21st century Hungary. In L. S. Olah & E. Fratczak (Eds.), *Childbearing, women's employment and work-life balance policies in contemporary Europe* (pp. 179–206). Basingstoke and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Treas, J., Lui, J., & Gubernskaya, Z. (2014). Attitudes on marriage and new relationships: Cross-national evidence on the deinstitutionalization of marriage. *Demographic Research*, *30*(1), 1495–1526. https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2014.30.54

Treas, J., & Tai, T. (2012). Apron strings of working mothers: Maternal employment and housework in cross-national perspective. *Social Science Research*, *41*(4), 833–842. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.01.008

Treas, J., & Tai, T. (2016). Gender inequality in housework across 20 European nations: Lessons from gender stratification theories. *Sex Roles*, *74*, 495–511. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0575-9

Watson, P. (1993). The rise of masculinism in Eastern Europe. *New Left Review*, *1993*(May), 71–82.

West, C., & Zimmermann, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, *1*(2), 125–151. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

About the Author

Daria Ukhova is currently completing a PhD in Sociology at the Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences, Germany. In her mixed methods dissertation, she explores how class shapes gender division of unpaid work in post-socialist Europe, with a particular focus on Russia. Prior to starting her PhD, Daria worked for a number of years in various research and policy roles at Oxfam and WHO.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 35–45
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.3018

Article

The Transition to Parenthood in the French and German Speaking Parts of Switzerland

Regula Zimmermann [1,*] and Jean-Marie Le Goff [2]

[1] Department of Social Sciences, University of Basel, 4051 Basel, Switzerland; E-Mail: regula.zimmermann@unibas.ch
[2] Institute of Social Sciences, Université de Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland; E-Mail: jean-marie.legoff@unil.ch

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 14 March 2020 | Accepted: 3 June 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
After the first transition to parenthood, most couples adopt a gendered labor division, where mothers become main caregivers and fathers breadwinners of the family. By comparing two distinct language regions within one country, the present article explores how parents' gendered labor division comes into existence and what role gendered culture and social policy play. The analysis draws on in-depth interviews with 23 German speaking and 73 French speaking participants from Switzerland. The results reveal that French speaking women and men presume an egalitarian labor division as parents. In German speaking regions, however, participants anticipate that mothers will become the main caregivers and fathers the breadwinners. It is shown that the labor market structure, which is in line with the male breadwinner norm, contributes to men's full-time employment, whereas mothers' labor market insertion is influenced by the acceptance of non-parental childcare and to a lesser extent by the offer of childcare facilities. Further, mothers experience more time conflicts than fathers, and the less mothers' paid work is accepted, the more they suffer from feelings of guilt when being employed.

Keywords
family policy; gender inequality; labor division; parenthood; Switzerland

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

The transition to parenthood is a turning point in the life course (Rönkä, Oravala, & Pulkkinen, 2003). Parents' new roles as caregivers affect various domains, such as professional life (Gatrell, 2005), income (Misra, Budig, & Boeckmann, 2011), life satisfaction (Carmichael & Ercolani, 2016), and priorities (Grunow, 2019). Research shows that how parents experience this transition and which labor division they opt for is shaped by gender culture, as well as welfare state policies (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016, 2019; Pfau-Effinger, 2005).

The present article proposes a comparison of how women and men anticipate and experience their first transition to parenthood in the French and German speaking regions of Switzerland. The French and German regions of Switzerland are described as "bounded communities" (Geser, 2003, p. 2), which differ in their values and discourses. This is especially the case in the domain of reconciling family and working life, in which ideals vary between the language regions (Armingeon, Bertozzi, & Bonoli, 2004; Bühler, 2002). French speakers are more favorable to government support for families, as voting results show (FCh, 2004, 2013), and are less oriented towards a male breadwinner model than German speakers (Bühler, 2002). On the other hand, there is some commonality in family welfare policies between the regions, for example, in the labor market

policy, but also some variation, for example, in the offered childcare services (Armingeon et al., 2004). In the present study, we are interested in taking into consideration the heterogeneity of gender culture in the context of a decentralized country. Our analysis is distinct from more common international comparisons which contrast differences between nation states, and mostly emphasize the role of policy, whereas culture is only marginally discussed (Pfau-Effinger, 2005). By using a qualitative approach, we analyze how culture and policy interact, thereby contributing to the understanding of how women's and men's decisions on how to reconcile paid work and care work are shaped, and which conflicts between the two they experience, during the first transition to parenthood.

In the first section of the article, we review literature on how culture and policy shape parents' labor division. Subsequently, we describe the specific context of Switzerland. This is followed by our own analysis which is drawn from the 'Anticipated Parenthood and Employment' study (AP; Maihofer, 2018), including 23 in-depth interviews with German speaking and 11 French speaking individuals, as well as from the qualitative longitudinal data of the 'Becoming Parents' (BP) study (31 couples, among which partners were individually interviewed from French speaking Switzerland; see Le Goff & Levy, 2011). The data include interviews with participants who anticipate or have already experienced their first transition to parenthood, allowing us to investigate how parents' gendered labor division comes into existence.

2. Gendered Culture, Welfare Policy and Couples' Labor Division

Over the last decades in OECD-countries, women's educational attainment has risen and the share of women in heterosexual relationships who have the same or more resources than their partners has increased (Vitali & Mendola, 2014). Despite women's educational and professional achievements, after the transition to parenthood, most heterosexual couples opt for a gendered labor division. Mothers shoulder the majority of care work, and often reduce investment in their careers, whereas fathers remain focused on paid work (Kühhirt, 2011; Schober, 2011).

Gendered culture can be defined as "values, models and belief systems which relate to the gendered relationship of the family to employment and childcare" (Pfau-Effinger, 2012, p. 533). It includes widespread societal values and norms about what parents' labor division ideally looks like. It also shapes what is considered 'good' mothering and 'good' fathering and the most suitable form of care for the child. Gendered culture legitimizes inequalities and thus helps to explain the gendered labor division among parents (Pfau-Effinger, 2012). 'Intensive mothering,' a term coined by Hays (1996), describes a cultural position that promotes the essentialist view that women are better caregivers than men, and that mothers should devote vast amounts of time, and emotional as well as financial resources to child rearing. This notion of giving care conflicts with individualistic ideals inherent to professional life, which emphasize independence and self-reliance for career success. Many studies have confirmed that such expectations exert pressure on mothers, and thus influences their work and care priorities (Bielby, 1992; Johnston & Swanson, 2006; Miller, 2005). However, fatherhood has changed over the last decades (Johansson & Andreasson, 2017, p. 17). The 'ideal' father is no longer solely a breadwinner but is also 'involved' and 'emotionally engaged' in childrearing from infancy (Miller, 2011, p. 7). In practice, however, fathers typically arrange their care activities around their job obligations (McGill, 2014; Miller, 2011).

Moreover, welfare policies narrow parents' options for labor division (Bühlmann, Elcheroth, & Tettamanti, 2010; Saraceno & Keck, 2011). Cross-national comparisons reveal that mothers' employment rates and working hours are higher in contexts that provide childcare for young children. Furthermore, mothers' insertion in the labor market is linked to parental leave policies: moderate leave lengths (40–90 weeks) are positively related to labor market insertion, whereas shorter, but also more extended leaves are associated with a lower attachment to the labor force (Misra et al., 2011; Pettit & Hook, 2005). Some countries have also created policies promoting fathers' caregiving, by offering them paid non-transferable leaves. These paternity leaves are associated with a higher investment of fathers in childcare, even beyond the leave time (O'Brien, 2009). Research has shown that policy not only has a direct impact on parents' labor division, but that it also influences gendered culture. As an example, the provision of childcare facilities acts as a cultural anchor, increasing acceptance of working mothers (see Grunow & Evertsson, 2016, on European countries). In other respects, the extension of maternal leave entitlements reduces mothers' commitment to paid work (see Gangl & Ziefle, 2015, on Germany). However, culture does not automatically follow policy. Policy must match the cultural values of at least some groups in society, otherwise it remains inefficient (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016). Examples are Italy, where fathers do not take leave time despite financial compensation, because it collides with the cultural notion that mothers should be primary caregivers (Bertolini, Musumeci, Naldini, & Torrioni, 2019) and South Korea, where mothers do not take advantage of 100% paid maternity leave, because it conflicts with cultural norms demanding deference to the employer and individual sacrifice (Lee, 2015). Overall, policy and gender culture limit the leeway for decision making for couples during the transition to parenthood, and the disparity between them makes it even more difficult for parents-to-be to plan their labor division. However, as gender culture and policy interact, and both vary between contexts, their relative effects are difficult to disentangle and remain contested (Grunow & Evertsson, 2016, 2019; Pfau-Effinger, 2012).

3. The Respective Contexts of Work–Family Conciliation in the French and German Speaking Parts of Switzerland

Switzerland is a mosaic combining different religious denominations, languages and lifestyles (Geser, 2003). Adapted to differences between regions, the country has a federalist structure. Cantons and sometimes municipalities retain important roles in driving family policy. Furthermore, based on direct democracy, Swiss citizens directly decide on a broad range of policies (Armingeon et al., 2004). The present study homes in on a comparison of the two major language regions: The German speaking and French speaking regions which represent 63% and 23% of the population, respectively.

In both language regions, mothers' work force participation increased during the second half of the 20th century, and labor division transformed from 'male breadwinner' into a 'one and a half'-earner-model, with fathers working full-time and mothers working part-time. Simultaneously, a shift in values can be observed in which the mother is not solely responsible for care work: The father should also take an active role in the children's upbringing (Baumgarten, Burri, & Maihofer, 2017). Despite these changes, parents' labor division remains highly gendered. Fathers' labor force participation rate is high (97%) and nine out of ten work full-time, which usually corresponds to 41.5h/week. Mothers' insertion in the labor market varies between the language regions: After the birth of the first child, 67% of German speaking mothers and 75% of French speaking mothers remain in the labor force. 80% of mothers work part-time, despite this being linked to downward mobility (FSO, 2016; Strub, 2003). After the first transition to parenthood, French speaking mothers work on average 3.5 days/week, and German speaking mothers 2.5 days/week (FSO, 14 November 2019, personal communication). In both language regions, mothers shoulder the vast majority of unpaid work (FSO, 2013).

Switzerland's family policy is based on subsidiarity and non-intervention in the area of family. The existing social insurance schemes are largely designed to compensate for the loss of breadwinner income, and few policies support reconciliation of family and paid work (Ballestri & Bonoli, 2003). The limited social policy is sometimes linked to direct democracy as voters tend to oppose social policies to avoid tax increases (Armingeon et al., 2004). However, national polls reveal differences between the language regions. French speakers are more open to state support for family than German speakers, as two recent votes about family policy have shown. In 2004, after four rejections, a paid maternity leave of 14 weeks was accepted, but acceptance rates were clearly higher in the French speaking parts of the country than in the German speaking parts (FCh, 2004). In 2013, an article that demanded more state support to reconcile family and paid work and the increase of subsidized childcare infrastructure was rejected by a majority of the German speaking regions, even though in French speaking regions it was accepted (FCh, 2013). Despite this vote, the number of childcare facilities increased, yet the coverage rate of childcare for children at preschool age remains low (18%). However, French speaking cantons, but also urban regions have more support (FSIO, 2018). Furthermore, French speaking parents pay lower rates than their German speaking counterparts (EKFF, 2008). Despite the different fees, in both language regions professional childcare, combined with tax increases for dual earner couples, can erase a substantial part (or sometimes all) of a second income (Bütler, 2007), making it barely worthwhile to have a second income.

Previous research provides mixed results on reasons as to why parents in Switzerland opt for a gendered labor division. One view posits that the social policy, in particular the lack of childcare facilities, leads to mothers' reduction of working hours (Levy & Widmer, 2013). The research suggests that parents embrace egalitarian values "the younger generation no longer reproduces traditional norms" (Krüger & Levy, 2001, p. 154) and that they opt for gendered labor division despite their intent. Quantitative studies have found that the offer of childcare rather than its costs is positively related to the labor participation of mothers (Ernst Stähli, Le Goff, Levy, & Widmer, 2009; Ravazzini, 2018; Stadelmann-Steffen, 2007). Moreover, research conducted in French speaking Switzerland reveals that parents commonly plan for more equal labor division before childbirth than they finally realize afterwards (Le Goff & Girardin, 2016). Additionally, their views are more egalitarian than what is reflected in their allocation of paid and unpaid work (Tettamanti, 2016).

Research in the German speaking parts of Switzerland draws different conclusions: König (2012) argues that couples end up in gendered labor division by negotiating on a daily basis. Additionally, Stamm (2018) as well as Baumgarten et al. (2017) conclude that despite women's emancipation, ideals about motherhood have barely changed, leading mothers to prioritize their presence at home and to cut down their working hours. A study that combines social norms and policy found that both vary between language regions, and that both have an impact on parents' labor division (Epple, Gasser, Kersten, Nollert, & Schief, 2014). Given these conditions, if we expect that the labor division is different between the language regions, the question remains as to how social policy and gendered culture interact.

4. Methods and Data

This research draws on data from two projects with intersectional foci: the AP (Maihofer, 2018) and the BP (Le Goff & Levy, 2011). It is, in part, a secondary analysis. The combination of those data, both consisting of in-depth interviews about the transition to parenthood provides an opportunity to contrast women and men's experiences in two language regions.

The AP study was designed to examine how 30-year-old women and men experience their current professional situation in gender typical, gender atypical and gender-neutral professions, as well as their ideas about how to reconcile family and professional life. It is a subsample of the longitudinal nationally representative study "transitions from education to employment" (TREE, 2016). 81 participants of the TREE-sample were contacted, and 47 agreed to be interviewed. The data were collected in 2014 and 2015. The presented analysis focuses on women and men who wished to have or already had children. Participants from the AP sample who talked solely about their professional life and did not give information about the reconciliation of family and work (because the topic did not apply to their current situation) were excluded from the analysis. In the sample, 23 German speaking participants (11 women, 12 men) and 11 French speaking participants (six women, five men) remained. One woman self-identified as homosexual, whereas the other participants anticipated or lived parenthood as part of a heterosexual couple. Among the German speaking participants, three were expecting their first child and four had recently become parents for the first time when the interviews were conducted. Among the French speaking participants, two were expecting their first child and one was already a parent. The interviews were problem-centered (Witzel, 2000), meaning they were semi-structured and contained participants' objective conditions but also their subjective perception of a situation. The interview protocol included questions concerning the participants' professional trajectory, their career aspirations and the (anticipated) labor division as parents. Furthermore, they were asked to elaborate on gendered norms, and their perception of the institutional framework for parents.

The second data set consists of the qualitative sample of the longitudinal BP study. This study was conducted in the French speaking parts of Switzerland between 2005 and 2009 and its aim was to trace how parents' gendered labor division comes into existence. The participants first took part in a quantitative survey, by the end of which they were asked whether they agreed to give a more detailed interview. Participants self-registered for this study. A sample of 31 heterosexual couples were interviewed, men and women separately, once during the women's pregnancy and twice after the first transition to parenthood. Not all participants completed every wave: the first wave consisted of 62 interviews, the second (4–6 months after childbirth) of 38 interviews, and the third (12–24 months after first childbirth) of 44 interviews. As all participants anticipated parenthood no interviews were excluded. Similarly to the AP study, the interviews were semi-structured and the protocol included questions on participants' professional situation and their (anticipated) labor division as parents. Participants also described their objective situation as well as subjective perception of the situation.

In both datasets participants with a tertiary education were over-represented. Many were working in the service industries, in finance, administration, health, counselling, or teaching; only a few had jobs in the trade or agricultural sector (Table 1).

All interview transcriptions were coded using codes derived from the interview guidelines. The same coding

Table 1. Overview of the participants.

Study	French speaking		German speaking	
Anticipated Parenthood	Women	6	Women	11
	Men	5	Men	12
Participants were interviewed once	Mean age/age range	30/29–31	Mean age/age range	30/29–31
2014–2015	Education level:		Education level:	
	Tertiary	10	Tertiary	14
	Secondary	1	Secondary	9
Total		11		23
Becoming Parents	Women	31		
	Men	31		
31 couples, 3 waves (before and after the first transition to parenthood)	Mean age/age range	31/22–40		
	Education level:			
2005–2009	Tertiary	41		
	Secondary	20		
	Compulsory education	1		
Total		62		

scheme was utilized for both datasets. Then, women and men's discourses in both language regions before and after the transition to parenthood were contrasted. The analysis focuses on how women and men decide what their labor division as parents should look like. It examines their priorities, particularly, what form of care is considered the most suitable for their child. In addition, structural constraints linked to policy are taken into account (i.e., access to formal childcare, workplace constraints). For the present article, the citations were translated from French or German to English. For each citation we indicate the participants' gender and distinguish three family situations: childless, (partner) pregnant when they are expecting, as well as mother or father for young parents. We further specify the participants' job and, as several participants had the same profession, we indicate the study (AP, BP) and number of the interview.

5. Results

5.1. Work

5.1.1. German Speaking Participants

German speaking men point out that when they become fathers, they anticipate being the breadwinner of the family: "One has to provide for…[the] children" (man, childless, bank clerk, AP15). However, they also wish to be present for their child. To this end, many of them considered it ideal if a father worked a high level of part-time (80%) work to "spend one day with the children" (man, childless, tax inspector, AP2). Some men anticipate full-time work as fathers because they think that no part-time jobs in their field are available or that part-time work has a negative impact on their career prospects. Only one man anticipates sharing breadwinning and caregiving equally. It is linked to his profession as a musician; he does not have the possibility to work a full-time job. The others consider the mother as being mainly responsible for childcare and indicate that she could "work some percentages" (man, childless, bank clerk, AP15), or stay at home.

Women's anticipations for the labor division as parents are in line with those of men. Most of them want their partner to work 80%. For themselves they all anticipate part-time work, mostly about 40%, in some exceptions up to 60%. Even though it is clear for women that they will substantially reduce their working hours once they become mothers, this does not mean that their job is not important to them. Often, they have invested many resources in their education and indicate that their professional life endows meaning and identity. They consider their work as "a big part of life" (women, childless, human resources assistant, AP28), say that they have a "great job" (woman, childless, veterinarian, AP26) and like going to work. Women are aware that a reduction of working hours reduces their career prospects, but they consider that as an inevitable consequence of their choice to have children:

> Somebody is just going to have to draw back….I think it's nice to be able to present a certain career and sometimes maybe a setback will come. But I decide either way [having children or having a career], but not both. (Women, childless, accountant, AP24)

Overall, German speaking women anticipate that their professional life will lose its meaning as soon as they become mothers. Nonetheless, they wish to stay in the labor market in order to have a change from being at home, staying "with half a foot" (woman, pregnant, communications specialist, AP4) in professional life or to have a "little money of their own" (woman, childless, veterinarian, AP26). These results of parents' anticipated labor division are in line with previous research on the AP data (Baumgarten, Luterbach, & Maihofer, 2017; Baumgarten, Wehner, Maihofer, & Schwiter, 2016).

5.1.2. French Speaking Participants

In contrast to the German speaking participants, before having children, most French speaking men and women indicate that sharing earning and caring is the best solution for a couple. They reject the idea of a mother's responsibility to provide childcare and of a father's to be the breadwinner: "It is not the question that I earn enough money, but that I and my wife, both working, earn enough to sustain the family" (men, childless, engineer, AP4). Another participant considers a gendered labor division as an "outdated idea," which persists because "change needs time" (woman, childless, teacher, AP5).

Childless men typically indicate that circumstances, like the professional situation of each parent at a given moment will determine their labor division as parents. Many also stress the importance of being present for their child and consider a reduction of their working hours when being a father: "I could work 50%…for me it's no problem to stay at home and take care of the children and clean" (man, childless, nurse, AP9). However, when interviewed during their partner's pregnancy, only a few fathers-to-be who indicate a desire to work part-time had asked their employers to reduce their working hours. Among the others, two options can be observed: Men from the first group mention that working part-time is an option, but they explain that it is too early to make a decision: "I don't know yet very well what it means to be a father, therefore I won't ask [for a reduction] now" (man, partner pregnant, engineer, BP367). They also indicate that they could still adapt their working hours if needed. The second group is composed of fathers-to-be that wish to work part-time but consider it impossible. They mention financial constraints or that their job cannot be done part-time. Most frequently they think that no part-time positions are available: "Positions that will open up are a priori only for 100%" (man, partner pregnant, teacher, BP362). Alternatively, they believe that their employer would not agree if they asked to reduce their working hours: "A reduction…is quite difficult….I don't think that

this will be accepted" (man, partner pregnant, technical collaborator, BP11). Only one father-to-be says he wishes to work full-time, because he likes his job: "No I think professionally….I don't necessarily want to change" (man, partner pregnant, journalist, BP231).

Childless women also remain vague about what their labor division as parents could look like. However, most of them anticipate a reduction in working hours when they become mothers. By the time they are pregnant, they usually negotiate with their employer to obtain a part-time position. Most, but not all employers grant the reduction. For women in male dominated sectors (e.g., finance, engineering) it is more difficult to get a part-time position than in mixed or female dominated domains like teaching or care professions. If part-time work is in conflict with professional options, women prioritize part-time work. An engineer, for example, explains that she took the risk of not getting a job by telling a potential employer that "it's out of the question that I work 100%" (mother, engineer, BP231). A bank clerk whose demand to reduce working hours was not accepted said: "As they did not accept my 50% for after [childbirth]…I quit" (women, pregnant, bank clerk, BP209).

In French speaking regions, mothers-to-be anticipate higher working hours than in the German speaking parts. Most plan to work between 50% and 80%, but there is high variability: Expected working hours range between 20% and 100%. The highest working hours are anticipated among mothers-to-be in the urbanized Lake Geneva region. In this region many women wish to continue working 80% or full-time: "I have always worked to finance my studies, for the baby I don't see any difference….I would like to work 100%" (woman, pregnant, student/secretary, BP68). Many mothers-to-be are concerned about how to reconcile breastfeeding and employment. Some plan to extend the short maternity leave with an unpaid leave, while others remain ambivalent about resuming work "either I stop breastfeeding at that moment…[or] I work only a few hours" (women, pregnant, therapist, BP43).

Mothers-to-be usually intend to continue working after childbirth because they wish to "balance" (woman, pregnant, engineer, BP231) professional life and family life. Some also worry about the loss of career prospects: "Once the little one goes to school…there's still a whole life behind it and then it's maybe a pity to put such a drastic brake on a career" (woman, pregnant, information specialist, BP30). In these cases, mothers-to-be typically opt for an 80% position as a trade-off between having time to spend with the child and continuing their professional career. Though not all women were career oriented, in particular among the lower educated, some of them indicate that ideally they wished to stay at home, but went to work because they considered their income as essential: "I had stopped [working]…but financially this is not possible" (woman, pregnant, nurse assistant, BP336). Rarely, women also indicate that they continue working to avoid financial dependence on the partner.

In sum, during their pregnancy women take steps to be able to reduce their labor force participation after childbirth. Meanwhile, the majority of men at that time indicate that it is too early to decide about a reduction of working hours or that reducing working hours would be impossible due to financial and labor market constraints. However, only fathers-to-be state that no part-time position is available. If mothers-to-be do not get a part-time position they look for another job. Further, a comparison of men and women holding the same job reveals that while men considered that their job is unsuitable for part-time work, women declare that working part-time was unproblematic, or at least possible. A gender difference can also be observed in the discourse about financial constraints: Men sometimes say that they anticipate working full-time because they earn more. However, it is almost exclusively mothers-to-be who anticipate reducing their labor force participation, even if they outearn their partner.

5.2. Childcare

5.2.1. German Speaking Participants

Most German speaking participants prefer parental childcare: Typical statements are that children "come first" (woman, childless, psychologist, AP10) and that "parents should raise the children" (man, childless, bank clerk, AP15). Many also consider it pointless to start a family if the children are cared for by a nursery: "I don't want to take the kid to daycare…there's a reason for having a kid in the first place" (man, partner pregnant, business economist, AP5). While some participants avoid non-parental care because they consider it the parents' responsibility to take care of their children by themselves, others are concerned about the child's well-being and education. They worry that in daycare the child misses an attachment figure, that no one is there if he or she is not well or that a nursery weakens the bond between parents and children. One mother-to-be details her concerns: "I wouldn't want my kid to be raised by the state…well by other people." She worries about the influence of the childcare, educating the child according to different beliefs than her own: "I would like to pass on my family traditions….I would not like to get it dictated by someone 'no, you have to do it that way"' (woman, pregnant, escrow clerk, AP6).

This does not imply that German speaking participants are totally against non-parental care. Usually they prefer care provided by family members (mostly their own parents) for up to two days a week. A few participants also suggested that parents should help each other instead of relying on formal structures: "I would find it rather better if daycare would be self-organized [by parents] in the form of lunch tables" (women, childless, accountant, AP24). A minority of participants do not prefer informal childcare. A woman indicates that it "irritates" her that grandmothers commute to avoid a child going

to daycare. She considers this as "conservative thinking" (women, childless, translator, AP12) and for her a child is as well cared for in daycare as by the grandmother. Very few other participants also consider daycare a good option, but argue that it is too costly.

The preference for parental care makes dual-earning unfeasible. Therefore, all German speakers anticipate that at least one parent substantially reduces labor force participation. Although most participants emphasize the necessity of a parent being present at home, for most it goes without saying that it must be the mother. For some participants this is due to nature: "When a child is born, the mother is more in demand, that's just a natural condition" (man, childless, tax inspector, AP2). Other participants indicate that it is up to each couple regarding which parent will stay at home, "it has to suit everyone individually" (man, childless, corporate client advisor, AP30), or that relative incomes determine the labor division. However, the majority of participants hardly imagine fathers as main caregivers and mothers as main earners. A young mother indicated that she had a decent salary before childbirth and could have sustained a family while she considered her partner's income as insufficient. She says: "I think I couldn't bring myself to just go to work and leave the child with the father," and adds "I am the mother, I stay at home….I would like to…have the mother role…and do the housework and take care of the child" (mother, teacher, AP27). This shows that presence at home is closely tied to motherhood, which is not the case for fatherhood. Participants usually consider a father's full-time work as unproblematic. When asked whether they think that full-time working fathers do not see their children enough, only one participant agreed, whereas the others emphasized that he makes "the most of the limited time" (man, partner pregnant, business economist, AP5) or that working less would conflict with the responsibility to sustain a family.

The few German speaking participants who are parents arrange their roles in gender differentiated ways: Fathers are breadwinners, some working part-time, while mothers work small part-time jobs or stay at home. As most of the time a parent is present at home, partners experience few time conflicts. However, the need to avoid a decrease in the standard of living, a lack of variety at home or a desire to continue an education are being expressed as reasons as to why mothers continue their professional activities. Nonetheless, for mothers, going back to work can evoke mixed feelings: A mother who has reuptaken her work one day per week asked herself whether it was "the right thing to do" or whether she was "selfish" (mother, teacher, AP27).

5.2.2. French Speaking Participants

French speaking participants have divergent opinions about the ideal care of their child. While some think that parents should take care of the child by themselves, others are open to non-parental care: "I have no worries that my baby is around 15 other children" (women, pregnant, engineer, BP231). Most participants lie between the two positions and believe that non-parental childcare for some days a week favors the child's development and its ability to interact with other children.

Many parents-to-be who want to rely on professional care cannot do so because "places in nurseries are scarce and expensive" (woman, pregnant, physician, BP12), as one participant summarized it. Nurseries have long waitlists, and outside urban areas there are often no facilities at all. Some participants bemoan this lack of access to professional childcare and consider it necessary that public financing is increased. In cases when they do not obtain a place in a nursery, parents turn towards non-professional, so called 'family day care' in which another person, usually a mother, serves as a 'day mother' to the child. Family day care provides enough places, and it is significantly less costly than professional care. For smaller amounts of care, many participants also rely on their own parents. These informal care solutions make dual-earning possible.

Some parents-to-be prefer parental care. In this case, men typically want their wife to reduce her working hours, whereas women usually anticipate a more equal share of paid and unpaid work. In most cases, though, mothers are not able to put their intention into practice, as their husbands do not contribute the expected proportion of housework and childcare. Therefore, mothers, who are considered responsible for caregiving, readapt. One way to do so is for the mother to interrupt her career against her initial intentions. In that case, mothers consider the reduction of working hours as temporary, which leaves them "kind of a lifeline helping…to get over this sacrifice" (mother, secretary/student, BP68). Yet, the adaption is sometimes difficult: "It's hard, it's a grief all the same" (mother, midwife, BP351). Other women reconsider their priorities concerning childcare: "When I was pregnant, I had said never the nursery…finally I agreed to visit the nursery but I said he won't go there anyway, and finally I liked the nursery very much" (mother, teacher, BP180).

Despite mothers adapting their view on childcare, among those who work 80% or more, feelings of guilt were ubiquitous. A mother who is the breadwinner of her family says roughly one year after childbirth: "I am torn…on one side I still feel guilty, I have not yet fixed this…on the other side I want to work" (mother, accountant, BP4). Further, working mothers often suffer from time conflicts. They bemoan the incompatibility of their work schedule with the necessity to pick up the child from childcare or to be at home to breastfeed on time. Often, they are exhausted, which sometimes leads them to question their arrangement: "If I have a second child I will stop [working]" (mother, midwife, BP351).

Even though many fathers work more than they wished to, they refer in positive terms to their work–family reconciliation. They point out the time they spend at home besides their full-time work, and part-timers are

often proud of their investment for the family: "Having this 80% [job] really shows…[that] I'm…making…a lot of effort or sacrifice to have a life…as a dad….I really feel that I'm present" (father, risk manager, BP16). Some fathers do not insist on their presence, but on the fact that both parents are able to continue their careers: "[S]he's [the wife] taken up her work, I've taken up mine….I think it's great" (father, journalist, BP231). In contrast, his wife refers in more negative terms to their arrangement. She says that at times she was so exhausted that she "couldn't go on anymore" (mother, engineer, BP231).

This does not mean that fathers are sheltered from work–family conflicts: The more they share caregiving, the more they feel stressed and tired as well. However, if the situation becomes too stressful, fathers also rely on other persons, mostly their wife or their mother, to take care of the child: "I have repeatedly expressed my displeasure and my frustration to my wife…and finally she…reduced [her working hours] to 20[%]" (father, teacher, BP43).

6. Conclusion

The study is a within-country comparison, which analyzes how gendered culture and welfare policies shape how women and men anticipate and experience the transition to parenthood in the French and German speaking parts of Switzerland. Values about labor division are different in the two language regions: Before becoming parents, most French speaking women and men consider it ideal to share paid and unpaid work equally as parents, whereas their German speaking counterparts prioritize fathers' breadwinning and mothers' caregiving. However, in both language regions, parents opt for a gendered labor division. In German speaking parts, parents' sharing of paid and unpaid work is largely congruent with the expressed values, whereas French speaking couples become more inegalitarian than they anticipated. The inequality comes into the picture during pregnancy when fathers' paid work is given priority, and mothers opt for a part-time position to reconcile caregiving and employment. After childbirth, the differentiated roles are reinforced.

This comparison provides some insights into the interaction of policy and gendered culture. Switzerland is characterized by little government support for families and a relatively unregulated labor market. Our results reveal that the labor market structure is an important driver for the observed gendered labor division. Women and men in both language regions are aware that working part-time implies a reduction of career prospects. For fathers, this labor market structure is congruent with the male breadwinner norm and contributes to high working hours. Due to this, most fathers were less involved in care work than they had originally anticipated. Nonetheless, they focus on the time they spend with their children besides work and usually refer in positive terms to the couples' labor division.

Mothers' insertion in the labor market varies between language regions. German speakers consider childcare to be the responsibility of the parents, and most of them avoid formal care, even to a smaller extent. In this context of matching policy and personal responsibility for childcare, women, usually denominated as the caregiver, find it hard to imagine themselves as mothers having high working hours. Furthermore, among mothers, even small part-time work can lead to worries about the child's well-being and feelings of guilt.

French speakers are generally more open to state support for families and therefore more open to non-parental and formal childcare as German speakers. There are also more childcare facilities available in the French language regions and, as it turns out, even some parents who were originally skeptical towards formal childcare also take advantage of this option, as it allows them to continue their professional activities. But despite the overall larger offer of childcare facilities in the French speaking regions, the supply cannot match the demand. An informal childcare market therefore fills the gap in availability. All in all, for French speaking mothers, the individual situation shapes their insertion in the labor market: Those who worry about their career, often opt for an 80%-position as a trade-off between professional opportunities and care demands. Others decide to reduce more or interrupt labor force participation to avoid the double load of job and childcare, to be able to breastfeed beyond the brief maternity leave, or because they prefer parental care. The higher acceptance of working mothers is also shown by the observation that the only ones who express feelings of guilt are those who work high percentages. Also, French speaking women who reduced their working hours against their initial intentions consider this as a sacrifice. Such a discourse can not be observed among German speaking mothers, who think (at least during the transition to parenthood) that, as a mother, their professional life has to come second.

Furthermore, both culture and policy reduce the individual leeway. This analysis shows that if there is a congruence between policy and gendered culture, participants discourses and behaviors are more homogeneous (fathers and German speaking mothers) than if there is a disparity between the two (French speaking mothers). French speaking mothers whose work is mostly accepted, but is not supported by welfare policy, face more time conflicts and ambivalences than German speaking mothers, but there is a broader variety of conceivable options for them. These results are in line with research that shows that women have more time conflicts than men (Notten, Grunow, & Verbakel, 2017), and that in Switzerland, mothers' working hours are positively correlated with an increase in time conflict (Stadelmann-Steffen & Oehrli, 2017).

The research shows that substantial variations between gendered culture and policy that shape parents' labor division can exist not only among, but also within countries. However, we must keep in mind that these

results are based on two different datasets. Among French speakers, we observe a more egalitarian discourse, despite the data on becoming parents being almost a decade older than the anticipated parenthood data. Nonetheless, in Switzerland a small change towards equality has occurred between the two studies (FSO, 2019). Therefore, we cannot omit that the results underrepresent the differences between the language regions. Moreover, the sample size is small, in particular among German speakers, which might reduce the variety in observation. In addition, the study only focuses on the transition to parenthood. More research, also with longitudinal data, needs to be conducted to cover a longer period than the transition to parenthood. Further, the presented analysis is limited to individuals who are mostly affluent enough that dual-earning is an option rather than an obligation. Future research should continue to investigate how gendered culture in the transition to parenthood is experienced by other groups of society.

Acknowledgments

Data collection for this publication has been supported by the National Centre of Competence in Research LIVES—Overcoming Vulnerability from a Life-Course Perspective (NCCR LIVES), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (grant number: 51NF40–160590).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Armingeon, K., Bertozzi, F., & Bonoli, G. (2004). Swiss worlds of welfare. *West European Politics*, *27*(1), 20–44.

Ballestri, Y., & Bonoli, G. (2003). L'Etat social suisse face aux nouveaux risques sociaux [The Swiss welfare state in face of new social risks]. *Swiss Political Science Review*, *9*(3), 35–58.

Baumgarten, D., Burri, J., & Maihofer, A. (2017). *Die Entstehung der Vorstellungen von Familie in der (deutschsprachigen) Schweiz* [The emergence of the concept of family in (German-speaking) Switzerland]. Basel: University of Basel.

Baumgarten, D., Luterbach, M., & Maihofer, A. (2017). Wenn Kinder da sind, kommen die an erster Stelle. Sonst muss man keine Familie haben [If we have children, they come first. Otherwise, there is no need to have a family]. *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Geschlechterstudien*, *23*(1), 1–17.

Baumgarten, D., Wehner, N., Maihofer, A., & Schwiter, K. (2016). Wenn Vater, dann will ich Teilzeit arbeiten: Die Verknüpfung von Berufs- und Familienvorstellungen bei 30-jährigen Männern aus der deutschsprachigen Schweiz [As a father, I want to work part-time: How 30-year-old men from German-speaking Switzerland link concepts of career and family]. *Kultur, Gesellschaft Sonderheft*, *4*, 76–91.

