UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
School of Social Sciences

EXPLORING MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT IN POST-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

Understanding the Implications of Childcare Policies

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ABSTRACT

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EXPLORING MATERNAL EMPLOYMENT IN POST-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES: Understanding the Implications of Childcare Policies

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Access to paid employment has conspicuous economic, political, cultural and social implications, for both personal autonomy and gender equality. Eight most advanced post-socialist countries that entered the European Union in 2004 have boasted comparatively high full-time employment rates for women since the socialist period. However, the proportion of women who withdraw from paid employment when they care for pre-school children differs significantly among these countries. This thesis examines why women's employment rates drop so sharply subsequent to childbirth in some of the post-socialist countries, but not the others. It seeks to answer this question by exploring childcare policies. The main research question is whether, and how, these policies shape mothers' employment in the eight countries.

This thesis first analyzes the emancipatory potential of national policies on childcare leave and formal childcare service provision between 2000 and 2008, in order to determine whether or not childcare policies provide options for carers to engage in paid employment. It probes the applicability of the varieties of familialism literature to the post-socialist countries, and draws attention to policy characteristics that received insufficient attention in earlier comparative research. It finds that among eight post-socialist countries Slovenia and Lithuania create conditions for women's continuous employment, while Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia provide financial incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for a longer period after childbirth, whereas parents in Poland, Slovakia and Latvia are left nearly without public support.

Drawing upon maternal employment data, the thesis finds evidence in favour of the childcare policies explanation. In countries with gender-neutral leave of moderate duration and affordable, adequate and accessible formal childcare services the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children are significantly higher than in other countries. Such policies are especially important for the employment of low-skilled and low-income mothers with pre-school children, who are usually employed in less protected and less secured jobs. The thesis also suggests that educational attainment and the income needs of households suppress rather than rival the childcare policies explanation, and that the unregulated service markets and day care by other family members account for mothers' employment in countries with limited state support. The findings in this thesis underpin the importance of childcare policies for enhancing women's continuous employment and indicate that childcare policies have broader social implications upon women's economic and personal autonomy.

The thesis sheds new light on childcare policies and maternal employment trends in eight post-socialist countries. It helps differentiate their overly simplistic characterization in earlier comparative research, and allows a more meaningful discussion of how childcare policies shape employment practices of mothers with pre-school children.

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Jana Javornik-Skrbinšek, declare that the thesis entitled "Exploring Maternal Employment in Post-Socialist Countries: Understanding the Implications of Childcare Policies" and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

• this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

• where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

• where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

• where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

• I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

• where the thesis is based upon work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

• none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Forgive me, good readers
whom I may be slighting
in my selfish attempt
to learn English by writing.
(Piet Hein)

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This thesis is for you.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

EC	European Commission
ESS	European Social Survey
ESPAnet	European Network for Social Policy Analysis
ESSPROS	European system of integrated social protection statistics
EU	European Union
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on income, social inclusion and living conditions
EVS	European Value Survey
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
HDI	Human Development Index
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMAD	Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development of the Republic of Slovenia
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISSA	Information Systems Security Association
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LFS	Labour Force Survey (Eurostat)
MISSCEEC	Mutual Information System on Social Protection in Central and Eastern European Countries
MISSOC	Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the Member States of the EU
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPS	Purchasing Power Standard - artificial currency unit (Eurostat)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WVS	World Values Survey

Eurobarometer	Public Opinion Analysis Sector of the European Commission
Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – European Union research organisation of living and working conditions
Eurostat	Statistical office of the European Union
Eurydice	European network on early care and education systems and policies in Europe

Acronyms of countries

CZ	Czech Republic
EE	Estonia
HU	Hungary
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
PL	Poland
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia

I cannot give any scientist of any age any better advice than this: The intensity of the conviction that a hypothesis is true has no bearing on whether it is true or not.
(Sir Peter Medawar)

Preface

In 1998, a small group of policy analysts from Central and Eastern Europe, including myself, were invited to discuss the effects of the transition from socialism to capitalism on female employment in eight most advanced Central European states, called 'post-socialist countries'. We were also asked to present our views on female employment outlook in ten years, when the tumultuous period of social and economic transformation would have been over. We were of course much better at documenting and recounting the past than forecasting the future. Being almost ten years into 'post-socialism', we agreed that future trends would have depended on the restructuring of national as well as global economies. After all, the 1990s represented a decade of intensive society-making, when the socioeconomic conditions were not "normal" (Wagener 2002: 152). It was the period of "leaping in the dark" (Kovács 2002: 182) and "muddling through" (Wagener 2002: 171) to avoid the worst and to adapt the institutions that were inherited from the socialist past to the immediate requirements of transformation. Hence, we suggested that the economic conditions, shaping the opportunity-constraint structures of the labour markets, would have determined the female employment outlook in the ensuing years.

Among the participants, nobody had suggested that within the broad category of 'female employment' something else might be going on. That a more compelling trend would be evident if we focused on the employment behaviour of women with young children. We assumed that during the period of state socialism, the normative and institutional foundations for a dual-earner family model were laid, and hence that the conventional gender division of labour was challenged. However, we disregarded that these eight countries have followed diverging trajectories. We overlooked that different normative assumptions about the gender division of labour might have underpinned national public policies. That the states might have used childcare policies differently to challenge, or reinforce, the conventional gender division of care, and that people might have gained different collective experiences. By and large, we did not take into account that past developments might interact with the current social and employment trends, and hence that other factors than purely economic could influence female employment. Twelve years down the road, after having thoroughly explored the underlying driving forces of female employment, this study provides a more theoretically informed account of female employment in eight 'most advanced' post-socialist countries.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Defining the research problem

Relative to Western capitalist countries, the socialist states were distinguished by comparatively high full-time employment of women since the early socialist period, i.e. since the 1950s (e.g. Unicef 1999). Much of the earlier literature argues that state socialism eroded the bonds of family life and that its childcare policies freed women to join the labour force – and on a full-time basis (e.g. Van der Lippe and Van Dijk 2001a: 5). But, after the collapse of state socialism in the late 1980s, the winds of change have swept not only through political and economic systems, but also through female employment (e.g. Unicef 1999). By the mid-1990s, employment rates declined across post-socialist countries, including the "most advanced post-socialist countries" that joined the European Union in 2004: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia from Central Europe, and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from the Baltic States (von Wahl 2008: 27).

The literature that documents and recounts the early post-socialist period in these eight countries argues that the economic changes evoked a renaissance of traditional gender roles and values, and that shifts to neo-familialistic cultural practices emerged (e.g. Einhorn 1993; Funk 1993; Gal and Kligman 2000; Unicef 1999). Gender theorists argue that "returning women to the 'private sphere' was a central mechanism for transformation from a 'full employment' to a quasi-capitalist system" (Funk 1993: 2). This scholarship presupposed an increase in traditionalism in attitudes, practices and policies, and argued that the ideological climate would push women into traditional relationships, out of the labour force (e.g. Motiejūnaitė 2008: 83; Pascall and Lewis 2004: 375-7; Pascall and Kwak 2005: 29).

With reference to this literature, neo-familialism had gained momentum with the following two shifts. On the one hand, national economies plunged into recession during the early post-socialist period (e.g. Deacon 1992, 1996, 2000; Mrak et al. 2004; UNDP 1999b).[1] To stabilise national economies in the context of global economy and overall austerity in fiscal policies, government officials introduced a number of economic austerity programmes and measures, which generated overall retrenchment (e.g. Barr 1994, 1996; Fajth 1999; Müller 2000; Rojec et al. 2004).[2] The earlier literature anticipated that this trend would have led to

[1] Discussed in detail in special editions of *West European Politics* (2002: 25(2)), which takes diversity as its foci and looks at its political and social dimensions; *Global Social Policy* (2003: 3(2)) which focuses on Europeanization, globalization and social policy; and *East European Politics and Societies* (2001: 15(2)) on the nature and course of the transition from socialism.

[2] Socioeconomic transformations generated new dilemmas of how to sustain public spending. Most of countries relied on financial assistance from a range of international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and later from the European Union (e.g. Deacon 1996; Ferge 2002, 2004; Morgan 2008). Policy-makers were confronted with a great number of international economic

ascendancy of liberalism, and that traditional gender-role values would spur severe cuts in national childcare policies (e.g. Gal and Kligman 2000; Rostgaard 2004). Lacking extensive public subsidies the public childcare provision would plummet, child care would be re-familialized, and women would be *driven off* the labour markets to engage in (cheaper) family care work.

On the other hand, an 'anti-feminist sentiment' thesis argues that, given the opportunity, women in the post-socialist countries would *opt out* of jobs to stay home with their children (e.g. Einhorn 1993; Gal and Kligman 2000; Pascall and Kwak 2005).[3] This scholarship argues that the socialist politics endorsed a sense of paid employment as a 'civic duty' (Funk 1993; Simienska 1999; Unicef 1999). That state socialism concealed the role of motherhood as the linchpin of family life, and produced cheap labour and overburdened women (e.g. Gal and Kligman 2000). That conditions of work, low wages, and the magnitude of the public/private demands evoked a sense of victimization and a perennial guilt at women never being able to do "enough of anything, especially the mothering" (echoed as "female brave victim" in Gal and Kligman 2000: 53; also Einhorn 1993). It argues that household work was undervalued, and benefits of paid work overestimated for most women (also Gilbert 2008: 4-5). In sum, female employment was 'forced' by authoritarian socialist governments, and hence women would 'choose' to leave employment once the situation allowed (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 21). Thus, a new awaking – compelling women to substitute one type of life for another, i.e. to retreat from the labour force and stay home with their children – would not be perceived as 'redomestification' of women (for overview see Motiejūnaitė 2008: 20-24; Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007: 354-5). Einhorn even argues that "it is understandable that the double burden of the past, and the difficulties of the present combine to make women *favour* staying at home or working part-time or from home" (Einhorn 1993: 136). Taken together, these scholars had anticipated that women would have returned in droves to domestic lives in the ensuing years. Only few had suggested that for many 'socialist' women waged labour might have also been a source of self-realization and

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advisers (known as 'Chicago Boys', 'Wild-East Thatcherites'), who proposed strict stabilisation programmes (and hence the reforms that generated retrenchment and restructuring the social security system); these were complemented by ambitious plans for mass privatisation and marketisation (e.g. Kovács 2002). In the mid-1990s, this group of countries also began the negotiation processes with the European Union; in the light of the stringent EU membership criteria the pressures to cut public spending continued to grow.

[3] Einhorn uses this argument to explain "an allergy to feminism" (Einhorn 1993: ch. 6). She argues that, contaminated by the rhetorical devices of "socialist feminism" (Gal and Kligman 2000: 66), people in post-socialist societies became 'allergic' to the jargon used in the (Western) feminist rhetoric (e.g. quotas, liberation, emancipation, exploitation), and distrust in 'feminism' and 'emancipation' therefore runs deep in these countries, which may explain the overall backlash against feminism in post-socialist countries (e.g. Gal and Kligman 2000; Szelewa and Saxonberg 2007).

autonomy – and as such a benefit worth defending (e.g. Einhorn 1993: 114; Motiejūnaitė 2008: 86).

