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Working time, gender and family in west and central east Europe

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a comparative analysis of west and central east European countries focusing on how work flexibility affects individuals and their households and particularly their ability to combine family and work life.

In addition, the paper has two further concerns. First, the analysis takes into account the differing institutional and policy contexts in the selected countries. It is clear that routes to flexibility as well as the concept of flexibility have been very different in the diverse parts of Europe. A second concern of the paper is to further our understandings of the culture and values which underpin the organisation of family and work in the different countries.

The paper, therefore, addresses a number of issues and debates in Europe, for example, working time arrangements, employment patterns and childcare arrangements, and the reconciliation of work and family life.

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Working time, gender and family in west and central east Europe

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This paper provides a comparative analysis of how work flexibility affects individuals and their households and particularly their ability to combine family and work. The paper draws on a current project 'Households, Work and Flexibility' (HWF) funded by the EU Framework 5 Programme.¹ The participating countries are the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK in west Europe and Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia in central east Europe.

The aim of the project is to examine the ways in which members of the household put together different forms of work and the impact of such work on the household and on quality of life. The project considers the role of employment flexibility in this context and for this purpose we have defined flexibility in terms of time, place and conditions of work. A further aim is to compare west European EU countries with a range of central east European candidate countries, each illustrative of different policy approaches to flexibilisation and work-family integration.

The main research instrument employed in the project is a national survey of around 1000 households in each country using a standardised questionnaire. This questionnaire examines the relationship between households and the types of work undertaken by all members of the household, using a broad definition of work to include paid work, casual work, unpaid and domestic work, social or communal work and self-provisioning. The project was also interested in attitudes to flexible work and preferences for working arrangements. A series of grids in the questionnaire asked respondents about the work arrangements of other members of the households, and their perceptions of work and family arrangements. Finally, the questionnaire focused on economic resources of the household, income, living conditions and access to resources. Space in this paper, however, precludes an in-depth presentation of all research findings from this rich source of data. Rather, the following discussion focuses on one area of current policy and academic debate in Europe, namely, flexibility of time. The paper, therefore, addresses a number of issues and debates in Europe, for example, working time arrangements and working-time preferences,

employment patterns and childcare arrangements, and the reconciliation of work and family life.

In addition, the paper has two further concerns. First, the analysis takes into account the differing institutional and policy contexts in the selected countries. Here, background papers² for the HWF survey have documented how the discourse and policies on flexibility differ in the different national contexts. It is clear that routes to flexibility as well as the concept of flexibility has been very different in each country. Indeed, as discussed below, and following Sik and Wallace (2003) and Wallace (2002) we can identify four types of flexibility regimes in the eight partner countries.

A second concern of the paper is to further our understandings of the culture and values which underpin the organisation of family and work in each country. Here, the concept of the gender culture is seen as a useful way to examine differences in social understandings of what men and women do and expect, and how this impacts on childcare and parenting and men and women's involvement in paid work (Pfau-Effinger 1998, Duncan and Pfau-Effinger 2000, Duncan 1995). Whilst the term gender culture has usefully been applied in comparative analysis of several west European societies it has been much less developed in the central east countries. The discussion below, therefore, aims at an initial exploration of differences in men and women's integration of work and family life in west and central east Europe through an analysis of the HWF survey data and a consideration of how different gender cultures and social policies may affect these.

The paper is organised as follows. First, there is a brief discussion of different routes to flexibilisation in the participating countries as this background context is necessary for an understanding of the differences between the countries in terms of work /family integration. The second section of the paper examines the working hours of respondents as well as their working time preferences. In the third section of the paper we consider childcare and the domestic division of labour and work and family relations. Finally, by way of conclusion there is a discussion of the main findings presented.

DIFFERENT ROUTES TO FLEXIBILISATION

‘Forced flexibility’ and ‘regulated anti-flexibility’

Two of the central and east European countries, Bulgaria and Romania, are transition countries still in a situation of economic crisis. Whilst there has been widespread flexibilisation, this is not due to policy initiatives but rather to the strong retrenchment of the formal labour market (Wallace 2002). In Romania, for example, by 1998 only 26 per cent of households made a living from the formal economy (state and market), 9 per cent from the informal economy and the rest, 65 per cent, pooled income from various economies (Stanculescu and Berevoescu 2002). In particular, a decline in urban employment was reflected in a massive increase in agricultural jobs (much of it of a subsistence nature) rather than declining inactivity or rising unemployment (Employment in Europe 2001). Agriculture accounted for 45 per cent of the workforce by 2000 (ibid). The HWF survey found that of those in employment in 1989 only 41 per cent were in the official labour market by 2001 (Stanculescu and Berevoescu 2002a) and over one third of male and female respondents in the Romania sample are retired (See Table 1 in Appendix).

In Bulgaria, mass unemployment has persisted for the whole decade of the transition. The sudden collapse of the system of full employment and life long jobs, matched with a 50 per cent drop in economic output, has created segmented and fractured labour markets (Kovacheva and Pancheva 2002). The HWF survey found that as high as 30 per cent of male respondents and one quarter of female respondents in the Bulgarian sample are unemployed (Table 1). Overall, the Bulgarian researchers demonstrate in their papers a picture of a downward spiral of negative population growth, mass impoverishment, employment decline, a worsening of health status and high emigration rates.³ We might term the form of flexibility in Bulgaria and Romania as ‘forced (or ‘default’) flexibility as people have been thrown onto their own resources to survive (Sik and Wallace 2003, Wallace 2002).