Bertolini, S., Musumeci, R., Naldini, M., & Torrioni, P. M. (2019). The transition to parenthood in Italy: Reasons for non-normativity. In D. Grunow & M. Evertsson (Eds.), *New parents in Europe: Work-care practices, gender norms and family policies* (pp. 148–168). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bielby, D. D. (1992). Commitment to work and family. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *18*(1), 281–302.

Bühler, E. (2002). Formen der Vereinbarkeit von Erwerbstätigkeit und Familie [Ways of reconciling work and family life]. *Geographische Zeitschrift*, *90*(3/4), 167–179.

Bühlmann, F., Elcheroth, G., & Tettamanti, M. (2010). The division of labour among European couples: The effects of life course and welfare policy on value–practice configurations. *European Sociological Review*, *26*(1), 49–66.

Bütler, M. (2007). Arbeiten lohnt sich nicht: Ein zweites Kind noch weniger. Zum Einfluss einkommensabhängiger Tarife in der Kinderbetreuung [Working is not worth it: Having a second child even less. About the influence of income-based childcare rates]. *Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik*, *8*(1), 1–19.

Carmichael, F., & Ercolani, M. G. (2016). Unpaid caregiving and paid work over life-courses: Different pathways, diverging outcomes. *Social Science & Medicine*, *156*, 1–11.

EKFF. (2008). *Familien- und schulergänzende Kinderbetreuung* [Family- and school-complementary childcare]. Bern: EKFF. Retrieved from https://www.ekff.admin.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/ekff/05dokumentation/d_09_Publ_Kinderbetreuung.pdf

Epple, R., Gasser, M., Kersten, S., Nollert, M., & Schief, S. (2014). Parenthood and employment: The impact of policies and culture on gender inequality in Switzerland. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *34*(2), 141–154.

Ernst Stähli, M., Le Goff, J.-M., Levy, R., & Widmer, E. (2009). Wishes or constraints? Mothers' labour force participation and its motivation in Switzerland. *European Sociological Review*, *25*(3), 333–348.

FCh. (2004). Änderung vom 03.10.2003 des Bundesgesetzes über die Erwerbsersatzordnung [Adjustment of the federal law on the compensation of income from 03.10.2003]. *FCh*. Retrieved from https://www.bk.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/20040926/can513.html

FCh. (2013). Bundesbeschluss vom 15.06.2012 über die Familienpolitik [Federal decree on family policy from 15.06.2012]. *FCh*. Retrieved from https://www.bk.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/20130303/can567.html

FSIO. (2018). *Evaluation "Anstossfinanzierung." Entspricht das bestehende Angebot an familienergänzender Kinderbetreuung der Nachfrage? Forschungsbericht 14/17* [Evaluation "start-up financing". Does the existing offer of complementary childcare meet the demand? Research Report 14/17].

Bern: FSIO. Retrieved from https://www.bsv.admin.ch/dam/bsv/de/dokumente/familie/studien/Evaluation_Angebot_Nachfrage_2017.pdf.download.pdf/14_17d_eBericht.pdf

FSO. (2013). Das Engagement der Väter in Haushalt und Familie [The commitment of fathers in the household and the family]. *FSO.* Retrieved from https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfsstatic/dam/assets/348982/master

FSO. (2016). Mütter auf dem Arbeitsmarkt [Mothers in the labor market]. *FSO*. Retrieved from https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfsstatic/dam/assets/1061095/master

FSO. (2019). Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann im europäischen Vergleich [Equality of women and men in a European comparison]. *FSO*. Retrieved from https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/wirtschaftliche-soziale-situation-bevoelkerung/gleichstellung-frau-mann.assetdetail.11068535.html

Gangl, M., & Ziefle, A. (2015). The making of a good woman: Extended parental leave entitlements and mothers' work commitment in Germany. *American Journal of Sociology*, *121*(2), 511–563.

Gatrell, C. (2005). *Hard labour: The sociology of parenthood*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.

Geser, H. (2003). *Sprachräume als Arbeits- und Organisationskulturen: vergleichende empirische Befunde in der deutschen und französischen Schweiz* [Language regions as work and organizational cultures: comparative empirical findings in German and French-speaking Switzerland]. Zurich: University of Zurich.

Grunow, D. (2019). Comparative analyses of housework and its relation to paid work: Institutional contexts and individual agency. *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, *71*(1), 247–284.

Grunow, D., & Evertsson, M. (2016). *Couples' transitions to parenthood: Analysing gender and work in Europe*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Grunow, D., & Evertsson, M. (2019). *New parents in Europe: Work-care practices, gender norms and family policies*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Johansson, T., & Andreasson, J. (2017). *Fatherhood in transition*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Johnston, D. D., & Swanson, D. H. (2006). Constructing the "good mother": The experience of mothering ideologies by work status. *Sex Roles*, *54*(7/8), 509–519.

König, T. (2012). *Familie heißt Arbeit teilen* [Being a family means sharing work]. Konstanz: UVK.

Krüger, H., & Levy, R. (2001). Linking life courses, work, and the family: Theorizing a not so visible nexus between women and men. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, *26*(2), 145–166.

Kühhirt, M. (2011). Childbirth and the long-term division of labour within couples: How do substitution, bargaining power, and norms affect parents' time allocation in West Germany? *European Sociological Review*, *28*(5), 1–18.

Le Goff, J.-M., & Girardin, N. (2016). Répartition des tâches domestiques et de soins aux enfants: Intentions et pratiques [Allocation of household and child care tasks: Intentions and practices]. In J.-M. Le Goff & R. Levy (Eds.), *Devenir parents, devenir inégaux* [Becoming parents, becoming unequal] (pp. 76–108). Zurich: Seismo.

Le Goff, J.-M., & Levy, R. (2011). *Devenir parent: Rapport de recherche* [Becoming a parent: Research report]. Lausanne: University of Lausanne. Retrieved from www.lives-nccr.ch/sites/default/files/pdf/publication/8_lives_wp_legoff_devenirparent.pdf

Lee, M. (2015). Legislative initiative for work–family reconciliation in South Korea: A comparative analysis of the South Korean, American, French, and German family leave policies. *Asian American Law Journal*, *22*, 45–103.

Levy, R., & Widmer, E. (2013). *Gendered life courses between standardization and individualization: A European approach applied to Switzerland*. Munster: LIT Verlag.

Maihofer, A. (2018). *Wie beeinflussen Vorstellungen von Familie und Beruf die Berufsverläufe von jungen Männern* und Frauen*?* [How do ideas about family and profession influence the career paths of young men and women?]. Basel: University of Basel.

McGill, B. S. (2014). Navigating new norms of involved fatherhood: Employment, fathering attitudes, and father involvement. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(8), 1089–1106.

Miller, T. (2005). *Making sense of motherhood: A narrative approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, T. (2011). Falling back into gender? Men's narratives and practices around first-time fatherhood. *Sociology, 45*(6). https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038511419180

Misra, J., Budig, M., & Boeckmann, I. (2011). Work–family policies and the effects of children on women's employment hours and wages. *Community, Work & Family*, *14*(2), 139–157.

Notten, N., Grunow, D., & Verbakel, E. (2017). Social policies and families in stress: Gender and educational differences in work–family conflict from a European perspective. *Social Indicators Research*, *132*(3), 1281–1305.

O'Brien, M. (2009). Fathers, parental leave policies, and infant quality of life: International perspectives and policy impact. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *624*(1), 190–213.

Pettit, B., & Hook, J. (2005). The structure of women's employment in comparative perspective. *Social Forces*, *84*(2), 779–801.

Pfau-Effinger, B. (2005). Culture and welfare state policies: Reflections on a complex interrelation. *Journal of Social Policy*, *34*(1), 3–20.

Pfau-Effinger, B. (2012). Women's employment in the institutional and cultural context. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *32*(9), 530–543.

Ravazzini, L. (2018). Childcare and maternal part-time employment: A natural experiment using Swiss cantons. *Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics*, *154*(15). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41937-017-0003-x

Rönkä, A., Oravala, S., & Pulkkinen, L. (2003). Turning points in adults' lives: The effects of gender and the amount of choice. *Journal of Adult Development*, *10*(3), 203–215.

Saraceno, C., & Keck, W. (2011). Towards an integrated approach for the analysis of gender equity in policies supporting paid work and care responsibilities. *Demographic Research*, *25*(11), 371–406.

Schober, P. S. (2011). The parenthood effect on gender inequality: Explaining the change in paid and domestic work when British couples become parents. *European Sociological Review*, *29*(1), 74–85.

Stadelmann-Steffen, I. (2007). Der Einfluss der sozialpolitischen Kontexte auf die Frauenerwerbstätigkeit in der Schweiz [The influence of socio-political contexts on the employment of women in Switzerland]. *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, *59*(4), 589–614.

Stadelmann-Steffen, I., & Oehrli, D. (2017). Perceiving reconciliation: Child care policies and gendered time conflicts. *Gender & Society*, *31*(5), 597–623.

Stamm, M. (2018). *Neue Väter brauchen neue Mütter: warum Familie nur gemeinsam gelingt* [New fathers need new mothers: Why a family can only succeed together]. Munich: Piper Verlag.

Strub, S. (2003). *Teilzeitarbeit in der Schweiz* [Part-time work in Switzerland]. Bern: Büro BASS. Retrieved from http://www.buerobass.ch/pdf/2003/teilzeitarbeit_schlussbericht.pdf

Tettamanti, M. (2016). Devenir parent en Suisse: Une situation paradoxale? [Becoming a parent in Switzerland: A contradictory situation?]. In J.-M. Le Goff & R. Levy (Eds.), *Devenir parents, devenir inégaux* [Becoming parents, becoming unequal] (pp. 109–129). Zurich: Seismo.

TREE. (2016). Daten [Data]. *TREE*. Retrieved from https://www.tree.unibe.ch/daten/index_ger.html

Vitali, A., & Mendola, D. (2014). *Women as main earners in Europe* (Working Paper 56). Southampton: ESRC Centre for Population Change.

Witzel, A. (2000). The problem-centered interview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *1*(1). Retrieved from http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0001228

About the Authors

Regula Zimmermann is a Social Scientist at the University of Basel (Switzerland). Her research focuses on the structuring of life courses and gender inequalities. She is currently working on the longitudinal study 'Becoming Parents,' which traces the career and family paths of young mothers and fathers.

Jean-Marie Le Goff is a Senior Researcher and Lecturer at the Social Sciences Institute of the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and an Associate Researcher at the Swiss National Center of Competence in Research—Overcoming Vulnerability: Life Course Perspectives (LIVES). His research interests include the transition to parenthood, family life, and more broadly life course studies.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 46–60
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2967

Article

Work–Family Arrangement and Conflict: Do Individual Gender Role Attitudes and National Gender Culture Matter?

Christina Bornatici and Marieke Heers *

FORS—Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, University of Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland;
E-Mails: christina.bornatici@fors.unil.ch (C.B.), marieke.heers@fors.unil.ch (M.H.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 26 February 2020 | Accepted: 29 June 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
This article examines the relationship between couples' work–family arrangement and individuals' perceived work–family conflict (WFC), considering individuals' attitudes towards gender roles and national gender culture in 37 countries (N = 15,114). Previous research has shown that WFC depends on work and family demands and has mostly accounted for absolute time spent in paid and domestic work. We hypothesize that WFC depends on couples' work–family arrangement in terms of time spent in paid, domestic and care work. We further expect that the relationship between couples' work–family arrangement and WFC depends on individuals' gender attitudes and national gender culture. To test these assumptions, we use the ISSP-2012 data and apply multilevel linear regression analyses. The findings indicate that an egalitarian work–family arrangement—that is, sharing paid, domestic and care work equally with one's partner—is associated with lower levels of WFC. Moreover, individuals with egalitarian gender attitudes and an egalitarian work–family arrangement experience less WFC than individuals with inconsistent attitudes and behaviours. Individuals with consistent traditional attitudes and behaviours experience the most conflict. Finally, a more egalitarian gender culture relates to less WFC. Cross-level interactions indicate that the relationship between work–family arrangement and WFC is not mediated by countries' gender culture.

Keywords
care work; couple dynamics; gender culture; gender role; work–family arrangement; work–family conflict

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

Women and men are increasingly involved in the paid work and the family domain (i.e., domestic and care work). Reconciling these domains in a way that allows individuals to develop a work–family balance fitting their expectations and needs remains an every-day challenge. When the demands in the work domain interfere with those in the family domain, individuals might experience work–family conflict (WFC). This has become a major policy concern as there is a growing understanding that WFC results into lower satisfaction and productivity at work, lower satisfaction with family life as well as lower well-being and health (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011; Notten, Grunow, & Verbakel, 2017). A rich array of studies has identified the antecedents and consequences of WFC (e.g., Amstad et al., 2011; Byron, 2005). In this study, we elaborate on how having multiple roles in different life domains (i.e., paid, domestic and care work) relates to WFC.

First, we investigate the relationship between couples' work–family arrangement (WFA)—each partner's involvement in paid, domestic and care work—and individually perceived WFC. Work–family responsibilities are arranged between partners; this can have the explicit or implicit aim of achieving a low level of WFC for each person. Thus, not only individuals' but also their partners' involvement in paid and unpaid work and the resulting demands matter for WFC.

The literature has shown that having higher work and family workloads results in more WFC. Most studies account for individuals' hours spent in paid and domestic work. Spending longer hours in paid and domestic work are important antecedents of WFC (e.g., Byron, 2005; Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017). However, there is a lack of evidence on the absolute time spent on care (see Nomaguchi, 2011). Care demands are mostly measured in terms of the number and age of the children in the household (e.g., Grönlund & Öun, 2010; Ruppanner, 2013). Moreover, the literature has mainly focused on partners' involvement in paid work (e.g., Notten et al., 2017; Steiber, 2009), some included partners' involvement in domestic work (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Nordenmark, 2013), but no study has analysed partners' involvement in care work. To complete the picture, Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie, and Robinson (2012) called for analyses of women's and men's allocation of time in the three domains and suggested to pay particular attention to care work, which represents the actual barrier to women's employment.

Second, we investigate to what extent the association between WFA and WFC depends on individuals' attitudes towards gender role equality; that is individuals' level of support for an equal division of paid and unpaid work between women and men. This is important as gender attitudes shape individuals' preferred and actual WFA (Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Pollmann-Schult, 2016). Prior studies on the association of gender attitudes and WFC provide inconclusive results (Nordenmark, 2013; Ruppanner, 2013; Steiber, 2009); we examine the indirect association between gender attitudes and WFC while considering couples' WFA.

Third, we account for national gender culture, that is the norms and values that shape the "desirable and 'correct' form of gender relations and division of labour between women and men" (Pfau-Effinger, 1998, p. 150). According to Powell, Francesco, and Ling (2009), gender culture is a major factor in the work–family interface. While both national culture and individual gender attitudes influence individuals' opportunities and behaviours (Treas & Tai, 2016; Uunk, 2015), norms affect couples differently in different countries (Aboim, 2010). Thus, it is particularly relevant to evaluate how different gender cultures—in combination with individual gender attitudes and WFAs—relate to perceived WFC.

Taken together, this study addresses WFC that may arise from couples' WFA, taking into account individuals' attitudes towards gender roles and national gender culture. Our research question is: To what extent is an egalitarian WFA between partners related to WFC, and to what extent is this association affected by egalitarian gender role attitudes and an egalitarian gender culture (EGC)?

Our contribution to the literature on WFC is threefold. First, as advocated by Bianchi et al. (2012), we account for couples' arrangement of paid, domestic and care work. To have a comprehensive understanding of the association between WFA and WFC, we assess couples' general WFA and their arrangement in each domain. Second, we analyse the conditional role of gender attitudes in this relationship, which has only been considered by one study on a limited number of countries (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006). Third, we acknowledge that individuals' behaviours are shaped by social, cultural and political contexts (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). While prior research on WFC has mainly focussed on institutionalist explanations and evaluated family policy regimes (e.g., Grönlund & Öun, 2010; Notten et al., 2017), our focus is on gender culture, which constitutes "an important analytical dimension" for WFC (Hagqvist, Gådin, & Nordenmark, 2017, p. 794).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Multiple Roles in Work, Family, and WFC

Having multiple roles is considered to lead to role conflict and WFC, or role expansion and increased fulfilment. While the focus of our study is on role conflict, we also briefly elaborate on role expansion as both are related (Grönlund & Öun, 2010).

Based on role theory, having to fulfil multiple roles in the work and family domains can lead to excessive and competing demands arising from those roles. As individuals' time and energy are limited (Goode, 1960), meeting all expectations is challenging and compliance with one role can make compliance with the other role(s) difficult or impossible (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). In this sense, WFC is defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Therefore, when work demands interfere negatively with the fulfilment of family life and/or family demands interfere negatively with the completion of employment, individuals experience role conflict and, as a consequence, WFC. Past studies found that higher work and family demands relate to higher levels of WFC (e.g., Byron, 2005; Notten et al., 2017; Ruppanner, 2013).

Another stream of studies posits that having multiple roles can produce positive outcomes and spillover as "problems and failures in one sphere can be compensated for by success and satisfaction in the other" (Grönlund & Öun, 2010, p. 180). According to this perspective—referred to as role expansion, role enrichment or role enhancement—the combination of work and family roles can generate social support, greater sat-

isfaction with work and family, higher levels of well-being and better health (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Yet, beneficial effects of multiple roles seem to only occur under specific conditions and vanish when the demands of one role are too excessive, or when the perceived role quality is low (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). The literature on role expansion acknowledges the risk of role conflict and defines work–family balance as the achievement of a high level of role expansion and a minimal level of role conflict (Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

A meta-analysis suggests that role expansion is negatively related to WFC (Byron, 2005). Grönlund and Öun (2010) do not consider the direct relationship between role expansion and role conflict but are interested in how the same antecedents either result into the one or the other when also accounting for the policy regime. They find that individuals with lower work and family demands are more likely to experience lower role conflict and higher role expansion. However, while individuals having higher demands experience higher role conflict, in dual-earner family policy regimes they also experience higher role expansion. These results suggest that the negative relationship between role expansion and WFC is more likely to occur when demands are low. In addition to the level of demands, other factors, such as individual gender attitudes and the national gender culture, may also imply lower WFC generated by role expansion.

2.2. Couples' WFA and WFC

While the literature has shown that WFC depends on individuals' work and family demands, individuals' perceived WFC might also depend on their partners' involvement in paid, domestic and care work. Therefore, the responsibilities and contributions of both partners in a couple must be considered. Past studies mainly focus on partners' involvement in paid work and reveal mixed results on its relationship with individuals' WFC. Notten et al. (2017) found that, for both women and men, having a full-time working partner reduces WFC compared to having a non-working partner. This corresponds to Steiber's (2009) results showing that women experience more WFC when their partners work shorter hours. Nordenmark (2013), on the other hand, found that men experience more WFC when their partners spend longer hours in paid and domestic work.

Most studies account for the absolute time the partner spends in paid and domestic work. Yet, to understand how partners' demands and their possible support affect perceived WFC, one needs to take into account couples' general WFA, as well as the relative time both partners spend in each domain, including care work. We assume that within couples, work and family responsibilities can be arranged to achieve a lower level of WFC for both partners and to improve their work–family balance. Partners can specialize in paid or unpaid work, or equally share employment, domestic and care work. Sharing roles and responsibilities in the work and family domains more equally may affect WFC in two opposite ways: as suggested by role theory, having to fulfil multiple roles may create competing demands and, thereby, result in role conflict. On the other hand, if both partners share the workloads more equally, the risk of an overwhelming demand towards one partner is lower, which implies that individuals' report lower levels of WFC (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2015; Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017). To investigate the underlying mechanism, we test the following hypothesis:

> Hypothesis 1: Individuals sharing paid, domestic and care work about equally with their partner report less WFC.

The relationship between having to fulfil multiple roles and WFC may differ by gender and it can be assumed that women experience higher levels of WFC (Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, Arvan, & Knudsen, 2017). Yet, the literature reveals mixed results. Byron (2005), for example, found no significant relationship between gender and WFC, while others found that women experience more conflict (e.g., Notten et al., 2017; Steiber, 2009).

2.3. WFA and Conflict: The Role of Gender Attitudes

Previous research has identified attitudes towards gender roles as an important factor in individuals' preferred and actual WFA (e.g., Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Pollmann-Schult, 2016). Individuals with more traditional attitudes favour a male breadwinner and female homemaker arrangement, whereas individuals with more egalitarian attitudes prefer an equal share between partners in each domain. Past studies have mainly analysed the direct relationship between gender role attitudes and WFC and found mixed results: Steiber (2009) found that men's egalitarian attitudes are related to more WFC, while Ruppanner (2013) found that egalitarian attitudes are related to less WFC for women and men. Accounting for national gender culture, Nordenmark (2013) found that gender attitudes are not significantly related to WFC. In addition to directly affecting WFC, gender attitudes may affect WFC indirectly.

More egalitarian attitudes relate to women's higher involvement in paid work (Steiber & Haas, 2009) as well as more equally sharing housework (Aassve, Fuochi, & Mencarini, 2014) and childcare (Monna & Gauthier, 2008). However, gender attitudes do not always match couples' WFA: Individuals' actual WFA may deviate from their gender role attitudes due to institutional and normative constraints as well as pragmatic decisions (Bühlmann, Elcheroth, & Tettamanti, 2009; Treas & Tai, 2016). Such inconsistency may lead individuals to experience more WFC, while consistent attitudes and behaviours may rather decrease WFC. Hence, the relationship between couples' WFA and individually perceived WFC might by conditional on individuals' attitudes towards gender roles.

Individuals with egalitarian attitudes value having dual roles in the work and family domains and, up to a certain level of demands, experience it as role expansion rather than role conflict. Indeed, egalitarians seem to benefit more from having multiple roles than traditionalists (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). At the same time, individuals with egalitarian attitudes are more likely to experience a specialized WFA as unfair (Greenstein, 1996). Therefore, egalitarian individuals are likely to perceive higher levels of WFC when paid and unpaid work is not shared equally. Conversely, individuals with traditional attitudes consider that men should principally contribute to the family as providers and women as homemakers and caretakers. Hence, traditional individuals would perceive having dual roles as preventing them from fully fulfilling their 'proper' role. Accordingly, individuals with traditional attitudes and an egalitarian division of paid and unpaid work probably experience more role conflict and, consequently, more WFC than traditional individuals with more specialized roles.

The only study that has analysed the relationship between WFA and WFC conditional on gender role attitudes is the one by Crompton and Lyonette (2006). They found that consistent egalitarians (i.e., individuals whose egalitarian gender attitudes are consistent with their egalitarian WFA) have lower levels of WFC than consistent traditionalists. The latter is contrary to our expectation (namely, consistent traditionalists experience less WFC). Yet, their sample included only full-time employees and the consistent and inconsistent groups were defined based on individuals' gender attitudes and the division of domestic work; paid and care work were not considered. Given that all women in the sample were working full-time, it was not possible to capture traditional women's attitude-behaviour consistency in terms of paid and unpaid work. Here, we shed more light on the relationship between attitude-behaviour consistency and WFC by considering paid, domestic and care work. To this end, we test the following hypothesis:

> Hypothesis 2: Individuals with consistent gender role attitudes and WFA report lower levels of conflict than individuals with inconsistent attitudes and WFA.

2.4. National Gender Culture, Couples' WFA, and WFC

A large body of literature has analysed how gender cultures influence individuals' gender attitudes (e.g., Davis & Greenstein, 2009) and frame couples' WFA (e.g., Aboim, 2010; Treas & Tai, 2016; Uunk, 2015). These studies generally show that more gender-egalitarian cultures encourage equality in terms of work and family roles and responsibilities. Indeed, in these contexts, there are higher normative expectations for men to contribute equally to unpaid work (Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017). Furthermore, women, and particularly mothers, are strongly involved in the labour market as EGCs and policies encourage it (Bühlmann et al., 2009; Uunk, 2015). On the other hand, in countries with more traditional gender cultures, institutions are relatively unsupportive of egalitarian WFAs and there are stronger social pressures to act in line with the predominant gender culture (Aboim, 2010).

While multiple studies have assessed the relationship between gender culture and couples' division of paid and unpaid work, and despite an acknowledgement that gender culture is an important factor in the work–family interface (Powell et al., 2009), few studies have explicitly measured gender culture and evaluated its relationship with WFC. Hagqvist et al. (2017) found that in countries with more gender-egalitarian norms towards women's employment, individuals report lower levels of WFC. On the contrary, Nordenmark (2013) found that more EGCs relate to higher WFC. Other studies do not find a significant relationship between gender culture and WFC (Allen et al., 2015; Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017).

Again, Crompton and Lyonette's (2006) study provides valuable insights. The authors analysed the interconnectedness between individuals' gender attitudes, couples' division of domestic labour and WFC in five European countries. They tested neither gender culture nor policy regimes directly but assessed the effect of living in five countries. Their results indicate that individuals in Finland and Norway experience less WFC than those in France while all three countries have developed family policies encouraging dual-earner family models. The authors attribute this difference to varying societally embedded and gendered norms about couples' division of labour, with an inconsistency in France between gender culture and behaviours. France has an EGC and a traditional division of domestic work prevails; the EGC in the Nordic countries, on the other hand, is consistent with a more egalitarian division of domestic work. Moreover, Crompton and Lyonette find that in Portugal, where gender culture and behaviours are more traditional, the traditional division of domestic work did not relate to WFC. This suggests that the relationship between WFC and behaviour differs according to countries' gender culture. In this study, we disentangle how couples' WFA is related to WFC when gender culture—across a large set of European and non-European countries—is taken into account. Moreover, we test whether the relationship between attitude-behaviour (in)consistency and WFC depends on gender culture. In the empirical section that follows below, we test the following hypotheses:

> Hypothesis 3: When couples' WFA is consistent with the prevailing gender culture, individuals experience less WFC. On the contrary, when the arrangement is inconsistent with the gender culture, individuals experience more conflict.

> Hypothesis 4: When attitudes and WFA are consistent with the prevailing gender culture, individuals experience less WFC. On the contrary, when attitudes and

arrangement are inconsistent with the gender culture, individuals experience more conflict.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data

We use the 2012 International Social Survey Programme data (ISSP Research Group, 2016). These data fit well with our research question as they include a validated measure on perceived WFC (Breyer & Bluemke, 2016), information on attitudes towards gender roles and on both partners' time allocation in paid, domestic and care work. Our sample consists of working respondents aged 18 to 64 who cohabit with their partner. Information on partners is obtained from the respondents. We include individuals with and without children; individuals without childcare responsibilities also experience WFC (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001). In total, 41 countries participated in the ISSP-2012. Four countries with missing information on respondents' cohabitation status or the number of children were removed. We dropped individuals with missing information on any of the variables included in the analyses. The analysis sample consists of 15,114 respondents in 37 countries.

3.2. Measures

The dependent variable, *WFC*, is measured with four items: (1) I have come home from work too tired to do chores which need to be done; (2) It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I have spent on my job; (3) I have arrived at work too tired to function well because of household work I had done; (4) I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities.

The original four-point scale ranges from 'several times per week' to 'never.' We inverted the scale and summed the items into an index ranging from 0 (no conflict) to 1 (high level of conflict; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$).

To analyse WFAs, we have constructed three groups of variables. First, we account for the *absolute time* respondents spend on paid, domestic and care work (weekly hours). Care includes childcare and care of other family members. Values higher than 70 hours were recoded to 70 hours (corresponding to Fuwa & Cohen, 2007). These variables are used as control variables. Based on these absolute time indicators, three dichotomous variables indicate whether both partners spend an approximately equal amount of time on paid, domestic and care work. Namely, based on respondents' and partners' weekly hours spent on each domain, we first calculated the respective ratios. Positive values indicate that the woman spends more time on that respective domain and negative values indicate that the man spends more time on that domain. Second, couples with a repartition of around 0 (from −0.2 to 0.2) were categorized as spending an approximately equal amount of time on each domain (= 1; in all other cases = 0). Respondents reporting that their partners and themselves spent no hours on either domestic or care work were categorized as sharing equally (coded 1). As having no care obligations (i.e., spending 0 hours per week) is different from equally sharing care work, we run robustness analyses that only include couples with care obligations (n = 12,258). The variables take into account the *relative time* both partners spend on each domain and account for the *specific arrangement* in each domain separately. Finally, a categorical variable accounts for *couples' general WFA* (taking into account the division of paid and unpaid work) and indicates if the general arrangement is traditional (the man is more involved in paid work and the woman in unpaid work), modern traditional (equal involvement in paid work, but the woman does more unpaid work), egalitarian (equal involvement in paid and unpaid work) or if the couple has a different arrangement (e.g., the woman is more involved in paid work and/or the man in unpaid work).

To measure *gender role attitude*s, we have combined eight items assessing respondents' attitudes towards gender roles. Respondents had to indicate if they agree or disagree (on a five-point scale) with the following statements: (1) A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work; (2) a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works; (3) all in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job; (4) a job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children; (5) both the man and woman should contribute to the household income; (6) a man's job is to earn money and a woman's job is to look after the home and family. The respondents were also asked whether women should work part-time, full-time or not at all, both (7) when there is a child under school age and (8) after the youngest child starts school. These items have been previously used to measure gender role attitudes (e.g., Fuwa & Cohen, 2007). We first compute a gender role attitudes scale ranging from 1 (traditional—not at all in favour of gender role equality) to 5 (egalitarian—totally in favour of gender role equality; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$). Based on this scale, we have created a three-category measure distinguishing individuals with traditional (1 to 2.5), neutral (2.5 to 3.5) and egalitarian (3.5 to 5) gender attitudes.

We created two types of *attitude-behaviour consistency* measures. The first measure captures the consistency between individual gender attitudes and couples' general WFA to create four groups of individuals: the consistent egalitarians (individuals with egalitarian WFA and attitudes), the consistent traditionalists (traditional arrangement and attitudes), the consistent modern traditionalists (modern traditional arrangement and traditional attitudes) and individuals with inconsistent WFA and attitudes. For individuals with traditional attitudes, we differentiate traditional and modern traditional arrangements to capture the difference between women who are involved in paid work as much as their partner

and those being less involved. Second, we create measures for each specific arrangement in paid, domestic and care work and distinguish individuals with consistent egalitarian, consistent traditional and inconsistent attitude-behaviour.

To measure *national gender culture*, we have constructed an indicator corresponding to the proportion of respondents with egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles in each country. This aggregated country-level measure of individual-level gender role attitudes is based on all respondents in the analysed countries (n = 55,709), i.e., it also includes individuals who are excluded from our analysis sample. Hence, it represents each country's level of support for gender egalitarianism.

Finally, the literature suggests that higher demands in work and family, as well as being younger or more educated, predicts higher levels of WFC (e.g., Ruppanner, 2013; Steiber, 2009). Thus, we include the following control variables: respondents' age, educational level, work status and the presence and age of the youngest child in the household. We also control for respondents' sex.

3.3. Analytic Strategy

Much of the cross-national research on WFC has grouped countries into family policy regimes to compare national contexts (e.g., Grönlund & Öun, 2010), but it has been argued that a more nuanced perspective must be taken (Hagqvist et al., 2017). Hence, we examine the relationship between couples' WFA, individual gender attitudes, national gender culture and WFC without clustering countries into policy groups.

Given that individuals (Level 1) are nested in countries (Level 2), we apply multilevel linear regression analysis (MLA). MLA allows to account for the non-independence of individuals and to simultaneously examine micro—and macro-level factors (Snijders & Bosker, 2012). We have specified several random intercept models adding the variables step-by-step and verified if the model fit improves. While we comment on most models, due to limitations of space, we only display the most important ones. We present the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) and the deviance (in terms of log likelihood [−2 LL] values). We cannot make causal statements but reveal associations.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics. The sample includes slightly more men than women. Most respondents have a traditional or modern traditional WFA. Around half report that they and their partners spend an equal amount of time on paid and care work, but only around a quarter spend an equal amount of time on domestic work. Considering gender attitudes, 37% are in favour of egalitarian gender roles and 15% have traditional attitudes. Most respondents have inconsistent attitudes and behaviours, both when accounting for the general or domain-specific arrangement. There are more consistent egalitarians in paid and care work than in domestic work.

There is considerable variation across countries' gender culture (Figure 1). Nordic countries have the most egalitarian culture, led by Sweden, where 62% of the population favours gender equality. India has the least EGC with only 3% of the population having egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. We also observe considerable differences in terms of perceived levels of WFC across countries. Venezuelans experience by far the highest level of conflict (0.67), followed by Bulgarians (0.46) and Indians (0.44). Individuals in Switzerland (0.20) and the Netherlands (0.21) report the lowest levels of WFC. Both countries are characterised by a high share of part-time female employment (OECD, 2018). Overall, a less EGC relates to higher levels of WFC. Lower levels of support for gender egalitarianism correlate with lower proportions of individuals with an egalitarian WFA.

4.2. The Relationship between WFA and WFC

The results of the MLAs are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The 'empty model' indicates that an average person experiences 0.32 WFC on a scale ranging from 0 to 1. The ICC reveals that 12.4 percent of the individual variation in WFC is explained by living in different countries (Model 1.1, Table 2).

To test whether sharing the workload equally relates to reduced WFC (Hypothesis 1) we first assess couples' general WFA (egalitarian, modern traditional, traditional, and other). Compared to individuals in couples with an egalitarian arrangement, those in any of the other three arrangements perceive more WFC (Model 1.2). This supports Hypothesis 1.

To have a more comprehensive understanding of how the specific domains affect WFC, we test a set of models with dichotomous variables indicating if both partners spend an approximately equal amount of time in paid, domestic and care work. First, we include each indicator in separate regressions and find that sharing paid work and care work equally is related to less WFC, while sharing domestic work equally is not significantly related to WFC (not shown). When we consider paid and domestic work in the same regression (not shown)—the domains that have been mostly considered by previous studies (Nordenmark, 2013; Notten et al., 2017; Steiber & Haas, 2009)—we find that equally sharing paid work relates to less conflict. However, this ignores the challenges that couples face regarding care work. Once we include all three domains in the same regression, only an egalitarian sharing of care work is related to less perceived WFC, while equally sharing paid and domestic work is not significantly related to WFC (Model 1.3). To conclude, it is mainly equally sharing care work with the partner that is related to lower WFC, while equally sharing paid and

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the analysis sample.

	Mean or %	SD
Individual-level variables		
WFC	0.30	0.24
General WFA		
Traditional	27%	
Modern traditional	31%	
Egalitarian	20%	
Other	22%	
Equally sharing paid work	55%	
Equally sharing domestic work	26%	
Equally sharing care work	47%	
Gender role attitudes		
Traditional	15%	
Neutral	48%	
Egalitarian	37%	
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in general WFA		
Inconsistent	80%	
Consistent egalitarian	11%	
Consistent modern traditional	4%	
Consistent traditional	6%	
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in paid work		
Inconsistent	68%	
Consistent egalitarian	24%	
Consistent traditional	8%	
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in domestic work		
Inconsistent	77%	
Consistent egalitarian	12%	
Consistent traditional	11%	
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in care work		
Inconsistent	70%	
Consistent egalitarian	20%	
Consistent traditional	10%	
Control variables		
Woman	46%	
Age	43.41	10.40
Educational level		
Lower	26%	
Upper secondary	39%	
Tertiary	35%	
Hours in paid work	42.01	12.94
Hours in domestic work	12.45	10.88
Hours in care work	13.80	16.93
Work status		
Employee	60%	
Employee with supervision task	23%	
Self-employed	17%	
Children at home		
None	43%	
Child 0-below school age	27%	
Child school age-17	30%	
Country-level variable		
EGC	0.31	0.17
N individuals / countries	15,114 / 37	

Source: ISSP Research Group (2016).