Van der Lippe and Fodor (1998: 132) argue that "the empirical evidence for these statements *[of re-traditionalism in post-socialist countries]* is scarce, mostly anecdotal and impressionistic". They argue that the earlier literature neglected the importance of comparisons with the situation of men, with conditions in the socialist period, and with conditions in other countries (also Motiejūnaitė 2008: 22). This led me to make a snapshot analysis of employment trends in these countries between 2000 and 2006, whereby I found that a significant decline in their female employment rates in the early years of the 1990s was indeed a tidal wave among the eight countries, a blip of a readjustment (e.g. Eurostat 2005; Unicef 1999). Between 2000 and 2006, the employment rates for women in full-time jobs were, on average, still higher (at about 80 per cent and over) than in other countries of the European Union, with practically no cross-country variation, and with fairly narrow gender gaps in employment (Eurostat 2005; EC 2008; Eurostat 2008). This empirical evidence indicates that women in eight most advanced post-socialist countries did not retreat from the labour force, but have continued to engage in paid employment on a full-time basis.

However, within the broad category of 'female employment' something else is going on. I found a considerably more compelling trend when I narrowed my focus to employment patterns of women in the phase of "active motherhood in *[their]* biographies" (Pfau-Effinger 2004a: 2). On the one hand, the employment rates for women aged 20-40 years without children under 12 years of age were similarly high among the eight post-socialist countries (about 80 per cent in 2003). But, this trend contrasted sharply with the employment rates for women with children under 12 years of age; these ranged from 50 per cent in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, to about 85 per cent in Slovenia (Eurostat 2005). This shift in employment practices among women with children deviates from the pattern of total female employment in a cross-country perspective, and seems at odds with the re-traditionalization thesis that argues that trends in mothers' employment would be similar among these eight countries.

What accounts for such behavioural change among women with young children and those without? Scholarship on female employment and the gendered welfare state suggests that the shared experience of the "working mothers" cuts across economic class lines (Eisenstein 1983: 51). Women are generally more likely to accommodate their formal economic activities to carry out their responsibilities for care-giving than men, which Land and Rose (1985) call "women's compulsory altruism" (also Orloff 1993: 313). It is therefore women,

and not men, who abandon paid employment when acute family servicing need appears (Esping-Andersen 2002a: 91). However, a wide cross-country variation in the employment gaps between women with young children and those without remains a puzzling development:

> If full-time employment rates for women without young children are similar among the advanced post-socialist countries, and are similar to men's, why does the presence of young children affect mothers' employment so differently among these countries, with a conspicuous fall in their employment in some but not the others?

2. Aims of the study

This study aims to explore the puzzling phenomenon of a wide cross-country variation in the employment rates for women with pre-school children in eight most advanced post-socialist countries between 2000 and 2008 (the selection of both country sample and the period is explained further below). It aims to analyze and to clarify (1) what shapes this variation, and (2) whether or not the current trends in care/work integration practices are in any way influenced by historical-institutional developments during the period of state socialism.

The objective of this study is to conduct a thorough and theoretically informed analysis of the relationship between maternal employment and childcare policies in eight post-socialist countries, and in so doing, to characterize and define an optimal model of childcare policies that creates conditions for women to engage in paid employment, and encourages men to participate in care. Underlying this study is the postulate that women's access to paid employment has conspicuous economic, political, cultural and social implications for gender equality and women's autonomy. On the one hand, welfare systems are dominated by employment-led social policies (Lewis 2010); the prevalence of labour force participation as a source of welfare entitlement makes labour market participation compulsory. On the other hand, participation in paid employment enables women's command of their economic resources independently of their familial reciprocities, and enables them to establish "autonomous households" (Orloff 1993: 323). Overall, labour force participation is of crucial importance to people's economic and social rights and access to independent income raises the quality of their lives, safeguards them against poverty and social exclusions, as well as boosts gender equality, i.e. prevents women's dependence on men.

My principal argument is that the stages in women's lifecycle are casually linked, and maternity/motherhood is a key issue in their employment-family life choices due to the opportunity costs associated with employment interruptions (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2009: 24). If we can identify the social mechanisms that frame their decisions about how much time to invest in paid employment in the stage of active motherhood, we can better understand the shape of female employment. Hence, this study is based on the following four assertions: (1) Care is a universal human need and women are more likely to be carers of dependent relatives than men. The 'gender contract', i.e. "the compromise made about the gender division of labour, at work, and by implication, at home" prescribes specific roles for men and women (Gottfried 2000: 253). The reality is that most women continue to assume the brunt of household and childcare responsibilities; although many men have increased their involvement in domestic life, on average they still do far less than a fair share of 'conventional female duties' (Gilbert 2008: 31; Esping-Andersen 2009: 35-49). Overall, it is embedded in the culture of social obligation or the 'normative' contract that women are primary carers (e.g. Daly 2002; Daly and Lewis 2000; Van Dijk and Van der Lippe 2001: 265). (2) Women with children of pre-school age are the most 'sandwiched' between care (for young children) and paid employment. Children of this age demand more care, relative to older children who are more independent and spend most of the day in school. Hence, the presence of a pre-school child imposes higher costs in terms of mothers' available time. (3) Availability of public care options is a necessary precondition for freeing mothers' time to engage in paid employment. Unless children are cared for, women cannot engage in paid employment. If they remain locked into familial care obligations, they forego an important source of (independent) income – and self-realization (Esping-Andersen 2009: 80). (4) The states differ in their policy priorities and goals, thus in the extent to which they consider the uneven capacity of mothers to invest in paid employment, and childcare policies ostensibly reflect whether, and how, the states support mothers in paid employment as well as challenge the gender-specific parenting. Childcare policies create conditions for women to engage in waged labour, and encourage men to participate in care. They bolster or undermine the incentives for women's early as well as continuous attachment to waged labour, and shape their prospects for gaining (adequate) income during their working lives and into retirement.

The following questions will be considered in this study when delving into these topics:

1. **What are the main factors that influence female employment, and what is the role of the welfare state?**

Hakim (2000) argues that women, having been given the chance, are simply doing what they want. Those who want a career pursue it; those who do not, retreat from the labour force, or decrease the number of hours of work – and leaves it at that. Other scholars argue that economic necessity is driving mothers into the labour markets (e.g. Gordon and Kammeyer 1980). To understand cross-country variations in maternal employment, this study will systematically review the rich scientific literature on female employment, with the main aim to identify factors explaining the shape of mothers' employment. With reference to this literature this study will offer a different view to Hakim's and will argue that choice is something complex and elusive, and emerges from the constraints, opportunities and ideologies of a particular time and place. Hence, it sees women's employment as being determined by endogenous and exogenous variables – that is, shaped by their particular circumstances, opportunities in the labour markets, as well as culture, i.e. the social pressures of norms and values, which are reinforced through policy provisions.

2. **How childcare policies influence maternal employment in the most advanced post-socialist countries?**

This study builds on the premise that policies on childcare leave and public childcare service provision, hereafter referred to as *childcare policies*, generate dis/incentives for women to shift their labour from the home to the market, and dis/incentives for men to participate in care, i.e. challenge the gender-specific parenting. This thesis has not yet been tested among the eight countries, but I will argue that it is indispensable in theory formation on female employment to explore this interrelationship, because post-socialist countries could shed new light on comparative knowledge. To approach this relationship, a closer examination of childcare policies and employment rates for women with pre-school children will be made, in order to analyze whether, and how, policies and maternal employment vary in tandem in the selected post-socialist countries.

This task first requires gathering various policy and employment data which was previously unknown. To examine childcare policies in the post-socialist countries, this study will focus on policies on childcare leave and childcare service provision. It will draw attention to specific and more detailed policy characteristics that received insufficient attention in earlier comparative research. To manage the complexity of a range of policies in a cross-country

analysis, I will develop an analytical tool, which provides a fuller portrait of national childcare policies. I will build two policy indices using a benchmarking approach, in order to assess whether or not policies provide carers the options to engage in paid employment (hereafter referred to as *the emancipatory potential* of childcare policies), as well as challenge gender-specific parenting. This multidimensional approach will enable exploration of both a big-picture view – overall childcare policies and changes over time – as well as detailed perspectives on their components. At the same time, I will utilize the indices to explore their relationship with maternal employment in eight post-socialist countries. To analyze maternal employment this study will analyze various employment data that was previously unknown using the aggregate-level data from the Eurostat's Labour Force Surveys. I will employ descriptive statistics, scatter plots, and correlation coefficients to transform the associations between policies and employment into the 'language of numbers'.

3. Maternal employment patterns and social organisation of care: legacies of the socialist era?

Talk of a new, 'post-socialist' era and a transformation from socialism to capitalism conveys a sense of fundamental change. But comparative knowledge about development trends is limited. Not much research has been done so far on whether or not historical-institutional developments have influenced the current patterns of social organisation of care, maternal employment and state policies towards the mothers in paid employment. To account for the socialist period, this study will make a historical scan, which puts the relationship between maternal employment and the state into historical perspective. It will analyze whether or not the developments during state socialism, i.e. between the 1950s and the late 1980s, shed new light on social practices in the contemporary post-socialist period. This study will show that the socialist period produced extraordinary leap in terms of female employment, which in turn dismantled the male breadwinner family model and heralded significant change in the role of the state in the family. A longer scan will produce a picture of continuity, and will indicate that treating these eight countries as one single group masks an interesting and nuanced story. The study will show that state socialism put these eight countries on different paths, and the social inheritance continues to exert a powerful effect on their social practices in the contemporary post-socialist period.

3. Country sample

This study is based on a "purposive sample" of eight post-socialist countries, which are selected for their typicality, in order to test for specificity (de Vaus 2002: 363). The countries included in this study are: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia for Central Europe, and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for the Baltic States. On the one hand, the sample is manageable enough to allow me to learn about them in a reasonable amount of detail, and if any number of states among Central and Eastern European countries forms a somewhat coherent post-socialist group, it would be these eight (von Wahl 2008: 27).[4] On the other hand, the most similar selection eases the interpretation and facilitates contextual equivalence (Mangen 2004: 313). Namely, the eight countries not only share a distinctive history and have a common background in terms of state socialist legacy, transition and accession processes, but also comprise a "recovery group" (e.g. Manning 2004: 219). They are regarded the 'success stories' of transition, which underwent dramatic changes from conditions of relative closure to full exposure at approximately the same time (Feldmann 2006). Moreover, they are similar in terms of their progress in democratization and privatization (Manning 2004), and have similarly advanced industrial (labour market) structures (Mahutga and Bandelj 2008).[5] Notwithstanding their similarities, they demonstrate considerable variations in the employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without. Understanding factors of female employment in countries that exhibit considerable contextual similarities, and have been exposed to the world markets, socialist legacies, international agencies, and the European Union at the same time, will contribute to comparative knowledge about female employment and its developments. Comparative analysis of these countries shall extend the interpretative capacities of theories from the West and will thus enhance further theory formation, as well as facilitate recommendations for policy actions.