In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia, on the other hand, whilst changes in the labour market have been profound, unemployment rates are at a similar level to the European Union average.⁴ In these countries the worst of the transitional economic depression was over by the mid-1990s and their relatively strong economic position and falling unemployment has meant that they have been able to avoid or resist flexibilisation of their labour markets (Wallace 2002). There have been modest

or unsuccessful policies to encourage flexibilisation and even resistance against it. In the Czech Republic, for example, there is a high demand for job security even though employees remain dissatisfied with their employment. In Hungary policy makers are concerned to create 'typical jobs', employers have a lack of interest in flexibility due to substantial fixed costs and for employees pay and job security are the most important aspects of job preferences (Medgyesi 2002). Although governments have attempted to introduce flexible working arrangements, these have had little success (ibid). In Slovenia, despite efforts to comply with the European employment strategy, legislation on flexible work options is still rigid and under discussion (Sicherl 2002). Adapting the term used by Sik and Wallace (2003), these countries could be said to represent 'regulated anti-flexibility'.

'Regulated' and 'de-regulated' flexibility

In the three west European countries, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, in contrast, flexible employment has been the subject of intensive debate and policy intervention in the past two decades. The Netherlands has the highest part-time hours for women in Europe and such work, as is well known, has been the source of the Dutch 'employment miracle' in the past two decades. Three-quarters of the two million new jobs since 1983 have been part-time, the majority of which have gone to women (Visser 2002). The UK and Sweden also have high levels of part-time working in the European context, although this has been declining in Sweden over the past decade as more women are working longer hours. In the UK, part-time work for women has remained stable over the past decade after a rapid rise in the 1980s. However, although part-time work for women is the most important source of flexible work in these three countries, the nature of such work differs considerably in each country. The UK for example, can be said to have a de-regulated form of flexibility whilst the Netherlands and Sweden have introduced flexibility in the context of strong regulation with strong trade unions and state intervention (see also Sik and Wallace 2003, Wallace 2002 and Cousins and Tang 2003b). As we discuss in more detail in another paper (Cousins and Tang 2003) these differences have considerable implications for the integration of work and family life.

HOURS OF WORK AND WORKING HOURS PREFERENCES

In the west European countries, part-time work accounts for nearly two-thirds of female workers in the Netherlands, 51 per cent in the UK and 22 per cent in Sweden (for ease of comparison we are defining part-time work as 30 hours or less per week). As Table 2 shows, however, it is noticeable that part-time working is much more important for mothers in the Netherlands and the UK, the proportions rising to 85 per cent of mothers in Netherlands and 66 per cent in the UK. In the Netherlands part-time employment is so important for mothers with young children that only 8 per cent of mothers with children under 6 work more than 31 hours per week.

In Sweden, however, the presence of dependent children does not have such a large impact on the proportions working 30 hours or less (Table 2 and 3). Working mothers in Sweden do work longer hours than their counterparts in the Netherlands and UK, for example 60 per cent of mothers work between 31-40 hours compared to 12 per cent and 30 per cent in the Netherlands and the UK respectively. As is well known, the ability of mothers in Sweden to combine work and family life is facilitated by extensive and generous parental leave schemes when children are young and by the provision of public childcare for those who demand it. Paid parental leave and affordable childcare, on the other hand, are much less available in the UK and the Netherlands. Indeed Visser (2002) concludes that as mothers in the Netherlands could not count on public facilities supporting the combination of work and motherhood, part-time work became their dominant coping strategy. In the UK, however, there has been a long debate as to whether part-time work for mothers is a lifestyle choice or reflects structural constraints in the context of lack of childcare (for example, Hakim 1991, 1995, 2000, Bruegel 1996, Ginn *et al.* 1996).

The vast majority of part-time mothers in the Netherlands and the UK and Sweden are happy with their hours of work, 70 per cent, 85 per cent and 65 per cent respectively (Table 4-1). Around two-thirds of these respondents in each country state that this is because they can meet domestic commitments (See Table 5 in Appendix). In contrast, however, quite high proportions of full-time working mothers would prefer to reduce their hours, that is, over half in Sweden, and over two-fifths in the UK and the Netherlands (Table 4-2). In each country, over three-quarters of these respondents give the reason to spend more time with their family (Table 5).

Men in the UK work noticeably longer hours than those in the Netherlands or Sweden (Table 2). Here it is interesting that whilst 45 per cent of men in Sweden and one third the Netherlands stated that they worked exactly 40 hours, this was only 22 per cent in the UK (Table 6 Appendix). This reflects the far more unregulated nature of working hours in the UK as well as an entrenched long working hours culture (see Cousins and Tang 2002). In the Netherlands and Sweden working hours are highly regulated by collective bargaining and legislation (Anxo and O'Reilly 2000, OECD 2001).

The majority of fathers in the Netherlands and the UK (62 per cent and 65 per cent respectively) are happy with their working hours. This is less the case in Sweden and as high as 47 per cent of fathers (and 80 per cent of those working more than 51 hours per week) would prefer to work less hours, with three quarters stating that they wished to spend more time with their families. Very few fathers want to work more hours.

Part-time working in the central east European countries is much less developed than in the west, ranging from around one fifth of women workers in Romania to 5 per cent of Slovenian mothers (see also Employment in Europe 2002). Furthermore, the presence of children does not have an impact on the proportions working 30 hours or less per week. Mothers do not therefore have the option of working part-time as a means to combine work and family life as in the UK and the Netherlands. For example, very small proportions of mothers with children under 6 years work part-time, ranging from 1 per cent in Slovenia to 7 per cent in Hungary. The majority of part-timers do not have young children in all countries. In Slovenia part-time employment is rather used as an individual employment strategy for those who have an illness, disability or are in retirement (Sicherl 2002). Similarly, in the Czech Republic, part-time work is used as a means of entry or exit from the labour market and is not used by families with young children to reconcile work and family life (Stepankova 2002). As the researchers in both countries stress, working full-time has been a tradition since communist times and part-time employment is viewed as work which would not bring in a satisfactory income.