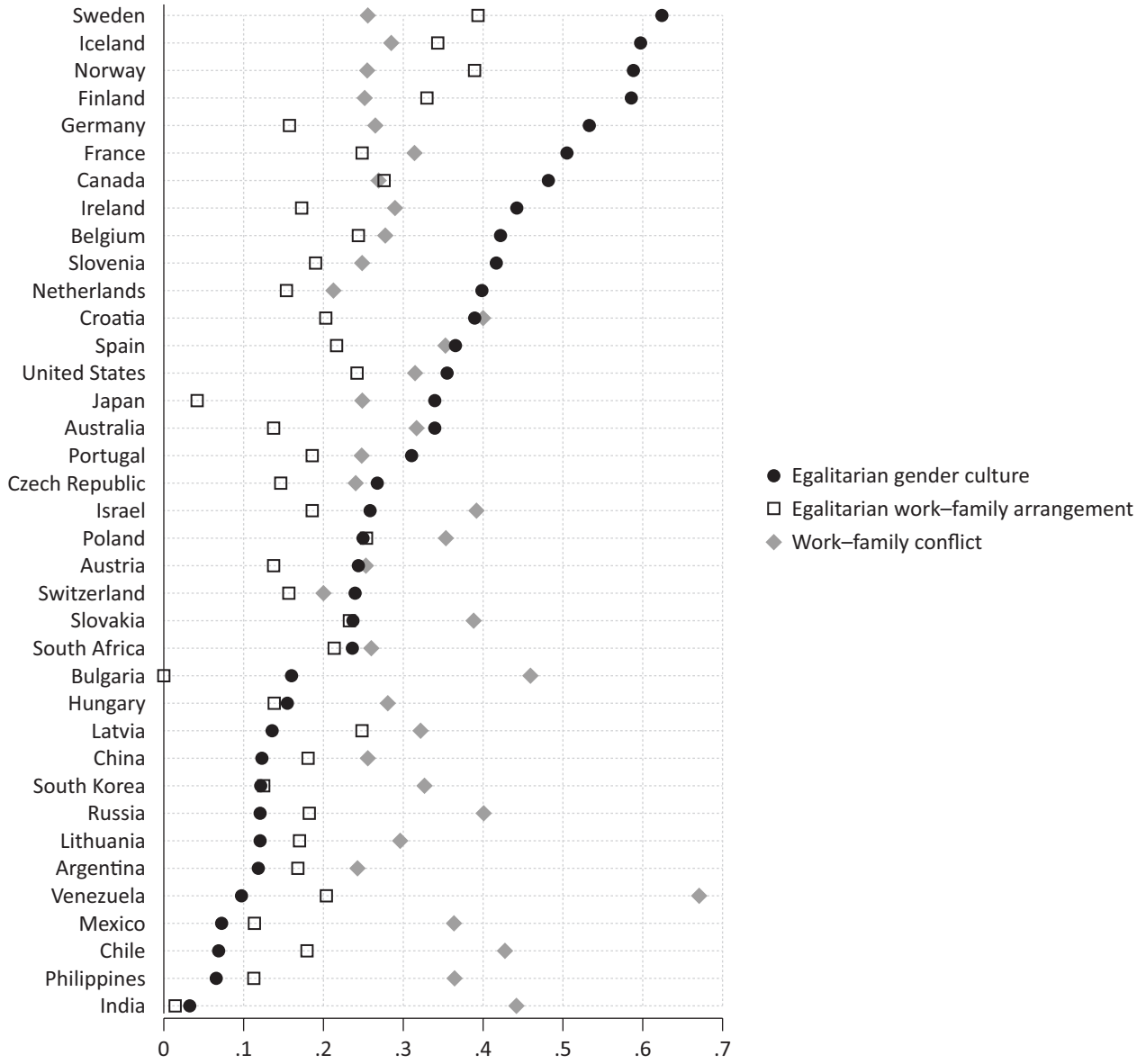

Figure 1. Mean EGC, egalitarian WFA and WFC, by country.

domestic work is not related to WFC. This completes the results for the models with the categorical WFA indicator and further supports Hypothesis 1.

4.3. Individuals' Attitude-Behaviour Consistency and WFC

Next, we are interested in how couples' WFA relates to perceived WFC when accounting for individual gender attitudes. Compared to individuals with egalitarian attitudes, individuals holding traditional or neutral attitudes experience more WFC (Model 2.1, Table 3), and those holding neutral attitudes report less WFC than those with traditional attitudes (not shown).

After having established that gender attitudes are related to WFC, we turn to Hypothesis 2 stipulating that individuals whose WFA matches their gender attitudes perceive less WFC than individuals with inconsistent attitudes and WFAs. We consider two measures for attitude-behaviour consistency. First, for couples' general arrangement we find that compared to individuals with inconsistent attitudes and arrangements (the largest group), consistent egalitarian individuals report less WFC, while those with a consistent modern traditional or a consistent traditional arrangement report more conflict (Model 2.2).

Second, we examine consistency in each domain. We estimate models assessing attitude-behaviour consistency in paid, domestic and care work in separate regressions (not shown); then, we account for paid and domestic work jointly (not shown) and finally for all three domains in the same regression (Model 2.3). Overall, compared to individuals with inconsistent attitudes and behaviours, individuals with egalitarian attitudes and behaviours in either paid, domestic or care work experience less conflict. However, egalitarian consistency in domestic work is only significant when it is assessed separately. Individuals with traditional attitudes and sharing paid

Table 2. MLAs predicting WFC from couples' WFA and gender culture.

	Model 1.1		Model 1.2		Model 1.3		Model 1.4		Model 1.5		Model 1.6		Model 1.7	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Constant	0.317	(0.014)***	0.217	(0.019)***	0.247	(0.019)***	0.385	(0.025)***	0.276	(0.028)***	0.306	(0.028)***	0.213	(0.018)***
Individual level variables														
General WFA														
Traditional			0.014	(0.006)*					0.013	(0.006)*			0.013	(0.006)
Modern traditional			0.013	(0.005)*					0.013	(0.005)*			0.012	(0.005)
Egalitarian			ref.						ref.				ref.	
Other			0.019	(0.006)**					0.019	(0.006)**			0.019	(0.006)***
Equally sharing paid work					−0.006	(0.004)					−0.005	(0.004)		
Equally sharing domestic work					−0.002	(0.004)					−0.002	(0.004)		
Equally sharing care work					−0.023	(0.004)***					−0.022	(0.004)***		
Country level variable														
EGC							-0.234	(0.074)**	−0.203	(0.074)**	−0.201	(0.074)**	−0.201	(0.076)**
Cross-level interactions														
Traditional WFA x EGC													−0.022	(0.033)
Modern traditional WFA x EGC													0.031	(0.030)
Egalitarian WFA x EGC													ref.	
Other WFA x EGC													−0.018	(0.033)
Variance components														
Country variance	0.007	(0.002)***	0.007	(0.002)***	0.007	(0.002)***	0.006	(0.001)***	0.006	(0.001)***	0.006	(0.001)***	0.006	(0.001)***
Residual	0.052	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***	0.052	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***
ICC	0.124		0.119		0.119		0.100		0.101		0.101		0.100	
Deviance	−1516.305		−2005.824		−2034.705		−1525.132		−2012.756		−2041.526		−2016.609	
N individuals / countries	15,114 / 37													

Note: * p<0.05, ** p <0.01, *** p<0.001. Controlled for respondent's sex, age, educational level, hours spent on paid work, domestic work and care work, work status, children in the household (except Model 1.1). Source: ISSP Research Group (2016).

Table 3. MLAs predicting WFC from attitude-behaviour consistency and gender culture.

	Model 2.1		Model 2.2		Model 2.3		Model 2.4		Model 2.5		Model 2.6	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Constant	0.199	(0.019)***	0.230	(0.019)***	0.239	(0.019)***	0.285	(0.028)***	0.287	(0.028)***	0.190	(0.019)***
Individual level variables												
Gender role attitudes												
Traditional	0.063	(0.006)***										
Neutral	0.039	(0.004)***										
Egalitarian	ref.											
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in general WFA												
Inconsistent			ref.				ref.				0.036	(0.007)***
Consistent egalitarian			−0.033	(0.006)***			−0.033	(0.006)***			ref.	
Consistent modern traditional			0.060	(0.010)***			0.060	(0.010)***			0.120	(0.016)***
Consistent traditional			0.016	(0.008)*			0.016	(0.008)*			0.049	(0.011)***
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in paid work												
Inconsistent					ref.				ref.			
Consistent egalitarian					−0.023	(0.006)***			−0.023	(0.006)***		
Consistent traditional					−0.024	(0.009)**			−0.024	(0.009)**		
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in domestic work												
Inconsistent					ref.				ref.			
Consistent egalitarian					−0.004	(0.007)			−0.004	(0.007)		
Consistent traditional					0.030	(0.010)**			0.030	(0.010)**		
Attitudes-behaviour consistency in care work												
Inconsistent					ref.				ref.			
Consistent egalitarian					−0.025	(0.006)***			−0.025	(0.006)***		
Consistent traditional					0.021	(0.010)*			0.021	(0.010)*		

Table 3. (Cont.) MLAs predicting WFC from attitude-behaviour consistency and gender culture.

	Model 2.1		Model 2.2		Model 2.3		Model 2.4		Model 2.5		Model 2.6	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Country level variable												
EGC							−0.187	(0.074)*	−0.164	(0.074)*	−0.160	(0.082)
Cross-level interactions												
Inconsistent att.-behav. in general WFA x EGC											−0.037	(0.039)
Consistent egalitarian x EGC											ref.	
Consistent modern traditional x EGC											0.242	(0.080)**
Consistent traditional x EGC											−0.063	(0.066)
Variance components												
Country variance	0.006	(0.002)***	0.007	(0.002)***	0.007	(0.002)***	0.006	(0.001)***	0.006	(0.001)***	0.006	(0.001)***
Residual	0.050	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***	0.050	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***	0.050	(0.001)***	0.051	(0.001)***
ICC	0.113		0.119		0.116		0.103		0.103		0.103	
Deviance	−2115.648		−2066.854		−2130.508		−2072.739		−2135.109		−2088.982	
N individuals / countries	15,114 / 37											

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Controlled for respondent's sex, age, educational level, hours spent on paid work, domestic work and care work, work status, children in the household.
Source: ISSP Research Group (2016).

work traditionally also experience less conflict, whereas traditional consistency in domestic and care work is related to more conflict. Taken together, we find mixed support for Hypothesis 2: While consistent egalitarians experience the least conflict, consistent traditionalists experience the most WFC.

4.4. Gender Culture, WFA, and WFC

The theoretical and empirical literature suggests that national gender culture contributes to shaping how couples share different types of workloads. Therefore, we now assess the extent to which gender culture plays a role in the above-observed relationship between WFA, gender attitudes (as well as consistency thereof) and WFC. Again, we build the model step-by-step following the same procedure as in sections 4.2 and 4.3. We start with a model that only accounts for gender culture (ICC = 10%). On average, WFC is lower in countries with more EGCs (Model 1.4). This is confirmed when the control variables are added and when assessing couples' general WFA (Model 1.5) or the domain-specific arrangement (Model 1.6). When we assess overall (Model 2.4) and domain-specific consistency (Model 2.5), a more EGC is still associated with reduced levels of WFC. The results presented in sections 4.2 and 4.3 are confirmed when accounting for gender culture.

Hypothesis 3 posits that the relationship between WFC and WFA differs according to gender culture. To test this, we include cross-level interactions between gender culture and general (Model 1.7, which, like Model 2.6, included a mean centred variable for national gender culture) and domain-specific arrangement (not shown). The interactions are not significant (revealed by Wald-tests). Hence, the relationship between WFA and WFC does not differ according to gender culture and Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

To understand if the relationship between attitude-behaviour consistency and WFC depends on the intensity of countries' gender egalitarianism (Hypothesis 4) we test interactions between gender culture and attitude-behaviour consistency (Model 2.6). The interaction is significant (Wald test: $\chi^2_3 = 16.25$, $p < 0.01$). Compared to consistent egalitarians, consistent modern traditional individuals experience more conflict in countries with more EGCs (which has been verified graphically but it is not shown here). We have also tested interactions between gender culture and consistency in each domain (not shown)–they are insignificant (again indicated by Wald-tests). Hence, Hypothesis 4 is confirmed for the general arrangement and concerning egalitarian and modern traditional consistency.

4.5. Observations on Control Variables and Robustness Analyses

Across models, spending more hours in paid and care work as well as having children in the household relates to higher levels of WFC. Spending more time on domestic work is not significant. This confirms earlier studies (e.g., Notten et al., 2017; Ruppanner, 2013). In all models, women experience significantly more WFC than men.

To keep couples without children in the sample, in the main analyses, individuals without care obligations were classified as 'sharing care work equally,' while we controlled for the presence of children. To assess the robustness of those findings, we test the models including the variables 'sharing care work equally' and 'attitude-behaviour consistency in care work' with a restricted sample considering only individuals with care obligations (n = 12,258). The above findings are confirmed.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has analysed how variations in couples' WFA are associated with individually perceived WFC, and what role individuals' gender attitudes and national gender culture play in this relationship. It set out with the assumption that WFC is not only directly affected by individuals' workloads related to the paid, domestic and care domains, but that it also depends on couples' WFA. Moreover, we expected the relationship between couples' WFA and WFC to depend on individuals' gender role attitudes and national gender culture.

First, we investigated the relationship between couples' WFA and individuals' perceived WFC. Previous research has shown that individually perceived WFC depends on individuals' work and family demands (e.g., Byron, 2005; Notten et al., 2017; Ruppanner, 2013), while partners' demands and their possible support were not systematically taken into account. We posit that considering couples' WFA provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between individuals' work and family demands and WFC. The results regarding couples' general division of paid and unpaid work show that individuals having an egalitarian WFA experience lower levels of WFC, confirming Hypothesis 1. As it is likely that sharing paid work equally affects WFC differently from sharing domestic or care work equally, we have also accounted for couples' domain-specific arrangements. Indeed, sharing care work equally is related to lower WFC, while sharing paid and domestic work equally does not predict perceived WFC. A potential explanation is that care work is perceived as more rewarding than routine domestic tasks (Bianchi et al., 2012). This suggests that sharing care work plays an important role in generating role expansion: Compared to the traditional repartition of activities, men are more involved in care work and share this responsibility with women. Consequently, women can be more involved in paid work or other activities. Future research should investigate if the relationship between care and WFC differs according to the specific care task (e.g., providing personal care vs. more enjoyable activities) and to whom care is provided (Byron, 2005). Corroborating Bianchi et al.'s (2012) suggestion, our findings show that analyses should ac-

count for both partners' time spent in paid, domestic and care work.

Second, we analysed how couples' WFA relates to perceived WFC when accounting for individual gender attitudes and attitude-behaviour consistency. We hypothesised that individuals experience less WFC when attitudes are consistent with their arrangement. Yet, this assumption does not hold under all conditions: Attitude-behaviour consistency is only related to less WFC when attitudes and arrangements (both general and domain-specific) are egalitarian (i.e., consistent egalitarians). On the contrary, individuals having traditional attitudes and arrangements (i.e., consistent traditionalists) experience more WFC than individuals having inconsistent attitudes and arrangements. Hypothesis 2 is partly supported. An attitude-behaviour fit seems to benefit consistent egalitarians, while it is rather detrimental for consistent traditionalists. The concept of role expansion is useful to explain this difference: consistent egalitarians experience higher role expansion when having multiple roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Furthermore, they receive greater support from their partner in unpaid work, which may lead to lower WFC (Allen et al., 2015; Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017). Consistent traditionalists, on the other hand, are less likely to experience positive spillover since they are mainly involved in one domain. Also, the pressure to completely fulfil a role might be higher when one partner is mainly (or exclusively) responsible for a specific role. Our results lend further support to those of Crompton and Lyonette (2006). We extend their findings as we have assessed consistency in terms of paid, domestic and care work, while they have focused on the domestic domain. Overall, gender attitudes play an important role in WFC. They are directly related to WFC: individuals with more egalitarian attitudes experience the lowest level of WFC. Additionally, they affect WFC in their interplay with couples' practices. Our results are robust in showing that egalitarians experience the lowest level of conflict, this holds in terms of attitudes and behaviours and their consistency.

Third, this article has shed light on how the relationship between WFC and WFA varies along countries' gender culture. The results are robust to adding gender culture to the analyses and reveal that individuals living in more egalitarian countries tend to experience lower levels of conflict. The finding that individuals in countries with a more EGC perceive lower levels of WFC reinforces previous research (Hagqvist et al., 2017). An important contribution was to assess if gender culture mediates the relationship between couples' WFA (general and domain-specific) and WFC. Gender culture does not mediate those relationships when we only consider arrangements (rejecting Hypothesis 3). Once gender attitudes are accounted for, the picture changes. Cross-level interactions between attitude-behaviour consistency and gender culture suggest that compared to consistent egalitarians, consistent modern traditional individuals experience more conflict when support for gender egalitarianism is stronger (partly confirming Hypothesis 4). Thus, consistent egalitarians living in more EGCs experience the least conflict. This lends support to the suggestion that egalitarian attitudes and arrangements can be most efficiently implemented in contexts that support it (Steiber & Haas, 2009).

The present study has some limitations. The sample consists of respondents who are in paid work. This implies that populations that are particularly at risk of experiencing WFC, that is, those who do not work to avoid conflict, are excluded. ISSP-2012 did not ask if the reason for not working is a strategy to avoid WFC. We suggest collecting this information in future surveys. Moreover, the measures for gender role attitudes focus on women's roles, leaving men's roles and other aspects of gender equality out of the picture. Future research should provide a finer assessment of gender attitudes: a differentiation of attitudes towards sharing paid work (e.g., women's and mothers' role in employment, men working part-time) equally and attitudes towards sharing domestic and care work (e.g., women's and mothers' role as housewife and carer and men's role in unpaid work) would be valuable to analyse individuals' attitude-behaviour consistency. Additionally, the current study has focused on WFC; to better disentangle the mechanisms, future research should analyse how the above findings differ for work-to-family and family-to-work interference. Finally, besides gender culture, other macro-level factors (e.g., family policy measures, proportion of mothers in employment) should be included to assess the role of contexts more comprehensively.

To conclude, our results suggest that for individually experienced WFC, not only individuals' workloads and couples' WFA but also individual gender role attitudes and national gender culture matter. Our results indicate that egalitarian individuals, both in terms of attitudes and arrangements as well as consistency thereof tend to experience lower levels of WFC. Moreover, individuals tend to experience less WFC in countries with stronger support for gender egalitarianism.

Given that the antecedents of role conflict arise from multiple levels, initiatives and efforts to reduce WFC have to be implemented at the individual, couple and national policy level. Policies aimed at decreasing WFC and its negative societal consequences should take individual attitudes into account; it is important to note that policies may also affect norms concerning gender roles and attitudes (Brighouse & Olin Wright, 2008; Stickney & Konrad, 2012). Particular attention should be paid to how policies encourage partners to share care tasks more equally. To reduce WFC, policymakers should strengthen policies that favour the involvement of both partners in (child)care. Overall, men and particularly fathers should be more extensively considered by family policies. Finally, employers also have an important role to play in supporting fathers to be more involved in the family domain.

Acknowledgments

The authors have contributed equally to the article and their names are listed alphabetically. The authors thank the editors and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Aassve, A., Fuochi, G., & Mencarini, L. (2014). Desperate housework: Relative resources, time availability, economic dependency, and gender ideology across Europe. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(8), 1000–1022. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0192513X14522248

Aboim, S. (2010). Gender cultures and the division of labour in contemporary Europe: A cross-national perspective. *The Sociological Review*, *58*(2), 171–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2010.01899.x

Allen, T. D., French, K. A., Dumani, S., & Shockley, K. M. (2015). Meta-analysis of work–family conflict mean differences: Does national context matter? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *90*, 90–100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.07.006

Amstad, F. T., Meier, L. L., Fasel, U., Elfering, A., & Semmer, N. K. (2011). A meta-analysis of work–family conflict and various outcomes with a special emphasis on cross-domain versus matching-domain relations. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *16*(2), 151–169. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022170

Barnett, R. C., & Hyde, J. S. (2001). Women, men, work, and family: An expansionist theory. *American Psychologist*, *56*(10), 781–796. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.10.781

Bianchi, S. M., Sayer, L. C., Milkie, M. A., & Robinson, J. P. (2012). Housework: Who did, does or will do it, and how much does it matter? *Social Forces*, *91*(1), 55–63. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sos120

Breyer, B., & Bluemke, M. (2016). Work–family conflict scale (ISSP). *Zusammenstellung sozialwissenschaftlicher Items und Skalen*. https://doi.org/10.6102/zis243

Brighouse, H., & Olin Wright, E. (2008). Strong gender egalitarianism. *Politics & Society*, *36*(3), 360–372. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329208320566

Bühlmann, F., Elcheroth, G., & Tettamanti, M. (2009). The division of labour among European couples: The effects of life course and welfare policy on value–practice configurations. *European Sociological Review*, *26*(1), 49–66. https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcp004

Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work–family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 67*(2), 169–198. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2004.08.009

Crompton, R., & Lyonette, C. (2006). Work–life 'balance' in Europe. *Acta Sociologica*, *49*(4), 379–393. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699306071680

Davis, S. N., & Greenstein, T. N. (2009). Gender ideology: Components, predictors, and consequences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *35*(1), 87–105. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115920

Fuwa, M., & Cohen, P. N. (2007). Housework and social policy. *Social Science Research*, *36*(2), 512–530. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2006.04.005

Goode, W. J. (1960). A theory of role strain. *American Sociological Review*, *25*(4), 483–496. https://doi.org/10.2307/2092933

Grant-Vallone, E. J., & Donaldson, S. I. (2001). Consequences of work–family conflict on employee well-being over time. *Work & Stress*, *15*(3), 214–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370110066544

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *The Academy of Management Review*, *10*(1), 76–88. https://doi.org/10.2307/258214

Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work–family enrichment. *The Academy of Management Review*, *31*(1), 72–92. https://doi.org/10.2307/20159186

Greenstein, T. N. (1996). Gender ideology and perceptions of the fairness of the division of household labor: Effects on marital quality. *Social Forces*, *74*(3), 1029–1042. https://doi.org/10.2307/2580391

Grönlund, A., & Öun, I. (2010). Rethinking work–family conflict: Dual-earner policies, role conflict and role expansion in Western Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *20*(3), 179–195. https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928710364431

Hagqvist, E., Gådin, K. G., & Nordenmark, M. (2017). Work–family conflict and well-being across Europe: The role of gender context. *Social Indicators Research*, *132*(2), 785–797. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1301-x

ISSP Research Group. (2016). *International social survey programme: Family and changing gender roles IV—ISSP 2012* [Data set]. https://doi.org/10.4232/1.12661

Kahn, R. L., Wolfe, D. M., Quinn, P. R., Snoek, J. D., & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Lachance-Grzela, M., & Bouchard, G. (2010). Why do women do the lion's share of housework? A decade of research. *Sex Roles*, *63*(11), 767–780. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9797-z

Monna, B., & Gauthier, A. H. (2008). A review of the literature on the social and economic determinants of parental time. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, *29*(4), 634–653. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-008-9121-z

Nomaguchi, K. M. (2011). Marital status, gender, and home-to-job conflict among employed parents. *Jour-*

nal of Family Issues, *33*(3), 271–294. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X11415613

Nordenmark, M. (2013). Disagreement about division of household labour and experiences of work–family conflict in different gender regimes. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, *2*(3), 205–232.

Notten, N., Grunow, D., & Verbakel, E. (2017). Social policies and families in stress: Gender and educational differences in work–family conflict from a European perspective. *Social Indicators Research*, *132*(3), 1281–1305. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1344-z

OECD. (2018). Part-time employment rate. *OECD Data*. Retrieved from https://data.oecd.org/emp/part-time-employment-rate.htm

Ollo-López, A., & Goñi-Legaz, S. (2017). Differences in work–family conflict: Which individual and national factors explain them? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *28*(3), 499–525. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1118141

Pfau-Effinger, B. (1998). Gender cultures and the gender arrangement: A theoretical framework for cross-national gender research. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, *11*(2), 147–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.1998.9968559

Pollmann-Schult, M. (2016). What mothers want: The impact of structural and cultural factors on mothers' preferred working hours in Western Europe. *Advances in Life Course Research*, *29*, 16–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2015.11.002

Powell, G. N., Francesco, A. M., & Ling, Y. (2009). Toward culture-sensitive theories of the work–family interface. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *30*(5), 597–616. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.568

Ruppanner, L. (2013). Conflict between work and family: An investigation of four policy measures. *Social Indicators Research*, *110*(1), 327–347. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9933-3

Shockley, K. M., Shen, W., DeNunzio, M. M., Arvan, M. L., & Knudsen, E. A. (2017). Disentangling the relationship between gender and work–family conflict: An integration of theoretical perspectives using meta-analytic methods. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *102*(12), 1601–1635. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000246

Sirgy, M. J., & Lee, D.-J. (2018). Work–life balance: An integrative review. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *13*(1), 229–254. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-017-9509-8

Snijders, T., & Bosker, R. (2012). *Multilevel models*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Steiber, N. (2009). Reported levels of time-based and strain-based conflict between work and family roles in Europe: A multilevel approach. *Social Indicators Research*, *93*(3), 469–488.

Steiber, N., & Haas, B. (2009). Ideals or compromises? The attitude–behaviour relationship in mothers' employment. *Socio-Economic Review*, *7*(4), 639–668. https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwp015

Stickney, L. T., & Konrad, A. M. (2012). Societal institutions and work and family gender-role attitudes. *Organization Management Journal*, *9*(4), 236–246. https://doi.org/10.1080/15416518.2012.738528

Treas, J., & Tai, T. (2016). Gender inequality in housework across 20 European nations: Lessons from gender stratification theories. *Sex Roles*, *74*(11), 495–511. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0575-9

Uunk, W. (2015). Does the cultural context matter? The effect of a country's gender-role attitudes on female labor supply. *European Societies*, *17*(2), 176–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2014.995772

About the Authors

Christina Bornatici is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lausanne. She is also a researcher at FORS—Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences. Her research interests lie in the field of gender equality, where she focussed on attitudes towards gender equality and couples' work–family arrangement, which she explores from a gender and a life course perspective.

Marieke Heers is a Senior Researcher at FORS—Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, Lausanne. She has obtained a PhD from Maastricht University and worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the French Institute for Demographic Research (INED, Paris). Her multidisciplinary research focuses on family contexts and dynamics as well as on social inequalities related to education and migration.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 61–71
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2969

Article

Agency and Capabilities in Managerial Positions: Hungarian Fathers' Use of Workplace Flexibility

Nikolett Geszler

Centre for Gender and Culture, Corvinus University of Budapest, 1093 Budapest, Hungary;
E-Mail: nikolettgeszler@gmail.com

Submitted: 28 February 2020 | Accepted: 13 May 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
This article analyses the agency freedom of manager fathers in Hungary to claim work–family balance through corporate flexible working arrangements. Hobson's interpretation of Sen's capability approach (Hobson, Fahlén, & Takács, 2011) is applied to appraise the effect of individual resources and organizational and national context on managers' work–family balance, as well as their influence on organizational culture. An interview-based case study was undertaken at the Hungarian subsidiary of a Scandinavian multinational company, wherein 43 personal interviews were conducted with fathers in managerial positions. The interviews were analysed according to structuring qualitative content analysis. Managers benefitted from corporate flexibility (home office and flexible schedule), but experienced power asymmetries in terms of access to and use of the former according to hierarchy and department. Even though the men in these positions are assumed to be change agents, the majority of them perceived limited agency freedom to convert flexible working into work–family balance, or to influence organizational culture. The privileged position of managers was detected at the level of their individual agency. Most managers could economically afford to maintain a male breadwinner model. Therefore, limitations related to securing parental and flexibility rights were due to traditional gender norms, and the strong sense of entitlement to work. Consequently, the extent and means of use of flexibility did not challenge deeply rooted assumptions about ideal employee norms.

Keywords
agency; capabilities; fatherhood; flexibility; managers; work–family balance

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

Flexible working—namely, employees having control over when or where they work—is usually considered a family-friendly arrangement that can be used as a capability-spanning resource to reconcile work and family demands (Chung & van der Horst, 2018; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018). The national and organizational context strongly shapes who has access to these arrangements, and how flexible working affects employees' work–family balance outcomes (Chung, 2018; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018). When the state implements a limited amount of work–family policies, organizations play an even more significant role in promoting employees' work–family balance (Been, den Dulk, & van der Lippe, 2017). A supportive organizational culture produces norms that involve respect for employees' personal and family time and encourage the latter to use flexible working arrangements (van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2018).

Managers are critical to developing a supportive organizational culture and to the success of flexible schedules (Allard, Haas, & Hwang, 2007; Kossek, Ollier-Malaterre, Lee, Pichler, & Hall, 2016). Managers are believed to be change agents who can alleviate employee fear by

leading by example and making it salient to others that it is acceptable to prioritise personal demands over work (Hobson, Fahlén, & Takács, 2011; Lewis & Stumbitz, 2017). Despite their high level of work autonomy, men in managerial positions are often subject to work–family conflict (Allard et al., 2007; Kossek et al., 2016). If privileged groups of professionals cannot benefit from such arrangements, this might shape the work–family outcomes of lower level employees and the organizational culture as a whole.

This article analyses the case of a Hungarian subsidiary of a Scandinavian multinational company considered to be family-friendly. Although the literature about the issue of flexible working is rich, and a growing number of studies acknowledge the gendered nature of organizations and management (Acker, 2006), fathers' work–family needs often remain invisible in organizational settings (Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2012). Studies that focus on managers as fathers (Been et al., 2017; Burnett et al., 2012), especially in the post-socialist regime, are still lacking. As Lewis and Stumbitz (2017) argue, there is a need to expand the range of national contexts, as most work–family research focuses on affluent countries. Addressing this the research questions of this study facilitate an analysis of (1) how professional fathers perceive their agency in terms of reconciling work and family demands, and (2) how flexible working, as an institutional resource, is perceived and used for work–family balance purposes. The present article analyses fathers in management from two viewpoints: as employees, who try to achieve balance through flexibility, as well as change agents, who can influence the existence of a flexible organizational culture by their own behaviour. The cognitive level (Hobson et al., 2011)—the awareness of one's own agency—is crucial, as managers can help or hinder the development of a family-supportive organizational culture by acting as role models or gatekeepers (Alemann, Beaufays, & Oechsle, 2017; Allard et al., 2007). The capability framework of Sen (2008), as applied by Hobson and Fahlén (2009) and Hobson et al. (2011), is a valuable concept for studying whether and how men in managerial positions with a specific cultural and institutional background can convert flexible working as a resource into the capability to achieve work–family balance.

This article's contribution is that it integrates both management and gender dimensions into the research on flexible working and work–family balance within the understudied Central and Eastern European context. Contextual interrelations (Lewis & Stumbitz, 2017) are presented through the example of how a company with Scandinavian ownership and a family-friendly cultural background, embedded in a post-communist country with traditional gender norms and strong gender inequality, can reflect employees' work–family balance claims.

The next section introduces the capability approach as a conceptual framework applied to work–family balance. The section after this briefly summarises the institutional and cultural background of Hungary in terms of gender equality and family policy, as well as flexible working opportunities. This is followed by a description of data and methods, while the fifth section provides the results. The article ends with a discussion section that includes the interpretation of results and a conclusion.

2. The Logic of the Capability Approach

The capability approach is a dynamic, multi-layered tool for studying the impact of policies within their cultural context (den Dulk & Yerkes, 2016) by (1) locating individual agency in specific institutional settings, (2) acknowledging variation in resources and means, and (3) recognising the importance of the cognitive level of agency, i.e., whether one can convert resources—such as flexible working—into the lives individuals want to lead (Hobson & Fahlén, 2009).

Work–family balance is considered a 'functioning,' a quality-of-life issue that one has a reason to value (Hobson et al., 2011). The capability approach does not define an optimal way to combine work and family life. Instead, it relates to the possibility of converting resources into the ability to make choices—in this case, actual freedom to reconcile work and care demands. Individuals' access and ability to take advantage of work–family policies (den Dulk & Yerkes, 2016) depends on so-called conversion factors: These include individual-level factors (gender, age, social class, network, skills, etc.), institutional factors (legal rights, care and leave benefits, organizational policy) and societal factors (social norms, values, social movements, media, etc.; Hobson et al., 2011). Hobson et al. (2011) also put emphasis on the cognitive dimension, as actual agency must be preceded by a sense of entitlement to make demands. This is essential for "understanding not only what one does or would like to do, but also the ability to imagine alternatives" (Hobson et al., 2011, p. 174). The sense of entitlement is highly gendered (Lewis & Stumbitz, 2017). Fathers may feel less entitled to ask for workplace support for family purposes (Alemann et al., 2017) as this could contradict underlying convictions about the cultural value of work (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007; Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013).

2.1. The Gendered Nature of Agency

Those with more individual resources are less dependent on institutional and societal factors. Highly educated, middle-class men in leading positions can be considered a privileged group whose members have significant individual resources; therefore, they can be expected to have more agency freedom. On the other hand, they might be particularly exposed to taken-for-granted assumptions such as norms about the ideal employee (Acker, 2006)—an unencumbered devotion to work—or the dominant idea of masculinity (van der Lippe &

Lippényi, 2018). Hegemonic forms of masculinity are still associated with the uninterrupted, long-working-hours career model (Burke, 2000), especially in managerial positions, which require men to be irreplaceable at work. In the background is the unspoken message that men's careers are still regarded as more important than women's (Halrynjo & Lyng, 2013; Kvande, 2009). The gendered nature of organizations is difficult to perceive when the masculine values of work and management remain invisible and are thereby reproduced and reinforced (Burnett et al., 2012).

The traditional male breadwinner model accords with ideal employee norms, as it associates fatherhood with providing. Involved fathering—the idea of nurturing, caring men who are committed to family responsibilities—on the other hand is not something that may be understood within the frame of the ideal employee (Williams et al., 2013), due to the perception that care and career are mutually exclusive (Alemann et al., 2017). As a result, agency inequalities in men's work–family balance manifest in the form of limited possibilities for involved fathering (Hobson et al., 2011).

2.2. Flexible Working as a Resource

Institutional factors in the capability approach cover both the policy level, such as leave and childcare benefits, and the firm level, including the opportunity for flexible working and organizational culture in general. A workplace organizational culture that is sensitive to employees' work–family balance is a site for converting policies into work–family balance claims. Flexible working is usually seen as an indicator of an organization's responsiveness to employees' work–family concerns, but the actual uptake of the former is often low (Williams et al., 2013).

Among other reasons for this are fears of flexibility stigma; namely, negative career consequences (wage penalties, lower performance evaluations, fewer promotions) due to the use of flexible arrangements. Although flexibility is formulated in a gender-neutral way, it implicitly targets women in particular as they are typically expected to become dependent second-income earners, or non-earners (Burnett et al., 2012). Men using flexibility to meet family demands often results in double stigma as it is considered a violation of overtime culture. Working long hours is seen as 'heroic activity,' a manly test of physical endurance. The successful enactment of this masculinity involves displaying one's exhaustion, physically and verbally, in order to convey the depth of one's commitment, stamina, and virility (Williams et al., 2013). The pull of the economic, social, and symbolic power associated with male management reinforces the individual's engagement in business (Bowman, 2007), especially in greedy organizations (Coser, 1974) that seek exclusive and undivided loyalty from their employees. As full-time employment constitutes the core of the male identity, pursuing an alternative way of life requires not only making a conscious decision against a professional career, but also a reformulation of male identity (Liebig & Kron, 2017).

In addition, flexibility can have other controversial outcomes: Although higher-level occupational groups are more likely to have access to flexible working arrangements (Chung & van der Horst, 2018; Hobson & Fahlén, 2009), they tend to use flexibility—and schedule control in particular—to increase their performance (Chung, 2018). Men are more strongly expected to use flexible working for performance-enhancing purposes rather than caring ones, which leads to the expansion of work (Chung & van der Horst, 2018; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018). Organizations offer flexibility to fathers as a reward for high-level commitment, not as a social right (Liebig & Kron, 2017). Consequently, it can be better understood why men in managerial positions are often subject to work–family conflict (Allard et al., 2007; Kossek et al., 2016), and why employers may support flexibility for reasons other than enhancing work–family balance.