4. Time period under review

This study reviews the period from the 1950s to 2008, but empirical research will focus on the period between 2000 and 2008 for the following three reasons. First, existing scholarship has extensively covered the earlier period, whilst the literature on the current developments

[4] Post-socialist transition to market economy happened in about thirty countries at roughly the same time, i.e. late 1980s/early 1990s (Feldmann 2006: 831).

[5] Other post-socialist countries lag behind the 'catching up' with Western Europe, e.g. countries of former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, which are labelled "hybrid transitional states, in which transition is stalled or reversed (e.g. Domsch et al. 2003: 11), or Romania and Bulgaria, the two "evolving or reforming hybrid transitional states" (e.g. von Wahl 2008: 27; Domsch et al. 2003: 11). In contrast, East Germany lost its state after the 1990, when it reunified with West Germany into one state.

is more scant. Second, much of the writing in the aftermath of the collapse of state socialism was premature, as it did not have the perspective of distance to evaluate changes and their significance (e.g. Ray 2009: 327). In contrast, this study analyzes policies and employment trends in the first decade of the 2000s to overcome the problems related to any temporal instability during the radical socioeconomic transformations in the 1990s. The first half of the 1990s was the period of "exceptional" (King 2002: 5) and "extraordinary politics" (Balcerowicz 1995 in: Feldmann 2006: 846). In the second half, the selected countries were building up the conditions for the European Union and of going "back to normalcy" (Kovács 2002: 176). By 1998, however, their economic orders were more or less established, and the "recovery group" of post-socialist countries gained control of their new market-based economies (Manning 2004; Kovács 2002). Thus, it is important to analyze trends after this challenging period, to see if these changes have left a mark on current developments. Third, the lack of comprehensive and comparative employment data prior to 2000 makes it difficult if not impossible to reconstruct female employment rates in these countries, especially for mothers. After 2000, data has been systematically collected by the Eurostat, and is more serviceable for the comparative analysis. 2007 was, however, the latest year for which comparable employment data was available for this study. That notwithstanding, policy analysis extends up to the early 2008, to cover the most recent policy developments.

5. Maternal employment – the dependent variable

In this study, maternal employment is analysed with two indicators: (1) employment rates for women with pre-school children, and the employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without children of that age. The *maternal employment rates* are defined as employment/population ratios for women with children under seven years of age. *The employment gap* is a relative measure of the effect of having a pre-school child on women's employment, and measures the difference between the employment rates for women with pre-school children, relative to other women in the same country (i.e. women who either have older children or have no children).

Empirical research is based on a lifecycle approach: I focus on women aged between 25 and 49 years, i.e. the age range when women are most likely to have dependent children and hence most pressed with caring obligations (e.g. Lewis 2010: 32). This decision is based on two factors. First, mean age of women at birth of the first child was about 25 years among the eight countries (Eurostat online database). Hence, the analysis of employment patterns for women in this age group ostensibly reflects the effect of motherhood on female employment. Second, this age range allows me to analyze the employment rates for women

who completed their formal schooling, but are young enough to rule out any substantial outflow from employment into retirement (see e.g. Antecol 2003: 4; Scharle 2007: 167; EC 2008a: 100-1).

6. Contributions of the study

This study makes several advances over previous empirical research of these countries, and sheds new light on comparative knowledge about post-socialist countries. (1) Emerging studies typically include two or three countries from this group, while I analyze eight post-socialist countries. Using a larger country mix this study provides a better understanding of more recent developments in the region, while a narrow focus on the most advanced post-socialist countries contributes to a better understanding of the development trends in countries that exhibit considerable contextual similarities. (2) The earlier literature has extensively documented the first decade of post-socialist transition, while this study analyzes eight countries over a longer time period. First, it uses a historical perspective, and explores development trends in the period of state socialism. Second, it thoroughly analyzes maternal employment and childcare policies in the period between 2000 and 2008. Such approach allows this study to provide some less widely reported insights about persistent differences between the eight countries, and to challenge some of the earlier theses about post-socialist transformations. This study will demonstrate that the typologies have been too narrowly drawn and generalizations about the developments in this country group made on too few countries. (3) Unlike earlier studies, this study analyzes the employment rates for women with pre-school children, relative to other women in the same country, using tailored data from the Eurostat's Labour Force Surveys dataset. These rates provide a superior measure of the effect of a pre-schooler on women employment, and help differentiate the employment of mothers with pre-school children. Analysis of employment patterns allows me to reveal a compelling variation in employment rates for different groups of women, which was overlooked in earlier studies. (4) This study analyzes childcare policies between 2000 and 2008, focusing on policy programmes. It employs a large number of more detailed policy aspects, and provides a more thorough understanding of policy characters. Thus, it draws attention to policy characteristics that received insufficient attention, and helps differentiate the overly simplistic characterization of both national policies as well as maternal employment patterns in earlier comparative research. In sum, this study provides a broader picture of the contemporary employment and policy trends among these eight countries. It shows that intra-group diversities are a symptom of larger, more sustained differences between these countries. Further, it sheds new light on the interrelationship between

childcare policies and maternal employment; by enhancing the interpretative capacities of childcare policies explanation for the shape of maternal employment, this study is relevant also from a broader social policy perspective.

7. Outline of the thesis

This study is divided across eight chapters. I begin in chapter 2 by putting maternal employment into historical perspective, and explore how women and national governments responded to the opportunities and tensions created by the changing structures of the labour markets during state socialism. This chapter uncovers a compelling variation in social organisation of care and state support for mothers in paid employment among the eight countries. It shows that these states dismantled the male-breadwinner family model, but had diverged in their treatment of working mothers, having used ideas, rhetoric and childcare policies differently, in order to challenge the conventional gender division of labour, or reinforce it.

Chapters 3 and 4 systematically review the existing literature on female employment. Chapter 3 synthesizes available scholarship and empirical evidence on female employment in Western capitalist countries. It is divided across three main schools of thought, of which each has particular assumptions about the main determinants of female employment: (1) *economic theory* argues that women's employment is the result of macro- and micro-economic factors such as the demand for female labour force and each individual's particular circumstances; (2) scholarship on the role of the culture emphasizes the role of *social norms and attitudes towards* gender division of labour; and (3) the *welfare state theory* argues that the states use social policies differently, to reinforce or challenge the conventional gender division of labour. Chapter 4 maintains the list of factors with high explanatory power, in order to systematically review earlier studies of female employment in post-socialist countries. It shows that earlier studies of post-socialist countries produced important insights into the decade after the fall of state socialism, but did not systematically cover all eight countries. Moreover, earlier empirical research documents and recounts the early post-socialist period, while empirical research of maternal employment is scant, and the relationship between policies and maternal employment in this group is scarce and unsystematic knowledge.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed analytical framework of the comparative research of the relationship between childcare policies and maternal employment and discusses the methods. It documents in detail and justifies the research design and the procedures. It gives a rationale for the decisions and the procedures, and a realistic view of using the chosen methods. It discusses the problems that were anticipated and explains the steps taken to prevent them from occurring, as well as the problems that did occur and the ways their impact was minimized. Overall, it answers two main questions: How was data collected and generated? And, how was it analyzed? It explains in detail my analytical tools for evaluating the emancipatory potential of childcare policies, and measures used in this study.

Chapters 6 and 7 present the results of my empirical analyses. Chapter 6 finds that countries cluster regionally into three regimes in the field of childcare policies, each reflecting specific policy modalities, designations, mechanisms and operating rules. I retain these policy models as analytical tools throughout the chapter, and explore whether, and how, the policy models relate to maternal employment. I find a general pattern of strong and positive association between childcare policies and maternal employment in the eight countries, suggesting that childcare policies serve as an incentive or a brake on maternal employment. However, Poland and Latvia are at oddity in this group: as the laggards in childcare provision they do not demonstrate the lowest employment rates. Against this background, chapter 7 looks closely at these countries and provides an in-depth and theoretically informed exploration of other potential factors of employment patterns. While interpretative and hypothesis-generating, empirical evidence suggests that education and economic necessities suppress childcare policies, while the unregulated childcare service markets and informal day care create the conditions for mothers to engage in paid employment in countries with limited state intervention.

Chapter 8 summarises the central findings of this study and concludes the thesis. It outlines the main insights for cross-country analysis of childcare policies, discusses implications of childcare policies, provides suggestions for further research, and presents some thoughts on how to design policies in order to assist mothers in maintaining paid employment while raising young children.

Chapter 2

State socialism: dismantling the male-breadwinner family model?

Introduction

When comparing post-socialist countries, it is necessary to consider their distinctive character, shaped by their specific historical differences in political and economic organisation. Namely, taking these countries as a group implies an assumption that state socialism has been a powerful determinant of their 'exceptional' situation in socio-economic developments. Indeed, this chapter will show that the roots of high female full-time employment in the eight countries lie in the socialist period, i.e. the period between 1950 and 1989, when the socialist programmes emphasized the need to transform economic and social relationships, and had in turn compelled individuals to provide for their needs through gainful employment (i.e. occupational welfare).

Women in this region entered the labour force during the period of rapid industrialization in the late 1920s and early 1930s (e.g. Jogan 2006; Motiejūnaitė and Kravchenko 2008: 36).[6] However, it was the period after World War Two, i.e. the period of state socialism that had produced extraordinary leap which, in turn, dismantled the male breadwinner family and heralded significant change in the role of the state in the family. The pace of economic growth over the post-war era was rapid, and the big acceleration in female employment started in the mid-1950s, when continuous lifetime and full-time employment among mothers became the norm in the socialist states (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 19). This chapter will show that the shift to full-time employment was extraordinarily brisk and all-embracing across the region, bringing along women's quest for economic autonomy and education. As women's employment and educational attainment matured, the demand for child care inevitably grew (e.g. Jogan 2006). The familial care became decreasingly realistic, because the pool of available carers shrank considerably – potential carers (such as grandmothers) were very likely to be in the labour markets themselves (also Esping-Andersen 2009: 91). But the question is whether women's new economic status was also accompanied by new policy logics. To ascertain the extent to which the states considered the uneven capacity of mothers to invest in paid employment, this chapter explores the relationship between the state and mothers' employment during state socialism. While I cannot explore in any depth the part played by policy actors and social institutions, this chapter focuses on coming to some understanding of the nature of ideas and rhetoric that was used to make the case for both women's (full-time) employment and policy development.

[6] At that time, mothers accounted for about one third of all gainfully employed women in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with their rates further increasing during both wars (e.g. Jogan 2006).

Historically, the eight countries appear to group together. After all, they have been bound together through a joint history (Pascall and Manning 2000: 244). However, although they pursued similar programmes of the socialist revolutionary transformation of institutional order between 1950 and 1980, they have been quite different in the oppressive use of state, as well as in ways of state intervention via social policies. A historical scan reveals a compelling story – mothers' employment and social organisation of care were constructed around a contrasting set of normative fundamentals, and countries differed largely regarding their support for mothers in employment. In short, maternal ideology competed with the duty of labour to different extent in different socialist countries (also Pascall and Manning 2000: 245).