The option for mothers with young children is therefore either a full-time job or to stay at home as a full-time mother. Quite high proportions of mothers do give their economic status as looking after the family, for example, 41 per cent of mothers with children under 6 in Romania, 38 per cent in the Czech Republic, 28 per cent in

Hungary and 20 per cent in Bulgaria. In Romania the common rule in rural areas is for mothers with young children to stay at home; in the urban areas, however, mothers with young children have difficulties in finding jobs or in keeping jobs (despite the protective legal provisions).⁵ In the Czech Republic there is a four-year parental leave scheme and most use this chance to be a full-time mother for the whole period.⁶ In Bulgaria, however, parental leave has been reduced from three to two years, and the vast majority of young women work without labour contracts and are, therefore, excluded from protection in pregnancy and motherhood (Koveacheva and Pancheva 2002). In Slovenia only 12 per cent of mothers with young children are at home looking after family. This is possibly related to the high level and affordability of childcare provision which has survived since communist times and is still seen as a precondition for extensive female employment.⁷

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For those mothers who do work, they tend to work much longer hours than their counterparts in the west, for example, mothers working more than 41 hours per week comprise 28 per cent in Romania, 32 per cent in Bulgaria, 25 per cent in Slovenia and 44 per cent in the Czech Republic. These compare to 4 per cent of mothers in the UK, 5 per cent in Netherlands and 14 per cent in Sweden. The very long hours in the Czech Republic confirm Pollert's (1995) earlier finding that women in the Czech Republic had the longest working hours in all European countries. In fact, in Pollert's study when part-time shifts were required for extended opening hours in the retail sector, the low pay of service employment meant that these part-time shifts were in *addition* to full-time work. There are also large differences between east and west countries in the extent to which women can control their hours of work or negotiate with their employer. Only a minority can decide their hours of work themselves or jointly with their employers, ranging from 21 per cent in Bulgaria to 36 per cent in Romania. In contrast, in the Netherlands, as many as three-quarters of women can decide their own hours or negotiate hours with their employer (see Table 7 Appendix)

However, with the exception of mothers in the Czech Republic, mothers are less likely than their counterparts in the west to express a desire to work fewer hours (Table 4). The majority are content with the hours that they work. In Bulgaria, however, as high as 79 per cent of fathers and 78 per cent of mothers want to work more hours and this is related to the need to earn more money (see Table 5).

Men in the central east European countries work much longer hours than those in the west (with the exception of the UK) although, as in the UK and Sweden, fathers work longer hours than men without dependent children. In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia the majority of men are happy with the hours that they work. A substantial minority, though, would wish to work fewer hours (with the exception of Romania), with around three-fifths stating this is because they would like to spend more time with their family.

A further question enabled the examination of respondents' willingness to work full-time. In this question respondents were asked if they would be willing to work more than 40 hours a week, first, in a condition of a negative incentive, that is, if they had no job, and secondly, in a condition of positive incentive, that is, if they could earn twice their salary.

As Table 8 shows in all countries men were more likely than women to say that they would be willing to work more than 40 hours per week in either condition of the positive and negative situation. However, there are pronounced differences between the countries in west and eastern Europe. At one extreme is the Netherlands, with 48 per cent of men and only 9 per cent of women saying that they are willing to work more than 40 hours if they had no job. There is also a marked gender difference in the UK with 80 per cent of men and 31 per cent of women willing to work more than 40 hours. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, nearly two-thirds of men and over half of women are willing to work more than 40 hours. If we consider women with children, we find that in the Netherlands only 2 per cent are willing to work 40 hours or more if they have no job, and even in the positive condition of earning twice their salary only 6 per cent would do so. In the UK the figures for mothers are 18 per cent and 37 per cent respectively. In the UK there is also a considerable difference between women part-timers and full-timers in their willingness to work more than 40 hours, that is, 13 per cent and 45 per cent respectively (in the scenario of having no job).

CHILDCARE, DOMESTIC TASKS AND WORK AND FAMILY RELATIONS

In this section of the paper we focus on childcare and the domestic division of labour in the different countries. We also consider the extent to which work and family impinge on one another and the extent to which this generates conflict.

Respondents were asked who was mainly responsible for taking daily care of children or taking care of children when they are sick. Table 9 shows the responses in families with children under 14 years in the different countries. It is clear that daily childcare is largely the responsibility of the mother or is shared equally.

Responsibility for daily care of children ranges from just over half of female respondents in Sweden and Slovenia to nearly 90 per cent in Hungary. One fifth of fathers with children under 14 take responsibility for childcare in Slovenia, but elsewhere this ranges from 6 to 10 per cent. Sweden has far higher proportions of mothers and fathers who report that childcare is shared equally, over half of fathers and 45 per cent of mothers. For Swedish parents who work between 31-40 hours per week equal responsibility for childcare rises to 59 per cent for men and 52 per cent for mothers. In the UK, the Netherlands and Slovenia around one quarter of parents share childcare equally, although this is higher (at 40 per cent) for families with two full-time earners in the UK. Hungary appears to have the most traditional division of labour with respect to childcare and only 1 per cent of respondents state that childcare is shared equally (see also below). A similar picture arises in the question on who takes care of children when they are ill, although in all countries fathers, on the whole, tend to be less involved than mothers in caring for a sick child.