3. The Hungarian Context

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2018), Hungary, with Greece and Slovakia, ranks lowest in the European Union, scoring less than the EU28 average, for all aspects of gender equality (work, money, knowledge, time, power, and health). One of the most gender-unequal domains is related to time, especially the sub-domain of care activities, where women are taking on even more responsibilities than before.

This inequality can be better understood if we consider Hungary's historical socialist-era heritage. As a consequence of forced emancipation, female labour force participation was formerly high. Simultaneously, the state placed emphasis on motherhood by stressing women's responsibilities as mothers and granted them the right to carry out care duties (Kispéter, 2012). Following the socialist era, Hungary tried to reintroduce a traditional familization regime and restore the male breadwinner model and the related private-public division of gender roles (Hobson et al., 2011). Emancipation occurred in a way in which the participation of men in household duties was not even considered, and the dual burden of women's paid and unpaid work became a permanent feature of everyday life (Nagy, Király, & Géring, 2016). Even if generous state support for parental leave is framed in neutral terms, given the prevailing social norms and the structural conditions on the labour market women are still encouraged to take sole responsibility for household-related labour and care (Nagy, 2008; Nagy et al., 2016). Although the level of fathers' assistance through parental leave is remarkably low (Hobson et al., 2011) and is not promoted by state policy, slow changes have been recorded in men's attitudes toward fatherhood (Pongrácz & Molnár, 2011). As a result, fathers often face the ambiguous and contradictory expectation of securing their role as male breadwinners while

spending more time with children (Pongrácz & Molnár, 2011; Spéder, 2011).

Refamilization has increasingly been in the spotlight recently, as rectifying the demographic decline was specified by the prime minister as the most important challenge (Félix, 2015). The government made 2018 'the year of the family' by promising support to families with three or more children (family housing loan scheme, student loan support, and family taxation allowance). Although an increase in funding for day-care and kindergartens is also promised, most of these policies affect poor and better-off families differently, putting the latter in a more favourable position. Moreover, this family policy neglects other related issues such as gender inequality and child poverty (Félix, 2015; Szikra, 2018).

As in other post-socialist countries, dual-earner households are prevalent. In Hungary, 73% of individuals active in the labour force live in dual-earner households, the highest rate among EU Member States (the EU28 average is 56%; see Eurofound, 2017). In 2019, the employment rate for men within the working age population was 77%, and for women 63% (OECD, 2020). Additionally, the labour market is characterised by a very low share of part-time employment (4%). According to Eurofound (2017) data, 68% of employees stated that their schedule was strictly defined by the company at which they worked, and they had no leeway to make changes (10 percentage points higher than the EU28 average). Forty-seven percent found it difficult to take an hour or two off to take care of personal or family matters during working hours (EU average 35%). Forty-nine percent of employees considered it rather difficult to reconcile paid work with their care responsibilities, compared to the EU average of 36%. These results indicate a strong link between the ability to take some time off work and the perceived fit of working hours with care and other commitments. Chung, Kerkhofs, and Ester (2007) categorised Hungary—along with other mostly southern European countries—as countries with a large share of low-flexibility companies. Another phenomenon typical of this group is the frequent presence of overtime. In Hungary, most companies do not offer many flexible or work–family balance options, but when they do, the former usually serve to meet the organization's flexibility needs rather than employee demands.

4. Method and Sample

The Hungarian subsidiary of a large Scandinavian service sector company was chosen as the case for analysis. Qualitative case studies, by definition, take context into account and therefore serve as an appropriate method for exploring the interconnections embedded in an organizational and social background. The focus on several contextual layers can contribute to challenging gendered assumptions about work and family roles (Lewis & Stumbitz, 2017). The origin of the present case study company is important, as Scandinavian societies are well known for their longstanding policy legacy of promoting gender equality and work–family balance (O'Brien, Brandth, & Kvande, 2007). This factor was thus expected to influence organizational culture. The reason for investigating a large, service-sector company was the greater potential for identifying formal work–family and flexible initiatives.

According to Géring (2014), only 5% of medium- and large-sized companies in Hungary find it important to represent their engagement with corporate social responsibility on their websites. The case study company belongs to that small minority of firms that use family-friendliness as an identity-forming feature. Among the range of work-life balance opportunities they promote part-time and flexible working options. According to the website, the company invests heavily into employees' human capital, health, security, and working conditions.

An interview-based case study was conducted within this company in the form of 30-minute (average duration) semi-structured managerial interviews. The target group was middle and top managers with small children (younger than 10 years old). Female managers were also included in the research as a control group (the focus of this article, however, is not making a gender comparison, thus the article does not cover the analysis of the female sample). Only Hungarian managers were interviewed, since managers from abroad might have been differently socialized and have a different cultural background. Managers were directly approached using a list of potential interviewees the HR Department prepared based on the given selection criteria. All potential interviewees received an invitation e-mail that briefly described the purpose of the research and suggested a potential date for the interview. Forty-three men agreed to participate out of the 50 who were approached (86% response rate). Interviews were conducted within the company in one of the meeting rooms during work time. The meeting room was a private but also natural environment for the interview. Only one interviewee refused to permit audio recording. Fieldwork lasted from 3 March 2015 to 13 April 2015.

In terms of employee positions, the sample consisted of 22 team leaders, 13 heads of department, six directors, and two C-level executives. Mean age was 39 years, with two children on average. With one exception, all respondents were married. One-third of men lived in a dual earner couple, with the partner occupying a full-time position. Another third of male interviewees had a wife who worked on a part-time basis or was self-employed. One-third of male manager's wives were on maternity leave at the time of the research. Almost all respondents had a degree, as did their partners. In terms of the professional field the respondents were involved in, there was great diversity, from finance and marketing to customer service and sales.

The interview guideline covered the following broader themes: definition and perception of work–family balance; sources of work–family conflict; coping

strategies and boundary management between work and private life; formal and informal types of support with an emphasis on flexible working arrangements; and feelings, values, and responsibilities in relation to being a father and manager. The interview transcripts were analysed with the use of NVivo10 software in line with a mixed, alternative form of the structuring type of qualitative content analysis called content structuring, or theme analysis (Mayring, 2014). This involves a deductive first step of category assignment—i.e., the latter are pre-defined based on theories and previous research—followed by inductive category formation. The three types of work–family conflict (time, strain, behaviour) defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) are examples of deductive category creation based on the literature. Other themes, such as the understanding of work–family balance, needed further category development based on the answers. After coding the first 10 interviews, the categories and coding guideline were revised before working through the whole material. The final step involved analysis of these categories by summarising the content, checking category frequencies, and interpreting contingencies.

5. Results

This section starts with an introduction of the interviewees' perception of their work–family balance situation, focusing on the source of tension between the two life spheres. This is followed by a summary of how capable managers feel in relation to claiming and achieving balance, and whether there is a sense of entitlement concerning the ability to prioritise family over work. Finally, I describe how flexible working—among other types of resources—is perceived and used for work–family reasons.

5.1. Conflict between Work and Family Demands

Managers defined work–family balance in various ways. What is more important, however, is whether they felt able to function in their preferred way. Based on their level of satisfaction, three, equally large, distinct groups of respondents emerged: (1) manager fathers, who considered their current work–family balance to be satisfying—mainly those who were maintaining the traditional breadwinner role and living in line with their self-concept (Alemann et al., 2017); (2) those who faced temporary problems on a cyclical basis; and (3) those who were critical about their work–family balance in the long term—mostly managers living as part of a dual-earner couple. Both temporary and lasting problems stemmed primarily from workload: Many managers found this to be extreme, including tight deadlines, overtime, working in the evenings, and even at weekends and on holidays. Some directors argued that the secret of the company's performance was to make employees undertake more work than would normally be expected of them: "This is a strong expression, but in fact we exploit people. Strongly. And all the [other] things [i.e., organizational support] we try to do stay rather on the surface" (Director, 40 years old).

Consequently, the most frequent type of work–family conflict was time-based (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), involving work preventing interviewees from spending as much time with their families as they wanted. This time squeeze emerged not only in relation to physical absence from home, but also as a lack of psychological and mental involvement. This feeling of being in "constant stand-by mode" often resulted in anxiety and strain-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985):

> My wife often tells me that it's totally useless to go with me on holiday, because I'm not present with my family mentally, only in body….I have to create a life strategy regarding this [challenge] if I don't want to be killed by stress at 50. (Director, 42)

To a lesser extent, conflicts arose from attempts to fulfil both a traditional breadwinner role and a more emotional, caring father and partner role: "It's a strange paradox, and many of my male companions face it, that we should earn much more but also be home a lot! Well, it's not possible" (Head of Department, 35). This type of conflict was due not only to the contradictory expectations the environment raised, but also by the internal motivation of the men and their sense of entitlement towards involved fatherhood:

> I put bread on the table, and that's where my fatherly responsibilities end. But obviously it's not good. I would like more than this. I don't know….I would like to raise happy people, and I want to play a role in that. (Head of Department, 40)

5.2. Capabilities and the Cognitive Level of Agency

Most of the managers emphasized their own responsibility for creating the work–family balance they wished for. They believed that it would be naïve to expect the company to consider their work–family balance a top priority, since the company's aim is to make a profit. The company offers a framework for flexibility, with options such as home office and flexible working hours, but it depends on the individual how they take advantage of these opportunities. Consequently—and as responsible adult individuals—everyone is provided with the autonomy to define their own priorities and act accordingly. Respondents added that this requires self-awareness about where to define the limits of work:

> I have lots of colleagues who don't understand how I can resist checking my phone on the weekend….And, funny or not, the main reason for this is having a private life which doesn't allow you to work constantly. If I didn't have a family and I were single, I would surely work much more. But having children means

> that you can't really think of anything else. (Head of Department, 33)

Significantly fewer managers highlighted the company's role in maintaining a work–family balance. One executive interviewee and the head of the human resources department had the impression that more employees expected the company to solve their work–family balance issues than the interviewees admitted:

> Everyone expects us to create a new culture of meetings, or to tell them that everyone has to go home at 5 p.m. We can try, but life is not like this—only you [employees] can draw the lines regarding what work to undertake and what not. By the way, I wouldn't like to be told not to work after 6 p.m., because it might be important for me to finish a task. (Head of Department, 40)

The majority of interviewees spoke from the position of employees and only rarely referred to their role as managers in the organizational culture. This fact was also captured in observing what the interviewees said they would change to achieve better work–family balance. Almost all the managers spoke about the personal changes they could make to their attitude or level of efficiency (for instance, developing time management skills, waking up earlier, moving closer to the workplace to save on commuting time, etc.). All this suggests that most respondents take the working environment as given, and do not feel they have much influence on working processes or corporate culture. Ideas about attempting to change working conditions arose rarely: One example included an overworked manager sharing his difficulties with his superiors (who, in response, hired more people for the relevant group to ease the pressure on individuals). In most cases, however, interviewees accepted their working conditions and did not appear to feel that they had agency in this regard. Team leaders especially considered themselves to be insignificant, placing themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy of managers, and acting according to this perception. Not only did they perceive a lack of agency in relation to their ability to claim work–family balance, but they also did not take into account their own impact on their colleagues. Only top managers expressed their own responsibility for other employees' work-life balance and their role in corporate change:

> We talked with the CEO about how it looks when he works on the weekend and sends e-mails or calls me about some question….With one single e-mail he drags in 4–5 people….Since we agreed [found a solution] about this two and a half years ago, he hasn't written and we haven't needed to work on the weekend. (Executive, 43)

They realized that their own work–family balance strategies and own routines might drag others into work:

> Sometimes I work on Saturday at 2 a.m. It happens that, somehow, I'm in the flow, I have creative energy. Some weeks ago, I told my group that I would like only one thing: that they don't answer anything [any communications] from Friday 5 p.m. until Monday morning. It [the response] was very interesting; it had the psychological effect that employees couldn't stop themselves replying. Ergo, I started to work offline. (Director, 40)

5.3. Conversion Factors

Managers mentioned four types of resources they could rely on to achieve balance: (1) familial support (first of all, help from partners, and second, grandparents); (2) organizational support (flexibility and managerial support); (3) their own skills (time management, prioritisation, boundary management); and (4) paid help (babysitters or cleaners). Flexible working and managerial support belong to the firm level of institutional factors. The other factors are used as individual resources, although familial support—due to gender norms—may be classified as a societal factor. Boundary management was mentioned as an individual skill that can be improved. On the other hand, it can also be understood as the perception of agency itself:

> You might sulk, of course, if a meeting doesn't work out as you had wished….But you don't always have to be part of that. There are battles you have to fight, and there are battles you don't. You have to define your priorities. (Team Leader, 29)

Perceived control over boundaries (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012) is strongly related to how managers experience flexibility: whether they see it as a tool of autonomy or a tool for exploitation. Those with high perceived control over boundaries (regardless of whether they prefer to separate work from home, or enjoy the blurred borders between spheres) usually see the positive side of flexible arrangements (even if these are used for productivity enhancement and not for family purposes). In the case of weak control over boundaries, flexibility is perceived to generate even more work. This can mostly be explained by internal motivation—a fear of lagging behind. Employees are seemingly not called to account for using flexible working for family reasons, although personal presence and constant availability are believed to be a way of expressing commitment and be rewarded by the company:

> There were cases when those who went home at 7 p.m. received acknowledgment. It didn't matter that they [an employee] were [was] playing on their computer from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. He really was playing. But he was held up as an example because he stayed so long. (Team Leader, 43)

5.3.1. Flexible Working and Organizational Support

The general evaluation of the organizational culture at the company was positive, many understanding it as the influence of so-called Scandinavian culture, which they describe as having an informal, people-oriented, and democratic approach—characteristic of the Norwegian model (Brandth & Kvande, 2019)—which was usually considered as being an example worth following. Critiques were therefore not directed at Scandinavian culture, but rather at the inadequate adaption of Hungarians to this 'foreign' culture:

> In Scandinavian countries they start the morning with the gym, they get up early and arrive at work early, but at half past five they leave, whatever happens. They live in an incredibly structured way. While in Eastern Europe the normal culture of work was ruined under socialism, and after the 1990s this new world burst into our lives, and my generation had no-one to learn from about the working culture of this type of business life. Typically, we work in a less structured way, more ad hoc. Our daily agenda is not managed, we are swimming in work, we stay late, therefore we are tired the next day and we don't go to the gym…and the spiral continues. (Executive, 43)

Various initiatives were mentioned by the interviewees that were designed to improve employee satisfaction, but flexibility was the most significant among these. This covers two things: the autonomy to organize one's schedule and working from home (home office). Many fathers in the sample used flexible work for family reasons; for instance, to take their children to school, or to stay at home with them when they were sick: "Today, for example, my youngest son insisted that I take him to nursery, because it's been a long time since I was able to. So I took him. And it felt very good" (Director, 42). The fact that a male director or an executive uses flexibility for family purposes can mediate the message to employees that it is acceptable to prioritise fatherhood-related responsibilities over work-related ones. At the moment, however, these scattered and occasional examples do not challenge preexisting ideas about work.

Flexibility is also a means of productivity enhancement:

> For me, flexibility is opportunity. For others, it is responsibility, but for me opportunity. I would encounter many problems if there was no flexibility….Let's say I had a little cold, I was feeling a bit sick, or coughing, I wouldn't go to work. Then I would need to go see a doctor, take sick leave, and officially I couldn't check any e-mails, I couldn't handle my tasks, and decisions would not be taken. (Team Leader, 29)

Either used for family-related purposes or productivity reasons, the majority of male managers perceived flexibility to be employee-driven; an arrangement beneficial for themselves. They also associated flexible arrangements with the attitudes of their bosses, and those who felt trusted by their superiors tried to foster such behaviour amongst their own team members. Consequently, the role-model effect trickled down. Fewer managers highlighted the disadvantageous way in which flexibility could act as an instrument by which companies can exploit employees:

> It is very useful that [there] is no card-punch, although I think that this [situation] is more useful for the company than me. So the company gives us flexibility, but most probably due to this flexibility I'm putting more into it voluntarily than I should. (Head of Department, 39)

Only a small minority expressed any objections towards flexible working due to concerns about productivity. Consequently, negative perceptions related to flexible working stem primarily from weak agency in relation to accessing it or using it for one's own benefit (perceiving it as employer-driven instead of employee-driven), rather than from productivity concerns. Even if using a home office and flexibility are formally supported, the company's everyday functioning and the organization of work can restrict the agency required to take advantage of flexible opportunities. The culture of meetings regularly prevents managers from benefitting from a home office. Although technology is available for online meetings, real presence is preferred and expected: "I tried many times to cut back on the number of meetings, skipping some, but the organization resents this. It's a very interesting thing that in this culture delegation is not accepted" (Head of Department, 35).

More interestingly, the corporate building was originally designed with the concept of home office in mind: There are fewer places in the office than the number of employees based on the assumption that some employees will work from home. In certain departments, such as property management and customer service, use of a home office is even more infrequent since employees in these areas always have to be available and ready to act:

> She [the customer service director] was extreme; she would call the heads of department on Saturday at midnight without a problem….So, unfortunately, even if we have a flag outside saying that this is a family-friendly company, this doesn't work at above team-leader level. This flag is bullshit. (Team Leader, 43)

Differences were found not only in terms of department, but in relation to hierarchy too. Although a higher-level position is associated with more control and autonomy, this also requires that individuals in these positions be more present and visible due to the importance of their role in decision-making processes. Top managers are not only faced with longer working hours, but a high level of

responsibility too, which makes them more vulnerable to psychological pressure:

> I don't think that a director or CxO [C-level manager] has to tolerate a bigger workload during working hours or in terms of kilojoules, but the workload is different; it's rather stress[ful]….The emotional load is definitely bigger, there's no question, since we have to make decisions about others' fates, not only ours. (Director, 40)

5.3.2. Familial Support and Paid Help

As expected based on the national context and previous research, the men in this sample could completely rely on the support of their wives in achieving work–family balance. Couples usually divide responsibility for work in line with traditional gender roles, especially when they have young children and their wives stay at home for a long period of time: "My wife works six hours per day. We agreed that someone has to care for the child. It's impossible that the children should be raised by grandparents or a babysitter because this is not a healthy thing" (Head of Department, 33).

In the sample, none of the fathers had taken more than the standard five-day period of paternity leave. It often transpired that wives were working in similar professional positions before they took maternity leave. A few had decided not to go back to the same sector after their maternity leave, but rather chose more flexible work that was complementary to their husband's wage-earning activity:

> The enterprise is ours….It's rather a toy, it's not about the money, but it's there to produce, to produce value….She [my wife] told me in 2005 that she didn't want to go back to the bank to work, instead she wanted to play this role. And I celebrated the idea. So she is not sitting at home being a housewife and cooking stew, but she is occupied, she can express herself…so she feels useful. (Director, 40)

Very few men realized that the share of unpaid labour within their relationship was unequal, or were able to reflect on their own contribution self-critically. An exception included the following statement: "I can see that she would like to go back to work. But the option to build a career is already gone. And I think it's because she sacrificed it for me" (Team Leader, 44).

In contrast, men in dual-earner relationships experienced work–family conflict more frequently, except when the couple employed a babysitter or cleaner. Paid help, however, was rarely used since it was found to be too expensive. Economically, it was not considered a rational option, especially when wives fulfilled these caring and household roles. In some cases, the wives themselves acted as gatekeepers and showed resistance to the idea of having extra help. It is important to add that managers tended to think about paid services in terms of help for their wives, not for themselves: "I would be very comforted if part of the housework was done using such help [using a cleaner], and we could do something more meaningful instead. This results in conflict because I back out of doing housework" (Team Leader, 39).

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Just as previous research (Allard et al., 2007; Kossek et al., 2016) argues, men in managerial positions may be vulnerable to work–family conflict in a high performance environment, even though the organizational culture is believed to be family-friendly. This can be partly explained by the observation that "those with the most autonomy often have jobs that place the most demands on them" (Hobson & Fahlén, 2009, p. 223).

Although flexible working at the case study company was regarded a resource for promoting better work–family balance, the conversion of this into capabilities was hindered. One reason for this implementation gap (Kossek et al., 2016) is the difference in accessing flexible working provisions. The managers of some departments (property management, customer service), as well as middle managers, experienced a lower level of access and had weaker capabilities to apply flexible working. The use of flexibility seems to be de-gendered in the sense that fathers were actually able to benefit from it and to some extent satisfy their need to devote time to their families. Although—at least on the discursive level—managers rarely acted as gatekeepers of flexibility, other types of power asymmetries prevent flexible working from becoming a 'community of practice' (van der Lippe & Lippényi, 2018) involving a shared understanding of problems and solutions.

The other reason for the growing pressure is that flexibility was often used for the purpose of productivity-enhancement, rather than the fulfilment of family demands. Productivity-related concerns and flexibility stigma were rarely perceived, mostly due to the gift-exchange mechanism (Chung & van der Lippe, 2018), meaning that managers experienced and reproduced work intensification to express commitment to the company and show gratitude for the opportunity of having flexibility. Hence, limitations related to securing parental and flexibility rights were less derived from economic concerns—which is the case of the general Hungarian population (Hobson et al., 2011)—but rather arose due to a strong sense of entitlement to the masculine values of work, career motivation, a fear of lagging behind, and the perception of being irreplaceable at work (Halrynjo & Lyng, 2013). Consequently, the means and extent of the use of flexibility mainly involved organizing work so that it still allowed the fulfilment of basic caring obligations (Liebig & Kron, 2017). This approach does not challenge deeply rooted ideal employee norms and ideas about how work should be carried out (Williams et al., 2013).

The gender norms in Hungarian society limit fathers' sense of entitlement to involved fathering and strictly define how resources are converted into capabilities. The Scandinavian background of the Hungarian case study subsidiary has only a moderate impact on the latter, and a more gender-equal approach was not transmitted. Even if some modern elements of fatherhood exist, and fathers feel the need to spend more time with their children, the traditional separation between paid and caring roles is still prevalent. The majority of respondents' wives created a supportive background for their husband's managerial jobs, even at the cost of neglecting their own careers. The privilege of a managerial position appears in employees' ability to maintain a male breadwinner model without economic concerns—especially in the first years of parenthood, which are supported by state provisions concerning parental leave. The coping strategy of respondents therefore matches more closely the demands of organizations rather than family needs (Allard et al., 2007), while it also reproduces and maintains gender inequalities. Men in dual-earner relationships, however, experience conflict more frequently, except when other individual resources (such as paid help or support from grandparents) can be converted into capabilities for reconciling work and family demands.

As a result of the low level of consciousness and reflectivity regarding agency, working conditions and organizational culture are taken as given. This reinforces the operating mechanisms of neoliberal capitalism, whereby the role of corporations and the state in maintaining work–family balance remain invisible and the status quo is unquestioned, and responsibility is pushed down to the level of individuals. When work–family balance is taken as an individual responsibility, employees only focus on individual resources and blame themselves for lacking these, or not being able to convert them into balance (Alemann et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2007). Raising awareness of these hidden mechanisms and promoting role models that involve managers taking up flexible working for family purposes (Alemann et al., 2017; Chung & van der Lippe, 2018) could strengthen the sense of entitlement to work–family balance, make fathers more visible within organizations (Burnett et al., 2012), and enhance employee-driven forms of flexibility, instead of a productivity-enhancement focus.

The main limitation of this research is its use of a single case study, since findings naturally cannot be generalised to the whole population. On the other hand, taken as an example it can enrich empirical findings and contribute to the hitherto insufficient material about Hungarian men and work–family balance, and might also serve as a basis for future research.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions on this article.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & Society*, *20*(4), 441–464.

Alemann, A., Beaufays, S., & Oechsle, M. (2017). Work organizations and fathers' life styles: Constraints and capabilities. In B. Liebig & M. Oechsle (Eds.), *Fathers in work organizations: Inequalities and capabilities, rationalities and politics* (pp. 21–39). Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

Allard, K., Haas, L., & Hwang, P. (2007). Exploring the paradox. *Community, Work & Family*, *10*(4), 475–493.

Been, W. M., den Dulk, L., & van der Lippe, T. (2017). A business case or social responsibility? How top managers' support for work-life arrangements relates to the national context. *Community, Work & Family*, *20*(5), 573–599.

Bowman, D. (2007). Men's business. Negotiating entrepreneurial business and family life. *Journal of Sociology*, *43*(4), 385–400.

Brandth, B., & Kvande, E. (2019). Workplace support of fathers' parental leave use in Norway. *Community, Work & Family*, *22*(1), 43–57.

Burke, R. (2000). Do managerial men benefit from organizational values supporting work-personal life balance? *Women in Management Review*, *15*(2), 81–89.

Burnett, S. B., Gatrell, C. J., Cooper, C. L., & Sparrow, P. (2012). Fathers at work: A ghost in the organizational machine. *Gender, Work & Organization*, *20*(6), 632–646.

Chung, H. (2018). Gender, flexibility stigma and the perceived negative consequences of flexible working in the UK. *Social Indicators Research*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2036-7

Chung, H., Kerkhofs, M. J. M., & Ester, P. (2007). *Working time flexibility in European companies*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of European Communities.

Chung, H., & van der Horst, M. (2018). Flexible working and unpaid overtime in the UK: The role of gender, parental and occupational status. *Social Indicators Research*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2028-7

Chung, H., & van der Lippe, T. (2018). Flexible working, work–life balance, and gender equality: Introduction. *Social Indicators Research*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-2025-x

Coser, L. A. (1974). *Greedy institutions: Patterns of undivided commitment*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

den Dulk, L., & Yerkes, M. A. (2016). Capabilities to combine work and family in the Netherlands: Challenging or reinforcing the one-and-a-half earner

model? *Japanese Journal of Family Sociology*, *28*(2), 180–192.

European Institute for Gender Equality. (2018). Gender Equality Index 2017: Hungary. *European Institute for Gender Equality*. Retrieved from https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-hungary

Eurofound. (2017). *Sixth European working conditions survey—Overview report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Félix, A. (2015). Hungary. In E. Kováts & M. Põim (Eds.), *Gender as symbolic glue: The position and role of conservative and far right parties in the anti-gender mobilizations in Europe* (pp. 62–82). Budapest: Feps—Foundation for European Progressive Studies.

Géring, Z. (2014). Tartalomelemzés: A virtuális és a 'valós' világ határán. Egy vállalati honlap-elemzés bemutatása [Content analysis: At the border of virtual and 'real' worlds. Describing an analysis of corporate websites]. *Kultúra és Közösség*, *2014*(1), 9–24.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, *10*(1), 76–88.

Halrynjo, S., & Lyng, S. T. (2013). *Fathers' parental leave in Norwegian elite professions*. Paper presented at the 11th ESA Conference, Turin.

Hobson, B., & Fahlén, S. (2009). Competing scenarios for European fathers: Applying Sen's capabilities and agency framework to work–family balance. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *624*(1), 214–233.

Hobson, B., Fahlén, S., & Takács, J. (2011). Agency and capabilities to achieve a work-life balance: A comparison of Sweden and Hungary. *Social Politics*, *18*(2), 168–198.

Kispéter, E. (2012). *Producing working mothers: Maternalist labor control in a Hungarian factory*. Budapest: Central European University Department of Gender Studies.

Kossek, E. E., & Lautsch, B. A. (2012). Work–family boundary management styles in organizations. *Organizational Psychology Review*, *2*(2), 152–171.

Kossek, E. E., Ollier-Malaterre, A., Lee, M. D., Pichler, S., & Hall, D. T. (2016). Line managers' rationales for professionals' reduced-load work in embracing and ambivalent organizations. *Human Resource Management*, *55*(1), 143–171.

Kvande, E. (2009). Work–life balance for fathers in globalized knowledge work. Some insights from the Norwegian context. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *16*(1), 58–72.

Lewis, S., Gambles, R., & Rapoport, R. R. (2007). The constraints of a 'work–life balance' approach: An international perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *18*(3), 360–373.

Lewis, S., & Stumbitz, B. (2017). Research on work and family: Some issues and challenges. In B. Liebig & M. Oechsle (Eds.), *Fathers in work organizations: Inequalities and capabilities, rationalities and politics* (pp. 227–244). Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

Liebig, B., & Kron, C. (2017). Ambivalent benevolence: The instrumental rationality of father-friendly policies in Swiss organizations. In B. Liebig & M. Oechsle (Eds.), *Fathers in work organizations: Inequalities and capabilities, rationalities and politics* (pp. 105–126). Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

Mayring, P. (2014). *Qualitative content analysis. Theoretical foundation, basic procedures and software solution*. Klagenfurt: GESIS—Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences.

Nagy, B. (2008). A munka és a magánélet összeegyeztetése a férfi menedzserek életében [The reconciliation of work and private life in the lives of male managers]. In P. Balogh, B. Dobos, A. Forgács, B. Nagy, & A. Szűcs (Eds.), *60 éves a Közgazdaságtudományi Egyetem. A Jubileumi Tudományos Konferencia alkalmából készült tanulmányok* [The University of Economic Sciences is 60 years old. Studies prepared for the Jubilee Scientific Conference] (pp. 389–403). Budapest: Aula Kiadó.

Nagy, B., Király, G., & Géring, Z. (2016). Work–life balance and gender regime after the economic transition. *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics*, *2*(3), 5–20.

O'Brien, M., Brandth, B., & Kvande, E. (2007). Fathers, work and family life. *Community, Work & Family*, *10*(4), 375–386.

OECD. (2020). *OECD social and welfare statistics: Family indicators* [Data set]. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/data/oecd-social-and-welfare-statistics/family-indicators_efd30a09-en

Pongrácz, T., & Molnár, S. E. (2011). Nemi szerepek és a közvélemény változásának kölcsönhatása [The interaction of change in gender roles and public opinion]. In I. Nagy & T. Pongrácz (Eds.), *Szerepváltozások. Jelentés a nők és a férfiak helyzetéről 2011* [Changing roles: Report on the situation of women and men] (pp. 192–206). Budapest: TÁRKI Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium.

Sen, A. (2008). Capability and well-being. In D. M. Hausman (Ed.), *The philosophy of economics. An anthology* (pp. 270–279). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spéder, Z. (2011). Ellentmondó elvárások között….Családi férfiszerepek, apaképek a mai Magyarországon [Between contradictory expectations….Masculine family roles, father ideals in the recent Hungary]. In I. Nagy & T. Pongrácz (Eds.), *Szerepváltozások: Jelentés a nők és férfiak helyzetéről 2011* [Changing roles: Report on the situation of women and men] (pp. 207–228). Budapest: TÁRKI Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium.

Szikra, D. (2018). Távolodás az európai szociális modelltől—A szegénység társadalompolitikája [Moving away from the European social model—The social policy of poverty]. *Magyar Tudomány*, *179*(6), 858–871.

van der Lippe, T., & Lippényi, Z. (2018). Beyond formal access: Organizational context, working from home, and work–family conflict of men and women in European workplaces. *Social Indicators Research*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1993-1

Williams, J. C., Blair-Loy, M., & Berdahl, J. L. (2013). Cultural schemas, social class, and the flexibility stigma. *Journal of Social Issues*, *69*(2), 209–234.

About the Author

Nikolett Geszler has a PhD in Sociology from the Corvinus University of Budapest. Her main research interests are organizational sociology, involved fatherhood, and work and family reconciliation, primarily in relation to the lives of men in managerial positions. She is currently participating in research focusing on parenting and children's subjective wellbeing. Besides her academic activity, she has five years of experience in market research.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 72–80
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2971

Article

"Mummy is in a Call": Digital Technology and Executive Women's Work–Life Balance

Beáta Nagy

Institute of Communication and Sociology, Corvinus University of Budapest, 1093 Budapest, Hungary;
E-Mail: beata.nagy@uni-corvinus.hu

Submitted: 29 February 2020 | Accepted: 3 June 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
Research findings confirm the contradictory impact of mobile technology on work–life balance, as these tools both guarantee greater flexibility and contribute to blurring boundaries between private and working spheres. Several articles have been published on women executives' work–life balance in Western countries; however, their usage of mobile devices remained almost unexplored in the post-socialist region, where in the wake of the transformation not only the unquestioned neoliberal change of the corporate sector but also refamilisation took place. This article gives an overview on the issue of how women executives make use of mobile technology during their everyday activities in Hungary, where not only are the signs of 'corporate colonization' present, but also motherhood plays an important role. Based on twenty semi-structured interviews with Hungarian women in senior management positions carried out in 2014 and 2015, the article discusses the perceptions and narratives explained by these women. Results contribute to the ongoing debate on the paradoxical impacts of modern technology on work–life balance and its specificities in the post-socialist context.

Keywords
boundary management; executive women; gender; motherhood; technology use; work–life balance

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

Almost all research findings confirm the contradictory impact of mobile technology on work–life balance: While widespread use of mobile technology facilitates the coordination of various tasks, there is a danger of employees active in knowledge intensive sectors being engaged with work not just anywhere and anytime but more like everywhere and all the time (Crowe & Middleton, 2012; Dén-Nagy, 2014; Kossek, 2016; Towers, Duxbury, Higgins, & Thomas, 2006; Wajcman, Rose, Brown, & Bittman, 2010).

Despite the continuously growing working hours and work pressure, which are also accelerated by the easy access to employees' private life, limited complaints have been formulated among managers regarding organizations' potential responsibility to ease this. Moreover, new turns, often labelled as postfeminist or neoliberal, further advocate for the importance of individual responsibility and agency. This rhetoric and imagery increasingly underline the importance of individual choice even in questions of gender equality and work–life balance, thus reinforcing gendered tensions of work–life balance (Adamson, 2017; Sørensen, 2017). In the present coronavirus pandemic, the huge burden placed on mothers' shoulders, such as home schooling, makes these gender inequalities even more salient, and the topic even more relevant.

The article has a twofold contribution to the research of technologies and work–life balance. On the one hand, it depicts how naturally top-level managers at large companies in a post-socialist Central and Eastern

European country accept the norm of endless working time. Moreover, corporate norms regarding work–life balance practices and borderless wage work remain unquestioned. There are arguments that these practices have been imported particularly strongly in transitional countries, which thus have become the special 'victims' of neoliberalism (Jessop, 2013).

The other contribution is to the discussion of post-socialist refamilisation. The long-lasting effects of refamilisation are manifested in narrowing public childcare opportunities, limited access to flexible working conditions and excessively long parental leave, which together, but also individually might limit working mothers' equality in economic life (Saxonberg & Sirovátka, 2006). The widespread phenomenon of refamilisation puts pressure on working mothers to excel at being devoted mothers and devoted employees at the same time. This article intends to analyse the narratives about work–life balance explained by twenty top women executives working at business companies in Hungary.

2. Literature Review

2.1. A Theoretical Overview of the Impacts of Mobile Technology

Extensive diffusion of the Internet and mobile telephony has brought major spatial and temporal changes including an increasing likelihood of transgressing boundaries between work and home life (Wajcman et al., 2010). Initially, it was assumed that the advent of mobile technologies would cause private life to fall victim to mounting work demands (Chesley, 2010; Towers et al., 2006), and work would become more intensive. However, positive aspects have also appeared in the debate: on the employee side, for example, increasing flexibility gives more opportunity to micro-coordinate and reduces commuting time (Wajcman, Bittman, & Brown, 2008).

Boundary management is undoubtedly a critical issue as dissolving boundaries have spatial and temporal signs. The line of divide between work and private sphere has, to some extent, been permeable before but separation of the two worlds has been considerably reduced by the use of mobile technologies (Currie & Eveline, 2011; Duxbury & Smart, 2011). Technological devices allow the individual to be present virtually, if not physically, at a different location or in the life of another community. 'Absent presence' (Duxbury & Smart, 2011) has thus been created. The question is to what extent these 'integrating' or, as the case may be, boundary-blurring devices promote or hinder employees' well-being (Chesley, 2010; Kossek, 2016).