I argue that recognising and appreciating the specificity of national contexts is a key to better understanding current developments, as well as to developing more robust typologies. Hence, I will classify the eight countries into two socialist regimes: (1) the countries of the Eastern Bloc, which pursued the *Soviet model* of state socialism, and (2) Slovenia, which had specific characteristics, also within the Yugoslav type of socialism. The Eastern Bloc comprised the member states of the Soviet Union along with other members of the *Warsaw Pact* (i.e. a Soviet-dominated military organisation) and *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance* (i.e. an economic organisation of the communist states). After World War Two only Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were constituent republics of the Soviet Union, while Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary were 'independent' states after 1918 (e.g. Berglund et al. 2004; Motiejūnaitė 2008: 19). However, the Soviet Union had much political and economic influence and control over its Eastern Bloc possessions, and hence all six countries adopted the Soviet model of 'totalitarian' state socialism (e.g. Fuchs and Klingeman 2002: 28). In contrast, Slovenia was a constituent republic of Yugoslavia, and had adopted a 'softer' socialist system of *workers' self-management* in 1950 (Adam 1992; Kardelj 1977). Moreover, the elements of both cultural as well as social pluralism existed in Slovenia since mid-1950s, with a strong organized grass-roots support for women (Toš 1999: 219). I will argue that these two models reflect two different autocratic regimes, with different roles of the state and influence of organised politics. The resulting structures of political organisations had shaped how governments responded to mothers' employment and influenced state familialism. I will argue that this is a critical distinction which holds some keys to a better understanding of their contemporary social practices – understanding these differences may help reconceptualise how we group them.

1. Emergence of the 'adult worker' family model

Women participated in the labour markets worldwide before World War Two, mainly to generate additional household income (e.g. French 1985; Jogan 2006). But the growing demand for labour force in the aftermath of war propelled the employment boom. Women in the eight countries massively entered the labour force in the early 1950s, i.e. about ten years before women in the West (Van der Lippe and Van Dijk 2001a: 5). The socialist states, especially the Soviet Union, suffered disproportionately more human casualties during the war than the Western (e.g. Rummel 1990; Ellis 1993). This led to policy regimes in Central and Eastern Europe: To secure the labour force necessary for the post-war reconstruction and to meet the labour demands related to the rapid industrialization, the socialist economic policies first eroded financial viability of the male-breadwinner family model. The ideology of the family wage was abolished (which in reality was more of a 'rhetoric', used to limit alternative means of independence of women – especially more highly educated, and to justify the wage gap); the wages were set so low that few families could survive on one income, and mandatory individual taxation of income with high income tax load was introduced (for overview see Ferge 1979; Szalai and Orosz 1992; Einhorn 1993; Kotowska 1996).

By the mid-1950s, participation in the labour force determined both the distribution of financial resources, i.e. women's prospects for gaining (adequate) income during their working lives and into retirement, as well as access to social rights, such as housing and health care (e.g. Jogan 2004; Pascall and Manning 2000: 248).[7] Occupational welfare as the main source of welfare as well as economic necessity had driven households into coping strategies, making it necessary for women across socio-economic strata to increase their participation in the labour force. To generate sufficient income, women entered the labour markets on a full-time basis. Relative to the employment trends in the West, part-time employment was low, regardless of women's marital or parental status (Rosenfeld and Birkelund 1995). If it existed, it was largely involuntary as a result of lower labour demand, except for persons in school, the partially retired, and those with health problems (Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001: 39). Work became both moral obligation as well as an essential welfare support.

[7] Enterprise welfare became the primary source of welfare over local and central government services: housing stock was controlled by enterprises, social security was managed by trade unions, health care was available at work, as well as child care. Holidays, food and other consumer items were provided by employers and trade unions, and these entitlements supported labour market participation (e.g. Pascall and Manning 2000: 248).

The socialist states, committed to full employment, promoted participation in productive employment as a foundation stone to female emancipation and autonomy, and both men and women were understood to owe the state a special patriotic duty to work (Pascall and Manning 2000; Pascall and Lewis 2004: 375). Economic independency became an integral part of the identity of women. That notwithstanding, the eight countries had laid different foundations for the 'proper' gender roles. In countries with the *Soviet model*, i.e. with 'totalitarian' 'real' socialism, the strong activist state demarcated the moral notions about what the 'good' citizenship entailed (Kirschenbaum 2001; Bicskei 2006). Women's participation in waged employment was only one of the duties the state ascribed to women; the production of more workers through motherhood was the other. Normative assumptions about gender division of labour shifted between the 'pro-workerist' and 'pro-natalist' several times during state socialism; government officials directed the supply and allocation of childcare services depending on the demographic needs and economic demand (e.g. Einhorn 1993: 5; 13). In times of labour shortages they oppressively used state power and employed an "arsenal of scientific techniques and procedures" to promote a dual-earner family model, and hence an image of women as a "new socialist man" (Gal and Kligman 2000: 47). To stimulate maternal employment, the "supermoms image" (Dillaway and Pare 2008) and the image of "heroine workers-mothers" (Kollontaj 1982: 15) was the cultural ideal underpinning the gender division of labour (Einhorn 1993; Haney 1997, 2002). But in times of economic downturns and demographic crisis, i.e. between the 1960s and early 1970s, maternal ideology competed with the duty of labour, as the policy-makers across these countries promoted full-time housewifery, although to a varying degree. Employing the public discourse as well as public policies they reinstated the ideal of the 'motherhood' as the primary duty of women to the state.[8] In Poland, for example, drastic cuts were made in the sector of light industry during the Gomulka period (between 1960 and 1970): when female unemployment emerged for the first time, the Polish state encouraged women to retreat from the labour market and return to (cheaper) family care work (Heinen and Wator 2006: 192). Practically no childcare facilities were established, and those still operating could have catered for less than 30 per cent of children aged 3-6 years (Heinen and Wator 2006: 194). But in the 1970s, the investments returned, and the demand for labour increased. Between 1970 and 1975 female labour force was 'remobilized', and investment in public childcare facilities increased. I found similar trends in maternal employment in other countries of the Eastern Bloc (for detailed overviews see, for example, Haney 2002 for Hungary; Domsch et al. 2003 and Einhorn 1993 for countries from the Eastern Bloc).

[8] In Eastern Bloc, mothers who brought up from five to six children were awarded a 'Medal of motherhood'. Those, who brought up from seven to nine children, were awarded the state order of the 'Glory of motherhood'. And those who brought up ten children, were awarded the state order of the 'Mother heroine' (Aidukaite 2004).

Overall, in this group the dual-earner/public-carer family model was challenged several times. The states used ideas and rhetoric to make a case for women's employment as well as for policy development, and women were confronted with social and economic upheavals throughout the socialist era as noted earlier. They were 'disposable workers', the "reserve army labour" (Van der Lippe and Fodor 1998: 133).[9] They were periodically employed, and then laid off; like in Western capitalist countries women were the last to get hired but the first to get fired (Heinen and Wator 2006: 196).[10]

In contrast, the *Slovenian* female employment rates show trends of continuous, full-time, practically full employment during socialist period, regardless of women's marital or parental status (Jogan 2001: 237). That notwithstanding, the Slovenian women, too, were laden with expectations about their 'proper' social role, which was rooted in male-centred tradition (Jogan 2004). But the following two elements left the Slovenian government officials with less room to manoeuvre during economic downturns, and hence with stark choices about whether or not to support female employment. First, women's equality "with men in all fields of state, economic, and social life" was enshrined in the Constitution in 1946; access to paid employment became a statutory duty but also the *right* of both men and women (Jogan 2006).[11] Second, the role of the state had never been as strong as in the Eastern Bloc, because Slovenia adopted a self-managing system in 1950 (Jogan 2004; 2006). Although the leadership of the Communist Party was obvious, 'civic' organisations were more involved in the policy-making as legitimate social actors between the 1950s and late 1980s. Two civil society organisations played a critical role in ensuring that gender equality (as a declared social objective) was (f)actually realized (Jogan 1991: 219): the *Socialist Alliance of Working People*[12] and the *Alliance of Women's Associations* (since 1961 the *Conference for the Social Activity of Women*).[13] Both were officially recognized by the Communist Party, and had systematically promoted equal opportunities and gender equality,

[9] The term originates in Karl Marx' *Capital* (Vol One, Chapter 25; 1978), where he argues that the "relative surplus-population is … the pivot upon which the law of demand and supply of labour works". The phrase is common in Marxist analysis of the labour reserves that capitalist economies create. For a conceptualization of women as reserve army see, for example, Milkman (1976: 73-97), Beechey (1978), Bruegel (1979: 12-33).

[10] It should be noted, however, that socially managed labour demand for female labour was not characteristics of planned economies; this approach has been used across the industrialised world, especially when the shifts in economy could not be regulated via migration (of male labour); see chapter 3 in this study.

[11] Measures to secure the emancipation of women in the Soviet Union were embodied in resolutions of the 1920 Congress of the Comintern, and the official constitutional position of women under state socialism was of equality with men also in other socialist states (e.g. Pascall and Manning 2000: 245).

[12] The *Socialist Alliance of Working People* was established in 1953 as the successor of the *Libertation Front of the Slovenian People* (established in 1941), to unify various political organisations during World War Two (Jogan 2001: 219).

[13] The first Slovenian women's organisation was established in 1887 in Trieste, followed by the *Association of Slovenian Women Teachers* in 1898, and by *General Women's Association* in 1901 (Jogan 2001: 233).

challenging the conventional gender division of labour. Their continuous pressures between the 1950s and 1970s propelled the issue of state responsibility for the welfare of children and families into the realm of formal, political debate. Promoting access to paid employment as a key social right they played a key role in campaigning for party platforms and policy measures, which in turn led also to gender-neutral de-familializing childcare policies as key structural condition for women's access to paid employment (Jogan 1991: 219). In the 1970s and 1980s, the normative bases for a dual-earner/public-carer model were laid; government officials enacted gender-neutral and de-familializing childcare policies as laws (Jogan 2004).[14]

2. Responding to the tensions of work and family

Increasing female (full-time) employment led to economic empowerment of women; accompanied by a constant rise of women's educational level, it increased their autonomy (e.g. Pascall and Lewis 2004: 375; Jogan 2006). However, while women's high labour market participation altered the terms on which they entered and negotiated family relationships, labour market participation was targeted at the need of labour rather than the needs of women. Family obligations were socially undervalued; the household (work) was 'private', and hence undervalued in relation to the public. The prevailing expectations and norms prescribed women's dual responsibility as the earners *and* the carers/household managers, whereas the images of men as both waged workforce *and* fathers were not promoted nor were widely shared (Einhorn 1993: 5; Gal and Kligman 2000: 72).[15] Despite sporadic state attempts to socialize household work women retained almost sole responsibility for it (Gal and Kligman 2000).[16] Being a full-time paid worker as well as a full-time mother-carer-household manager, the socialist women were overburdened (Gal and Kligman 2000: 53).