Whilst there was no direct question on childcare arrangements when parents are at work, what is striking about the survey findings is that in the west European countries, responsibility for childcare is contained within the immediate family with an extremely high reliance on mothers themselves, or sharing between partners.

Virtually no respondents in the Netherlands and Sweden and very few in the UK rely on other family members, someone from outside the household or pay for daily childcare or for caring for a sick child. A substantial minority of respondents in the central east European countries, however, rely on other family members.

With respect to domestic tasks, it is overwhelmingly women who take the main responsibility for household chores in all eight countries (Table 10). In three countries, mothers with children under 14 are more likely than women without dependent children to carry out domestic tasks, for example, the UK, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands, (cooking, cleaning, washing and shopping). In Romania too there is evidence from the Romanian Report that young men in families without children play a greater role in domestic tasks but once children are present

their wives take on more domestic responsibilities and earning more money becomes more important to the men.

Equal sharing of domestic tasks is on the whole more important in the west and especially in Sweden. In Sweden, half of fathers with dependent children state that they share cleaning the house and daily shopping, with one third sharing cooking. The involvement of other family members in household tasks is, however, more important in the central eastern countries. Hungary and the Czech Republic appear to have the most traditional division of domestic labour with respect to household tasks. Furthermore, responsibility for these domestic tasks is also almost entirely contained within the household in all countries. The proportion receiving paid or unpaid help with domestic tasks from outside the household ranges from 1 to 3 per cent for all countries. The exception is cleaning the house which in the west European countries ranges from 1 to 10 per cent, although this is lower in families with children.

PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY/WORK ARRANGEMENTS

In order to estimate the extent to which work and family impinge on one another, respondents were asked if they had experienced the following conflicts in the past three months as shown in Table 11.

Table 11 shows, unsurprisingly, that parents with dependent children are more likely to experience conflicts between work and family lives than those without dependent children, and this is particularly so for fathers. However, what is striking is that in 5 countries (the Netherlands, UK, the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary) fathers are more likely than mothers to state that work makes it difficult to do household tasks or fulfil family responsibilities. Fathers in Slovenia are also more likely than mothers to say work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities. This is a rather surprisingly finding, given that women carry the major responsibility for childcare and domestic work. However, as Table 12 shows experience of work/family conflict is strongly related to long hours of work for fathers in these countries, as in all cases there are higher proportions who state that their work makes it difficult to do households tasks or fulfil family responsibilities. In general fathers in the western countries are more likely to state this than those in the central east countries. Family/work conflict is particularly high in the UK, reflecting perhaps the very long hours that some fathers work in that country. In Bulgaria, on the other hand,

we can see that family/work conflict is low even for those working long hours. As the Bulgarian researchers stress there is little concern for time for leisure and family life when faced with the need to survive in very unfavourable economic and social conditions (Kovacheva and Pancheva 2002a).

Sweden has the highest proportion of parents, over half, who state that work makes it difficult to do household tasks or fulfil family responsibilities. It is difficult to know why Swedish parents should experience such high levels of work family conflict, as it is a country envied world wide for its family-friendly policies. It is also surprising given the high levels of shared responsibility for childcare and domestic tasks. Here too though long hours of work are also related to the experience of family/work conflict. Nearly all (94 per cent) of Swedish mothers and two thirds of fathers working more than 41 hours report that work makes it difficult to carry out household tasks and nearly three quarters of both state that work makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities. It may be that in a country which has developed 'innovative architectures of time' (Hochschild 1997: 252), those who fall outside this time structure do experience greater conflict. We have also seen earlier that higher proportions of fathers and mothers than elsewhere wish to reduce their working hours in order to spend more time with their families. Furthermore, equal sharing of childcare is accomplished by higher proportions of men and women who work between 31 to 40 hours. There does then seem to be a greater expectation/aspiration to balance home and family life in Sweden, which if not achieved leads to greater experiences of work and family conflict.

In all countries too, higher proportions of respondents with tertiary level of education experience work/family conflict (Table 13 Appendix). The Netherlands has the highest proportion (43 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women) with tertiary level education, followed by Sweden with one third of men and women and the UK with one fifth of men and women. In central east Europe, however, the proportions are much less and range from 10 per cent in Romania to 17 per cent in Hungary. In part this may explain the difference between west and eastern countries, in that the more highly educated have higher expectations of balancing working and family life but many cannot achieve this in practice, especially if they are working long hours.

With respect to the question on 'family responsibilities prevented me from working adequately' there is more reluctance in general to agree with this statement. However, over one quarter of fathers in the UK and one fifth of fathers in Slovenia

agree with this statement. In the UK this rises to 40 per cent of fathers who worked more than 50 hours per week suggesting the difficulties of fathering in the long-hours culture of this country.

Two fifths of fathers in Sweden and one third of mothers report that they take work home to finish. This is the highest proportion of the eight countries and may contribute to the higher experience of work/family conflict of parents in Sweden. There is however, little support for Hochschild's (1997) thesis that many parents prefer to spend more at work rather than with their family. The higher proportions of parents who state this in Bulgaria (around one quarter) may prefer to spend more time at work in order to earn more money as we have seen earlier. This has to be placed in the context of mass impoverishment of the population in the 1990s and the survival strategies with which households must engage. These are very different reasons to those given in the American context by Hochschild.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the Netherlands part-time work for women and especially mothers is the norm and as we have seen Dutch women have an extremely strong preference for working short hours. In the Dutch literature review for the HWF project the author notes that part-time work in the Netherlands is not considered as atypical or flexible work (Jager 2002). Indeed, for mothers it is almost the only form of employment.