Researchers tend to emphasize conflict, as both spheres draw on the same resources, primarily time (Duxbury & Smart, 2011). Mobile devices enable people to perform work-related activities outside working hours, which may increase the time pressure as well as the amount of time spent with work (Mullan & Wajcman, 2019). Moreover, there is often a higher demand of being instantly available (Kossek, 2016).

Edley (2001) describes these phenomena as corporate colonisation. Employees are expected to be fully committed to work; mobile technologies involve extended working time and greater flexibility, which enables companies to colonise private life. Paradoxically, mobile devices simultaneously reinforce the employee and organisational control: They promote parents' productivity and the appearance of strengthening the position of the working parent. Corporate demands, however, supersede family demands (Edley, 2001).

2.2. Special Effects of Motherhood

Women's and men's labour market positions are markedly different. Gendered role expectations dictate that women should be the primary family carers and home-makers. This situation is exacerbated when women engage in child rearing (Hays, 1996). Cultural demands of motherhood engender a sense of guilt in women, including those in high-commitment careers.

As more and more women enter the workplace and take up management positions, social expectations attached to motherhood have likewise changed (Badinter, 2012; Hays, 1996). Describing an ideology of intensive mothering, Hays (1996) draws the picture of a mother sacrificing herself for her children. According to this ideology, mothers must put their children's needs before their own, and must always respond to their children's needs and desires to ensure their children's emotional and intellectual development.

Mobile technologies carry the promise of a more seamless coordination of gainful work and private life. Edley calls supermothering women who try to have it all by using technology "busy maternal cyborgs" (Edley, 2001, p. 32). Technology and particularly mobile phones permit remote mothering, which can take the form of phone calls or alerts in case of emergency. As she puts it: "Another indispensable item for some cyborgs is their cellular phone—the electronic extension of their motherly bodies" (Edley, 2001, p. 32). This enables women to work two shifts at the same time.

Nevertheless, this practice where women are seemingly in control and make their own decisions does not necessarily protect them from corporate colonisation. On the contrary—it covers up tensions and strengthens the myth of individual agency (Sørensen, 2017).

Here we have to note that due to their weaker economic positions, post-socialist countries and organizations might be even more intensely exposed to global systems, thus becoming 'victims' of this new world order (Jessop, 2013). As multinational companies became important employers with dominant impacts on the local labour market after 1989, their employees in knowledge intensive sectors might suffer more from the consequences of corporate colonisation, working in more intensive and extensive ways. We might assume that

Hungarian women managers, who are also mothers, are in a worse situation while bargaining with the corporate system.

3. Previous Empirical Findings

3.1. The Impact of ICT on Work–Life Balance

Early publications were dominated by the proposition that mobile technologies erode work–home boundaries and allow companies to colonise the space and time that was once reserved for family life (Wajcman et al., 2008). Data highlight an increase in transgression; however, Australian employees were found to use ICT for personal purposes during work time to a greater extent than for work purposes outside work time. Use of the Internet for work purposes outside working hours occurred in certain groups of managers and professionals but it had a positive effect on work–family balance (Wajcman et al., 2010).

Their survey on mobile phones also put forward surprising findings: The main purpose of mobile phone calls in daily life is to maintain connection with family and friends (Wajcman et al., 2008). Individuals exercise control over the extent to which work invades their personal life. This pattern is particularly observed in managers and professionals.

Cavazotte, Lemos, and Villadsen (2014) explored smart phone use of professionals at a Brazilian law firm. Users appreciated the flexibility and autonomy provided by mobile technology. At the same timem they expressed concerns regarding demands from superiors that negatively affected their private spheres.

Studying colonisation of private sphere by ubiquitous mobile devices, Mullan and Wajcman (2019) analysed time use data gathered in the United Kingdom and found evidence of a small increase in work extension. The increase was significantly greater in the case of managers and professionals. Lack of time was explained by a structural change in working conditions rather than by mobile phone use.

Mobile device usage relatively easily gives rise to a pattern of employees working anywhere any time. In Edley's (2001) survey, employees took some work home on a regular basis, thus relinquishing part of the time they had for themselves. Those who were busy performing work related activities after putting the children to bed or before the family got up in the morning were described as "corporate after-hours homeworkers" (Edley, 2001, p. 31).

3.2. Special Effects of Motherhood

The difficulties of balancing motherhood and career are commonly known. Women in executive positions also expounded on the challenge (Adamson, 2017). Submissive intensive mothering is typically expected of middle and upper middle classes (Hays, 1996).

Investigating North American employed mothers, Christopher (2012) found that work and family were equally important for them. Married mothers involve babysitters and domestic help in childcare and domestic chores and are ultimately responsible for delegation. Day-to-day mothering included selection and micro-coordination of appropriate help.

Work–life balance is imbued with competing gendered demands. Even today women are faced with a strong cultural expectation of family devotion even if their demanding executive careers expect work devotion (Blair-Loy, 2005). Women in executive positions must find ways to reconcile the conflict between intensive work demands and family devotion.

Remote access to work through technology created a parallel pattern for remote mothering. At the same time, Edley finds that "the lives of employed mothers constitute a gendered paradox of trying to succeed at two jobs that are simultaneous and contradictory" (Edley, 2001, p. 31).

A survey exploring the smartphone use of Canadian professional women working long hours revealed that the respondents used phones to manage family and work related tasks simultaneously, and they were mindful of the need to be available outside of working hours (Crowe & Middleton, 2012). They regularly checked their e-mail to show responsiveness and responsibility for their colleagues' work. Women used their smartphones for 'remote mothering' but also for the opposite: to work whilst they were really mothering.

Adamson (2017) found that motherhood is one of the biggest challenges to professionalism. Autobiographies of celebrity CEO women reveal that the traditional image of perfect motherhood features their ideals in a redefined fashion. In a workplace where demands are suited to men, women found individual solutions to reconcile the pressures of work and home. Redefinition and negotiated balance could be "achieved by abandoning unreasonable expectations of perfection and applying further business-like efficiency to home and private life" (Adamson, 2017, p. 321). Outsourcing and reducing other duties were also mentioned in the narratives about how celebrities challenged reconciliation of work and mothering and intended to normalize this 'imperfection.'

3.3. Previous Hungarian Research

In her analysis of a multinational company operating in Hungary, Tóth (2005) explored male and female managers' differing tactics to cope with the tension of constant time pressure: Women having young children only had time for the family besides work, while men's previous friendly relations were gradually replaced by corporate friendships. The respondents reported to constantly juggle with time and responsibilities and used their mobile phones mainly to ease time-related conflicts.

Investigating employee-friendly companies Primecz et al. (2016) found that when shaping flexible working hours in HR systems, the main focus was on mothers

with young children returning to work from childcare leave. Mothers with young children benefited from flexible hours but work they regularly had to attend to work at night. ICT use often led to dependence, mental exhaustion, burnout, or a compulsion of permanent accessibility.

Exploring the work practices of highly qualified women in executive positions working part-time, Oborni (2018) found that women are not protected from the encroachment of work on days when they were not supposed to be working. Being contactable outside of working hours when urgent work came up was a widespread practice. Women checked their messages on their mobile phones several times on their days off. The state of working part-time but actually working more than they officially should is fuelled by their desire to meet the demands of intensive motherhood and function as ideal employees.

4. Research Questions

Two main questions arise from antecedent research: What do women in executive positions say about their use of different mobile technologies, and to what extent do they thematise the ambivalent need to simultaneously meet the demands of motherhood and workplace?

5. Method

The two questions were addressed in the context of semi-structured interviews conducted in 2014 and 2015 with twenty women in senior management positions. Recruitment of some of the respondents was done by personal networking based on an informal organisation of female executives. Other respondents were found by snowball sampling. All interviews took place in Budapest and in its conurbation.

The majority of the respondent women were married, and some of them were divorced. Every respondent had children, their age varied widely, the youngest going to lower grades of primary school, and the oldest being adults. The husbands of married respondents were also professionals, many of them also in executive positions. There were a few husbands who held back their careers to help with childrearing, for example to take children to extracurricular activities. In one case, the husband, who worked in a totally different field went on paternity leave with the children and is still actively engaged in childcare. The interviews were audio recorded, and after transcription they were thematically analysed by NVivo 11 software.

6. Findings

6.1. Narratives and Perceptions about the Impacts of Technology Use in Work–Life Balance

The respondents use their mobile devices virtually on a continuous basis: "Effectively we are accessible from zero to 24 hours" (10). Although they called mobile technology a double-edged sword, in their own lives every respondent emphasized its advantages rather than its drawbacks. The advantages mentioned were basically related to speed, temporal and spatial flexibility, and a sense of staying in control of processes; disadvantages were related to erosion of the boundaries of the private sphere.

Enthusiasm was tinged with verbalisation of efforts to keep technology within bounds. Typically, the respondents mentioned some conflict, fight or catch situation. They described the situations as if the 'enemy' were a device detrimental to privacy rather than an expansive economic system:

> I'm trying to use it very consciously for, or in a way that it doesn't upset my life completely, so it's not [the phone] to rule over me but I'm ruling over it. (1)

None of the respondents said directly that mobile technologies were tools for corporate colonisation; at the same time, when they referred to mobile devices as threats, they generally meant permanent accessibility which could be abused by colleagues or customers. Some of them took it for granted and did not see it as a problem, not even when it disrupted vacation; they considered it as part of the (well-paid) executive function:

> I think a top manager, but even a medium level manager or from medium level manager upwards…so it's not something that mobile devices bought on, it comes with the position, it's a matter of responsibility to be always available. (5)

While the respondents made a conscious effort to limit incoming calls to working hours, they generally did not see it a problem when they made calls in their private time in business matters. Several of them tried to explain this paradox by their own interest: They took a deep interest in their work and were keen to keep track of the tasks and challenges it involved. They formulated (self-)criticism, if at all, from the aspect of dependence and the learning process rather than corporate expansion:

> I don't answer the phone in the evenings and at weekends, only if it's critical. But not to check e-mails. I'm interested, not because I can't get away from it but because it's my life, I'm interested. (13)

However, there were critical voices indicating that the system is operated not so much by individual choice but rather by social pressure and demands, although even this respondent did not specifically emphasize intrusive corporate demands:

> It's a terribly big pressure on you that when you check your e-mail everybody knows in theory that you could just as well reply any time. (4)

The organisation can colonise employees' time and capacity by making them perform more work in a given time—in other words, the working day is intensified. For example, face-to-face meetings with customers can be replaced by virtual conferences, and a new task can be assigned instead of travel time. E-mails also significantly reduce the time required for reaching agreements on issues. Almost every respondent enthused about the advancement of videoconferencing. One reason may be that videoconferences replace travel abroad, which facilitates simultaneous parenting and work. In all, the use of mobile devices makes work significantly more intensive and speeds up work processes. The aspect of expedition was sometimes mentioned obliquely:

> I think it's good not to feel that you have twenty-six hours instead of twenty-four, because it's actually still twenty-four but somehow we live it in a higher gear. (2)

At the same time extensive work is not only an individual but also a corporate problem. In one interview it was raised that the company also has to show responsibility in considering whether to expect online accessibility or night work. Women with young children can feel they have to prove their devotion to work, which may lead to staff burnout and quitting:

> Because I see, at night, I check how many people are online in the intranet communication system and it's almost like checking it during the day. (4)

Another unlimited corporate demand was the seasonal obligation of executives to work every evening and always be available to customers and colleagues. This meant that every week on four weekdays she had to go online and back to work from home. This implied that her colleagues also worked in the evening and at night.

The most extreme case was that of the respondent who said as a positive example that she was able to work via mobile technology while at home sick in bed:

> I had this herniated disc I got because of this sedentary job, and there were some three weeks when I couldn't move, so I could work from home, from my bed. (8)

A less inimical but very widespread practice was checking e-mails while on vacation, forwarding urgent messages and working through the mails on the last day of the vacation. It is also typical that the executives did not want to leave an endless flow of unanswered mails to the next day and, after the family goes to bed, they start processing them.

New challenges arising from corporate operation are contrary to the amount of work that can be completed or is 'cleverly' doable. Several of the respondents working in global positions often referred to global processes: almost every hour there was a site actively working. ICT technologies boosted this process as new mails to be responded and tasks to be handled were coming in nonstop:

> We are present in a hundred and one countries. You look at the time zones, someone is already up ahead of us in the Asian region, we are up now, and America will be up in six hours from now. (8)

As every respondent was a senior manager, they were often flexible to tackle certain tasks. This was particularly important when a child suddenly got sick. With one or two exceptions, the women almost never mentioned the fathers' role. In the case of divorced women, the father's contribution never arose.

The option of flexibility very often led the women to the conviction that they were in control and free to make decisions. As the Hungarian labour market gives very little flexibility to employees, this option coming with a job is rated very highly. This is true even in cases where the working time regime fully clashes with the time when reproductive responsibilities must be attended to, for example a videoconference is scheduled when the mother should be picking up the child from kindergarten or school. In such cases it is not the workplace, but the employee and her family are flexible:

> I often go to pick up the children with the earplug in my ear and I just wave at them to get in the car, and they have to be very cooperative then, they must know that mummy is in a call. (2)

Many feel they have to 'repay' flexibility by working at night the time spent with managing private affairs, visits to the doctor's, school functions, etc. The reverse, i.e., taking time off and working less in return for night or weekend work never arose. Yet it is part of the employee's flexibility to interrupt her summer vacation is the company's operation so requires:

> Yes, sometimes it's awkward, it did happen that I had to be on the alert while I was on my summer vacation, I had to know when the next airplane flew out of which airport in case I had to fly back home in an emergency. (8)

Sometimes the perception of flexibility and freedom of choice masks the fact that these women executives work as parts of an extensive work regime. The amount of work to be done is always considerably more than can be handled within the normal working time. This issue, however, was not raised by the respondents. In fact, some of them considered it a matter of choice whether they should work in the evening at home or whether they should stay in the office overtime.

Although considering their own practice, the majority of the respondents felt they were quite successful in

managing boundaries, they generally admitted to performing work-related tasks in the evenings and often over the weekends. While they did not consider this a good thing, they insisted that they were only taking away time reserved for themselves.

Use of ICT technology for private purposes during working time, while it occurred, was very limited. They generally used the devices for logistics, i.e., for micro-coordination. The most frequently mentioned purpose was communication with family, primarily with the partner, child, parents or teachers. To remember, plan and undertake these logistic tasks generally remained the woman's job.

Permanent time pressure compelled respondents to use any filler time anywhere to work—during the children's extracurricular lessons or parent-teacher meetings, on the motorway, in traffic jams. Those who commuted daily found utilising travel time particularly important. They were also positive about better exploitation of the 'free time' generated by business trips. They never mentioned that these business trips often encroached upon the individual's personal time or weekends.

There were significant differences in setting borders. Flexible but controlled device use for micro-coordination was continuous on weekdays. Mobile phones promoted getting information without allowing uncontrolled infiltration of one sphere into the other. They were typically in alert mode. Protection of private sphere was only limited on weekdays. Respondents differed most markedly in protecting their weekends and even more whilst on vacation. However, keeping private life out of work seemed to be more effective than vice versa:

> My daughter knows I want to know how she did, she doesn't call me but snaps her A+ maths test and sends me the picture. (20)

The respondents are positioned along a continuum from separation to integration. Some felt they almost always had to be accessible for their office and showed only minor signs of setting boundaries. They do not necessarily consider vacation sacrosanct, and one of them said vacation means there is no limit between work and leisure. In this exceptional case boundaries were entirely porous. At the other extreme were those who separated the two domains more clearly and tried not to work from home in the evening and either left their mobile devices in the office for the weekend or only checked on their phone whether they received any important e-mail.

Small practices protecting nights and weekends from the intrusion of mobile phones were quite widespread: instead of putting the phone on the bedside table they left it on the desk, in the kitchen or on another storey of the home in an effort to keep away from the phone and e-mails.

They also developed tactics for work to find them in several stages if their involvement is necessary. In urgent cases they receive a text or call telling them to check their mail. Several respondents mentioned this also eased the pressure on underlings.

No respondent mentioned company policy regulating technology use. However, some respondents raised corporate responsibility issues: work tasks dumped on continuously by e-mail day and night and weekends is oppressive and obstructs rest.

Despite perceiving this as a potential problem, respondents took informal and inconsistent rather than formalized steps. The respondent who stated colleagues leave each other alone in the evening actually worked regularly on her laptop every evening and kept sending e-mails to colleagues.

6.2. Mothering and Mobile Technologies

Around the system change thirty years ago the ideology of intensive mothering was less pressing, not least because the system was based upon dual earner families. Still, it is important to note that the early signs of refamilisation and intensive mothering were present in the last decades of socialism, for example, through the introduction of a lengthy parental leave scheme. Today the social pressure of intensive mothering conspicuously affects women. Executive mothers were often denigrated in their environment, by female family members or friends and nursery teachers for spending little time with their children.

Similarly to the general consensus that mobile technologies were both a blessing and a curse, the feeling was the same in the context of mothering. At the level of standards and rhetoric it was beyond question that the respondents considered time with their children to be paramount and needing protection. They felt that mobile technologies increased their accessibility, and while this was regarded as an advantage during working hours, it was a disadvantage in their leisure.

Several respondents tried to return to their pre-childbearing pace of work but soon realised this had to change. In the new situation the mobile phone extended work time and the interviewee managed to conduct the day's opening and closing meetings with staff whilst commuting:

> That's superb, totally great as it was the first thing that got me out of a fix, hands-free car phone. So I extended my working time morning and evening as I could make a conference call, or summarized the day with the people. (3)

Delegating household tasks to paid help was also subordinated to extended working time. A sign of extensive mothering, it allowed women executives to work longer hours and spend less time on domestic responsibilities. Outsourced tasks were generally undertaken by other women (babysitters, housekeeper), but there are jobs typically relegated to men. Mobile phones were indis-

pensable for organising their involvement as it reinforced the attentive and caring mother image.

Skype talk was also raised in the interviews. For women travelling a lot technology helps create intimacy and connectedness with the family. Absent presence was made possible by mobile technologies:

> My child was crying in the small hours, my husband called me to go on skype, I was in Cape Town and they were back home, and the child was pacified and went back [to sleep] all happy. (13)

On the other hand, some did not prefer remote mothering. Instead they collected their children at 5 PM, the official end of working hours, and continued working at night through their devices as a matter of course. Many of the respondents defined it as part of a mother's job to be with the child:

> So I make a point of getting up at five from the desk and going to the nursery because it's very important for me that the child should feel mummy is not just mummy at a distance or stumbling home at seven but she is involved in these things. (10)

Some respondents stayed home after school with their teenage children and continued with their professional tasks in home office mode, replying to mail and attending videoconferences. Others had reservations whether this would work with very young children.

Third sites also had a role in working and mothering simultaneously. Mobile technologies enable mothers to work in situations where the child is engaged in sport or school activities. This is similar to the figure of 'busy cyborg mums' who lie in symbiosis with technology and workplace professionally managing two roles without contravening the demands of good mothering:

> I was at my child's fancy dress ball and there was a half-hour telephone conference I couldn't do anything about. The ball was on and I went out and sat in the car, called in on my phone and stayed on half an hour. The kid had a great time at the ball, I went back in, everything was okay, no one had any idea I was actually coming out of a fancy dress ball, I just connected on the mobile and that was it. (4)

Quality time regularly recurred in the narratives: the respondents tended to mute or set aside their phones to have undisturbed family time. But there in some cases the respondents never even noticed they used their phones excessively. The following is a particularly interesting narrative that shows no self-reflexion as the respondent later talked about the negative effect of device use on her children:

> When my daughter said, "you're always busy and even when you're home you're fiddling with your gadgets all the time," well, she was nine at the time and it was like looking into a mirror. I never thought I was overdoing it, I don't, even now…but it was too much for the kid. The little one hates the phone. Whenever he sees it, he tries to hide it, so if I leave it in sight I'll have a tough time finding it. He abhors the phone. (15)

The phone is the object of fear, when in effect children protest against the work regime that intrudes home life, distracting the parent who is devoted to both her work and her family.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The article focused on the impacts of technology, particularly mobile technologies, on women's perception of work–life balance and their use of devices in trying to meet the demands of being devoted mothers and being devoted employees. We sought answers to these questions by interviewing twenty Hungarian women in executive positions.

Previous studies had contradictory conclusions: there were significant concerns about using mobile technologies for fear of the incipient possibility of continuous work and the colonisation of private sphere and time (Edley, 2001). On the other hand, increasing flexibility reduces the friction between the two domains and the time spent commuting (Wajcman et al., 2008, 2010). Work is intensified by device use as more tasks can be accomplished, but it also becomes more extensive (Mullan & Wajcman, 2019). An additional complication for women is their dual commitment to work and family (Blair-Loy, 2005). Women who apply mobile technologies professionally in meeting the demands of these competing spheres realise that some aspects of the double shift can be conducted simultaneously. Others argue that mothering can be extended without disrupting work (Christopher, 2012).

Consistent with the literature, our findings reveal that the use of technology greatly promoted women executives' ability to simultaneously meet the demands of work and family (Christopher, 2012; Currie & Eveline, 2011). Several respondents felt they could not have tackled potential crises without relying on their devices, nor would they have managed to build a professional career whilst running a family. Tóth (2005) had similar findings analysing Unilever Hungary's managers, where managers, typically fathers, travelling home stretched the otherwise rather short 'family time.'

Narratives of mobile technology use and practices were contradictory and highlighted the priority of work. The world of work had colonised private sphere even though employees considered the two to be parallel and equal, and thought they made the ultimate decision. Similarly to Wajcman et al. (2008) we found the insight that the executives controlled their technology use. This was reinforced by the finding that they often used their mobile phones for micro-coordination

(Duxbury & Smart, 2011), which strengthened the perception of flexibility.

On the other hand, while they described their relationship with technology and particularly to mobile phones as conflict-prone and aggravating, they did not reflect on organisations behind the devices demanding full commitment. Organisations have a direct economic interest in executives being accessible virtually anywhere any time. This is consistent with the narratives of American women executives (Adamson, 2017).

Another similarity with the findings of the research on American women executives was the reformulation of 'smart' relationship with the smartphone as individual responsibility. However, their narratives confirmed earlier research findings (Currie & Eveline, 2011; Edley, 2001) on the encroachment and intensification of work and its spatial and temporal expansion.

A clear sign of corporate colonisation work after the children have gone to bed. If this was done online or by e-mail it had a particularly oppressive effect on mothers with young children who were doing their best to prove their commitment. Researching, among others, Australian executives and professionals, Wajcman et al. (2008) also found that mobile technologies often impinged upon private life and guaranteed flexibility.

Still, the Australian or Western models are only partially relevant to the Hungarian situation. The reason behind this is the limited agency of employees working for these subsidiary companies in post-socialist countries, also called 'victims' of neoliberalism. For the latter, managerial work has become almost limitless: typical at night and frequent at weekend and during vacation. However, these behaviours were always interpreted as a matter of individual decision, thus shifting stress on personal responsibility. This is obviously explained by Hungarian organisations' greater exposure to global economic and political systems. Exploring the signs of this exposure might be a contribution to previous research findings.

The women executives talked most about individual coping tactics and solutions, and their responsibility; moreover, they considered responding a matter of individual choice. Some mentioned they had to be strict with themselves and set up rules. These self-regulatory remarks are in line with Adamson's (2017) findings. They took mostly individual steps to protect themselves from their job.

Besides individual responsibility, the importance of flexibility provided by mobile devices also arose. Even in blatantly obvious clashes, when the respondent had to attend her child's school event and participate in a conference call at the same time, i.e., when she had to work two shifts simultaneously, she felt there was a genuine choice, whereas in these situations obviously it was not the workplace but the employee and her family that had to be flexible.

The findings reveal primarily individual micro-level practices: muting phones, limited handling of e-mails at weekends and using filters were all applied by the women executives. Some of these practices improved work–life balance only on an individual level but did not resolve the overall situation causing tension. They reproduced the system with limited criticism, and personal examples reinforced rather than questioned these practices.

Beyond the well-documented post-feminist and neoliberal turns in Western scholarship, special attention should be paid to the phenomena caused by refamilisation in post-socialist countries. Results supporting the effects of refamilisation depict the difficulties of managing work–life balance. The situation of women executives was paradoxical: they clearly had to prove their commitment to family and job simultaneously and successfully. Despite having sufficient financial tools to cover the costs of outsourcing various child related tasks, they were warned by their environment to be good and available mothers. Mobile technologies have become important in meeting this challenge, enabling women to embrace the extensive mothering model (Christopher, 2012).

The use of mobile technology reinforces the image of self-disciplined, hard-working cyborg women, without changing the organisational and social status quo based on gender inequality. The flexibility and control provided by mobile devices underpin the perception of tensions and boundaries being manageable while it distracts from the fact that work is becoming increasingly intensive and extensive. It seems women executives receive precious little organisational and social support.

Acknowledgments

The project was financed by the National Research Development Fund (K120086). The author thanks all the reviewers and editors involved in the revisions of this work for *Social Inclusion* for their valuable feedback.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Adamson, M. (2017). Postfeminism, neoliberalism and a 'successfully' balanced femininity in celebrity CEO autobiographies. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *24*(3), 314–327.

Badinter, E. (2012). *The conflict: How modern motherhood undermines the status of women*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Metropolitan Books.

Blair-Loy, M. (2005). *Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cavazotte, F., Lemos, A. H., & Villadsen, K. (2014). Corporate smart phones: Professionals' conscious engagement in escalating work connectivity. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, *29*(1), 72–87. https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12022

Chesley, N. (2010). Technology use and employee assessments of work effectiveness, workload, and pace of life. *Information, Communication & Society*, *13*(4), 485–514.

Christopher, K. (2012). Extensive mothering: Employed mothers' constructions of the good mother. *Gender & Society*, *26*(1), 73–96.

Crowe, R., & Middleton, C. (2012). Women, smartphones and the workplace. *Feminist Media Studies*, *12*(4), 560–569. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2012.741872

Currie, J., & Eveline, J. (2011). E-technology and work/life balance for academics with young children. *Higher Education*, *62*, 533–550. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-010-9404-9

Dén-Nagy, I. (2014). A double-edged sword? A critical evaluation of the mobile phone in creating work–life balance. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, *29*(2), 193–211.

Duxbury, L., & Smart, R. (2011). The "myth of separate worlds": An exploration of how mobile technology has redefined work–life balance. In S. R. Kaiser, M. Pina e Cunha, M. Ringlstetter, & D. Eikhof (Eds.), *Creating balance? International perspectives on the work–life integration of professionals* (pp. 269–284). Heidelberg: Springer.

Edley, P. (2001). Technology, employed mothers, and corporate colonization of the lifeworld: A gendered paradox of work and family balance. *Women and Language*, *24*(2), 28–35.

Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. vJessop, B. (2013). Putting neoliberalism in its time and place: A response to the debate. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, *21*(1), 65–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12003

Kossek, E. E. (2016). Managing work–life boundaries in the digital age. *Organizational Dynamics*, *45*(3), 258–270. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.07.010

Mullan, K., & Wajcman, J. (2019). Have mobile devices changed working patterns in the 21st century? A time-diary analysis of work extension in the UK. *Work, Employment and Society*, *33*(1), 3–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017017730529

Oborni, K. (2018). A részmunkaidő karriert támogató szerepéről a magasan képzett nők körében [The career supportive role of part-time work among highly qualified professional women]. *Szociológiai Szemle*, *28*(3), 87–113.

Primecz, H., Toarniczky, A., Kiss, C., Csillag, S., Szilas, R., Milassin, A., & Bácsi, K. (2016). Information and communications technology's impact on work–life interference: Cases of 'employee-friendly organizations.' *Intersections*, *2*(3), 61–83. http://dx.doi.org/10.17356/ieejsp.v2i3.158

Saxonberg, S., & Sirovátka, T. (2006). Failing family policy in post-communist Central Europe. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, *8*(2), 185–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/13876980600682089

Sørensen, S. Ø. (2017). The performativity of choice: Postfeminist perspectives on work–life balance. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *24*(3), 297–313. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12163

Tóth, H. (2005). Gendered dilemmas of the work–life balance in Hungary. *Women in Management Review*, *20*(5), 361–375. https://doi.org/10.1108/09649420510609195

Towers, I., Duxbury, L., Higgins, C., & Thomas, J. (2006). Time thieves and space invaders: Technology, work and the organization. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *19*(5) 593–618.

Wajcman, J., Bittman, M., & Brown, J. E. (2008). Families without borders: Mobile phones, connectedness and work-home divisions. *Sociology*, *42*(4), 635–652. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508091620

Wajcman, J., Rose, E., Brown, J. E., & Bittman, M. (2010). Enacting virtual connections between work and home. *Journal of Sociology*, *46*(3), 257–275. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783310365583

About the Author

Beáta Nagy is Professor at the Corvinus University of Budapest. She is Board Member of the European Consortium for Sociological Research (ECSR). Her previous research dealt with work–life balance; the present one focuses on time teenagers and their parents spend together with special attention to mobile technology. She has recently co-edited special issues for the journals *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* and the *European Management Review*.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 81–91
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2962

Article

The Father's Role in Child Care: Parental Leave Policies in Lithuania and Sweden

Jolanta Aidukaite * and Donata Telisauskaite-Cekanavice

Lithuanian Social Research Centre, 01108 Vilnius, Lithuania; E-Mails: jolanta.aidukaite@lstc.lt (J.A.), donata.telisauskaite@gmail.com (D.T.-C.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 26 February 2020 | Accepted: 29 June 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
This article contributes to the debate on the father's role in child care by looking at two distinct cases of child care policy development: Sweden and Lithuania. The findings show that Sweden continues to embrace the dual-earner-carer model very successfully. Parental leave, including non-transferable father's quota, is very popular among the population. In Lithuania we find the dual-earner model, as there is still more emphasis on the mother's employment than on the father's child care involvement. Based on the experts' views and document analysis, we conclude that in Lithuania the parental leave benefit is increasingly seen as a measure to ensure the family's financial security, but not as an instrument to enhance fatherhood rights. Yet, the state intentionally supports kinship familialism as grandparents are entitled to take parental leave.

Keywords
child care; family policies; Lithuania; parental leave; social policies; Sweden

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

A mother's role as worker and carer has been widely recognised through the provision of various work-family reconciliation policies, while the father's participation in child care is still debated and supported to a lesser degree (Leira, 2002; Ma, Andersson, Duvander, & Evertsson, 2019; Saraceno, 2013). Previous studies (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Hobson, Fahlén, & Takács, 2011; Ma et al., 2019; Takács, 2019) have shown that in Europe fathers are becoming increasingly actively involved in their parental role. However, their engagement varies considerably among countries, e.g., the Nordic countries are still the leaders with other countries lagging behind. Economic losses in taking parental leave, cultural/societal norms, including childhood socialisation patterns, long work hours and precariousness in the labour market prevent fathers from taking parental leave (Hobson et al., 2011; Ma et al., 2019; Takács, 2019). Yet, workplace characteristics matter, as in the private sector and in male dominated workplaces, where fathers are less likely to take parental leave (Bygren & Duvander, 2006).

This article seeks to contribute to a further debate on the father's role in child care by looking into two distinct cases of family policy development: Sweden, as a role model in expanding a father's right to child care on the one hand, and Lithuania, as a new EU member with less-developed fathers' rights as a carer on the other. Comparison to Sweden is common in family policy research. Hungary (Hobson et al., 2011), Spain (Hagqvist, Nordenmark, Pérez, Trujillo Alemán, & Gillander Gådin, 2017), Great Britain (Kaufman & Almqvist, 2017) and Poland (Suwada, 2017) were compared to Sweden to ex-

plore how changes in policy affect gendered time use, and how fatherhood is constructed in different socioeconomic settings. This study adopts a similar approach by using Sweden as a reference point for exploring a little-known case of Lithuania. The Lithuanian case is interesting as it went through numerous reforms in the family policy field over the last 30 years. In recent comparative social policy literature, it is often presented as a highly defamiliarising case of family-support-system development, especially if parental leave and child care policies (from birth to mandatory schooling age) are taken into account (see Javornik, 2014; Javornik & Kurowska, 2017). However, social policy reforms do not always work in practice as expected, and the outcomes may not necessarily be what was intended (Ferge, 2001). They have to be supported from below in order to make them legitimate (Veenhoven, 2001; Wendt, Mischke, & Pfeifer, 2011).

Thus, the scope of this article is twofold. On the one hand, we aim (1) to examine the factors that facilitate the expansion of a father's right to be a carer for his children. This is done by re-examining previous literature and drawing conclusions from the analysis of 29 expert interviews conducted specifically for this study. On the other hand, we seek (2) to explore citizens' attitudes towards parental leave policies. This is done by analysing quantitative data collected through original surveys conducted in Lithuania and Sweden. Both aims are interrelated as they help to better understand the father's role in child care in different EU countries. The experts' views and knowledge help to reconstruct the objectives of the child care policies and obstacles encountered by the fathers to take on their child care role. The citizens' satisfaction and attitudes illustrate the actual acceptance of the policies.

Our study is guided by two questions: Which factors/conditions facilitate the expansion of the rights of working fathers to care for their children? How do citizens in Sweden and Lithuania evaluate parental leave policies?

First, we discuss the various family policy models and their intended outcomes for the female labour force participation and gender equality. Second, we present the methodology of the article. Third, we move into a detailed comparative analysis of currently existing child care policies in Sweden and Lithuania. Fourth, based on 29 interviews with experts, we analyse the issues in relation to fathers' involvement in child care. Fifth, we discuss the citizens' satisfaction with parental leave policies to hypothesise how much they can be sustainable in the future. Finally, we offer concluding remarks.

2. Family Policy, Sweden and Lithuania

Over the course of welfare state development history in European countries, many welfare state societies directly or indirectly supported the male-breadwinner/family-carer model. The 21st century saw a clear shift towards the dual earner, and in some cases also the dual-earner/dual-carer model (Duvander & Ferrarini, 2013; Saraceno, 2013). In the dual-earner family/gender model, as defined by Korpi (2000), governments seek to increase female labour force participation through policies that support the mother's employment. Central to the dual-earner model are care facilities, available on a continuous basis, for the youngest pre-school children as well as earnings-related maternity and parental leave. The dual-earner/dual-carer model implies that not only do states support both parents' (usually mother's) employment through various welfare provisions, but also encourages the father's participation in child care (Saraceno, 2013). Fathers' participation in child care is encouraged through shared parental leave and/or paternity leave policies specifically designed for a father. It is widely recognised that the Nordic countries are the most advanced in their support of the rights of working fathers to care for their children.

In recent years, researchers developed various typologies of familialisation/defamilialisation to understand variations in family policies across countries and/or also to measure variation at the policy level as both familialising and defamilialising policies can coexist in a single country (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Leitner, 2003; Lohmann & Zagel, 2016; Saraceno, 2016). Defamilialisation refers to the liberation of the individual (mainly women) from dependencies (financial and caring) on a family relationship. Familialisation refers to the reinforcement of the individual's dependencies in a family relationship (Esping-Andersen, 2009; Leitner, 2003; Lohmann & Zagel, 2016; Saraceno, 2016; Yin-Nei Cho, 2014). It has been widely agreed that well-developed and widely available public child care services (or provided by the market or voluntary sector) as well as generous paid maternity, parental and paternity leaves, with a strong attachment to the labour market, ensure defamilialisation. Flat-rate cash payments that support family care at home and underdeveloped child care services have familialising effects. Paid paternity leave or parental leave, reserved for the exclusive use of fathers, clearly has defamilialising effects as it promotes gender equality in child caring responsibilities and an equal division of unpaid work at home (Leitner, 2003; Lohmann & Zagel, 2016; Yin-Nei Cho, 2014). However, some authors (Leira, 2002; Saraceno & Keck, 2011) consider paternity leave to be a form of familialisation of fatherhood, as it helps the father to maintain his familial duties. It increases gender equality in a family, especially in child caring function. For this reason, Saraceno and Keck (2011) have attributed a father's parental leave and paternity leave policies to the supported familialism model. We find concepts of familialisation and defamilialisation useful in analysing the differences and similarities between child care policies in Lithuania and Sweden. However, we do not intend to use them systematically, but rather, we use these concepts to illustrate the dynamics of child care policies in the two countries.