However, with increasing numbers of women in paid (full-time) employment women's demands for the adjustment of family responsibilities to their working duties grew across the socialist states (e.g. Jogan 2001: 237; 2006). Pressing demands for improved living and working conditions propelled the issue of care/work integration onto the political agendas of

[14] It should be noted that their endeavours were not limited to public childcare policies; to challenge the conventional gender division of labour the school programmes and curricula were also reformed (e.g. housekeeping and technical education were mandatory for all pupils).
[15] Such normative assumption was not unique to the socialist states; in the advanced industrial world it was institutionalised with a single-earner family model, and continues to underpin the one-and-a-half-earner model.
[16] The socialist states introduced a concept of public laundrettes and kitchens, the idea the people never adopted (e.g. Einhorn 1993).

the socialist states, and made child care a matter for (more extensive) public intervention.[17] To reduce the friction between paid employment and family life, government officials found ideological 'inspiration' in Engels' book *The origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884)[1942]. In his work Engels argued that women would become equal to men, i.e. freed to participate in the labour market, if mothers were no longer responsible for child care, while he saw the gender division of domestic work as 'natural'. The government officials used his idea to expand their systems of social security, and to introduce new childcare policies that would support mothers' employment (e.g. Kantorová and Stašová 1999; Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007).

During the period of state socialism, the general contours of childcare policies were fairly similar among the eight countries, and the states largely used the inherited social programmes as the basis for further policy developments (e.g. Bruszt and Stark 2001; Szelewa 2007). On the one hand, they promoted the idea of 'socially responsible parenthood': to improve general health of the population and alleviate the problems of poverty and infant mortality, governments extended pre-war maternity leave and introduced a more generous system of care for mothers and babies (e.g. Kollontaj 1982: 12-15, see also Szelewa 2007; Jogan 2001).[18] In the 1960s, they gradually extended maternity leave, and introduced childcare leave schemes (Deacon et al. 1992; Einhorn 1993; Kocourková 2002). They installed (higher) conditional cash benefits and job protection, in order to arrange for day care of the youngest children and to secure a swift return of mothers to the labour markets (e.g. Jogan 2004; ILO 1997). During the more prosperous 1970s and 1980s they extended public childcare services, and laid foundations for a more universal system of public childcare service provision.[19]

Most programmes were designed by central authorities, but were delivered through state enterprises, agricultural collectives and local governments. That notwithstanding, countries differed in the extent to which they de-familialized child care, and how, and the differences in the socialist regimes put the eight countries on different paths: the states in the Eastern Bloc chose a familialistic approach, relying on families to produce care, while Slovenia laid

[17] It should not be neglected that the socialist states did not build their childcare policies from scratch after the war. However, it was in that period when the governments became more active players in the provision of childcare, as more women were engaged in paid employment.
[18] E.g. public distribution of milk for the babies, food coupons, or cash benefits to employed parents (e.g. Szelewa 2007).
[19] Public childcare services existed before the period of state socialism, and have a longer tradition in countries which were parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. There, they were mainly part of 'Trivial Schools', which were founded by Maria Theresa in the 18th century (e.g. OECD 2000; Szelewa 2007).

foundations for a de-familialistic policy model, acknowledging the importance of the wider society for childcare.

2.1 Childcare Leave

In countries with the *Soviet model*, the decreasing birth rates and a predominant one-child family pattern in the 1960s and through the 1980s raised qualms in the governing circles, especially in the light of already severe human losses during World War Two (Einhorn 1993: 82-86).[20] To tackle the demographic crisis, i.e. to boost the fertility rates the governments introduced childcare leave, to which they gradually installed social rights granted to the carers, such as earnings-related income support payments during leave, pension recognition for care periods as well as protective labour market legislation for carers and job protection during leave (e.g. Kantorová and Stašova 1999).

The trends towards extending care leave began in Hungary: by 1967, when the government officials installed a pro-natalist package, mothers were entitled to a 3-year leave (ILO 1997; Fodor et al. 2002: 479-481; Tarkanyí 2002). The Czech Republic and Slovakia (then Czechoslovakia) installed paid childcare leave for up to three years in 1970 (Kocourková 2002: 317). Poland introduced a 3-year leave in 1972, but with means-tested cash payments (Heinen and Wator 2006: 195; Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007). In the Baltic States, paid childcare leave for up to a year was installed in 1982 (Aidukaite 2004). Before that, women were entitled to full income support payment during maternity leave of 16 weeks, followed by unpaid leave for up to three years. In 1989, paid childcare leave was extended for another six months (Mikalauskaitė et al. 1999; Stankuniene 2001). In this group of countries, leave was granted only to mothers; fathers could only have used it under special circumstances such as the death of the mother, or mother's incapacity to take care of the child (e.g. Domsch et al. 2003). Thereby, their governments also addressed the demands of the more conservative streams for more 'parental' care (e.g. Bicskei 2006; Heinen and Wator 2006: 204-205).

The *Slovenian* leave policy very much resembled the Swedish model (Jogan 2006). First, government extended maternity leave from 135 days to six months in 1974 (Jogan 2006). In 1976, two years after Sweden, it installed a gender-neutral *parental* leave scheme (Šircelj 2006: 176; Duvander et al. 2010: 46). Parental leave scheme granted *either* parent the right to six months leave (but one at the time), which was extended to one year with full financial

[20] Expressed in the slogan *"The Nation is Dying"* (Gal and Kligman 2000: 28).

compensation of previous earnings in 1986 (Jogan 2001: 238-40), and was further extended in case of multiple births in the early 1970s (Jogan 2006). That notwithstanding, only few fathers had used parental leave (Šircelj 2006).[21] The proposals for extending leave had been put forward many times throughout the socialist period by the 'conservative' streams (largely influenced and supported by the church). But relative to other socialist countries these calls had not received political support (Jogan 2000: 25). In contrast, they were perceived as 'misogynist endeavours' to re-familialize women, and to reinforce the conventional gender division of labour (Jogan 2006).

2.2 Public day care services

Until the 1970s, the socialist states were premised on familialism: they were 'biased' towards income maintenance, and so underdeveloped in terms of childcare service provision (e.g. Kocourková 2002: 304; Michel 2006). In this period, many elements of public childcare services were similar among the eight countries. The system of childcare services was entirely public, with most services delivered by public providers.[22] Services were provided in the enterprise-based facilities, and were heavily subsidized by the public funds (e.g. Kamerman 2000; Kocourková 2002: 304; Křižková et al. 2005). They operated on a full-time basis, some even around the clock, but only children of employed parents were granted access, whereas children of the unemployed and agricultural labourers were excluded from public day care service provision until the late 1970s (e.g. Michel 2006: 146-7; Kamerman 2000; Bicskei 2006). It was only from the 1970s onwards that these countries – in tandem with the surge in female employment – laid the foundations for a more universal childcare system, largely establishing municipal day care centres (Unicef 1999; Kamerman 2000).

Countries with the *Soviet model* provided childcare services through early day care for children under the age of 3 years (in nurseries), and pre-school education in kindergartens for older children (Unicef 1999; Kamerman 2000). The government officials directed the supply and set the price of day care service. Alongside the establishment and enforcement of the regulations they also planned curricular programmes and any financial subsidies to parents, both directly and indirectly, i.e. in the form of cash benefits and allowances for services, tax benefits to offset the costs of childcare (Kamerman 2000). Only more specific

[21] At that time, low use of leave by fathers could be linked to the organising principles of this entitlement, as the father could use it only upon the consent of both the mother of the child as well as his employer (Černigoj Sadar 2005; Šircelj 2006).
[22] Although day care was organised exclusively by a public structure, unregulated day care long existed as part of the 'second' 'informal' 'unregulated' service market.

policy decisions such as the waiting lists were made at the local levels (Kamerman 2000; Domsch et al. 2003; Aidukaite 2005; Křižková et al. 2005; Aidukaite 2006). Nurseries were administered under the ministries of health; they largely employed medical nurses, and were chronically overcrowded (e.g. Haney 2002 for Hungary, Křižková et al. 2005 for Czechoslovakia; for overview see Einhorn 1993: 35; Kocourková 2001). Unfavourable child-staff ratios in the hospital-like low-quality crèches resulted in a regimented day, lack of individual attention, and frequent outbursts of communicable diseases (e.g. Bicskei 2006; Heinen and Wator 2006). Nurseries had a poor reputation, and fragmented the 'constituency' for public day care for children under three years of age; parents simply did not trust the services provided by the state (Heinen and Wator 2006: 194, 203-4; Michel 2006). By contrast, day care services for older pre-school children were of considerably higher quality, with a well educated and trained staff (Kamerman 2006). Kindergartens were under the education auspices, were more widespread and available to all parents (Kocourková 2002; Domsch et al. 2003). Services were subsidized by public funds, and no adjustments were made to parental fees for many years (Bicskei 2006; Heinen and Wator 2006).

Detailed information or data on service provision by country is scant for that period, but the earlier literature argues that the supply of nurseries for the youngest children was very low across the countries, with strong urban/rural divides in availability of places in day care facilities (for overview see Domsch et al. 2003; Kamerman 2000). In contrast, services for children aged 3-6 years were practically universal, but were more extensive in countries which once were parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, i.e. Hungary and Czechoslovakia (e.g. Kamerman 2006; Kocourková 2002; Szelewa 2007). Poland, however, was a laggard in service provision among these countries: the development of childcare services was slow and service provision low (e.g. Heinen and Wator 2006: 192-5; Szelewa 2007: 6). First public childcare services were introduced in 1932, and were largely organised by the Church, in order to support the poorest parents (Szelewa 2007).[23] The first public nursery for the under-3s was opened only in 1958, but the initial state commitment towards public childcare provision for the youngest quickly waned (Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007). Day care service provision had never met more than a fraction of demand, not even in the period of high economic growth, i.e. between 1970 and 1975 (e.g. Heinen and Wator 2006: 192-5; Szelewa 2007: 6). In sum, the Polish state left parents nearly without support. Unregulated care services in the second economy thrived and parents largely relied on (un/paid) informal care by their family members and neighbours (e.g. Heinen and Wator 2006).

[23] By that time, about a quarter of children between 3 and 6 years were attending kindergartens in Hungary (Szelewa 2007).

The *Slovenian* policy on childcare service provision had some specific features, and the state adopted a unique strategy to service provision, involving the citizens in the realm of formal political debate (e.g. Jogan 2006; Lokar and Devčič 2008). Public infrastructure was by its nature a government function, a matter of state policy and state budget investment. But contrary to other socialist countries, the Slovenian citizens (i.e. the working people) had a pivotal role in the expansion of public childcare service. To develop the public childcare infrastructure, and address the issue of early learning and child care, the state endorsed a specific 'investment programme', which was characterized by a nexus of state subsidies and considerable financial participation from the citizens (Javornik 2000; Jogan 2006). Between the early 1970s and the late 1980s, a number of referenda were held at the municipal levels, asking the people to vote and to show whether they would financially contribute towards setting up a local childcare infrastructure (Jogan 2006).[24] The result of the extra money being earmarked for the childcare infrastructure was a growing and developing network of purposely-built childcare centres (Černigoj Sadar 2005; Javornik 2000).[25] The expansion of the childcare infrastructure created new places for children, but also for (female) childcare workers, and both the participation rates in public day care as well as the number of well-trained childcare personnel increased in the 1970s and 1980s (Lokar and Devčič 2008).