In the UK, part-time work is also a strong preference for women and especially mothers and as in the Netherlands there is a marked reluctance for mothers and those already working part-time to work long hours. The evidence discussed above suggests that both full-time and part-time mothers experience time constraints. Many full-time mothers would like to reduce their hours to spend more time with their family and part-time mothers demonstrate a preference for short hours because of their domestic commitments. These working time preferences should also be put in the context of the long, and in some cases very long, working hours of their partners.

However, it does appear that the choice for mothers to work is easier in the Netherlands, 16 per cent of mothers with children under 6 in the Netherlands are at home looking after the family compared to 34 per cent in the UK. Nearly half of these respondents in the UK are lone mothers, reflecting the difficulties they face in

combining paid work and caring in the UK. In contrast, the proportion of mothers with young children who are at home is 4 per cent in Sweden.

In both the Netherlands and the UK part-time work is strongly associated with a low personal income, 70 per cent of female part-timers in the UK and 61 per cent in the Netherlands are in the lowest quartile of the income distribution. This compares to 10 per cent of female part-timers in Sweden. However, in comparison with the UK, part-time jobs in the Netherlands are highly protected and regulated. The Netherlands has the highest proportion of women of the 8 countries who either decide their hours themselves or jointly with their employer, over three-quarters compared with 54 per cent in the UK (Table 7 Appendix) (see above for a comparison with eastern countries). Part-time work also has equality of treatment and conditions with full-timers and since 2000 there has been the right to request part-time work. In the UK in contrast, the HWF survey confirms other research findings which have consistently demonstrated that part-time work for women is a highly disadvantaged section of the labour market (see Cousins and Tang 2002, also Dex and McCulloch 1995, Gallie *et al.* 1998, Perrons and Hurstfield 1998, Purcell 2000). There is also a considerable polarisation between women working full-time and part-time. Part-timers are more likely than full-timers to occupy low-level and low skilled jobs, and be in jobs that require no training. Part-timers are also likely to receive less training or promotion opportunities and occupy jobs that have less benefits, employment rights, fringe benefits such as holiday pay, and access to pensions.

In both the UK and the Netherlands quite high proportions of parents exhibited a conflict between family and working life, and although not as high as in Sweden the proportions are considerably higher than most of the eastern European countries. However, it is men and especially fathers who report higher levels of conflict between work and family life. Here it was suggested that the inability to reconcile work and family life for men is related to their long working hours, especially in the UK. Women working short hours, however, have already accommodated the demands of family life by reducing their working hours and are therefore less likely to experience work and family conflict.

In the Netherlands policies by the social partners to develop part-time work and the demand from women themselves for this type of work (see Visser 2002) have enabled women to care for their children at home and work part-time. The author of the Dutch report notes that there is still a very strong ideology of caring for children

by the mothers themselves. Nevertheless, the stress is on individual working patterns and individual solutions to the problem of combining work and care (Jager 2002). As the Dutch author notes part-time work for women tends to emphasise rather than undermine traditional differences between men and women.

In the UK, part-time work for women has been described as essentially a 'gender compromise' (Fagan and O'Reilly 1998). Part-time work has provided a 'space' for women to enter the labour market and combine work and family but it does not challenge the male-work model or the long-hours culture and nor does it disrupt men's traditional breadwinner status at the workplace or in the home.

In Sweden we have found a different pattern of combining work and family where the majority of men and women, including parents, work between 31-40 hours. Short part-time working for mothers accounts for only a minority. Sweden also has the highest proportions of egalitarian families in the sense of equal sharing of childcare and domestic tasks. The HWF survey does confirm Sweden as a country which is far ahead of the others in supporting mothers at work and enabling them to participate as equals in the labour market. Nevertheless, Sweden has the highest proportion of men and women and as high as 60 per cent of mothers who wish to reduce their working hours, the majority in order to spend more time with the family. Further, Sweden has the highest levels of respondents who experience a conflict between work and family life. For men this may be related to the greater expectation that they participate more in childcare and domestic tasks and may also explain why such high proportions wish to reduce their hours of work, especially if working long hours.

In the central eastern countries flexibility has been achieved through the restructuring of economies and the exit of many workers from the formal labour market. For example, in Romania only 33 per cent of men and 29 per cent of women in the HWF sample report that they had received a wage as a source of income in the past month (Table 14 appendix). The proportions stating this in Bulgaria are also low at 45 and 47 per cent of men and women respectively. This compares to around three-quarters of men in the Netherlands and Sweden and 72 and 62 per cent respectively of women. Further, over one third of respondents in Romania and one third of women in Slovenia state that a pension is their source of income. Receipt of a pension is also the income source for one quarter of women in the Czech Republic, one quarter of men and women in Hungary and one quarter of men in Slovenia.

When respondents were asked if they had an income in the past year from self-employment, casual, short-term or small scale agriculture only one third of men in Hungary and Bulgaria and 17 per cent of men and 13 per cent of women in Slovenia stated that they had no income from such sources, suggesting an extensive informal economy. On the other hand, this was not the case in Czech Republic or the western countries.

Under communism women's labour market participation was higher in central east European countries than in the west. The state promoted women's employment with a range of maternity and parental leave schemes and childcare provision and benefits. The low levels of wages meant, though, that average living standards were premised on two full-time earner families (Pollert 1995). However, the concept of 'equality' in paid work did not spill over into the home and women's responsibility for childcare and domestic tasks remained unchallenged. In the 1990s in the transition to a market economy family policies in many countries have been under threat as cuts in public expenditure have taken place together with the closure or rationalisation of workplaces. Nevertheless, in comparison with the UK, there are still generous parental leave schemes, many of which also involve the father (despite a conservative gender ideology), for example, in the Czech Republic and Romania. However, strong protection for working mothers may actually disadvantage them as privatised firms cannot meet the costs of extended maternity and parental leave, as we have seen, for example, in Bulgaria and Romania.