Sweden is often considered as the most developed example of the dual-earner and dual-carer family model. It should be noted that gender equality has been at the core of family policy formation in all Nordic nations (Grødem, 2017; Haas & Rostgaard, 2011). Since 1974, Sweden has become the first country in the world that extended the field of family policy to both parents and involved fathers by introducing shared parental leave (Bygren & Duvander, 2006; Duvander & Ferrarini, 2013). However:

> Non-transferable entitlement to parental leave was first made available to fathers in Nordic nations in 1993, when Norway became the first nation in the world to offer fathers four weeks of father's quota that could not be transferred to mothers. (Haas & Rostgaard, 2011, p. 180)

In 1995, Sweden switched to a dual-carer family model by introducing one-month compulsory parental leave for a mother and a father (Duvander & Johansson, 2012). Thus, "the concept of 'caring father' was politically institutionalised well before it was made a policy issue in other countries" (Leira, 2002, p. 11).

Lithuania is an interesting case as it resembles the high female labour force participation, one among the highest in the EU. This could be considered as something that was inherited from the Soviet past. The Soviet state supported mothers' employment through a widespread network of child care facilities. Even if the high female labour force participation was achieved in the Soviet Union, unpaid jobs at home were not monetised. This created great gender inequalities in public and private spheres, as work at home was considered to be the sole female burden. The family policy has gone through dramatic reconfigurations in Lithuania since regaining its independence in the 1990s (for details see Aidukaite, 2006a; Stankuniene, 2001). The reforms' paths have been observed from defamilialism to familialism (1990 until 1996); and from familialism to defamilialism again (1997 and forward), however, with some coexistence (or elements) of familialism at the same time. The Lithuanian family policy was developed inconsistently. The emphasis was placed on financial support, while services were underdeveloped. The means-tested benefits were an important part of the financial support for families in Lithuania (Aidukaite, 2006a, 2016; Žalimienė, 2015). At present, Lithuania has rather generous parental leave policies. A previous study by Javornik (2014) that focused on parental leave and child care policies (from birth to mandatory schooling age), assigned Lithuanian systems as supporting defamilialism since the state seeks to incentivise women's continuous employment and active fatherhood through parental and paternity leave policies and available public child care. However, Lithuanian parental leave policy is not backed up by the secure access to public child care. This creates problems for mothers wanting to return to the labour market after a one-year parental leave (Javornik & Kurowska, 2017).

In the subsequent discussion, we analyse in detail the child care policies in Sweden and Lithuania looking for similarities and differences. However, before moving into this endeavour, the methodology of the article must be delineated. This is done in the following section.

3. Methodology

We ground our methodology on a comparative case study. Comparative case studies encompass the analysis of the differences and similarities across two or more cases that share a common focus. Comparative case studies usually use both qualitative and quantitative data. It is important in comparative case studies to describe each case in depth from the beginning as this enables a successful comparison (Goodrick, 2014). The qualitative data used in this study come from the semi-structured interviews with social policy experts conducted in 2018 in Lithuania and Sweden. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted (14 in Sweden and 15 in Lithuania). In Sweden, the experts interviewed for this study are policy makers working at the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Swedish Social Insurance Agency and leading scholars in the social policy field. In Lithuania, experts interviewed are from the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Social Insurance Board and leading scholars in the field. We recruited experts through our own knowledge of them in Lithuania. In Sweden, we recruited with the advice of Swedish colleagues working at Stockholm University. We targeted the most leading figures (policy makers, practitioners and scientists) in the family policy field in both countries. The interviews provide rich information to aid in understanding the major problems and challenges in child care policies in the two countries under study as well as to capture conditions that support the father's involvement in child care.

The quantitative data come from the nationwide surveys, which were conducted in two countries in 2018 (December, in Lithuania) and 2019 (January, in Sweden) providing unique information on how citizens evaluate public support to families. The surveys were carried out as part of the project 'Challenges to welfare state systems in Lithuania and Sweden' led by J. Aidukaite and financed by the Research Council of Lithuania. The questions were designed specifically to collect information on the satisfactions and attitudes related to family policy issues in two countries. The questionnaire, in Lithuania, was carried out by the Market and Opinion Research Centre 'Vilmorus.' In Sweden, the identical questionnaire was carried out by NorStat. The multi-stage probability sample with a random route procedure was used for the survey in both countries. 1,000 respondents were questioned in each country. The response rate was between 28%–36%, which is in a normal range. There was no representation bias (distributions regarding some socio-demographics are similar to the popu-

lation). In Lithuania, the questionnaire was completed through personal, face-to-face interviews at the homes of respondents by trained and supervised interviewers. In Sweden, the survey was carried out online. To capture satisfaction with the parental leave policies, the respondents were asked to evaluate the parental leave policies (parental, paternity and maternity; very good, good, poor, very poor, do not know). The Chi-squared test was used to observe if there are any significant differences in the distribution between men and women in their answers/evaluations.

4. Child Care Policies in Lithuania and Sweden: A Comparative Analysis

We began our analysis with the overview of the child care policy arrangements in Lithuania and Sweden, emphasising similarities and differences. They are needed to understand the context in which fathers make their decisions to take parental leave. It is well known that Sweden is a prototype of the social-democratic welfare regime that is characterised by the low levels of poverty and inequality. Yet, an important characteristic of the social-democratic regime is that it places a heavy emphasis on services instead of benefits. On the contrary, Lithuania is among the countries of the EU with the highest income inequalities and the lowest minimum wage (see Aidukaite, 2019), regarded as a post-socialist or hybrid welfare state (Aidukaite, 2006b; Kuitto, 2016), having characteristics of all regimes delineated by Esping-Andersen (1990), with less-developed services, but with heavy reliance on social insurance contributions. These general characteristics are present in the family support systems of two countries. We find significant differences when comparing the provision of child care institutions (nurseries and preschool facilities). According to the OECD data for 2016, the enrolment rate of 3- to 5-year-old children in Sweden was about 96%, while in Lithuania it was 84%. The differences are much higher if the enrolment rates of children up to 2 years of age are examined. The enrolment rate for Sweden was 46.5%, while for Lithuania it was only 23%, which is lower than that of the EU (31%) or OECD (33%) averages. Nevertheless, in Lithuania and Sweden child care establishment legislation is the same: Children attend the child care facilities/kindergartens until the age of six; public child care services are subsidised by the local governments. However, the right to have a place in the kindergarten is not fully exercised in Lithuania. In Sweden, after a child becomes one year old, he/she has a right to attend the kindergarten and be assigned with a place three months after registration (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2018). However, in Lithuania parents, especially in larger cities, have to wait an unlimited time for a place in the kindergarten. Due to lack of public child care facilities, parents are forced to turn to informal care arrangements and the OEDC statistics confirm that. The proportion of children using informal child care (care provided by grandparents or other relatives, neighbours and friends for which the provider does not receive payment) is quite high in Lithuania, which was almost 23% for 0- to 2-year-olds and slightly above 30% for three to five year olds. Informal care in Sweden is negligible, almost absent, comprising 0.4% (data for 2016; OECD, 2019).

In both countries the universal child allowance is paid to all children irrespective of parents' income. In Sweden, it helps to equalise incomes between parents who raise children and childless individuals. In Lithuania, by introducing the universal child allowance, the government meant to reduce poverty among families with children (for details, see Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2019; Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2018). Moreover, parents in Sweden are entitled to up to 25% shortened working days for raising children until the age of eight, though their income will decrease accordingly (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2018). In Lithuania, such an opportunity also exists, but only for parents raising more than one child. One or two off-work days are given depending on the family size and can be used as full non-working days or by shortening working hours (Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2018).

Overall, the legislation in both countries is rather favourable to parents raising children. In both countries, the universal child allowance is paid, and means-tested benefits are provided; public child care services are subsidised by the local government and additional non-working days are provided to employed parents with small children.

Let us turn to the parental leave policy, which is of major interest to our study. In Sweden, the maternity, paternity and parental leave policies are merged, while in Lithuania a clear distinction is made and they consist of separate schemes. In Sweden, the only benefit that is eligible to mothers (not both parents) is the pregnancy cash benefit, which is applied and paid for a maximum of 71 days to all women who work in physical or risky jobs. The pregnancy benefit is only available after the Swedish Social Insurance Agency has accepted the work as 'risky,' too physically hard and no temporary change can be made at the workplace. There is also a 2-week paternity leave available to all employed fathers. The pregnancy and the paternity benefits cover up to 80% of their previous salary (Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2018).

In Lithuania, all mothers are entitled to maternity leave during their pre-birth and post-birth periods. If a person is not covered by Sickness and Maternity Insurance or does not have sufficient working experience, a pregnancy grant is given (€76, from 2020 increased to €250). Yet, every mother receives a universal child birth grant, which is payable in a lump sum after the child is born (€418, from 2020 paid €429). A maternity benefit for insured mothers is paid for 126 calendar days; the payment period can differ depending on the existing circumstances (e.g., risky physical job). Paternity leave has been enacted by law since July 2006 and currently is paid to fathers for 30 calendar days after child-

birth and since 1 July 2017 the father can use this period of leave until the child is 3 months old (from 2020 until the child is 12 months old). The ceiling is applied to the paternity benefit. The maximum level of paternity leave benefit due to the ceiling is equal to two national average monthly salaries and the minimal benefit cannot be smaller than €228 (from 2020 equals to €234). Starting 1 January 2019, the replacement rate for the paternity and maternity benefits is 77.58% (gross) of the compensated recipient's wages (Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2019, 2020a, 2020b; MISSOC, 2018; Lithuanian Social Insurance Board, 2019a, 2020).

In Sweden, each parent receives 240 sharable days (480 in total) of parental leave. Both mother and father have an equal part of a non-transferable period of parental leave (90 days each—mother's quota and father's quota), which can be used in parts (months, weeks, days, hours), while the remaining 300 days (from which a 90 day flat rate is paid and does not depend on previous salary) can be shared voluntarily, until the child becomes 12 years old (MISSOC, 2018; Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2018). Based on interviews discussed in the following section, the Swedish government is considering increasing the number of non-transferable days up to 150, but it has not been enacted yet. While analysing parental leave benefits in Sweden, it is essential to point out that it depends on the previous salary and paid social insurance contributions. The benefit level provided up to 390 days is relatively high—up to 80% of previously received salary, the minimum rate—€24.30 per day. Sweden has a fixed 'ceiling' for parental leave benefit—it cannot be higher than €3,606.22 per month. The remaining 90 days of parental leave are paid at an equal flat rate of €17.50 per day regardless of past income. Those parents who are unemployed receive a benefit of up to €24.30. The employers are actively involved in providing various family benefits, for instance, employers on their own initiative, based on collective agreements, are able to compensate the part (about 10%) of employees' previous income who are on parental leave (MISSOC, 2018; Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2018).

Parental leave in Lithuania can be taken by a father or a mother. From 1 April 2018, one of the grandparents can also take a parental leave, if both parents want to come back to work and the grandparent is covered by the social insurance. The family is able to choose how long they want to receive the parental leave benefit—one or two years. According to new amendments implemented in January 2019, if a parent (or foster parent) chooses to receive a benefit until the child is one year old, he/she is paid 77.58% (gross) of the compensated recipient's wages. If one of the parents (or foster parents) chooses to receive the benefit until the child is two years old, he/she is paid 54.31% (gross) until the child is one year old, and later, until the child is two years old, 31.03% (gross) of the compensated recipient's wages. During the second year the father or mother receiving the benefit has the ability to work and receive the child care benefit at the same time (Lithuanian Social Insurance Board, 2019). If two or more children are born, compensation increases according to the legislation. Both a 'ceiling' and 'floor' are applied to the parental leave benefit (Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2019; MISSOC, 2018).

To sum up, according to legislation the Swedish and Lithuanian parental leave systems show signs of similarities and differences. The major difference is, in Sweden the more active the father's involvement is in child care, he can receive three months of non-transferable parental leave. The Swedish system also offers a higher flexibility as the parental leave can be utilised until the child's 12th birthday. The father's role in child care is obviously less pronounced in Lithuania as it is only one month of the entitlement for a father. But the father has an opportunity to take parental leave in the second or the first year.

5. Analysis of Interviews of Experts in Lithuania and Sweden

Before starting our analysis of interviews of experts, it is important to look at some statistical data on the fathers' parental leave. According to the latest OECD data for 2016, the male share of recipients of parental leave in Sweden was 45.3%, while in Lithuania it is 21.6%. The OECD average was 18%. In Sweden, the father's quota, which was introduced in 1995, became popular, and helped to gradually increase the proportion of fathers taking longer parental leaves (Ma et al., 2019). According to the Lithuanian Social Insurance Board (2019b) statistics, the number of fathers taking parental leave increased from 3,300 who received it in 2009 to 10,100 who received it in 2018. Let us examine the experts' views on fathers' behaviour.

The majority of experts interviewed stressed that in Lithuania fathers choose parental leave purely due to the family's financial interests: "Women usually take parental leave because women still receive lower salaries than men, so men work to support their families" (LT expert, Lithuanian Social Insurance Board). Families evaluate their financial options and calculate for which parent it is more advantageous to use parental leave so the family would not endure income loss. Informants also observed that fathers often choose to take a second year of parental leave:

> For the first year, surely, mothers use the child care leave, while during the second year, it is transferred to fathers, because they get bigger salaries, and if you read the legislation, it is also not obligatory to evaluate income, fathers simply receive 40% of their previous salary. (LT expert, Lithuanian Social Insurance Board)

In Lithuania a mother is covered by social insurance until the child turns three, if she is not working. However,

this affects her future pension benefit as she is only insured with minimum wage contributions. Since the gender wage gap still exists, the men often receive a higher salary than women, it is financially beneficial for a father to go on parental leave during the second year. This is also supported by previous studies. Studies (Braziene & Vysniauskiene, 2019; Šarlauskas & Telešienė, 2014) showed that the majority of families in Lithuania chose to stay on parental leave up to two years. These are mainly mothers (about 70%–80%), who take two-year parental leave. Few mothers (about 10%) and fathers (less than 5%) took the one-year parental leave in 2013. The pattern has been identified in Lithuania that parental leave for a second year was increasingly taken by the fathers. Their numbers have increased from 5% up to 20% during the period from January 2012 through August 2013. In most of these cases the mother stayed at home and engaged in full time home care, while the father engaged in full time employment and additionally received a parental benefit. This situation, as stressed by Šarlauskas and Telešienė (2014), supports familialism, increases the mother's financial dependency upon her husband and does not contribute to gender equality within the family.

It can be stated that in Lithuania the parental leave benefit is increasingly seen as a tool to ensure the family's financial security, but not as a key to enhance fatherhood rights. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian experts viewed parental leave policy in a positive way. This can be illustrated by the quote: "The parental leave system is probably one of the best in Europe, taking into account a long duration and the possibility to share it between parents" (LT expert, Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour).

The economic incentives of taking parental leave were also emphasised in Sweden, however, to a lesser extent and from a different perspective. Sweden is also facing difficulties, despite the continuing policy of gender equality throughout the years. Parental leave is still largely used by women (40% male vs. 60% female; Swedish Social Insurance Agency, 2017), one reason being a gender pay gap. The other issue concerns the parental benefit size. The low-income fathers are not inclined to take parental leave as it reduces their income considerably. This means that gender equality is more feasible among higher income earners as middle- and upper-class fathers are more inclined to take parental leave than lower income fathers. Many of the experts worried that fathers with low income or outside of the labour market, without social insurance coverage, use parental leave to a lesser extent:

> Well fathers who do not have a job and are outside the labour market they do not use the parental leave to the same extent. So they are outside the social insurance system and they are outside the labour market, so they become marginalised in that way. (SE expert, scientist)

These are often people with an immigrant background, working on a secondary labour market. The migrant families, especially those newly arrived, support the traditional family model of a single male breadwinner, which contradicts the Swedish dual-earner-carer model. These findings were also supported by the previous study (Ma et al., 2019), which showed that better-educated, living in metropolitan areas and surrounding suburbs, as well as Swedish-born fathers used parental leave more than young fathers, low-income earners and foreign-born fathers. Other studies (Grødem, 2017; Sainsbury, 2018) also pointed out that immigrant parents often have different behaviour when it comes to child care choices than Swedish-born parents.

However, in Sweden the experts were much more concerned about the behavioural aspects of taking parental leave than its financial benefits. In Sweden, informants emphasised that the major reason fathers choose to use parental leave is their intention to establish a stronger relationship with their children and family. There is a strong awareness among policy makers in Sweden that a father's involvement in child care makes family relationships healthier, and in this sense, it makes families stronger in the long run. Additionally, routinely sharing family duties can help give each parent an equal chance to successfully return to the labour market and maintain their professional competencies. Based on the experts' views, it is possible to state that 'daddy's leave' has become entrenched into the national culture, it is a norm in Sweden and even gives a sense of national pride. Cederström (2019) also states that today, father's leave has become a norm in the Nordic countries. This is illustrated by the quotes: "I think if we want to talk about something that has been successful in the Swedish family policy it is really this engagement of fathers in parental leave because they are using a lot of leave" (SE expert, scientist). The Swedish welfare state is known for well-developed services that allow mothers (parents) to engage in full time (or part-time) jobs and have children. Yet, gender equality is the cornerstone of family policy in Sweden. This is not going to change or go away. Experts see the day care, parental leave and father leave as the tools, ensuring gender equality and they are untouchable:

> Well, I think that certain things are untouchable. Nobody could take away the day care, it is just like a sacred cow. That is also true of parental leave and father leave. I do not think anybody is ever going to touch that. (SE expert, scientist)

The experts are well aware of the positive outcomes that shared parental leave provides: fathers become more empowered, they create their own fathers' networks and support groups; if they become involved in the child's life during early childhood, they would be more likely to continue being involved later on. However, despite these positive developments, the experts emphasised

the drawbacks. The labour division within the family is still unequal and women still do more of the household work.

Hence, Swedish experts were well aware of the positive outcomes that the father's involvement in child care can generate for family stability and gender equality. The Lithuanian experts were more concerned with the work-family reconciliation policies that help mothers engage in full employment; less concern was expressed about the father's responsibility in child care and unequal household work at home. Gender equality was understood as policies facilitating women's integration into the labour market, but not as much as the father's involvement in child care.

All experts in Lithuania mentioned that the main obstacle interfering with family and work reconciliation in Lithuania is a shortage of preschool facilities:

> It is important to have well-developed services for families with small children to help both parents to work and not to fall out of the labour market. We really need to develop services; it is not good when parents are out of the labour market for two or three years simply because they have not enough income to hire a nanny and have nowhere to leave their little child. (LT expert, Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour)

Due to a lack of child care facilities and their short working hours, the grandparents helping with child care is common in Lithuania. It is possible to say that in Lithuania the particular type of familialism, which we call the kinship familialism, is entrenched in child care. The government is keen to support this kind of familialism, as it is possible, according to the legislation, for the grandparents to take parental leave. According to the latest data received from the Lithuanian Social Insurance Board (personal communication), in 2018, 503 grandparents took parental leave in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian case shows that cultural norms, such as kinship support, can be transferred to the family policy legislation and can be formalised. The Swedish case shows the opposite, that the family policy legislation forms cultural practices. Specifically, the enactment of non-transferable parental leave can motivate fathers to take care of their children. Swedish experts noticed a tendency that policy legislation is the key factor that encourages fathers to choose parental leave:

> We used to have a law where non-transferable parental leave was 30 days, and what do you think? Fathers used exactly one month. Now non-transferable parental leave is 90 days, and as I know some statistics, fathers are going on parental leave exactly 90 days. (SE expert, Swedish Social Insurance Agency)

Fathers choose the parental leave duration, which is specified in legislation. Fathers, by their own initiative, rarely choose to use a longer period. According to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (2018), only a small percentage of fathers chose parental leave for more than 90 days. However, the overall trend is that fathers increasingly take a longer parental leave (see Ma et al., 2019).

The case of Lithuania shows that the legislation can create unintended practices such as fathers going on parental leave during the second year of child care leave and receiving a parental benefit and a full time wage, while mothers were staying at home as full time carers or grandparents taking parental leave. Thus, the country's family policy legislation combined with and the economic situation of many families in Lithuania have produced a particular practice for the fathers to take parental leave.

Despite some differences revealed between the practices of taking parental leave in two countries, we also find similarities. There is an awareness among policy makers in both countries that the prevailing gender role stereotypes in a society and employers' attitudes are important for helping fathers decide whether or not to take parental leave. Lithuanian society is still combating gender stereotypes (societal and employers') regarding parental leave policies: "Currently we are still facing stigmatisation of fathers who take parental leave, which is equally encountered by mothers, who do not want to use child care leave….I think, that it is a Lithuanian culture problem" (LT expert, Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour).

The family policy legislation supports fatherhood and labour laws forbid any form of discrimination in the work environment. However, changing cultural norms and public opinion can be much harder.

While Lithuania is still striving to combat gender stereotypes in child care, in Sweden the father's leave has already become a norm. The father could even be stigmatised if he does not go on parental leave. As one expert stated: "It would be very strange if your colleague at work did not go on leave. He would get all the questions of 'why, what is wrong'?"' (SE expert, scientist). The employers are often present in the negotiations on parental leave policies together with the policy makers and trade union representatives. In Sweden, the generous parental leave policy is viewed as a tool to attract labour to their companies, not as a penalty imposed upon employers.

Based on the interview analysis, we assume that in Sweden parental leave policy should be widely accepted by the population and evaluated very positively. In Lithuania, the parental leave policies should also be evaluated quite positively. However, the evaluations are expected to be lower than in Sweden.

6. The Subjective Evaluation of the Parental Leave Policies

Having discussed the experts' knowledge, in this section, we turn to people's attitudes and subjective evaluations of the parental leave policies. The acceptance of the pol-

icy by evaluating it as 'very good' or 'good' shows the success of the social policy reform.

Figure 1 illustrates the subjective evaluations of the parental leave policies that include parental, paternity and maternity leaves in Lithuania, while in Sweden the parental leave embraces all policies, including non-transferable parental leave. As noted, in Sweden, there is no clear distinction between the maternity and paternity policies, they are merged into the parental leave scheme, while in Lithuania a clear distinction exists among maternity, paternity and paternity policies. The respondents' evaluations support the experts' views. In Sweden, the parental leave policy is a great success and a national pride. More than half (54%) of all respondents evaluated the parental leave policy as 'very good' and almost 31% reported it as 'good.' This is more than 80% of all respondents. Those who have evaluated it as 'poor' or 'very poor' comprise just one percent. There were no significant gender differences in evaluations ($p = 0.222 > 0.05$ Pearson Chi-Square), showing that both genders are equally satisfied with the parental leave policy.

In Lithuania, the evaluations are not as good as in Sweden, but still half of the respondents evaluated the parental leave policies (about 41%–45% as 'good' and about 6%–10% as 'very good' for parental, paternity and maternity policies) positively. One quarter of all respondents evaluated it as 'fair' and a small group, about 6% for each three policies, evaluated it as 'poor' or 'very poor.' These evaluations, to some extent, contradict the views of the experts as many of them evaluated the parental leave policies as very good, and being among the best in Europe. The citizens' views show that improvements are needed if the Lithuanian government wants to be among the leading nations having the best parental leave policies in Europe. The major reason for the poorer evaluations than in Sweden can be the lack of complementarities, both on the policy level and in the national socioeconomic conditions. On the policy level, the lack of child care facilities, which was mentioned by the experts, can minimise the positive evaluations. On the national level, the increase in the minimum wage is needed as well as other macroeconomic policies allowing an increase in the average wage.

7. Conclusion

This article contributed to the debate on the father's role in child care by looking at two distinct cases of child care policy development: Sweden and Lithuania. We employed both qualitative (expert interviews) and quantitative (nationwide survey) data to reach our aims. The experts' views and knowledge helped to reconstruct the objectives of the child care policies and obstacles encountered by the fathers in taking their child care role. The citizens' satisfaction and attitudes illustrated the actual acceptance of the policies by the parents/citizens and how it could progress in a future.

The findings show that Sweden continues to very successfully embrace the dual-earner-carer family/gender policy model. The parental leave, including non-transferable father's quota, is very popular among the population. It gives a sense of pride and ensures gender equality. In Lithuania we find a dual-earner model, as there is still more emphasis on the mother's employment than on the father's child care involvement. The efforts to facilitate fatherhood are gradually increasing through the paternity leave policy that was implemented in 2006 and already gained support among the Lithuanian population.

Sweden maintains defamilialism in its child care policy and this is not going to change in the future. Contrarily, the shared parental leave quota might be extended from three to four months in the future, as revealed by experts' interviews.

In Lithuania we find a particular type of familialism, which we call kinship familialism. The state supports both parents' active involvement in the labour mar-

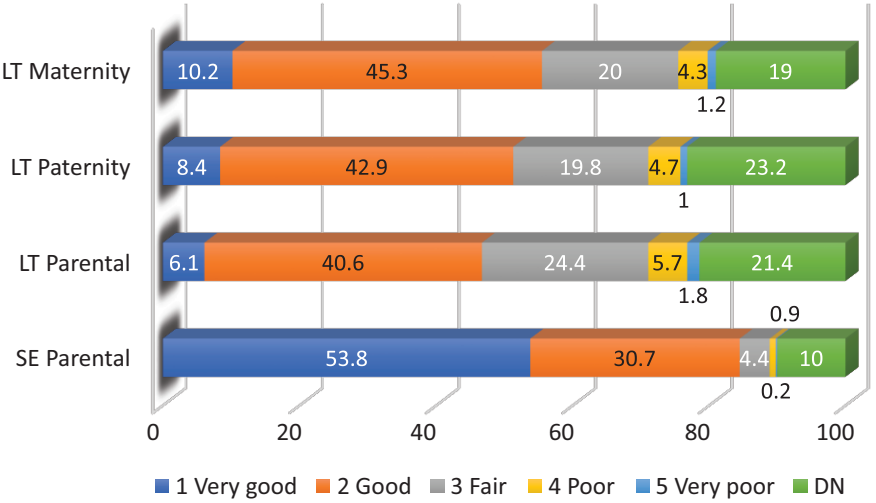

Figure 1. Subjective evaluation of the parental leave policies in Sweden (January 2019; N = 1,000) and Lithuania (December 2018; N = 1,000).

ket through relatively generous parental leave policies. However, it lacks a more coherent and broader view on family policy by not providing complementarities to parental leave policies to make them more effectively exercised. The lack of child care facilities and the possibility of taking parental leave for two years, while having the possibility of working at the same time, in some cases entrenches family dependency, although the policy itself is meant to increase defamilialism. Yet, the state intentionally supports kinship familialism as grandparents are entitled to take parental leave. Based on the experts' views and document analysis, we conclude that in Lithuania the parental leave benefit is increasingly seen as a measure to ensure the family's financial security, but not as an instrument to enhance fatherhood rights.

The analysis revealed three major reasons facilitating the father's involvement in child care. First of all, it is mainly the financial reason that was expressed by the Lithuanian experts, but also important in the Swedish case, particularly for low income fathers. Second, the cultural or moral reason is the desire to care for a child and to strengthen father-child relationships. In this situation, the positive attitudes of employers and society are needed, which can combat gender stereotypes in child care. The third one, and probably the most important one, is the legislation that encourages or even forces the fathers to go on parental leave.

The country's family policy legislation, the economic situation of many families in Lithuania and the lack of child care facilities in combination, have produced a particular practice for the fathers to take parental leave; namely, the father goes on parental leave, but works full time in practice and the mother stays at home.

This study contributes to the previous literature at least in three important ways. First, it enhances our intimate knowledge of Swedish and Lithuanian parental leave policy development from a comparative perspective. Second, it highlights the factors that facilitate the father's rights to child care. Third, it contributes to a better understanding of how the country's family policy legislation interacts with the socioeconomic, attitudinal and cultural environment in producing intended or unintended practices. Future studies should focus on parents' experiences in taking parental leave in order to better understand the reasons behind the embraced practices.

Acknowledgments

This study is financed by the Research Council of Lithuania under the project 'Challenges to welfare state systems in Lithuania and Sweden,' grant No. S-MIP—17–130. The project is carried out in cooperation with the Department of Sociology, Stockholm University. The authors would like to acknowledge the project team members Kristina Senkuviene, Teodoras Medaiskis and Šarūnas Eirošius who also contributed to the performance and/or transcription of expert interviews analysed in this article. We also want to thank our cooperative partners in Sweden (Livia Olah, Gerda Neyer, Sunnee Billingsley) and Barbara Hobson for providing support in developing the questionnaire for the quantitative survey and/or providing support for reaching experts in Sweden. The authors would like to thank the Academic Editors of this thematic issue and anonymous reviewers for useful comments. The earliest versions of the draft of this article was presented at the annual ISA RC19 'Poverty, social welfare and social policy" conference on 28–30 August 2019, University of Manheim, Germany and at the Sociology Seminar on 2 of October 2019, Stockholm University, Sweden. We would like to thank all who commented on it. The special thanks go to all experts in Sweden and Lithuania who agreed to be interviewed for this study and shared their invaluable opinions and knowledge with us.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Aidukaite, J. (2006a). Reforming family policy in the Baltic states: The views of the elites**.** *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *39*(1), 1–23.

Aidukaite, J. (2006b). The formation of social insurance institutions of the Baltic states in the post-socialist era**.** *Journal of European Social Policy*, *16*(3), 259–270.

Aidukaite, J. (2016). *Support to families with children in the Baltic States: Pathways of expansion and retrenchment from 2004 till 2016*. Paper presented at the workshop 'Baltic states after the crisis? The transformation of welfare systems and social problems,' Vilnius, Lithuania.

Aidukaite, J. (2019). The welfare systems of the Baltic States following the recent financial crisis of 2008/2010: Expansion or retrenchment? *Journal of Baltic Studies*, *50*(1), 39–58.

Braziene, R., & Vysniauskiene, S. (2019). *Paid leave policies and gender inequalities in Lithuania: An analysis of structure and choices of benefits recipients*. Paper presented at the workshop 'Challenges to the welfare state systems in the Baltic and Nordic countries,' Vilnius, Lithuania.

Bygren, M., & Duvander, A. Z. (2006). Parents' workplace situation and fathers' parental leave use. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *68*, 363–372.

Cederström, C. (2019). *State of Nordic fathers*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.

Duvander, A. Z., & Ferrarini, T. (2013). *Sweden's family policy under change: Past, present, future* (Working Paper 2013: 8). Stockholm: SPaDE.

Duvander, A. Z., & Johansson, M. (2012). What are the effects of reforms promoting father's parental leave use? *Journal of European Social Policy*, *22*(3), 319–330.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Esping-Andersen, G. (2009). *The incomplete revolution: Adapting to women's new roles*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ferge, Z. (2001). European integration and the reform of social security in the accession countries. *European Journal of Social Quality*, 3(1/2), 9–25.

Goodrick, D. (2014). *Comparative case studies: Methodological briefs*. New York, NY: UNICEF Office of Research.

Grødem, A. S. (2017). Family-oriented policies in Scandinavia and the challenge of immigration. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *27*(1), 77–89.

Haas, L., & Rostgaard, T. (2011). Fathers' rights to paid parental leave in the Nordic countries: consequences for the gendered division of leave. *Community, Work & Family*, *14*(2), 177–195.

Hagqvist, E., Nordenmark, M., Pérez, G., Trujillo Alemán, S., & Gillander Gådin, K. (2017). Parental leave policies and time use for mothers and fathers: A case study of Spain and Sweden. *Society, Health & Vulnerability*, *8*, 1–11.

Hobson, B., Fahlén, S., & Takács, J. (2011). Agency and capabilities to achieve a work–life balance: A comparison of Sweden and Hungary. *Social Politics*, *18*(2), 168–198.

Javornik, J. (2014). Measuring State de-familialism: Contesting post-socialist exceptionalism. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *24*(3), 240–257.

Javornik, J., & Kurowska, A. (2017). Work and care opportunities under different parental leave systems: Gender and class inequalities in northern Europe. *Social Policy Administration*, *51*(4), 617–637.

Kaufman, G., & Almqvist, A.-L. (2017). The role of partners and workplaces in British and Swedish men's parental leave decisions. *Men and Masculinities*, *20*(5), 533–551.

Korpi, W. (2000). Faces of inequality: Gender, class, and patterns of inequalities in different types of welfare states. *Social Politics International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, *7*(2), 127–192.

Kuitto, K. (2016). *Post-communist welfare states in European context patterns of welfare policies in central and eastern Europe*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Leira, A. (2002). *Working parents and the welfare state: Family change and policy reform in Scandinavia*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Leitner, S. (2003). Varieties of familialism: The caring function of the family in comparative perspective. *European Societies*, *5*(4), 353–375.

Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour. (2018). Kada ir kam priklauso mamadieniai ir tėvadieniai? [When and to whom do mothers and fathers' days belong?]. *Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour*. Retrieved from https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/mamadieniai-ir-tevadieniai-priklauso-abiems-tevams

Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour. (2019). Socialinė parama šeimoms ir vaikams [Social support for families and children]. *Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour*. Retrieved from https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/seima-ir-vaikai/socialine-parama-seimoms-ir-vaikams

Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour. (2020a). Išmokos vaikams (išmokos kūdikio besilaukiančioms moterims, vaikus auginantiems tėvams) [Child benefits (benefits for women who have children, parents raising children)]. *Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour*. Retrieved from https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/seima-ir-vaikai/socialine-parama-seimoms-ir-vaikams/ismokos-vaikams-ismokos-kudikio-besilaukiancioms-moterims-vaikus-auginantiems-tevams

Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour. (2020b). Tėvystės išmoka [Paternity benefit]. *Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour*. Retrieved from https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/socialinis-draudimas/socialinio-draudimo-ismokos/valstybinio-socialinio-draudimo-ismokos/tevystes-ismoka

Lithuanian Social Insurance Board. (2019a). Pensijos ir išmokos [Pensions and benefits]. *Lithuanian Social Insurance Board*. Retrieved from https://www.sodra.lt/lt/pensijos-ir-ismokos

Lithuanian Social Insurance Board. (2019b). Ligos ir motinystės išmokų atvejai (gavėjai) [Cases of sickness and maternity benefits (recipients)]. *Lithuanian Social Insurance Board*. Retrieved from https://atvira.sodra.lt/lt-eur

Lithuanian Social Insurance Board. (2020). Pagrindiniai socialiniai rodikliai [Key social indicators]. *Lithuanian Social Insurance Board*. Retrieved from https://www.sodra.lt/lt/situacijos/statistika/pagrindiniai-socialiniai-rodikliai

Lohmann, H., & Zagel, H. (2016). Family policy in comparative perspective: The concepts and measurement of familization and defamilization. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *26*(1), 48–65.

Ma, L., Andersson, G., Duvander, A. Z., & Evertsson, M. (2019). Fathers' uptake of parental leave: Forerunners and laggards in Sweden, 1993–2010. *Journal of Social Policy*, *49*(2), 361–381. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279419000230

MISSOC. (2018). Comparative tables database. *MISSOC*. Retrieved from https://www.missoc.org/missoc-database/comparative-tables

OECD. (2019). OECD family data base. *OECD*. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm

Sainsbury, D. (2018). Policy constructions, immigrants' social rights and gender: The case of Swedish child care policies. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *1*(15), 213–227.

Saraceno, C. (2013). Family policies. In B. Greve (Ed.),

The Routledge handbook of the welfare state (pp. 381–400). London and New York, NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Saraceno, C. (2016). Varieties of familialism: Comparing four southern European and East Asian welfare regimes. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *26*(4), 314–326.

Saraceno, C., & Keck, W. (2011). Towards an integrated approach for the analysis of gender equity in policies supporting paid work and care responsibilities. *Demographic Research*, *25*(11), 371–406.