In Slovenia, childcare services were organised and administered by the municipalities, mainly as the unitary settings, i.e. providing day care services for children from year 1 to 7 in a day care centre (Eurydice 2009).[26] Service catchment areas were founded on formal local government boundaries, i.e. all children in certain age group, who resided in the municipality, were eligible to attend a local day care centre (Lokar and Devčič 2008).[27] Rules of operation were set nationally, and service provision was under the auspices of national ministries, responsible for health, childcare and early education (Eurydice 2009; Lokar and Devčič 2008). Overall, with a symbiotic mix of enthusiasm, personal sense of responsibility and mutual supervision the Slovenian people paid for the childcare infrastructure from their own pockets, i.e. in the form of 'free' contributions. The economics of social ownership endorsed public childcare service as a common good, which its natural constituency, i.e. the working parents, supported wholeheartedly (Javornik 2001; Jogan 2006). Public sentiment increasingly embraced the acceptability of mothers' employment

[24] The Slovenian type of socialism was a socialist version of democracy "from the bottom" (e.g. Jogan 2006). Holding the referenda to ask the people whether they would financially contribute towards the *local* infrastructure was a feature of a common strategy to obtaining funds at the local level during socialism.
[25] The actual amount of contributions varied by the size of municipalities and needs (Lokar and Devčič 2008).
[26] The system with a unitary setting was also adopted in the Baltic States, whereby the services were provided under the single phase model for all children of pre-school age (Eurydice 2009).
[27] They were also given priority when the demand was high (Eurydice 2009).

and public childcare of pre-school children, and government officials faced a stark choice whether or not to support any sectional interests in service provision during economic slowdowns, which reflects in continuous growth and investments in childcare services during socialist period (e.g. Černigoj Sadar 2005; Javornik 2001; Lokar and Devčič 2008).

3. Discussion

This chapter has shown that after World War Two a new social order was endorsed in the eight countries: Before the war it was customary for women not to work outside the home, with the exception of women from low-income groups who entered the labour force to sustain their households. But in the 1950s, normative views and policies concerning female employment began to shift in response to labour-force needs – and in response to growing demands for social and economic equality.

The period between 1950 and 1989 was a critical period for women's entry into the labour force as well as of state expansion into the family life. However, while the eight countries dismantled the male-breadwinner model, there is no common ex-socialist heritage in terms of social practices towards mothers in paid employment. The eight countries went into distinct directions, having endorsed contrasting social norms and values about acceptable and desirable gender roles. Broadly, policy incentives, which reinforced these norms, followed two trajectories: of state familialism in the Eastern Bloc, where the states relied on households to produce care, and of de-familialism in Slovenia, committed to collective public care. That notwithstanding, countries were quite different in how the state intervened into family life; the states used policies on childcare leave and childcare service provision differently – as key measures to challenge the conventional gender division of labour, or reinforce it. In the Eastern Bloc, women's lifestyle choices were skewed by government dictates and social constraints. Civil society was practically non-existent, and the alternatives were scarcely articulated. If state socialism created an image of a woman as a 'new socialist man', public support for mothers in paid employment was imbalanced, and I found three different patterns of state-maternal employment relations in this group of countries: (1) Hungary and Czechoslovakia made women more dependent on the state rather than their husbands, but were less in favour of mothers' employment; they adopted more supportive policies for stay-at-home mothers, at least for the children under the age of three years, and did not attempt a broader transformation of gender division of labour. (2) The Baltic States were a mix case, with shorter but well paid maternity leave, and longer but unpaid childcare leave. In both groups of countries public childcare provision for children under the age of three years was low. (3) In Poland, direct state intervention was the most limited. The state

did not engage in the task of providing for childcare needs, and families were left to self-service in unregulated private childcare markets: after a very short but paid maternity leave the state limited direct public subsidies only to low-income families, and the unregulated childcare markets played a critical role in supporting mothers in paid employment.

Contrary to the familialistic group, the exceptional situation in Slovenia indicates its specific features. First, relative to the former group, forceful normative demands and exacting regulatory strictures were more limited, which emanated from the specificity of its socialist system since the mid-1950s. Although the leadership of the Communist Party was obvious, the political arena was more open to (organised) civil society. Second, the state explicitly prioritized mothers' employment, promoting female employment as the linchpin of gender equality. The government, left with less room to manoeuvre because of the strong public sentiment in favour of women's employment and public care options, installed gender-'neutral' de-familializing childcare policies. An activist approach to family policy facilitated the expansion of public childcare service provision and upended the conventional gender division of care. Ultimately, family depended less on family care and more on external sources. Women largely maintained a continuous record of employment, punctuated by brief periods (of about a year) around childbirth.

On the whole, the eight countries departed the socialist period and entered a 'new' era with mixed legacies and different collective experiences about social organisation of care and maternal employment. While state socialism brought legal entitlements affirming women's place in the society, and significant legislative protection of women in the labour markets across the socialist group of countries (e.g. Pascall and Manning 2000: 248), talk of a new, post-socialist era and transformation from socialism to capitalism conveyed a sense of fundamental change. The real economic crisis hit the region. Gone were the days of labour shortages, fiscal shortfalls undermined efforts to expand welfare state in new directions – in general, expensive new social policy programmes were taken off the table in the early post-socialist period (e.g. Unicef 1999). Thus, the question is whether, and to what extent, maternal employment patterns and social organisation of care in the post-socialist period reflect the aforementioned diversities, and if any parallels can be drawn between state socialism and the contemporary post-socialist period. Have socioeconomic transformations in the 1990s indeed led to re-traditionalization among the eight countries as argued by some scholars (chapter 1), or do cross-country variations reflect more sustained cross-country differences in social organisation of child care and support for mothers in paid employment?

Furthermore, the historical scan of the socialist past has shown that childcare needs cut across socio-economic strata, and that childcare policies represented the key structural condition for mothers to engage in paid employment. However, the systematic review of historical-institutional developments has also shown that changing opportunities and incentives in the labour markets, such as the demand for female labour, the income needs of households alongside the social pressures of norms and values, and social policies that reinforce them, represent a broader set of factors that shape women's decisions whether, and how, to engage in paid employment. Moreover, women have enjoyed a significant "degree of educational and skill upgrading that is historically unprecented" (Esping-Andersen 2009: 7; also Jogan 2006). This suggests that women's employment may not be perceived merely as a duty to endure, but also as a source of their self-realization and autonomy. Now, the question is *how* these factors affect women's employment, and whether, and how, they explain the shape of maternal employment in a cross-country perspective.

Chapter 3

Understanding factors that influence female employment in Western capitalist countries: a review

Introduction

In the previous chapter I have shown that personal lifestyle choices of women concerning their participation in the labour force are influenced by a set of causal factors such as the demand for female labour, household income needs, as well as the social pressures of norms and values, and social policies that reinforce them. But *how* do these factors affect maternal employment? What is their explanatory potential for the shape of maternal employment?

To understand better the cross-country variations in maternal employment this chapter systematically reviews the rich literature on female employment, with the main aim to identify factors explaining the shape of maternal employment. I used prior publication in peer-reviewed journals and books as the key criterion for the selection, and found that previously published studies of female employment are largely based on the evidence from Western capitalist countries, i.e. Northern-Western Europe and North America, New Zealand and Australia. In contrast, the literature on causal factors of female employment in post-socialist countries is scant. Thus, I first synthesize available scholarship on female employment in Western capitalist countries, and create a list of 'independent factors' of female employment. I organize the literature on the shape of female employment into the following three schools of thought: (1) *economic theory*, which argues that women's employment is the result of macro- and micro-economic factors such as the demand for female labour force and each individual's particular circumstances; (2) scholarship on the role of the culture emphasizes the role of the *social norms and attitudes towards* gender division of labour; and (3) the *welfare state theory* argues that normative assumptions about gender division of labour underpin social policies; policies reinforce or challenge the conventional gender division of labour, and hence shape maternal employment. The study proceeds in chapter 4, and uses this list of independent variables to systematically review earlier studies of the post-socialist countries.

1. Economic theory of female employment

I find two main schools of thought in the economic strand of the literature on female employment: (1) the *macro-economic* school, and (2) the *micro-economic*. The 'macroeconomic' strand of the literature has evolved around the structural shifts in the economy of the industrialized Western countries after World War Two. It argues that while favourable general conditions contribute to job growth, women's labour market fortunes are

more closely tied to the structural shifts in economies than men's, and explains female employment as the function of the labour market opportunities, i.e. the demand-side factors (for overview see Boserup 1995; Goldin 1995; Mammen and Paxson 2000). In contrast, the 'micro-economic' strand focuses on the individual, or the household. Its underlying assumption is that people are rational economic actors, and hence explains female employment as a utility maximizing response to the costs and benefits of wage labour relative to unpaid work.

1.1 Macro-economic theory

The literature on the economic development has found the U-shaped female employment patterns across different levels of economic development (e.g. Boserup 1995; Goldin 1995; Mammen and Paxson 2000). Female employment was the highest in the poorest and the richest countries, and it was the lowest in countries with a 'medium income' (in terms of their gross domestic product). Hence, this scholarship argues that female employment rates 'naturally' progress from high to low and back as countries move through different stages of development: the female employment rates in Western capitalist countries correspond to the points on the increasing slope of the curve, which starts with the southern European countries (Mammen and Paxson 2000). However, Goldin (1995) shows that the relationship between economic development and female employment is not straightforward or simple, and specifies three major underlying processes which underpin it: (i) the level of national income, (ii) the sectoral structure of the economy, and (iii) female educational attainment. She argues that in the early stage of economic development both income and education levels are low, and the agricultural sector as the main employer of women is large. With industrialization, the agricultural sector shrinks. The household income increases as an increasing proportion of male labour force moves into the higher-income industrial sectors, and women initially withdraw from the labour force (also Mahutga and Bandelj 2008: 436-7). But industrialization also generated socioeconomic transformations, which brought into existence the post-industrial labour markets (Bonoli 2005: 431). Women's levels of human capital increase and more and better paid jobs in the service economy become attainable to them, which in turn boosts their employment (Oppenheimer 1973: 186-189; also Mammen and Paxson 2000: 145-151). In a nutshell, it is not the economic development *per se* that explains cross-country variations in female employment, but the related industrial restructuring and socioeconomic transformations generate opportunities and incentives for women to enter the labour force, and hence explain a cross-country variation in female employment.

Demand for women's labour

The thesis that the demand for female waged labour is a causal factor of female employment can be traced back to Engels, who argues that women's emancipation would come from the demand for their labour in a modern large-scale industry (Engels [1884] 1942: 148). Job opportunities for women expanded enormously only in the twentieth century, with the shift from manufacturing and agriculture to the expanding sectors of the post-industrial economy (Goldin 1995; Rubery et al. 1998; Cotter et al. 2001; Jaumotte 2003; Bonoli 2005). Oppenheimer (1970, 1973) argues that the post-industrial service economy pulled large numbers of women into the labour force. In her study of the post-World War Two employment in the United States she attributes growth in female employment to the increased demand for labour in female-typed occupations, emanating from the growing gendered service sector. She argues that women's employment would only increase over and above the growth of 'female' occupations if/when the barriers to women's employment in 'male' occupations fall (also Cotter et al. 2001: 446).