One decade after the transition to post-communism, the HWF survey has shown that part-time working is not an important source of employment and it is certainly not used by mothers as a way of combining work and family. Women and men, with and without children, still tend to work long hours. There is however, evidence (with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania) of a substantial minority of parents who wished to work fewer hours in order to spend more time with their family. In Bulgaria, in the context of a dramatic decline in living standards, there is a strong desire to work even longer hours because of the need to earn more money.

As we have also seen, there is (with the exception of Slovenia) still a strong traditional domestic division of labour which suggests for that for working women there is a heavy 'double burden' of paid and unpaid work (see also Crompton 1997). In a minority of households mothers can rely on other household members for childcare and domestic tasks and this is almost as important as equal sharing between

partners. Nevertheless, women take the overwhelming responsibility for childcare and domestic tasks. Despite this workload however, women reported less work /family conflict than women in the west. Interestingly, men in the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary reported more difficulty in balancing work and family life than women. The gender culture may be characterised as a dual earner (or multi-earner) family but still with a traditional division of labour. In Romania and Bulgaria, however, many families have returned to the family economic gender model (Pfau-Effinger 1998) in which both genders contribute to the survival of the family economy. In Bulgaria the need to earn more money and concerns with family and individual survival strategies are more important than work and family balance. Slovenia (dubbed the 'Sweden of the south' by the research team) has, though, a higher proportion of egalitarian families, that is, a higher proportion of men who are involved in daily childcare or who shared childcare equally. All eight countries therefore, demonstrate diverse routes to flexibility and different mixes of social policies and gender cultures which have led to considerable differences in the integration of work and family life.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 Type of employment by gender (% of each country)

Employment status	West Europe				East Europe			
	NL N=1007	SW N=1284	UK N=945	BG N=1806	CZ N=1556	HG N=1166	RO N=1524	SL N=839
Full time (all)	21	62	41	41	49	46	29	42
Male	68	72	56	41	54	48	30	51
Female	18	52	31	42	45	45	28	35
Part time (all)	21	14	16	4	2	3	3	1
Male	6	5	4	4	1	2	4	1
Female	34	23	25	4	3	3	2	1
Fixed contract (all)	7	1	2	3	1	.4	1	6
Male	5	1	2	4	1	.4	2	6
Female	8	1	2	2	1	.5	1	7
Self employed (all)	8	8	8	7	9	7	3	4
Male	9	11	13	8	12	10	5	7
Female	7	4	4	5	7	4	2	2
Unemployed (all)	6	4	5	27	8	7	9	12
Male	2	4	6	30	8	9	12	9
Female	10	4	4	25	7	5	6	13
Retired (all)	4	4	11	9	14	14	35	28
Male	6	3	10	6	10	11	36	21
Female	3	6	12	11	17	17	34	33

Table 2 Hours of work per week for respondents with and without dependent children^a by gender (% of gender)

Hours of work Gender	With/without dependent children	30 or less		31-40		41-50		51+	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
West Europe									
Netherlands N=1007	With	2	85	66	12	24	3	8	1
	Without	12	48	57	45	24	6	7	1
Sweden N=1284	With	3	26	55	60	34	12	8	2
	Without	7	20	56	58	29	18	8	4
UK N=945	With	11	65	36	29	30	3	23	3
	Without	12	38	45	46	28	14	15	3
East Europe									
Bulgaria^b N=1806	With	11	12	55	56	20	27	14	5
	Without								
Czech Republic N=1556	With	3	15	34	41	47	37	17	7
	Without	8	11	31	42	43	39	17	8
Hungary N=1166	With	5	15	20	39	46	34	30	12
	Without	12	14	23	29	44	45	20	12
Romania N=1524	With	14	19	37	53	17	10	33	18
	Without	13	21	38	43	19	19	30	17
Slovenia N=839	With	1	5	57	70	27	20	15	5
	Without	10	18	48	56	29	22	14	4

^a dependent children are aged under 14 years

^b data not available for Bulgarian respondents without dependent children

Table 3 Mean hours of work by gender

Countries	With /without dependent children ^a		Male	Female
	With	without		
West Europe				
Netherlands N=1007	With	without	42	21
UK N=945	With	without	46	28
Sweden N=1284	With	without	41	28
			33	29
East Europe				
Bulgaria N=1806	With		42	40
Czech Republic N=1556	With	without	45	39
Hungary N=1166	With	without	49	42
Romania N=1524	With	without	48	41
Slovenia N=839	With	without	46	41
			43	38

^adependent children are aged under 14 years

Table 4-1 Female part-time workers' working hours preferences (% of gender)

West Europe	Working hours preference					
	Less hours		The same hours		More hours	
	No dependent children	With dependent children	No dependent children	With dependent children	No dependent children	With dependent children
Netherlands N=221	15	12	68	70	18	18
Sweden N=161	8	16	67	65	25	20
UK N=139	5	4	83	85	13	9

Table 4-2 Full-time workers' working hours preferences (% of gender)