Šarlauskas, T., & Telešienė, A. (2014). The regulation of state social insurance: Structure and choices of beneficiaries. *Public Policy and Administration*, *13*(1), 95–108.

Stankuniene, V. (2001). *Family policy of Lithuania: A changing strategy*. Paper presented at the European Population Conference 2001, Helsinki, Finland.

Suwada, K. (2017). *Men, fathering and the gender trap: Sweden and Poland compared*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Swedish Social Insurance Agency. (2017). Social insurance in figures 2017. *Swedish Social Insurance Agency*. Retrieved from https://www.forsakringskassan.se/wps/wcm/connect/6fa0e434-a212-4e6b-8c8d-5d7a498a253d/socialforsakringen-siffror-2017-engelsk.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=

Swedish Social Insurance Agency. (2018). Parental benefits. *Swedish Social Insurance Agency*. Retrieved from https://www.forsakringskassan.se/privatpers/foralder/nar_barnet_ar_fott/foraldrapenning

Takács, J. (2019). How involved are involved fathers in Hungary? Exploring caring masculinities in a post-socialist context. *Families Relationships and Societies*, *23*, 1–16.

Veenhoven, R. (2001). *Why social policy needs subjective indicators: Research unit social structure and social reporting* (Report FS III 01–404). Berlin: Social Science Research Center.

Wendt, C., Mischke, M., & Pfeifer, M. (2011). *Welfare states and public opinion: Perceptions of healthcare systems, family policy and benefits for the unemployed and poor in Europe*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Yin-Nei Cho, E. (2014). Defamilization typology re-examined: Re-measuring the economic independence of women in welfare States. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *24*(5), 442–454.

Žalimienė, L. (2015). Family support policy in Lithuania: Can we identify paradigmatic changes in the period 1996–2013? *Tiltai*, *70*(1), 39–61.

About the Authors

Jolanta Aidukaite (PhD in Sociology from Stockholm University) is a Chief Researcher at the Lithuanian Social Research Centre. Her main research interests are focused on welfare state, social policy, family policy, housing policy and urban community mobilisation. She recently edited a special issue of *Journal of Baltic Studies* "Baltic States after the Crisis? The Transformation of the Welfare System and Social Problems" (2019).

Donata Telisauskaite-Cekanavice has held an internship at the Lithuanian Social Research Centre in 2018 (July–August) financed by the European Social Fund grant No. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-09-0193. She works at the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour. She holds a master's degree in Social Policy from Vilnius University.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 92–102
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.2956

Article

Long-Term Care and Gender Equality: Fuzzy-Set Ideal Types of Care Regimes in Europe

Attila Bartha [1,2,*] and Violetta Zentai [3]

[1] Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, 1097 Budapest, Hungary; E-Mail: bartha.attila@tk.mta.hu
[2] Department of Public Policy and Management, Corvinus University of Budapest, 1093 Budapest, Hungary
[3] Center for Policy Studies, Central European University, 1051 Budapest, Hungary; E-Mail:zentaiv@ceu.edu

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 3 March 2020 | Accepted: 6 July 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
Recent changes in the organization of long-term care have had controversial effects on gender inequality in Europe. In response to the challenges of ageing populations, almost all countries have adopted reform measures to secure the increasing resource needs for care, to ensure care services by different providers, to regulate the quality of services, and overall to recalibrate the work-life balance for men and women. These reforms are embedded in different family ideals of intergenerational ties and dependencies, divisions of responsibilities between state, market, family, and community actors, and backed by wider societal support to families to care for their elderly and disabled members. This article disentangles the different components of the notion of '(de)familialization' which has become a crucial concept of care scholarship. We use a fuzzy-set ideal type analysis to investigate care policies and work-family reconciliation policies shaping long-term care regimes. We are making steps to reveal aggregate gender equality impacts of intermingling policy dynamics and also to relate the analysis to migrant care work effects. The results are explained in a four-pronged ideal type scheme to which European countries belong. While only Nordic and some West European continental countries are close to the double earner, supported carer ideal type, positive outliers prove that transformative gender relations in care can be construed not only in the richest and most generous welfare countries in Europe.

Keywords
care regimes; familialization; fuzzy set ideal type analysis; gender equality; long-term care; migrant care work

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

Care is a complex system at the intersections of several human relations, social practices, and public affairs that shape the demand, provision, and norms of managing physical and emotional assistance to people in need. Care relates to concerns with ageing of European populations, work-life family balance, structures of the labor market, and patterns of labor migration. Care can be a source of pride, dignity, and solidary bond for both the carer and the cared—and it can be a major burden on both parties. Care embodies and shapes various gender in/equality patterns, including the sharing of care responsibilities in family and societal settings, and the access to jobs of variegated social security and pension consequences. When migration becomes a major link between different components of care systems, gender equality considerations multiply. Macro-level inequali-

ties related to the differences in wealth in societies of the Global South and the Global North, and most recently of the old and the new member states of the EU, are interlinked with micro-level inequalities within the family as well as between caregivers and care receivers (Lutz, 2018; van Hooren, Apitzsch, & Ledoux, 2019). As a consequence, care work is embedded in complex hierarchies and power relations between the employer and the employee, the carer and the cared, and the citizens and the migrant workers of a country, and thus mirrors inequalities linked to gender and various other grounds, including ethnicity, nationality, race, and citizenship status. Care provision allows some (mostly men and some women) to engage in paid labour and spend less time in unpaid domestic work, providing support for children, elderly, and sick family members. At the same time, recognition of domestic care as paid work creates opportunities for others (mostly women) to pursue paid employment within the domestic sphere. All this has tangible, in many respects transformative, impacts on gender relations in society, but does unleash new forms of inequalities as well.

The welfare policy literature provides plenty of theoretical and empirical knowledge on the links between care regimes and the in/equality properties of gender relations. Gender studies and feminist scholars have contributed to refine welfare regime typologies, to conceptualize family policies (Daly, 2011), and by putting the problem of care to the front of welfare thinking, to link gender configurations to various other constitutive forces of welfare (Lewis, 2006). In the latter inquiry, scholarship has cast light on the relations and tensions between paid work and care. Nancy Fraser's (1994) work, most notably the universal caregiver ideal, has inspired generations of scholars in search of gender justice. In Fraser's model, a fair redistribution of care and paid work contributes to feminist theorizing on social citizenship which is anchored in production and reproduction in societal terms (Lewis & Giullari, 2005; Lister, 1997). A gender division of labor in family and society fundamentally shapes the possibilities of men and women in participation in production. Conversely, women's independent income from paid work and social benefits enhances their bargaining power in making household decisions. At the macro-level, public policies intervening in relations of production and reproduction can alter the historically constituted and legitimized unequal gender division of time, resources, and recognition (Ciccia & Sainsbury, 2018).

In our earlier work (Bartha, Fedyuk, & Zentai, 2015), we sought to explore the linkages of care regimes, gender equality policy regimes, and migration policy effects in European polities by addressing childcare and elderly (as well as disabled and sick) care together. Despite the obvious overlaps between care work for children and elderly in both micro and macro settings, scholarly investigations also dwell on these domains of care independently. Research is more robust and well documented on the former, whereas it has taken off in the latter field in the last couple of years. Therefore, in this article we present the first results of research which uncovers long-term care (LTC) patterns in Europe through sharpening our enduring interest on the care, gender equality, and migration policy triangle (Williams, 2012). The inquiry intends to capture some trends that partly started before the emergence of the 2008 crisis but unfolded in the 2010s. It also attempts to link LTC models and work-family reconciliation policies. We are making the first steps to reveal aggregate gender equality impacts of intermingling policy dynamics and also to link in the analysis of care chain effects that connect as well as separate the old and the new member states in the EU.

2. Theoretical Framework: Long-Term Care and Gender In/Equality in Europe

The European Pillar of Social Rights includes access to affordable and good quality LTC services as one of its core principles. Most European states face population ageing in the medium- to longer-term due to longer life expectancies in societies of decreasing birth rates. It is expected that the ratio of Europeans aged 80+ will rise from the present 5% to 13% in 2070 (European Commission, 2018). LTC provision in Europe is characterized by significant differences between countries, concerning the provision model (public, for-profit or non-governmental providers), the nature (home care versus institutional care), financing (cash benefits, in-kind benefits or out-of-pocket payments) and resources generation methods (via general taxation, mandatory social security and/or voluntary private insurance; Spasova et al., 2018). Several inquiries reveal that despite relative progress in the distribution of the caregiving burden, women continue to assume responsibility for carrying out most caregiving (Le Bihan, Da Roit, & Sopadzhiyan, 2019). Further, women are far more likely than men to reduce their working hours or to leave employment in order to provide care (Haberkern, Schmid, & Szydlik, 2015). In several countries, home care is gaining priority over residential care, but formal home care services for the elderly remain underdeveloped in many Southern and Central and Eastern European countries (Spasova et al., 2018, p. 6). Due to the growing priority for home care, residential care capacities have been decreasing in several European countries over the past 25 years. Nordic countries have implemented significant deinstitutionalization in support of home and other forms of care (Greve, 2017). In Southern Europe, however, LTC beds for people aged 65+ are on the rise through noteworthy reform measures. More robust formal care services in LTC are in progress, in particular in Spain (León & Pavolini, 2014). This is due to growing women's participation, the increase in the pensionable age, and changes in family patterns. The main direction of changes in Central and Eastern Europe is less clear-cut (Spasova et al., 2018, p. 7).

The literature that has inspired and informed us uncovers intensive reform movements and changes in the

European systems of LTC. One of the crucial conceptual, regulatory, and institutional transformations shapes up along the notion of familialization and defamilialization, that is, the ways in which care work is delivered by family members or by other care providers. Due to recent policy reforms unpaid work in the private sphere of the family has partly been transformed into formal, paid care work in the formal employment system outside the family. Still, several older people receive care by female family members (Pfau-Effinger, Eggers, Grages, & Och, 2017, p. 3). The dual notion of formal and informal care resonates with the split of public- and family-based organization of caring—but it is not identical to it. Formal care is usually provided by trained and qualified professionals employed and regulated by the state, municipalities, or market and non-profit organizations. Formal care may be provided in residential and home contexts. Formal caregivers are paid and entitled to social rights and working regulations. Informal carers are individuals with direct personal ties to the cared as family members, friends, or neighbors. They are not contracted and often do not have regulated working hours/time. They do or do not have general entitlements to social welfare. Cash for care (CfC) provisions bridge these two domains of care by allowing the recipient to choose the forms of care s/he uses the cash support for (Da Roit & Le Bihan, 2010).

A recent comparative inquiry investigating formal and informal care provision for people ages 65 and over identified three country groups in Europe, which is not particularly surprising. The Nordic and the continental countries with robust welfare systems compose the first group, where more than 60% of people in need of care receive formal care. The second group consists of countries where 35% to 45% of people in need of care receive formal care, which encompasses the Southern European countries. The third group, where less than 35% of people in need receive formal care, includes Central and Eastern European countries. At the same time, when the ratio of people receiving only informal care is considered, Southern and Central and Eastern European countries stand together (Barbieri & Ghibelli, 2018). These results resonate with Esping-Andersen's (1990) well-known welfare typology.

Another recent comparative study uncovers how informal care and, within that, CfC schemes shapes LTC systems (Le Bihan et al., 2019). Engaging with the debate on the consequences of familialization versus defamilialization policies (Leitner, 2014; Saraceno, 2010, 2016), the researchers propose a conceptual framework to explain recent LTC reforms and their outcomes. Most importantly, it is argued that defamilialization enables care users to organize their own care arrangement through compensation of family carers, or the purchase of professional (private or public) services. With great variations within a larger trend, it can be observed that several European countries have been increasingly moving towards familialistic care arrangements in the 2010s in various compositions, in which market and family services may be supported in different ratios (Le Bihan et al., 2019). Another comparative study (on five different welfare states) challenges the common assumption that generous support for caring family members is mainly used as a cheap substitute for extra-familial care by public support. This inquiry finds that, somewhat surprisingly, welfare state policies towards LTC for senior citizens are either generous or less generous in both modalities of care services, that is, family-based and extra-familial caser services (Pfau-Effinger et al., 2017, p. 3). It remains a prime interest for a growing body of cross-national and comparative research whether the systemic relations between formal and informal care is complementarity or substitution based (Verbakel, 2018).

Recent scholarship reveals that women remain the most important caregivers in LTC and the responsibility of supervising, coordinating, and assessing care falls on them (Le Bihan et al., 2019, p. 580). Informal care, especially if performed at higher intensity or for longer periods, has an impact on carers' employment prospects, social participation, and mental and physical health (Barbieri & Ghibelli, 2018). Home-based personal care work is labor-intensive, and can be emotionally and physically demanding. It is often carried out in substandard working conditions and without regulation or legal protection. Informal carers may face difficulties in securing reliable pensions and thus risk poverty and their own LTC at pension age (Eurocarers, 2016). If the burden of informal care is disproportionately taken by particular social groups, care will have major in/equality consequences. In various European contexts, a wider 'social contract' still values and normalizes care as women's duty and prime capability, hence the continued gender inequality concerns with informal versions of caring.

Although the gender inequality promoting effects of informal care are tangible and well documented, Ciccia and Sainsbury (2018) warn that the outcomes of defamilialization should be carefully scrutinized against the powerful feminist assumptions about the liberating effects of unravelling care work from women's home duties. Indeed, defamilialization does not provide an unambiguous route to gender equality as public care jobs are mostly taken by women for lower pay. Without incorporating paid and care work on equal terms into social and political citizenship a transformative gender order will not arise. On a positive note, informal care does not exclude the principle of gender equality if it is not a moral claim and caregivers have autonomous choices (Ciccia & Bleijenbergh, 2014, p. 8).

Finally, the literature we rely on argues that the trend of refamilialization, but to a certain extent all forms of care work, may imply care labor force replacement by migrant workers (van Hooren et al., 2019). Care provided by immigrant women also shapes the gender division of labor in families and societies. Migrant care work both supports and undermines gender equality principles and transformative impulses in the care receiving states. The transfer of informal care to immigrant domestic work-

ers allows women to join the workforce, but it also reaffirms the gendered nature of care since caring tasks and household chores remain largely in the hands of women (Ciccia & Sainsbury, 2018; Lutz, 2018). Relying on migrant care work in the family, especially if this form of work remains poorly regulated and paid, perpetuates the exploitation impacts of transboundary care chains with negative repercussions on gender equality in migrants' home countries.

3. Methodology and Data

We apply fuzzy-set ideal type analysis (FSITA) to understand the configurations of LTC in Europe. In the last two decades FSITA has been increasingly used in analysis of welfare regime change and in building childcare policy typologies (Ciccia, 2017; Ciccia & Bleijenbergh, 2014; Da Roit & Weicht, 2013; Kvist, 1999; Szelewa & Polakowski, 2008; Vis, 2007). In the particular steps of applying FSITA we follow the sequences suggested by Kvist (2007): First, we anchor our typology to theoretically defined ideal types; then, we operationalize our theoretical expectations related to the ideal types at the level of empirical variables; third, we calibrate the values of variables; and finally, we assess the conformity of national LTC policies to the ideal types.

Similarly to Ciccia and Bleijenbergh (2014) or Lauri, Põder, and Ciccia (2020), we started our ideal type building inspired by Fraser (1994). LTC policies, however, are much less crystallized than childcare policies. In particular, gender equal contribution to the double carer (in Fraser's [1994] words, the "universal caregiver") component of the double earner and double carer normative ideal seems missing in LTC; as an implication, in sharp contrast to childcare leave policies, there are no specific incentives to enhance male participation in LTC. At the same time, there are care regime type differences concerning the level of support for familial care. Accordingly, we distinguished three models of LTC policies: the male breadwinner, the double earner but unsupported carer, and the double earner and supported carer ideal types.

Deriving from the theoretical discussion in the previous section, our ideal types are built upon four dimensions: the generosity of LTC expenditures (G), the level of unmet care needs (U), the quality of home care regulation (R), and the employment gap between men and women (E). While the first three dimensions (G, U, and R) capture the care regime features of national policy configurations, the last dimension refers to the employment dimension (E) by comparing the time share of men and women in paid work through a full-time equivalent perspective. As there are no systematically elaborated data sets that provide data fitting the conceptualization in our research, we constructed the operationalized variables as proxy variables from multiple sources. In the data selection process, we used the most recent data collected by international institutions for the post-crisis period; when various measurements were available, period average values were used. Table 1 summarizes the theoretically-based expectations along the ideal type dimensions in fuzzy-set theory terms. A detailed description of these dimensions in the form of operationalized variables' values as well as the specific content and the sources of the variables is provided in the notes section of Table 2.

In the process of calibration (i.e., the transformation of empirical values into 0–1 fuzzy scores along the ideal type dimensions), we rely on the substantive knowledge of LTC scholarship. In addition, we apply the major principles and rules of fuzzy-set theory: the minimum principle and the intersection rule for logical AND relations, the complement rule for logical negation and the maximum principle and the rule of union for logical OR relations (Kvist, 2007, p. 476).

When assessing the conformity of individual countries to the ideal type varieties, our empirical expectation is that only a minority of national care policy configurations in the EU will belong to the double earner, supported carer ideal type. While we do not assume the prevalence of the male breadwinner model (that implies the female carer normative ideal as well), we expect that most of the EU member states exhibit a hybrid pattern and oscillate between the double earner, unsupported carer and the double earner supported carer models.

Concerning the gender equality outcome, we expect a clear ranking of the ideal types as the level of supporting policy of carers logically develops parallel to gender equality policies. In addition, migrants' incorporation in national care regimes is expected to be the most significant in countries close to the double earner, unsupported carer ideal type. In this respect, scarcity and uncertainty of care migration data is an important limita-

Table 1. Property space of LTC policy ideal types.*

	Generosity of LTC expenditures (G)	Unmet care needs (U)**	Quality of home care regulation (R)	Full-time equivalent employment gap (E)**
Male breadwinner	~G or G	U	~R	~E
Double earner, unsupported carer	~G	~U	~R	~E or E
Double earner, supported carer	G	U	R	E

Notes: * upper case letters indicate membership in a set, while letters preceded by a tilde (~) indicate the absence of the set. ** Membership in a set is defined as the more supportive care policy in each of the dimensions, thus set membership indicates low unmet care needs and lower full-time equivalent employment gap between men and women.

Table 2. Raw data used for the FSITA of European LTC regimes.

	Generosity of LTC expenditures (1)	Unmet care needs (2)	Quality of home care regulation (3)	Full-time equivalent employment gap (4)
Austria	1.9	30.0	0.75	19
Belgium	2.3	26.5	0.75	15
Bulgaria	0.4	60.5	0.50	11
Croatia	0.9	41.1	0.25	12
Cyprus	0.3	74.1	0.50	13
Czech Republic	1.3	40.9	0.75	18
Denmark	2.5	23.3	0.75	10
Estonia	0.9	17.6	0.75	15
Finland	2.2	7.8	0.75	8
France	1.7	20.5	0.75	12
Germany	1.3	20.1	0.75	20
Greece	0.1	87.7	0.25	17
Hungary	0.7	46.7	0.50	20
Ireland	1.3	33.9	0.75	17
Italy	1.7	51.8	0.25	20
Latvia	0.4	62.6	0.50	13
Lithuania	1.0	34.3	0.50	10
Luxembourg	1.3	17.1	0.75	15
Malta	0.9	34.6	0.50	25
Netherlands	3.5	20.5	0.75	21
Poland	0.5	42.8	0.50	20
Portugal	0.5	51.1	0.50	11
Romania	0.3	60.0	0.50	17
Slovakia	0.9	42.2	0.50	17
Slovenia	0.9	46.1	0.75	14
Spain	0.9	44.9	0.50	13
Sweden	3.2	12.7	0.75	8
United Kingdom	1.5	18.2	0.75	19
European Union*	1.3	38.2	(0.60)	15

Notes: *unweighted average. (1) Public expenditures on LTC (long-term nursing care and social care) as % of GDP, 2016. Source: European Comission (2018); (2) Households experiencing difficulty or great difficulty in affording professional home care services as a % of all households that pay for home care services. Source: Eurofound (2019); (3) Qualitative assessment of home care services' regulation (0: weak; 0.25: rather weak; 0.5: medium; 0.75: strong; 1: very strong) based on document analysis of data provided by Mutual Information System on Social Protection (2019) in the member states of the EU; (4) Full-time equivalent employment rate gap between men and women in %-points. Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (2019).

tion of our study. The content and the sources of the gender equality and migration variables is provided in the notes section of Table 3.

4. Findings

While none of the countries conform to the male breadwinner ideal type, half of the EU member states do not clearly belong to any of the LTC ideal types (see Table 4). These countries exhibit a hybrid character, fitting loosely either the double earner, unsupported carer or the double earner, supported carer models. Therefore, our results yield a four-pronged ideal type scheme of LTC in European countries. These results contained both anticipated and surprising elements (see Table 5).

Four Southern European countries and Bulgaria, Romania, and Latvia belong to the *double earner and unsupported carer* model. Whereas the employment participation gap between men and women is of middle value, the relatively low generosity of the LTC support becomes a decisive factor in the model. It is plausible that the countries associated with this ideal type show relatively high unmet care needs. This model overall resonates with what Le Bihan, et al. (2019) call unsupported familialism. Society relies on but only modestly supports the provision of care by the family, whereas most women are at work. In general, unmet care needs are high in the countries concerned here and families are the main sites and resources for LTC. The notion of 'unsupported' in the name of the cluster stands for a variety of provisions which rely on informal human relations and family resources, but occasionally with some tangible support for the care recipients and their families. In countries with no strict requirements on its use, cash benefit is frequently used to recruit informal domestic workers, which pertains to Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, and Romania in the

Table 3. Gender equality in care activities and migrants' incorporation in national care regimes.

		'Captured' carers (2)		Home-based caregivers in the labour force (3)	
	Gender equality in care activities (1)	Migrant women	Women in general population	Home-based caregivers	Share of foreign-born among home-based caregivers
Austria	62.1	14.0	13.8	0.5	29.6
Belgium	71.2	10.0	8.0	0.8	14.6
Bulgaria	56.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Croatia	57.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Cyprus	61.4	32.0	14.8	n.a.	n.a.
Czech Republic	57.7	n.a.	n.a.	0.7	1.7
Denmark	85.9	5.0	3.2	n.a.	n.a.
Estonia	81.6	n.a.	n.a.	0.5	4.5
Finland	83.5	10.0	14.7	0.9	n.a.
France	73.1	29.0	14.7	0.1	n.a.
Germany	69.6	18.0	16.0	0.1	10.8
Greece	52.3	n.a.	7.2	0.1	74.5
Hungary	67.2	n.a.	n.a.	0.3	n.a.
Ireland	78.0	33.0	22.6	0.1	n.a.
Italy	63.3	47.0	15.0	1.0	89.0
Latvia	84.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Lithuania	67.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Luxembourg	77.9	4.0	8.8	0.2	50.0
Malta	65.3	n.a.	12.2	n.a.	n.a.
Netherlands	78.9	24.0	11.2	1.4	14.3
Poland	64.6	32.0	16.0	0.2	1.6
Portugal	65.4	9.0	7.4	0.1	n.a.
Romania	73.2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Slovakia	58.5	n.a.	n.a.	1.6	0.4
Slovenia	70.4	33.0	3.8	0.2	n.a.
Spain	73.5	36.0	9.7	0.4	67.4
Sweden	88.1	3.0	7.2	5.0	22.2
United Kingdom	77.0	37.0	28.0	2.7	18.8

Notes: (1) Gender Equality Index scores in care activities, 2012–2017 averages. Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (2019); (2) Women aged 15–64 stating that they do not look for a job because of care activities. Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2016); (3) Share of home-based caregivers in the labour force (%) and share of foreign-born among home-based caregivers (%). Source: King-Dejardin (2019, pp. 36–37).

cluster (Spasova et al., 2018, p. 17). Gender equality in care work is usually modest in these countries, excepting the outlier Latvia, where we can assume some broader equalitarian or solidarity driven social practices. Feminist care scholarship supports the assumption that when unmet needs are high or rising, without much other support, women—even in employment but often in part-time and lower-paid jobs—will be the ones who step in as service providers. The possible replacement for these women may come from migrant care work, as in the cases of Italy and Greece (see Table 3). Migrant carers, often without a proper employment contract or work permit, are also typically women, which taps into the resources of the well documented care chain with tangible gender inequality effects.

Categorized in the *loosely fitting to the double earner and unsupported carer* model are three Visegrad countries, Spain, Croatia, and Lithuania. In this highly mixed group of countries, the generosity of the overall public support to care services is modest; the full-time equivalent employment participation between men and women varies; and the unmet care needs are tangibly lower than in the former country group yet still significant. The gender equality in care work index is of middle values except for Spain, which stands out with relatively high performance in this respect. It is noteworthy that the average gender equality score in care in this country group is not higher than in the former one (see Table 3). Thus, the tangible higher generosity of LTC support and the lower level of unmet care needs together elevate countries to this model. These two properties of the LTC regime make the gender equality potentials of care higher in these countries than in the first country group. Further research is needed to explore if the better figures for unmet care needs in the Visegrad states and Spain are due to various LTC reforms implemented in recent years. According to our data, the overall generosity of LTC support in some Visegrad countries is growing and the regulatory support to home care is reasonable. Since the introduction of a major reform in 2006, Spain has moved towards a mixed

Table 4. Fuzzy-set membership scores by ideal types.

	Male breadwinner	Double earner, unsupported carer	Double earner, supported carer
Austria	0.27	0.25	**0.54**
Belgium	0.21	0.25	**0.66**
Bulgaria	0.16	**0.50**	0.11
Croatia	0.17	0.41	0.25
Cyprus	0.19	**0.50**	0.09
Czech Republic	0.25	0.25	0.37
Denmark	0.14	0.14	**0.71**
Estonia	0.21	0.18	0.26
Finland	0.11	0.08	**0.63**
France	0.17	0.21	0.49
Germany	0.29	0.20	0.37
Greece	0.12	**0.75**	0.03
Hungary	0.29	0.47	0.20
Ireland	0.24	0.25	0.37
Italy	0.29	**0.51**	0.25
Latvia	0.19	**0.50**	0.11
Lithuania	0.14	0.34	0.29
Luxembourg	0.21	0.17	0.37
Malta	0.39	0.35	0.26
Netherlands	0.30	0.00	**0.70**
Poland	0.29	0.43	0.14
Portugal	0.16	**0.50**	0.14
Romania	0.24	**0.50**	0.09
Slovakia	0.24	0.42	0.26
Slovenia	0.20	0.25	0.26
Spain	0.19	0.45	0.26
Sweden	0.14	0.09	**0.75**
United Kingdom	0.27	0.18	0.43

Notes: Scores in bold designate fuzzy-set membership (≥ 0.5). A higher score indicates a closer correspondence between a country's LTC policy and the ideal type.

model of LTC with an increasing role for the public sector and regulated family care services, in spite of resource redistribution and governance challenges and post-2008 austerity measures (Arlotti & Aguilar-Hendrickson, 2018; León & Pavolini, 2014). As this cluster is mostly composed by Central and Eastern European countries (including Croatia and Lithuania), migrant labor participation in care work is not significant, at least it is not captured by official statistics. Migrant workers' participation in home-based care is particularly high in Spain with mixed gender equality effects.

The *loosely fitting to double earner and supported carer model* comprises the most diverse mix in any of the groups, including the two largest countries of the

Table 5. Gender equality scores by ideal types.

Country groups by fuzzy-set ideal types	Countries	Average Gender Equality Index scores in care activities by country groups*
Countries close to double earner, unsupported carer ideal type	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania	65.2
Countries loosely fitting the double earner, unsupported carer ideal type	Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Spain	64.8
Countries loosely fitting the double earner, supported carer ideal type	Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Slovenia, United Kingdom	73.2
Countries close to double earner, supported carer ideal type	Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden	78.3

Note: * Average values of Gender Equality Index scores in the 2012–2017 period. Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (2019).

continental welfare regime, two Anglo-Saxon countries and the Czechia, Estonia, and Slovenia trio from Central and Eastern Europe. The generosity of overall spending is higher than the European average in these settings but there are profound differences in the unmet needs. The home care services are usually highly regulated. The full-time employment rate gap between men and women is still significant, which tends to support the expectations and practices of supported familialism in care. The gender equality index of care work is relatively high, and outstanding in Estonia. The reasons behind this performance might be similar to what we assume in the case of Latvia's paramount gender equality value regarding care duties in the first group. The composition of scores assigning Czechia to this cluster is quite different: The lower gender equality in care score is accompanied by a high generosity of LTC expenditures compared to other Central and Eastern Europe countries. The care work replacement by migrant carers is high in Germany and the United Kingdom, which reveals that the cross-border care chain resource may give major assistance to very differently organized but well-regulated care systems. It surely limits fully transformative gender relations in care in wider societal terms, but it does not prevent a reasonably good gender equality index compared to regimes in the first two models. Informal carers often face difficulties in accumulating sufficient pension funds even in generous LTC regimes as well, yet Germany stands out with its mechanisms for carers to build up pension rights. This is likely to have positive effects on gender equality (Barbieri & Ghibelli, 2018, p. 17), but its distribution across classes and citizenship background is a further important inequality quest.

The fourth model enacts a *close to double earner and supported carer* scheme. As it encompasses high generosity of overall domestic care spending, highly regulated care services, and relatively low unmet needs, it is not surprising that Nordic countries and smaller and rich continental countries are associated with it. The Nordic countries and the Netherlands have generous LTC systems with widely available formal care services. In these settings, informal care is a choice rather than a substitute for the formal one (Heger & Korfhage, 2018). Austria makes the grade, too, but with the lowest fuzzy-set membership score, stemming from a relatively low gender equality value in care activities but with generous overall LTC spending.

The gender equality score in care work is high in these countries. This constellation is shaped by varying degrees of gender employment rate gaps, which implies high material, institutional, and regulatory support to familialism. This can compensate the possible setbacks of a gender gap in full-time equivalent employment, which is still tangible in Austria and the Netherlands. It is important to note that in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden, the involvement of migrant domestic care workers is significant according to our data (see Table 3). This suggests that gender equality progress for middle-class families has been achieved at the price of maintaining the gender imbalance in providing care at the societal level and through the often exploitative cross-border care chain. In Austria '24-hour care' at home is almost entirely provided by migrant workers, mainly from Slovakia and Romania (Bauer & Österle, 2016; Sekulová & Rogoz, 2018). This form of work has been regulated since 2007: Care workers can register as self-employed or directly employed by families. This enables them to have access to social and health care benefits, yet they are paid less than regular care employees (Österle & Bauer, 2016).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Different voices in the literature seem to converge in the understanding that family-based care is prevalent and growing in LTC systems in Europe. This is encouraged by CfC solutions, increasingly regulated care service markets, standardization of the profession, and various work-care reconciliation measures. Le Bihan et al. (2019), Spasova et al. (2018), and others suggest that there is a major shift towards familialism where home-care is fostered and often supported, and a form of choice is given to families to purchase paid care. In some countries, formerly preferred and developed residential care systems become streamlined. Home-based care and growing familialism has fundamentally been supported and maintained by migrant care work in a number of countries of Europe, with great geographical spread. Central and Eastern Europe has become a major supplier of this migrant labour force in the last decade. To capture the transient and more enduring changes in LTC and general social reproduction, we have turned to the intersections of care regime, gender regimes, and migration regimes. We have more reliable and comparable data on the first two domains which sets limitations on our work.

Through only a snapshot, our results resonate with the overall landscape of familialization in LTC by revealing that most countries belong to some sort of hybrid policy regimes. We have experimented with a regime typology by incorporating both policy input and output data on LTC resources and care giving modes, insights in the schematic social contract between families and other societal institutions, and indicators of gender relations. We also portrayed that hybrid regimes generate diverse gender in/equality conditions. Positive outliers prove that transformative gender relations in care can be construed not only in the richest and most generous welfare countries in Europe. Our findings confirm the eye-opening results of the comparative research by Pfau-Effinger et al. (2017) in *contesting* the common assumption that generous support for caring family members is mainly used as a cheap substitute for welfare state provisions and residential care services. Accordingly, welfare measures for LTC are either generous in different areas of care or they are overall less generous; thus, the familial and the extra-familial care move together rather than against each other on a societal scale. By the same token, other

important conditions of the care system, the regulation of home care services, the provisions of paid and unpaid care leave and work flexibility, and the regulation of migrant care work should be further explored as forces that have stand-alone as well as interlinked transformative gender equality potentials.

Our results engage with the gender scholarship on care in the European context, which tends to describe domestic work as a site of exploitation. Inequalities result from the unequal positioning of actors concerned in the care relations in households and society at large at the intersections of gender, class, and citizenship positions. There is, however, an understanding that domestic labor may become a proper employment and recognized as professional occupation (Sekulová & Rogoz, 2018). But the formalization, recognition, and valuation of home-based care is slow and uneven across Europe, especially in view of the fast-growing needs among elderly people. The increasing significance of domestic care makes it essentially important to understand how ageing, employment, and gender relations are manifested in families' reactions to care challenges. Haberkern et al. (2015, p. 315) have revealed that daughters seem to be more willing than sons to interrupt their working careers in order to assist their parents in need of LTC, regardless of their employment position. It is particularly important to acknowledge this observation when cash benefit provisions are on the rise. Since men earn more than women in all European countries and care work is seen as women's duties, cash benefits predominantly activate women and thereby preserve the gendered organisation of care. It is proposed that achieving gender equality in intergenerational care is still a "one-way ticket from informal care by women towards state care" (Haberkern et al., 2015, p. 317) if men's participation does not increase.

Our modest results also speak to the transnational care chain and 'care drain' scholarship that emphasizes unmet care duties of migrant carers in their home countries and the detrimental effects of migrant laborer conditions on children and elderly in the family. In addition to the highly recognized and influential research results by the leading care drain scholars, some recent empirical inquiries refine and redraw the picture of gender division of care work. In-depth qualitative investigations on Central and Eastern European women engaged in cross-border care practices propose that these women find ways to avoid care gaps in their families. For example, Bahna and Sekulová (2019, p. 141) observed that Slovak carers typically engage in care work in Austria either only after the demise of their parents or stop working as care workers should their parents' needs for care increase. Many of these women reported overwhelmingly positive job evaluation and elevating emancipation in their socio-economic positions and even professional recognition compared to their opportunities in the home country (Bahna & Sekulová, 2019, p. 142). The subjective experience with tangible emancipatory contents of migrant carers calls for further empirical research and theoretical reflections on the gender in/equality impacts of cross-border care chains in which Central and Eastern European women meet the unmet needs in the rest of Europe.

Finally, our inquiry offers some—but only preliminary—contributions to a slowly growing knowledge on LTC mechanisms and gender in/equality dynamics in Central and Eastern Europe. The high figures on unmet LTC needs and relatively low public spending on LTC represent obvious reasons why home care services for the elderly have remained undeveloped in most of these countries. But behind the hybrid nature of these countries' LTC schemes, one can assume diverse gendered composition of the labor market and varyingly generous care leave policies at the workplace. In addition, political narratives, cultural models, and traditions of intergenerational solidarity all shape the configurations of policy paradigms and social practices in LTC. Hrženjak's (2019) qualitative case study on Slovenia invites large-N and comparative investigations to test her findings in wider regional settings. She argues that the actual familialization of elderly care is conditioned by traditional patterns of informal family care of state socialism and transitional conditions. The absence of an integrated LTC system seems typical for Central and Eastern Europe, in which institutional services are insufficient, expensive, and accessible only for the middle-class families. In contrast to childcare, elderly care is not yet high on the agenda of gender equality thinking among policy makers (Hrženjak, 2019, pp. 649–650). We add to this observation that, in the case of Central and Eastern European countries, further inquiries cannot avoid addressing that the actual shape and performance of LTC should be read against the specific consequences of care chain patterns in Europe. Arguably, these countries play, at least potentially, a double role: While they provide a significant part of the supply side of care providers for the elderly and the disabled in the Western and Southern parts of Europe, the relatively wealthier states among Central and Eastern European countries also play an increasing role on the demand side of global care chains.