Scholarship that employs this conceptual framework argues that the growing firm size and its attendant problems of organizational control led to increased clerical work, which boosted the demand for female labour in the public (administration) sector (e.g. Huber and Spitze 1983; England and Farkas 1986; Mammen and Paxson 2000). Moreover, service economy has grown, opening new jobs to women (e.g. Pfau-Effinger 2004a: 1-5; Eliason et al. 2008; Huber and Stephens 2001). But whether female-dominated jobs are secure public sector jobs, or, instead, precarious jobs in the private sector, matters greatly in thinking about the consequences for female employment (e.g. Estévez-Abe 2005; Görlich and de Grip 2009). The public labour markets provide more job security (e.g. Rubery et al. 1999: 242-245; Ellingsæter 1999: 54-56; Esping-Andersen 2002a: 74). Further, they "more easily implement 'mothers-friendly' policies than the private labour market" (e.g. Rubery et al. 1999: 243). As working conditions are generally superior in the public service sectors (O'Connor 2004: 192), women "selectively opt for educational trajectories that are targeted towards public service sector jobs" (Esping-Andersen 2002a: 74; also Estévez-Abe 2005: 197).

Cotter et al. (2001) argue that the opportunity thesis is difficult to test in empirical studies, because it is not clear how the opportunities/the demand should be measured. Hence, empirical studies that test this theory are scant, and generally measure demand with the size of the service sector (e.g. Pettit and Hook 2005), size of the government sector (e.g. Eliason et al. 2008), or the extent to which the occupational structure is skewed toward

predominantly female occupations (e.g. Cotter et al. 2001). But regardless of indicators used, their findings support the opportunity thesis and show that the service sector growth explains variation in female employment.

Economic cycles: general labour market conditions

The thesis about the role of the economic cycles argues that cross-country variations in female employment should be understood against the backdrop of employment and unemployment figures (e.g. Cotter et al. 2001; Rubery et al. 1999; OECD 2007). This thesis argues that the net effect of unemployment on female employment is negative, and the employment of married women and women with children is the most vulnerable to external shocks generated by the shifts in economic conditions. Empirical evidence does not entirely support this thesis. First, economic shifts equally affect both female and male employment; thereby, economic spells do not necessarily hit women harder than men (Stadelmann-Steffen 2008). Data from the most recent economic recession also does not support the thesis that women are more likely than men to retreat from the labour force in periods of economic recession. Empirical study of the European Union member states in 2009 shows that younger men with lower levels of education, working in manufacturing, have suffered most in terms of job loss during the current recession (Eurofound 2009). Furthermore, empirical studies find that when the male unemployment rates increase, employment rates for married women and for mothers with young children increase (Pettit and Hook 2005). Micro-economic theory relates such employment trends to the micro-economic rationality, and sheds new light on factors that explain the shape of female employment.

1.2 Micro-economic theory

Underlying the micro-economic theory is the postulate that individuals, and the households, are rational economic actors. It argues that female employment is the result of women's particular circumstances, and that their labour supply is explained by three individual-level factors: (i) added worker effect, (ii) household economic need, and (iii) educational attainment.

The *added worker effect*[28] thesis argues that married women supply their labour in response to their husbands' unemployment spells and sees their labour supply as a household consumption smoothing response to the household income shock, which increases with the

[28] The term was coined by W.S. Woytinsky in his debate with C. Long about the labour economics in the 1930s (see, for example, Finegan and Margo 1993; Stephens 2001).

magnitude of the household income loss due to the husband's job loss (Finegan and Margo 1993; Jaumotte 2003: 14; Serneels 2002; Stephens 2001). On the other hand, the *household economic need* thesis argues that women's labour supply is the function of total household income, and hence not necessarily related to the husbands' job loss (e.g. Gordon and Kammeyer 1980; Meyers 1985). This thesis was put forward in the 1980s in the context of men's declining earnings and related household income shocks, and argues that women undertake paid employment because the total household income is low, and women's wages help sustain the levels of household consumption (e.g. Brandon 1999; Mammen and Paxson 2000: 142-145). As Esping-Andersen put it: "…all across the advanced world families increasingly require women's work income in order to uphold living standards" (2002a: 69).

Crompton and Lyonette (2006) tested this thesis to explain the differences in the full-time employment rates between the British and the Portuguese women in the early years of the 2000s. They measured the income needs with per capita income and gross earnings average for full-time employees in enterprises with 10+ employees, and found significantly lower values in Portugal, where female full-time employment was higher (ibid., p. 411). In a similar vein both Jaumotte (2003: 20) and the OECD (2004) used this thesis to explain Portuguese dual full-time earnership family model "as the norm since the late 1980s" (OECD 2004: 17). Uunk et al. (2005) tested this thesis with a multivariate statistical model of female employment in 13 EU countries over the 1990s, measuring the income needs with per capita GDP. They found that the female employment rates, especially on a full-time basis on average were lower in countries with higher per capita GDP. However, there was no straightforward relationship, and childcare services had an overriding effect on female employment.

Opportunity-cost effect on female employment

Neoclassical economic theory extends the basic micro-economic consumption model and argues that female labour supply is a (rational) consumption choice between their market income and the time spent outside paid work (e.g. Becker 1981; Beblo et al. 2009). Becker (1965) argues that family obligations affect women's employment decisions, and change the value that they place on their time outside paid work. Using the *'time allocation model'* he argues that women supply their labour only as long as their additional earning purchases more goods and services than required to make up for the lost home production and leisure (Becker 1981). Therefore, women's *reservation wage*, i.e. the net wage at which an individual considers employment to be worthwhile, reflects the utility of their time at home, including the value of their home production, measured in the price of market production

(Blau and Ferber 1992; Rubery et al. 1999; Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002). With reference to this micro-economic rationality thesis a rise in wages shifts the cost-benefit relationship and boosts female employment (Brandon 1999), but only when the financial returns from employment reward the individuals for giving up the time which otherwise would be spent for household work and leisure (e.g. Walby 2001; Beblo et al. 2009).

The *human capital thesis* sheds new light on how women make their employment decisions, and argues that 'opportunity-cost effect' varies with educational attainment (e.g. Del Boca et al. 2005; 2007). Women as the rational economic actors use their education and skills, i.e. the human capital stock as profitably as they can – as women's education increases, the opportunity costs of staying out of paid employment grow and equal the prevailing wage for women with the same educational level, experiences and skills (Mammen and Paxson 2000: 142-145). Furthermore, women with higher education lose more from staying out of the labour markets than women with lower levels – given that education functions as a proxy for women's potential wages, the loss of income from staying at home on average matters more for more educated women (Steiber and Haas 2009: 646; Görlich and de Grip 2009). On the one hand, work interruptions negatively affect female wages in the long-term perspective (e.g. Mincer and Polachek 1974). While shorter absence from the labour force has little effect on their earnings, lengthier absence is associated with substantial (2 to 3 percent) reductions in their relative wages over their careers (Ruhm 1998; Ondrich et al. 2003).[29] Moreover, longer time out from the labour force deteriorates women's labour market skills, and damages their future career paths and earnings (Ondrich et al. 2002, 2003; Edin and Gustavsson 2005, 2008; Buligescu et al. 2009 for Germany).[30] Overall, given the educational homogamy among couples (education being the proxy for the wage) women with higher levels of education have more options whether or not to be in paid employment, relative to women who are constrained by the household economic need (e.g. Steiber and Haas 2009: 646). However, their opportunity costs from staying out of the labour force are higher, which explains higher employment rates for more highly educated women.

Working-time arrangements

This strand of the literature argues that part-time employment frees women's remunerated time, which offers carers more options to allocate time between the labour markets and care-giving (e.g. Bettio et al. 1998; Hakim 2000: 68-72; Van der Lippe 2001). Given the

[29] Ruhm's (1998) study estimates that one year leave from the labour force cuts women's five-year wage growth by one-third, and eighteen months of leave reduces it by one-half.
[30] Buligescu et al.'s (2009) estimates based on German data imply a maternal leave wage penalty of 10 to 14 per cent, and the study finds that maternal wages catch up in five years after women return to work.

coincident growth of female employment with part-time employment, it explains part-time employment as the "the catapult of female employment growth" (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2002a: 79). Hakim (2000) goes further. Her 'preference theory' maintains that women do not form a homogeneous group in which everyone seeks to combine paid employment and family life. She uses part-time employment as an indicator of women's work commitments and family orientation and argues that part-time employment indicates women's family orientation, while full-time employment indicates career investment (Hakim 2000; 2004).

Empirical evidence from across the OECD and the EU countries does not support the thesis that part-time explains female employment (e.g. Bettio et al. 1998; Sainsbury 1996: 106-113; Del Boca et al. 2009). Rubery and Fagan (1994: 230-231) analyzed female employment patterns across the EU countries between 1980 and 1990, and found that the relationship between part-time and female employment rates varies among the EU countries: in Belgium, Germany, France, and the Netherlands more than half of the employment growth was accounted for by the expansion of part-time work. But in other countries the majority of new jobs taken by women were full-time. Furthermore, in Denmark and Greece employment growth co-exists with a contraction of part-time work (Rubery and Fagan 1994: 230). Hence, authors argue that rapid growth of female employment is not dependent upon the creation of part-time jobs. The same conclusion can be drawn based on the studies of female employment between the 1990s and early years of the 2000s (e.g. Rubery et al. 1999: 272-273; Eurostat 2005; OECD 2007: 172-173; EC 2008). Among the OECD countries, part-time employment has been the highest in the Netherlands[31], Denmark, the UK, and Germany. But female employment rates have also been very high in the United States and Portugal, the two countries which stand out as the main 'laggards' in providing part-time alternatives (Gornick and Meyers 2003: ch. 6; OECD 2004: 17; Crompton and Lyonette 2006a; EC 2008). Furthermore, empirical evidence shows no systematic pattern of association between part-time and maternal employment (e.g. Bielenski et al. 2005; Fagan 2005; Rubery et al. 1999: 274; Gornick et al. 2003; EC 2008).

[31] This is the result of the Dutch 'combination model' (Plantenga 2002; Gornick et al. 2003: 165). To redistribute paid and unpaid work at the household level the Dutch government installed provisions on part-time work in 2001 (Gornick et al. 2003: 165). These allow both men and women to increase or decrease hours of paid employment and at the same time prohibit all forms of differential treatment based on working hours (Knijn and van Wal 2001; Plantenga 2002; Lewis 2003; Gils and Kraaykamp 2008). In practice, however, the results have been disappointing (Lewis 2003). While the Dutch men indeed have the highest rates in part-time employment in Europe, it is mainly those aged over 55 or under 25 who work part-time (Knijn and van Wal 2001), instead of the 'target' group, i.e. men with young children (Lewis 2003).