Employed full time	Working hours preference					
	Less hours		The same hours		More hours	
	No dependent children	With dependent children	No dependent children	With dependent children	No dependent children	With dependent children
West Europe						
Netherlands N=441						
Male	37	33	59	62	3	4
Female	37	43	57	50	6	7
Sweden N=738						
Male	38	47	59	51	2	2
Female	44	55	55	46	1	-
UK N=389						
Male	25	34	69	65	6	2
Female	30	42	67	54	2	4
East Europe						
Bulgaria N=748						
Male		7		10		79
Female		8		10		78
Czech N=789						
Male	39	33	60	65	4	2
Female	44	43	56	56	4	1
Hungary N=539						
Male	26	32	58	59	16	9
Female	33	35	60	62	7	4
Romania N=536						
Male	19	16	61	60	21	25
Female	23	18	60	73	17	9
Slovenia N=422						
Male	26	31	70	68	4	2
Female	32	36	68	62	-	1

Table 5 Selected reasons for working hours preferences (% of gender)

Countries	Reasons					
	Less hours for more time with family		Same hours for domestic commitments		More hours for more money	
	No dependent children	With dependent children	No dependent children	With dependent children	No dependent children	With dependent children
West Europe						
Netherlands N=1007						
Male	14	43	2	10	27	29
Female	23	65	19	57	15	19
Sweden N=1284						
Male	37	77	17	18	54	50
Female	29	82	12	38	61	67
UK N=945						
Male	41	69	14	49	67	10
Female	33	68	25	66	79	60
East Europe						
Bulgaria N=1806						
Male		2		18		80
Female		2		38		77
Czech N=1556						
Male	34	58	21	37	71	60
Female	44	76	38	55	67	10
Hungary N=1166						
Male	24	61	25	39	84	94
Female	47	68	38	67	89	88
Romania N=1524						
Male	17	23	24	44	81	89
Female	34	41	40	58	84	91
Slovenia N=839						
Male	20	56	21	41	39	67
Female	24	60	31	51	80	10

Table 6 Per cent of respondents working 40 hours per week by gender

Countries	Men %	Women %
West Europe		
Netherlands N=173	33	11
Sweden N=414	45	40
UK N=104	22	12
East Europe		
Bulgaria N=445	45	45
Czech Republic N=306	26	34
Hungary N=170	21	29
Romania N=295	35	43
Slovenia N=293	49	59

Table 7 Autonomy in working hours by gender (% of gender)*

West Europe	I decide		Employer and I decide together	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Netherlands N=1007	37	31	35	45
Sweden N=1284	40	31	21	20
UK N=945	35	28	16	26
East Europe				
Bulgaria N=1806	21	15	5	6
Czech Republic N=1556	24	17	11	10
Hungary N=1166	26	18	16	14
Romania N=1524	39	29	5	7
Slovenia N=839	27	15	18	17

* Respondents were asked 'Who makes the decision on the number of hours that you work?'

Table 8 Potential willingness to work more than 40 hours per week by gender (% of gender)

Country*	NL		UK		BG		SL		CZ	
	N=1007		N=945		N=1806		N=839		N=1556	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
If no job and could get one under certain conditions	48	9	81	31	64	52	60	48	49	28
If offered a new job with twice the salary	51	14	83	48	74	66			72	54

*The two questions were not asked in HG, RO, SW and there is only data for the first question in SL.

Table 9 Who takes the responsibility for childcare in families with children under 14 (% of gender)

Country	West Europe						East Europe									
	NL N=400		SW N=449		UK N=329		BG N=456		CZ N=501		HG N=360		RO N=543		SL N=237	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Respondent	7	60	10	51	10	77	7	68	10	75	10	89	6	74	19	53
Partner	31	1	34	1	56	2	59	3	69	9	73	3	68	4	29	4
Other family members	2	1	-	-	4	2	15	12	7	4	16	6	18	16	21	15
Shared equally	22	20	53	45	27	19	18	17	15	11	1	1	^a	^a	23	15

* The table does not include answers to 'other situation', 'not applicable', 'don't know'.

^a shared equally was not asked in Romania

Table 10 Domestic division in families with children under 14 (% of gender)

Country	West Europe								East Europe							
	NL N=1007		SW N=1284		UK N=945		BG N=1806		CR N=1556		HG N=1166		RO N=1524		SL N=839	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Cooking																
Respondent	12	67	17	67	22	82	3	81	5	90	7	87	6	82	14	74
Partner	46	6	47	10	52	8	75	4	85	3	81	2	74	2	60	4
Other family members	1	-1	1	1	7	3	17	11	7	5	12	10	16	15	17	14
Shared equally	17	13	35	22	20	8	6	4	4	3	-1	-	-	-	9	8
Cleaning																
Respondent	7	72	12	62	9	77	2	80	4	84	5	91	5	79	10	62
Partner	44	1	35	4	66	2	73	2	81	3	83	2	76	3	49	4
Other family members	1	-	1	2	6	3	12	7	7	26	11	6	17	17	16	9
Shared equally	13	10	50	28	17	14	12	11	9	10	2	-	-	-	26	24
Washing																
Respondent	10	85	16	72	10	88	2	87	1	90	3	92	4	81	10	78
Partner	64	2	60	3	75	1	60	3	89	2	86	1	77	2	72	2
Other family members	2	1	1	2	7	3	10	6	7	5	9	7	17	16	15	13
Shared equally	8	9	22	22	8	8	4	5	2	3	1	-	-	-	3	6
Shopping																
Respondent	18	58	23	57	20	78	16	63	14	80	19	82	25	62	28	62
Partner	29	8	24	10	54	4	56	11	68	7	67	11	54	16	43	7
Other family members	1	-	1	1	7	3	14	10	6	4	12	7	18	20	10	12
Shared equally	34	22	52	31	20	15	14	16	12	9	2	1	-	-	19	19

* The table does not include answers to 'other situation', 'not applicable', 'don't know'.