Our study has some limitations. First, as comparative data about care migration are scarce, uncertain, and uneven across Europe, the suggested care migration-LTC regime nexus calls for further check, either by repeating our analysis in a smaller set of countries for which reliable care migration data is available, or by qualitative research methods used in comparative case studies. A second limitation is that in this study we have provided only a snapshot of LTC patterns in Europe, thus bifurcations in care policy trajectories are at best indirectly discussed. A third limitation stems from the predominantly hybrid character of European LTC regimes; as a result, our fuzzy-set categorization of European countries may mingle some apparently incongruent policy patterns. At the same time, this research may contribute to better understanding of LTC policy mechanisms shaping gender equalities in a broader European context and our findings may

open avenues for future research at the intersections of care, gender, and migration regimes.

Acknowledgments

This study was inspired by an earlier research cooperation of the authors with Olena Fedyuk within the NEUJOBS research project financed by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme. The authors express their gratitude to all colleagues who encouraged the present research, the anonymous reviewers as well as the academic editors whose comments greatly improved the manuscript. They also thank Michael Zeller for copyediting the text.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Arlotti, M., & Aguilar-Hendrickson, M. (2018). The vicious layering of multilevel governance in Southern Europe: The case of elderly care in Italy and Spain. *Social Policy & Administration*, *52*(3), 646–661.

Bahna, M., & Sekulová, M. (2019). *Crossborder care*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barbieri, D., & Ghibelli, P. (Eds.). (2018). *Formal vs. informal long-term care: Economic & social impacts*. (SPRINT Working Paper D4.4.) Brussels: Social Protection Investment in Long-Term Care. Retrieved from http://sprint-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SPRINT_D4.4_Formal_vs_Informal-LTC_Econocmic_Social_Impacts.pdf

Bartha, A., Fedyuk, O., & Zentai, V. (2015). Low-skilled migration: Immigrant workers in European domestic care. In M Beblavý, I. Maselli, & M. Veselkova (Eds.), *Green, pink & silver? The future of labour in Europe* (Vol. 2, pp. 237–257). Brussels: Center for European Policy Studies. Retrieved from https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/NEUJOBS%20Future%20of%20Labour%20Vol%20II_Final.pdf

Bauer, G., & Österle, A. (2016). Mid and later life care work migration: Patterns of re-organising informal care obligations in Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *37*, 81–93.

Ciccia, R. (2017). A two-step approach for the analysis of hybrids in comparative social policy analysis: A nuanced typology of childcare between policies and regimes. *Quality & Quantity*, *51*(6), 2761–2780.

Ciccia, R., & Bleijenbergh, I. (2014). After the male breadwinner model? Childcare services and the division of labor in European countries. *Social Politics*, *21*(1), 50–79.

Ciccia, R., & Sainsbury, D. (2018). Gendering welfare state analysis: Tensions between care and paid work. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, *1*(1/2), 93–109.

Da Roit, B., & Le Bihan, B. (2010). Similar and yet so different: Cash-for-care in six European countries' long-term care policies. *The Milbank Quarterly*, *88*(3), 286–309.

Da Roit, B., & Weicht, B. (2013). Migrant care work and care, migration and employment regimes: A fuzzy-set analysis. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *23*(5), 469–486.

Daly, M. (2011). What adult worker model? A critical look at recent social policy reform in Europe from a gender and family perspective. *Social Politics*, *18*(1), 1–23.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Eurocarers. (2016). *Supporting informal carers: Developing social rights and seizing the opportunity to rebalance the European Union*. Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17408&langId=en

Eurofound. (2019). *Quality of health and care services in the EU*. Luxembourg: Eurofound.

European Commission. (2018). *The 2018 ageing report: Economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU member states (2016–2070)* (European Economy Institutional Paper 079). Brussels: European Commission. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/ip079_en.pdf

European Institute for Gender Equality. (2019). *Gender Equality Index 2019. Work–life balance*. Vilnius: European Institute for Gender Equality.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. (2016). *Second European Union minorities and discrimination survey. Migrant women: Selected findings*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Fraser, N. (1994). After the family wage: Gender equity and the welfare state. *Political Theory*, *22*(4), 591–618.

Greve, B. (2017). Long-term care in Denmark, with an eye to the other Nordic welfare states. In B. Greve (Ed.), *Long-term care for the elderly in Europe: Development and prospects* (pp. 168–184). Abingdon: Routledge.

Haberkern, K., Schmid, T., & Szydlik, M. (2015). Gender differences in intergenerational care in European welfare states. *Ageing & Society*, *35*(2), 298–320.

Heger, D., & Korfhage, T. (2018). Care choices in Europe: To each according to his or her needs? *INQUIRY: The Journal of Health Care Organization, Provision, and Financing, 55*, 1–16.

Hrženjak, M. (2019). Multi-local and cross-border care loops: Comparison of childcare and eldercare policies in Slovenia. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *29*(5), 640–652.

King-Dejardin, A. (2019). *The Social Construction of Migrant Care Work. At the intersection of care, migration and gender*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Kvist, J. (1999). Welfare reform in the Nordic countries in the 1990s: Using fuzzy-set theory to assess confor-

mity to ideal types. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *9*(3), 231–252.
Kvist, J. (2007). Fuzzy set ideal type analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, *60*(5), 474-481.
Lauri, T., Põder, K., & Ciccia, R. (2020). Pathways to gender equality: A configurational analysis of childcare instruments and outcomes in 21 European countries. *Social Policy & Administration*, 1–20. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12562
Le Bihan, B., Da Roit, B., & Sopadzhiyan, A. (2019). The turn to optional familialism through the market: Long-term care, cash-for-care, and caregiving policies in Europe. *Social Policy & Administration*, *53*(4), 579–595.
Leitner, S. (2014). Varieties of familialism: Developing care policies in conservative welfare states. In P. Sandermann (Ed.), *The end of welfare as we know it?* (pp. 37–51). Toronto: Barbara Budrich.
León, M., & Pavolini, E. (2014). 'Social investment' or back to 'familism': The impact of the economic crisis on family and care policies in Italy and Spain. *South European Society and Politics*, *19*(3), 353–369.
Lewis, J. (2006). Employment and care: The policy problem, gender equality and the issue of choice. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis, 8*(2), 103–114.
Lewis, J., & Giullari, S. (2005). The adult worker model family, gender equality and care: The search for new policy principles and the possibilities and problems of a capabilities approach. *Economy and Society*, *34*(1), 76–104.
Lister, R. (1997). Citizenship: Towards a feminist synthesis. *Feminist Review*, *57*(1), 28–48.
Lutz, H. (2018). Care migration: The connectivity between care chains, care circulation and transnational social inequality. *Current Sociology*, *66*(4), 577–589.
Mutual Information System on Social Protection. (2019). *Comparative tables* [Data set]. Retrieved from https://www.missoc.org/missoc-database/comparative-tables/results
Österle, A., & Bauer, G. (2016). The legalization of rotational 24-hour care work in Austria: Implications for migrant care workers. *Social Politics, 23*(2), 192–213.
Pfau-Effinger, B., Eggers, T., Grages, C., & Och, R. (2017). *Care policies towards familial care and extra-familial care: Their interaction and role for gender equality*. Paper presented at the Transforming Care Conference, Milan, Italy.
Saraceno, C. (2010). Social inequalities in facing old-age dependency: A bi-generational perspective. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *20(*1), 32–44.
Saraceno, C. (2016). Varieties of familialism: Comparing four southern European and East Asian welfare regimes. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *26*(4), 314–326.
Sekulová, M., & Rogoz, M. (2018). *Impacts and particularities of care migration directed towards long-term care: Zooming in on Slovakia and Romania*. Vienna: International Centre for Migration Policy Development.
Spasova, S., Baeten, R., Coster, S., Ghailani, D., Peña-Casas, R., & Vanhercke, B. (2018). *Challenges in long-term care in Europe: A study of national policies*. Brussels: European Commission.
Szelewa, D., & Polakowski, M. P. (2008). Who cares? Changing patterns of childcare in Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *18*(2), 115–131.
van Hooren, F., Apitzsch, B., & Ledoux, C. (2019). The politics of care work and migration. In A. Weinar, S. Bonjour, & L. Zhyznomirska (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of the politics of migration in Europe* (pp. 363–373). Abingdon: Routledge.
Verbakel, E. (2018). How to understand informal caregiving patterns in Europe? The role of formal long-term care provisions and family care norms. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, *46*(4), 436–447.
Vis, B. (2007). States of welfare or states of workfare? Welfare state restructuring in 16 capitalist democracies, 1985–2002. *Policy & Politics*, *35*(1), 105–122.
Williams, F. (2012). Converging variations in migrant care work in Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *22*(4), 363–376.

About the Authors

Attila Bartha is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Political Science of the Centre for Social Sciences and an Associate Professor at the Department of Public Policy, Institute for Economic and Public Policy, Corvinus University of Budapest. Since 2015 he has been a Founding Editor of the journal *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics*. His main areas of research are comparative public policy, welfare policy, and political economy.

Violetta Zentai is a Social Anthropologist, Research Fellow and Co-director of the Center for Policy Studies, and Faculty Member of the School of Public Policy and the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the Central European University. Her research focuses on ethnic and gender inequalities, post-socialist socio-economic transformations, political and policy debates on social inclusion, and pro-equality civil society formations. For more information visit: https://cps.ceu.edu/people/violetta-zentai

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2020, Volume 8, Issue 4, Pages 103–109
DOI: 10.17645/si.v8i4.3620

Commentary

Division of Labour, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy: Conclusions and Reflections

Michael Ochsner [1,*], Ivett Szalma [2,3] and Judit Takács [2,4]

[1] FORS—Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, University of Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland; E-Mail: michael.ochsner@fors.unil.ch
[2] Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, 1097 Budapest, Hungary; E-Mails: szalma.ivett@tk.mta.hu (I.S.), takacs.judit@ tk.mta.hu (J.T.)
[3] Corvinus University of Budapest, 1093 Budapest, Hungary
[4] KWI Essen—Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, 45128 Essen, Germany

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 1 September 2020 | Published: 9 October 2020

Abstract
This thematic issue aims to shed light on different facets of the relationship between division of labour within families and couples, work–life conflict and family policy. In this afterword, we provide a summary of the contributions by emphasizing three main aspects in need of further scrutiny: the conceptualisation of labour division within families and couples, the multilevel structure of relationships and the interactions of gender(ed) values at different levels of exploration.

Keywords
division of labour; care work; family policy; gender equality; long-term care; non-paid work; work–family conflict; work–life balance; work–life conflict

Issue
This commentary is part of the issue "Division of Labour within Families, Work–Life Conflict and Family Policy" edited by Michael Ochsner (FORS Lausanne, Switzerland), Ivett Szalma (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary) and Judit Takács (Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Hungary/KWI Essen, Germany).

1. Introduction

The contributions in this thematic issue show that the relationship between division of labour within couples, work–life conflict and family policy is highly complex by revealing relevant insights on a number of aspects of this relationship. While there is ample research on country differences in family policy, on work–life conflict (and it's different conceptual colours as work–family conflict, work–family conflict, work–life balance, etc.) and on labour division within families and couples, less is known on the relationship between the three, especially when it comes to gender differences. Yet, it is the (gendered) relationship between those three concepts that needs scientific as well as policy attention because an isolated view on just one or two of them might miss the connection to real-life and bias the perspective because the three are inseparable.

In this concluding commentary, we summarise the findings of the contributions, pointing to three main aspects of the relationship between labour division within families and couples, work–life conflict and family policy. We then briefly demonstrate the complexity of the endeavour of comparative research regarding this relationship and point out theoretical and methodological lacunae. We conclude by pointing out the main findings of this thematic issue and their policy implication.

2. Three Aspects in Need of Scrutiny

Summarising the contributions of this thematic issue, we want to point out a few aspects that need more attention in the current scientific and policy discourse: First, labour division needs a broader conceptualisation including care work, also outside the family. Second, the relationships between labour division, work–life conflict and family policy take place in a multilevel context: The individual-level (household, class, values), meso-level (economy: employment, work demands) and macro-level (region, country: policy and culture) influence how partners share their work and how this has repercussions on work–life conflicts. We think that the meso-level and its interaction with the other levels is particularly under-researched. Third, values regarding gender roles and family arrangements as well as attitudes towards gender inequalities need to be taken into account on all the three levels including how such values are shaped by the three levels.

2.1. Conceptualisation of Labour Division within Families and Couples

As already pointed out in the introduction to this thematic issue, there is a lack of precision in the definition of labour division within families and couples. The plethora of definitions can be classified on a scale from very inclusive where all non-paid work within or outside the household is included blurring the limits between voluntary and housework (e.g., OECD, 2011, p. 10) to a very limited perception of non-paid work as female-attributed housework like dishwashing and cleaning (e.g., Hu & Yucel, 2018; Ruppanner, Bernhardt, & Brandén, 2017). However, the contributions in this thematic issue show that it does matter what is included in the definition of non-paid work and that non-paid work indeed encompasses different tasks. Bornatici and Heers (2020) demonstrate how important care work is regarding work–life conflict: When analysing family arrangement according to time spent on all tasks (paid, non-paid and care work), equal arrangements are associated with lower work–life conflict. However, when differentiating between paid, domestic and care work, equally sharing care work lowers work–life conflict while equally sharing paid or domestic work does not. Thus, researchers would draw the wrong conclusion that equally sharing tasks is linked to less work–life conflict when in fact, sharing care work is the main driver. Aidukaite and Telisauskaite-Cekanavice (2020) reveal that policy can change how care for children is shared within a family: While the Swedish model with non-transferable father's leave leads to a norm that fathers take a more important role in child care, Lithuanian policy focusing on financial security where fathers can even work during their parental leave and grandparents can take parental leave to take over care duties, fathers involve much less in child care. Moreover, long-term care policies differ across countries as Bartha and Zentai (2020) demonstrate. The study on long-time care also puts forward that not only childcare is a relevant factor in labour division within families but also care for elderly and disabled. Importantly, paid and non-paid care work is mostly done by women and is embedded in hierarchies reflecting power relations between employers and employees, citizens and migrants as well as men and women. Paid care allows (mainly) women to engage in paid work and do less housework. At the same time, paid care creates opportunities to gain an independent revenue in care jobs (again mostly taken by women). However, an achievement of more equal share of care-duties within a family comes with a grain of salt when considering the broader context. In countries where women participate more equally in paid work, care work is not only shared more equally within couples but also more likely to be outsourced to paid care. This can lead to gendered job situations in which women take less-paid jobs in the care sector or the care work is externalised to migrants where women from other, poorer countries take over care work. Due to lack of macro-data on the share of migrants in paid care, the authors could not take this factor into account in their model but suggest digging deeper into the potential issue of a new gendering of care through migration, or "global care chain" (see also Estéves-Abe & Hobson, 2015). Theoretical work, however, suggests complex relationships because of the involvement of so-called global families: Migrant women are not only exploited or climb the ladder when exploiting other women (Lutz, 2002), they might do low-paid jobs in Europe but might gain power and independency vis-à-vis their partners and families in their home country (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011). Such issues need certainly more theoretical and empirical development. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown, however, that those women (together with informal [male] farming and restaurant helpers) are the first to be in a very difficult situation in such a crisis, as the long waiting line for food parcels in Geneva showed, bringing the informal sector in one of the world's richest cities out of the shadow (Kingsley, 2020).

2.2. Multilevel Structure of Relationships

Second, decisions are taken in a multilevel context. While the individual level and the country level are well-researched (however, not always with consistent results; see Masuda, Sortheix, Beham, & Naidoo, 2019; Ruppanner, 2011), the meso-level, i.e., the situation at the workplace and labour market, is less researched (with the exception of working conditions, e.g., Gallie & Russell, 2009). Kromydas (2020) shows that education, in its mediating role between the individual and the meso level, plays a complex role regarding the relationship between division of labour and work–life conflict. Higher education can lead to higher work–life conflict for women, probably because they do double-shifts taking the same household duties but having more de-

manding jobs. On the other hand, higher education can work as a cushion for women in times of crisis. Women are more affected by economic crises than men everything held equal, but education reduces this negative effect. Demand of work force seems to play a role here as higher educated women seem to have more crisis resistant jobs than lower educated women. In other words, among highly educated, the difference between men and women regarding crisis resistant jobs is smaller than among low educated. Similarly, Ukhova (2020) finds for the Central and Eastern European countries that in the higher social class, gender equality has progressed while in the lower social class it has regressed.

A series of contributions in this thematic issue put forward that preferences in labour division do not always match with practice (Bornatici & Heers, 2020; Geszler, 2020; Nagy, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020). This is attributed to restrictions imposed by the work place, be it the difficulty for men to reduce their work percentages, availability of technical tools to increase flexibility to be productive during care time or the persistence of the "ideal employee" norm (Geszler, 2020; Nagy, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020). There is also an interaction between the meso and the macro level in the sense that policy can shape values in companies and the economic and political situation can turn countries into victims of globalisation when employers can put pressure on employees to be ever more committed to work, which can lead to stronger corporate "colonisation" where employees can be always reached and work time expands into private time due to technology (Geszler, 2020; Nagy, 2020; Ukhova, 2020).

2.3. Gender Values and the Interactions of Gender Values at Different Levels

Third, gender values need to be taken into account, not only on a macro level but also on the individual and organisational level (Bornatici & Heers, 2020; Ukhova, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020). Gender values relate to how people see the roles of the genders, what constitutes a family and how it is organised, how an optimal labour division within families is seen, etc. Such values can shape policies (as voters choose representatives sharing their sets of values) and policies can shape values (by emphasising certain role models over others; see the case of Sweden's "daddy leave" in Aidukaite & Telisauskaite-Cekanavice, 2020). In any case, couples do not take their decisions on division of labour in a void but in a multilevel environment, where each level can have value preferences. On the micro or individual level, some couples prefer egalitarian arrangements whereas other couples prefer a traditional family organisation. On the meso or economic level, employers and the labour market can facilitate some arrangements or make them impossible to realise (Geszler, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020). Moreover, preferences differ also on the macro or country level and policy can facilitate more or less egalitarian models (e.g., policy can grant long maternity leaves but no parental or paternity leave). To make things more complex, the choice of family arrangement on the individual level can be mediated by social class as Ukhova (2020) shows or regional culture as Zimmermann and LeGoff (2020) point out. Such interactions between the different levels matter regarding how the family arrangement affects work–life conflict as Bornatici and Heers (2020) demonstrate: Couples having a consistent modern traditional arrangement in an egalitarian society experience higher work–life conflicts while couples having a consistent egalitarian arrangement in an egalitarian society experience the least work–life conflict.

3. Issues for Future Research on Labour Division, Work–life Conflict and Family Policy

The focus on only these three aspects shows that the relationships are complex—much more complex than the current state of theory and operationalisation can capture. Consequently, there is a need for theoretical and conceptual development as well as on empirical and methodological refinement. On the one hand, the conceptual definitions of labour division within families and couples need scrutiny: Certainly, care tasks need to be included and the different levels of care examined. Furthermore, we need more explicit theories about the relationships between labour division, work–life conflict and family policy: How do they interact on the different levels on which they are active (individual, economic and country)? What are the consequences of achieving a more equal share of paid and non-paid work in couples? Does this come with gendered work patterns or even relocation of the gender divide to other world regions? Does the latter rather put migrant women into dependencies or empower them to be more independent (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Lutz, 2002)? Does technology facilitate a reconciliation between family and career or rather simply increase corporate colonization (Nagy, 2020)? Can technology help involve men more in family matters or is it rather used to increase female labour participation while keeping them doing the care work?

Finally, we want to point out a methodological issue we have encountered in the production of this thematic issue linked to the complex multilevel structure of the relationships examined: Hierarchical linear multilevel models are the methodological mainstream when researchers tackle concepts affecting different levels (e.g., Masuda et al., 2019; Ruppanner, 2011). They mostly rely on maximum likelihood and assume equal effects (and variances) on the individual level across countries. However, when it comes to policy, we cannot assume equal fixed effects and variances across countries anymore (Achen, 2005) and when studying policy, we are usually interested in country-level effects for which maximum likelihood provides poor precision (Bowers & Drake, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that results from

such studies are inconclusive or show unexpected results (as noticed by Masuda et al., 2019). To address this issue, two-step procedures could be employed that take into account that effects on the individual level vary across countries (Achen, 2005; Bowers & Drake, 2005; Bryan & Jenkins, 2016), for example because of different family policies impacting the relationship between division of labour and work–life conflict. However, such methods seem to be ignored by most scholars in the field and false beliefs about multilevel models are prevalent, for example, if data have a multilevel structure, multilevel modelling must be applied, as the work on this thematic issue showed. None of the articles submitted used multilevel modelling for the obvious reasons, however, the reviewers still asked all authors to apply multilevel modelling. One reason for the dislike of two-step methods is that the results and study description might look more complicated than the multilevel model. To improve the presentation of such models and their acceptance in the field, we need some methodological and theoretical work to be done: Such varying relationships across countries are complex and theories for how such differences could look like are missing, making it very difficult to come to easily presentable results within the limits of a journal article.

We therefore want to put forward that rather than just applying the mainstream method to all research, researchers must reflect on their research question and choose the appropriate method. We illustrate this point using a small example.

3.1. Example of the Difference between Multilevel Models and Two-Step Procedures

Our previous research inciting the idea of this thematic issue at a conference aimed at investigating whether a new vulnerable group regarding work–life conflict emerged in the context of the economic crisis of 2007 and, using data from the European Social Survey (ESS) rounds 4 and 8, found that not only the unemployed fall into difficult situations, but also some working parents can be seen as a vulnerable group as work demands increase and family demands do not decrease (Ochsner & Szalma, 2017). For this research, we applied the conventional multilevel model approach as we were investigating whether, across Europe, a new vulnerable group emerges. We were thus seeking a general trend in European countries; moreover, our interest did not lie in the size of country level predictors. If, however, we would aim at identifying whether policies can alleviate work–life conflict and whether we find differences across family policy regimes, we were not interested in a general pattern at the individual level valid for all countries but in the differences across countries in how work–life conflict comes about. In such a case, the preferred approach would be a two-step procedure, in which an OLS regression for each country was calculated in the first step and in the second step patterns in the coefficients were identified. Applying such a model as an example to demonstrate the methodological issue, we find that, using the same data, the ESS 2010 (ESS, 2012), and the same country selection, the independent variables' effects did indeed differ considerably across countries. Without going into detail or trying to interpret results, which would demand additional efforts for which we do not have the space, the example shows clearly that the effects at the individual level vary considerably across countries. Therefore, as soon as one wishes to investigate country differences or policy effects, fixed-effects or multilevel models are inadequate as they blur exactly what one wants to investigate (for a schematic presentation of effect sizes, see Figure 1, for the full table and a description of the variables used, see supplemental material).

However, interpreting such results is quite demanding as patterns are not necessarily straight forward. First and foremost, we do not have enough detailed theoretical knowledge about how policy shapes family arrangements and employers' decisions and their effect on work–life conflict to formulate clear hypotheses to test. Second, there is still only little methodological guidance on how to explore relationships on the second level without running endless numbers of regressions or generating visualisations on each coefficient and bringing them back into a full picture. If we want to take our understanding of the division of labour within families and couples to the next level, theoretical and methodological efforts must be made to link family policy with division of labour and work–life conflict and their interactions on the different levels as the relationships do not follow a linear pattern in the sense that generous family policy would lead to less work–life conflict and a more egalitarian division of labour (see also Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Strandh & Nordenmark, 2006).

4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

This thematic issue puts forward a few points relevant for research and policy with regard to labour division within families and couples and work–life conflict. We identified three aspects that need scrutiny: First, labour division needs to be conceptualised more broadly and include care work; second, the multilevel structure needs to be taken into account, especially at the meso-level – the economy, the labour market and employers as well as the restrictions they impose on decision making in couples; third, values regarding labour division differ and need to be taken into account at each level.

A perspective taking these three aspects into account reveals some points relevant to family policy. First, family policy should be de-gendered. Mostly focussing on improving female labour participation and facilitating the reconciliation of family and work for women will not likely be successful in achieving a more egalitarian labour division in households. Rather, policy must at the same time work on improving father's opportunities in taking a more important role at home (Aidukaite & Telisauskaite-

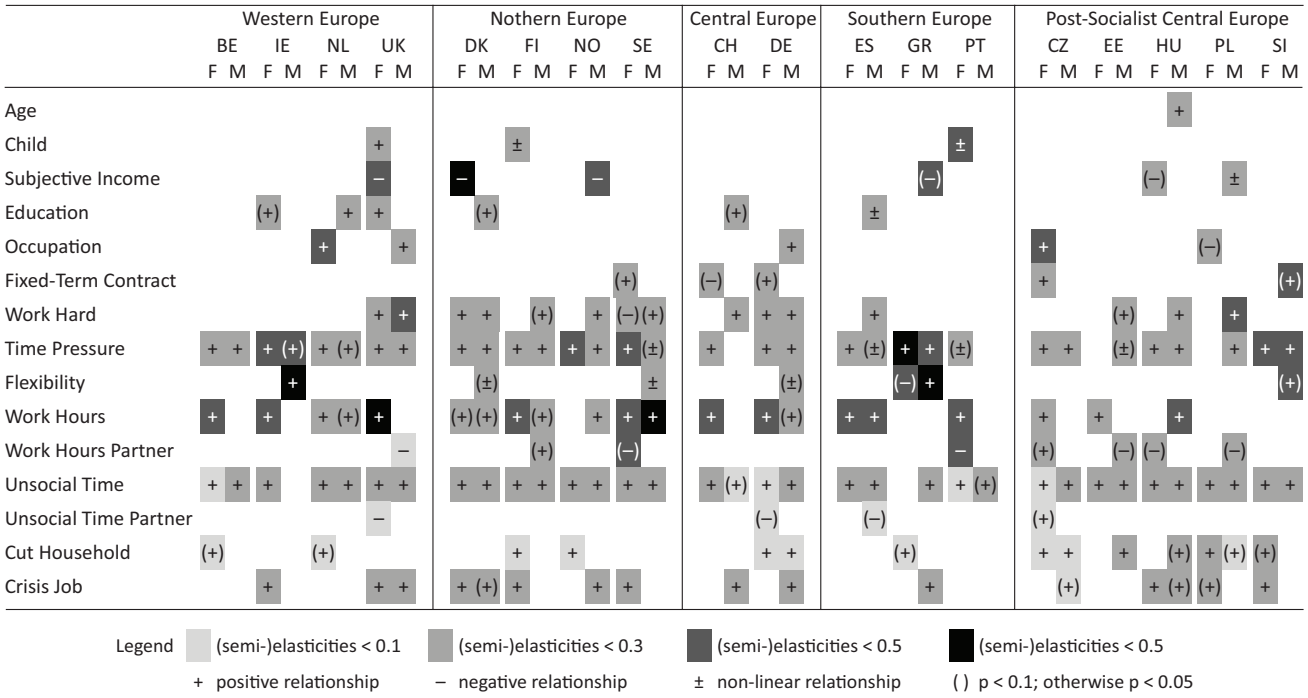

Figure 1. Graphical representation of effect size by country group, country and gender.

Cekanavice, 2020; Geszler, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020) and include models enabling parenting and being successful at work for both genders. Technology can be a facilitator in reconciling work and family demands but can have adverse effects if corporate colonisation is not countered (Nagy, 2020).

Second, families are fragile environments and work–life conflict is very context-dependent. Vulnerability is not only linked to a few conditions such as unemployment or single parenting, but many situations can lead to issues of work–life conflict and thus family problems, such as having multiple jobs, both parents working at unsocial times, trying to live gender equality in a traditional setting or vice versa etc. (Bornatici & Heers, 2020; Kromydas, 2020; Ochsner & Szalma, 2017; Ukhova, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020). Attitudes towards family arrangements do not only vary between countries, but also between regions and social classes (Ukhova, 2020; Zimmermann & LeGoff, 2020). Also, what can be achieved depends on contexts and it can be more stressful if the own preference is not congruent with the general attitude of the population and thus lead to work–life conflict. Family policy should therefore propose solutions for reconciliations of work and family for several arrangements of labour division within families and couples.

Third, different levels of jobs come with different problems. Having more autonomy on working hours might help reconcile work and family demands but this comes most likely with pressures to be always reachable. Tools to counter work–life conflict might differ between different levels of jobs: While technology might help managers to keep contact with their family, it might rather lead to corporate colonisation, i.e., expanding working time into family time, in so-called sandwich positions where workers take responsibility but do not have full autonomy (see Geszler, 2020; Nagy, 2020). Reconciliation measures should therefore take such different working conditions into account and tools should be available for all positions, also at the highest level, both to increase the female share in such positions and also to enable fathers in such positions to take responsibility in family matters.

Fourth, there is an interaction between policy and economy. Policies can introduce measures to facilitate reconciliation of work and family. However, companies act within those contexts and are aware of policies as they need to be competitive in the country's context. The availability of childcare institutions might facilitate family organisation, but it might also lead to higher expectations of employers towards parents as those parents are able to outsource family work. Also, companies can use reputation of reconciliation practices and advertise them to recruit talent. In practice, however, their approach towards parents might not be much different from average companies as the case of a Swedish company in Hungary suggests (Geszler, 2020). This has not only implications for policy makers who should acknowledge and anticipate such adaptations, but also on practitioners consulting workers and families in their coping strategies. Finally, it is relevant for research on family policy that it should be more aware of such cross-level interaction effects.

Fifth, a reflection regarding the scientific rather than the policy discourse, research comparing countries regarding family policies should take the different norms and policies in the examined countries into account and

should refrain from assuming general effects of policies across countries. Multilevel modelling should only be used when its assumptions are tenable. Rather, other modelling strategies should be applied, especially models taking country differences of individual level effects into account, such as two-step approaches.

Finally, we want to put forward that major events on the macro level, such as the economic crisis in 2007 or the current COVID-19 pandemic can have a strong impact on labour division within families and couples. It will most likely have some effects into the direction of a more traditional family model, but this might very well differ more strongly between social classes than in so-called normal times (see Ukhova, 2020).

Acknowledgments

The preparation of this thematic issue by Michael Ochsner and Ivett Szalma was supported by the Academic Publishing Workshop Award (H2020 ESS-SUSTAIN). The contribution of Judit Takács was supported by the Academy in Exile Fellowship at the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI) Essen.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

References

Achen, C. H. (2005). Two-step hierarchical estimation: Beyond regression analysis. *Political Analysis*, *13*(04), 447–456. http://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpi033

Aidukaite, J., & Telisauskaite-Cekanavice, D. (2020). The father's role in child care: Parental leave policies in Lithuania and Sweden. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 81–91. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2962

Bartha, A., & Zentai, V. (2020). Long-term care and gender equality: Fuzzy-set ideal types of care regimes in Europe. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 92–102. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2956

Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2011). *Fernliebe. Lebensformen im globalen Zeitalter* [Long-distance love. Lifestyles in the global age]. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Bornatici, C., & Heers, M. (2020). Work–family arrangement and conflict: Do individual gender role attitudes and national gender culture matter? *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 46–60. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2967

Bowers, J., & Drake, K. W. (2005). EDA for HLM: Visualization when probabilistic inference fails. *Political Analysis*, *13*(4), 301–326. http://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpi031

Bryan, M. L., & Jenkins, S. P. (2016). Multilevel modelling of country effects: A cautionary tale. *European Sociological Review*, *32*(1), 3–22. http://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcv059

Crompton, R., & Lyonette, C. (2006). Work–life 'balance' in Europe. *Acta Sociologica*, *49*, 379–393. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699306071680

Estéves-Abe, M., & Hobson, B. (2015). Outsourcing domestic (care) work: The politics, policies, and political economy. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, *22*(2), 133–146. http://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxv011

European Social Survey. (2012). *ESS round 5 (Data file edition 3.2)* [Data set]. Bergen: Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Gallie, D., & Russell, H. (2009). Work–family conflict and working conditions in Western Europe. *Social Indicators Research*, *93*(3), 445–467. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-008-9435-0

Geszler, N. (2020). Agency and capabilities in managerial positions: Hungarian fathers' use of workplace flexibility. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), XX–XX. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2969

Hu, Y., & Yucel, D. (2018). What fairness? Gendered division of housework and family life satisfaction across 30 countries. *European Sociological Review*, *34*(1), 92–105. http://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcx085

Kingsley, P. (2020, May 30). A mile-long line for free food in Geneva, one of world's richest cities. *New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/world/europe/geneva-coronavirus-reopening.html

Kromydas, T. (2020). Educational attainment and gender differences in work–life balance for couples across Europe: A contextual perspective. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 8–22. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2920

Lutz, H. (2002). At your service madam! The globalization of domestic service. *Feminist Review*, *70*(1), 89–104. http://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400004

Masuda, A. D., Sortheix, F. M., Beham, B., & Naidoo, L. J. (2019). Cultural value orientations and work–family conflict: The mediating role of work and family demands. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *112*, 294–310. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.04.001

Nagy, B. (2020). "Mummy is in a call": Digital technology and executive women's work–life balance. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 72–80. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2971

Ochsner, M., & Szalma, I. (2017). Work–life conflict of working couples before and during the crisis in 18 European countries. In M. J. Breen (Ed.), *Values and identities in Europe. Evidence from the European Social Survey* (pp. 103–125). Abingdon: Routledge.

OECD. (2011). *OECD social indicators: Society at a glance 2011*. Paris: OECD Publishing. http://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2011-en

Ruppanner, L. (2011). Conflict between work and family: An investigation of four policy measures. *Social Indicators Research*, *110*(1), 327–347. http://doi.org/

10.1007/s11205-011-9933-3
Ruppanner, L., Bernhardt, E., & Brandén, M. (2017). Division of housework and his and her view of housework fairness: A typology of Swedish couples. *Demographic Research*, *36*, 501–524. http://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2017.36.16
Strandh, M., & Nordenmark, M. (2006). The interference of paid work with household demands in different social policy contexts: Perceived work–household conflict in Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, Hungary and the Czech Republic. *British Journal of Sociology*, *57*, 597–617.
Ukhova, D. (2020). Gender division of domestic labor in post-socialist Europe (1994–2012): Test of class gradients hypothesis. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 23–34. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.2972
Zimmermann, R., & LeGoff, J.-M. (2020). The transition to parenthood in the French and German speaking parts of Switzerland. *Social Inclusion*, *8*(4), 35–45. http://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i4.3018

About the Authors

Michael Ochsner is a Senior Researcher at FORS, Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences in Lausanne. He is a survey methodologist involved in the implementation of the ESS, the ISSP and the EVS in Switzerland. His research covers welfare policy and legitimacy of the state, work–life conflict, cultural differences in survey research, representation bias and survey modes. He is also a specialist on research quality and evaluation in the social sciences and humanities. Image © felix imhof

Ivett Szalma is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence and an Associate Professor at the Corvinus University of Budapest, and the Head of the Family Sociology Section of the Hungarian Sociological Association. Her research topics include the effects of economic crises on work–life conflicts, post-separation fertility, childlessness, nonresident fatherhood, measurement of homophobia and adoption by same-sex couples.

Judit Takács is a Research Chair at the Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, responsible for leading research teams and conducting independent research on topics including family practices, work–life balance issues, childlessness as well as social history of homosexuality, social exclusion/inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, HIV/AIDS prevention. Currently she is an Academy in Exile fellow at KWI, Essen.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183-2803)

Social Inclusion is a peer-reviewed open access journal which provides academics and policy-makers with a forum to discuss and promote a more socially inclusive society.

The journal encourages researchers to publish their results on topics concerning social and cultural cohesiveness, marginalized social groups, social stratification, minority-majority interaction, cultural diversity, national identity, and core-periphery relations, while making significant contributions to the understanding and enhancement of social inclusion worldwide.

www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion

COGITATIO