Table 11 Experience of work/family conflict (% of gender)

Country	West Europe								East Europe							
	NL		SW		UK		BG		CR		HG		RO		SL	
	N=1007		N=1284		N=945		N=1806		N=1556		N=1166		N=1524		N=839	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
My work makes it difficult for me to do some of the household tasks that need to be done.																
With children under 14	55	42	57	60	55	36	23	30	43	25	31	31	34	26	46	52
No children under 14	39	42	38	44	33	24	-	-	24	22	22	25	27	22	27	35
My work makes it difficult to fulfil my family responsibilities.																
With children under 14	42	30	50	52	46	29	17	22	38	21	31	20	27	20	57	48
No children under 14	20	28	30	39	18	15	-	-	20	18	17	17	20	18	38	31
My family responsibilities prevented me from doing my work adequately.																
With children under 14	14	15	15	18	28	17	6	14	14	12	8	12	14	12	13	20
No children under 14	7	7	7	8	11	8	-	-	8	7	7	5	8	9	7	6
I have to take work from my employment home to finish.																
With children under 14	31	23	41	31	25	14	3	11	20	17	12	14	9	12	12	18
No children under 14	30	19	28	26	13	16	-	-	15	13	10	13	11	11	12	13
I preferred to spend more time at work than to spend more time at home.																
With children under 14	11	11	9	6	8	6	24	22	15	10	6	3	8	9	11	10
No children under 14	13	16	9	7	6	5	-	-	14	10	6	2	7	8	10	8

* The table includes answers of 'sometimes, often, always' to the question 'how often you have experienced this'.

Table 12 Per cent of fathers working more than 40 hours stating that work makes it difficult to carry out households tasks and fulfil family responsibilities

Countries	Household tasks	Family responsibilities
	% of fathers	% of fathers
West Europe		
Netherlands N=54	68	52
Sweden N=74	67	63
UK N=48	73	81
East Europe		
Bulgaria N=39	39	33
Czech Republic N=126	48	46
Hungary N=92	36	37
Romania N= 75	53	39
Slovenia N=33	56	77

Table 13 Work/family conflicts experienced by respondents with tertiary level of education (% of gender)

Countries	Western countries								Eastern countries							
	NL		SW		UK*		BU		CZ		HU		RO		SL	
	N=378		N=359		N=197		N=286		N=181		N=193		N=165		N=128	
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
My work makes it difficult for me to do some of the household tasks that need to be done.																
With dependent children	71	56	65	70	61	66	34	34	42	38	42	58	20	26	60	53
Without	41	51	46	54	33	24			37	36	34	33	46	37	41	54
My work makes it difficult to fulfil my responsibilities towards my family.																
With dependent children	47	40	63	58	48	42	10	19	39	26	46	36	27	11	10	47
Without	24	36	34	49	18	15			31	34	28	21	35	35	50	42
My responsibilities towards my family prevented me from doing work adequately.																
With dependent children	16	25	27	23	22	31	7	6	19	12	15	16	7	5	30	39
Without	9	11	8	13	11	8			8	12	9	8	12	14	12	4
I preferred to spend more time at work than to spend more time at home.																
With dependent children	8	11	11	9	9	7	10	11	8	27	12	-	7	5	44	11
Without	15	21	11	8	6	5			11	26	8	5	3	3	19	16

*UK answers from without dependent children include answers of 'DK/NA'.

Table 14 Income source by gender (% of gender)

Income source	Western countries								Eastern countries							
	NL		SW		UK		BG		CR		HG		RO		SL	
	N=1007		N=1284		N=945		N=1806		N=1556		N=1166		N=1524		N=839	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Wage or salary	79	62	75	72	62	58	45	47	57	50	51	48	33	29	58	43
Self employment	10	7	11	5	14	5	7	5	18	10	10	5	3	1	7	2
Additional jobs (occasional and/or casual)	3	3	5	4	1	2	5	3	12	9	5	2	8	3	11	9
Farming	1	1	1	1	-	-	8	4	3	-1	3	1	14	5	5	3
Pension	6	4	3	7	11	14	10	16	16	24	23	26	36	34	22	35
Unemployment benefit	2	3	3	3	5	3	8	7	7	6	5	3	5	5	3	4

NOTES

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² Details of these papers and their availability can be viewed at www.hwf.at

³ In Bulgaria 69 per cent of respondents said that their household economic situation had clearly or somewhat deteriorated in the past five years. In the other central east countries this ranges from 59 per cent in Romania to 36 per cent in the Czech Republic, and in the west 14 per cent in the Netherlands, 17 per cent in Sweden and 25 per cent in the UK.

⁴ Employment rates in the CEE countries are lower for both men and women than the west European countries. Male employment rates range from 56 per cent in Bulgaria to 73 per cent in the Czech Republic and female rates range from 47 per cent in Bulgaria to 59 per cent in Slovenia and Romania. In contrast in the west, male employment rates range from 75 per cent in Sweden to 82 in the Netherlands and female rates from around 64 in the Netherlands and the UK to 71 per cent in Sweden (Employment in Europe 2001).

⁵ Private correspondence with the Romanian partner, Manuela Stanculescu.

⁶ Private correspondence with the Czech partner, Petra Stepankova.

⁷ In 2000/2001 57 per cent of pre-school children were in day care centres, 29 per cent aged 1 to 2 years and 71 per cent 3 to 6 years. The existing childcare centres almost fully meet the demand for pre-school childcare (Sicherl 2002).