Rubery and Fagan (1994) argue that hours of paid work depend on specific supply-side characteristics and labour-market organization and conditions, as well as social norms about different types and forms of female employment. They argue that part-time jobs differ from full-time jobs in more than just the number of hours: the type of jobs, terms and conditions, and employment opportunities associated with part-time work vary considerably across countries. Furthermore, they find a striking variation in the level of in/voluntary part-time employment (Rubery et al. 1999: 274-275). The incidence of involuntary part-time work has increased across the European countries, and is mainly related to the downward economic trends and increased unemployment (also OECD 1994a; OECD 2007: 179-181). The Eurofound's (2010) study found that social partners and governments across much of the European Union seek to minimise the damage to employment caused by economic downturns with a range of measures, part-time being among the most often employed measures: it cuts working hours in line with reduced demand, but it keeps workers in employment. However, once a worker has moved to part-time, it is not always possible to go back to full-time. Thus, part-time may lead to lower social security contributions over the working life, and hence to lower pensions payments. Moreover, part-time can negatively affect one's career, and it is rarely practiced by those higher up in the organizational hierarchy (Eurofound 2010a). Overall, variation in maternal employment cannot be adequately explained by availability of part-time jobs.

1.3 Summary and discussion

Analyzing the rich and wide-ranging economic literature on female employment, I draw the following conclusions about whether, and how, economic factors explain female employment. The service economy generates *opportunities* for women to participate in the labour force: the more extensive it is, the higher the demand for female labour (e.g. Oppenheimer 1973). But the *public service sector* is the most important for the employment of women: the more extensive it is the higher the female employment rates. Relative to the private service sector the public service sector generally provides more secure jobs and women enjoy higher levels of employment protection (e.g. Rubery et al. 1999: 243). Public employers less often demonstrate discriminatory behaviour towards women, offer more enhanced reconciliation measures, and provide a more supportive environment for the employees who use them (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 86; O'Connor 2004: 192).

Women's personal choices whether or not to enter the labour force are influenced by their personal circumstances. The micro-economic literature, based on the assumption that individuals are rational economic actors, explains female labour supply as a utility

maximizing response to the costs and benefits of wage labour relative to unpaid household work (e.g. Becker 1965; 1981). Women's education as indexed by their potential wage and the household income affect women's decisions whether or not to participate in the labour force: the higher the women's education and the household income needs, the higher the *incentives* for them to participate in the labour force, regardless of their parental status.

Part-time jobs and economic cycles do not explain female employment, and the relationship is not straightforward. Female part-time employment is often involuntary as the result of market volatility, and generally grows in times of economic downturns. Therefore, part-time jobs are seen as an individual employment strategy rather than a factor of female employment. Moreover, the effects of economic recessions largely depend on the labour market structure, i.e. which sector gets hit most in the business cycles and the shifts in the (global) economy (Stadelmann-Steffen 2008; Eurofound 2009).

Based on this extensive review I conclude that the economic theory offers a logical set of factors which frame female employment, but *does not* explain the shape of maternal employment. The main thesis of economic theory that at any point in time female employment is determined by the demand for and the supply of female labour is credible, as the literature provides sufficient empirical evidence for this thesis. Individual-level explanations also provide important insights into a household-level decision-making, but this thesis assumes that female employment is at any point a result of a rational choice of women, or their households, and that these actors *always* act to obtain the highest possible well-being for themselves given available information about their opportunities and other constraints. Both theses are credible. However, this scholarship is insufficiently differentiated to account for the shape of mothers' employment or the factors that influence the employment gaps between women with children and those without. In sum, it does not explain whether, and how, economic factors shape mothers' employment any differently, relative to other women in the same country. Overall, this thesis does not develop an analytical framework that would adequately predict mothers' employment and it is difficult to explain any deviant patterns within this rational actor model.

2. Social attitudes and values

Scholarship on the role of the culture, social values and norms challenges the assumption of economic rationality and emphasizes the role of non-rational (f)actors in explaining female employment (e.g. England 1982; England and Farkas 1986; Reskin and Roos 1990; Boserup 1995). In this literature, the societal idea(l)s and notions about the 'appropriate' gender division of labour are key determinants of female employment (e.g. Duncan 1995; Haller and Hoellinger 1994; Lovenduski 1998; Stetson and Mazur 1995). They reinforce acceptability and attractiveness of female employment on the level of an individual, and affect their employment behaviour (e.g. Crompton and Harris 1999). In the context of attitudinal egalitarianism, i.e. when dual-earner family model is publicly supported, women are more likely to supply their labour and are more likely to stay in the labour force after childbirth (Boserup 1995: 52; Jansen and Kalmijn 2002: 129-59; Lesthaeghe 2002). In contrast, in the context of embedded attitudinal traditionalism, i.e. when social norms support (and reinforce) traditional gender division of labour, female labour force participation is lower, women predominantly enter the labour force on a part-time basis, and women with young children largely withdraw from the labour force (e.g. Pfau-Effinger 1999; 2004a).

Comparative research that has included attitudes as potential factors of women's employment is scant (e.g. Crompton and Lyonette 2005, 2006, 2006a; Haas et al. 2006; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007; Korpi 2000; Steiber and Haas 2009; Uunk et al. 2005). To measure gender-role values, these studies use statements from the international survey data, which refer to gender-role values and find inconclusive evidence about the causal links between attitudes and female employment. Largely, they show that the importance and uniformity of 'gender cultures' is overrated in explaining female employment. Using data from the 1994 ISSP Korpi (2000) found a patterning relationship between negative attitudes towards female employment and the percentage of women outside the labour force in 13 OECD countries. Public opinion was the least traditional in Sweden, where the share of women outside the labour force was low. In contrast, people in Ireland, Germany, Italy, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand had more traditional values and high proportion of women outside the labour force. However, the relationship between gender-role values and female employment is not straightforward: Korpi finds that the Netherlands and Norway do not adhere to this theoretical pattern, because their gender-role values contradict their employment patterns. In the former country the public sentiment largely supports female employment, but the gender gap in the labour force is wide. In the latter country, gender-role values are more traditional than in other Scandinavian countries, but the female employment

rates were high nonetheless. Haller and Hoellinger (1994) found a similar pattern, identifying two polar cases in their sample of countries: Portugal with very traditional values but high levels of female employment, and the Netherlands with non-traditional gender-role values but relatively low female employment rates (similar findings for Portugal were reported by Crompton and Lyonette 2006a: 410).

Often, Portugal is used as an example of the mismatch between values and female employment; while it has never experienced enforced gender equality, its full-time female employment rates are comparable to that of the Scandinavian countries (Crompton and Lyonette 2006a: 410). But the discrepancies between preferred and actual household arrangements can be even more specific. For example, in Austria the mothers either work full-time or are housewives, while much of the population sees part-time employment as the most favourable option for the mothers (Haas 2005).

Furthermore, studies that include more variables in their explanatory models find that attitudes have an intermediating effect on maternal employment, but do not explain it (e.g. Antecol 2003; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007; Uunk et al. 2005). The general patterns found in these studies are that mothers' employment is higher in a more egalitarian value climate, and the reduction in hours of paid work after the child birth is low (Scharle 2007: 166; Uunk et al. 2005). However, effect of attitudes on maternal employment becomes statistically insignificant when the income needs of households increase and public childcare service provisions decrease: when the income needs are high, mothers participate in the labour force regardless of their gender-role values. But when public care service provision is limited, they retreat from the labour force, regardless of their attitudes (e.g. Uunk et al. 2005; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007).

2.1 Summary and discussion

The literature on the role of value orientation and social norms argues that gender-role values shape women's employment, and the key explanatory factor is the degree of gender egalitarianism: female employment rates are higher in the contexts of attitudinal egalitarianism, where both the citizens and the state are gender-equality committed. In such contexts the mothers of young children engage in paid employment on a continual, full-time basis. In contrast, their employment is lower in the context of embedded attitudinal traditionalism, where gender-role values are more traditional. In such social contexts women are mainly employed part-time, and women with young children withdraw from the labour

force. But, empirical evidence about their relationship is inconsistent, and shows a limited explanatory range of this thesis.

I see the following five shortcomings in these studies. First, there is a causal ordering problem of whether attitudes determine the dominant employment practices, or the social practices generate the normative attitudes. For example, if social policies facilitate care/work integration, a working mother can be seen as a role model for the population at large, thereby affecting people's normative attitudes. The two interpretations cannot be separated with the survey data (also see Motiejūnaitė 2008). Second, the overarching problem of cross-national values survey databases is that these provide cross-sectional data. This raises questions of the consistency of the relationship over time, as people may change their attitudes more often than they (could) change their behaviour: women who are employed but have more traditional gender-role values are more likely to change their attitudes than their behaviour (Himmelweit and Sigala 2003: 20-1; Steiber and Haas 2009: 643). Moreover, the questions asked may be retrospective, referring to the past experience and not to the present situation of the respondents. Sjöberg argues that any attitudinal/behaviour ambivalence arises as a "consequence of a disjunction between people's aspirations and the structural possibility to realizing them" (Sjöberg 2009: 33). In the event of any value conflict people confront both pluses and minuses in choosing between rival options, and re-negotiate their attitudes (e.g. Crompton and Harris 1999: 144-147). This points to the danger of relying on the de-contextualized abstractions, as it may be difficult to establish causality between normative attitudes and employment behaviour. Third, the gender-role values measurements used are only approximations, which might address different types of values that may not be equally relevant to maternal employment. Thus, dis/agreement with the statements does not directly imply support for the 'adult worker/dual carer' family model (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 16). Overall, results could vary considerably between different studies depending on how the variables are constructed. Fourth, normative attitudes are themselves very complex and interact with a range of mediating variables, such as education, age of the respondents: the more educated and younger one is, the more egalitarian their attitudes (e.g. Haas and Steiber 2009). Fifth, a country mix affects the results: when post-socialist countries were included in cross-national comparisons, they were often treated as exceptions, because they had high levels of full-time female employment accompanied by traditional gender-role values (e.g. Alwin et al. 1992; Thornton 1989). This affects the thesis (and the findings) that the increased female employment rates are shaped by less traditional gender-role values (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 18). But the discrepancy between attitudes and policies/practices is not a special feature of post-socialist countries, and there is no straightforward or simple

interrelationship between gender-role values and female employment (e.g. Crompton et al. 2005; Steiber and Haas 2009: 657).

3. The gendered welfare state

A theory about the relationship between the welfare state and female employment has developed in three waves: (1) a *theoretical school* in the 1970s and 1980s highlighted that normative assumptions about the gender division of labour underpin social policy (e.g. Wilson 1977; McIntosh 1978; Land 1980; Abramowitz 1988; Gordon 1988; Jogan 1991). (2) The *welfare state regime* school further developed this conceptual frameworks and devised analytical tools for a gender-sensitive analyses of the welfare state and its effects on gender equality (e.g. Lewis 1992; Lewis and Ostner 1995; Sainsbury 1994, 1996; Lister 1994; McLaughlin and Glendinning 1994; Leitner 2003). (3) Seeking to address some of the weaknesses in earlier scholarship, a new wave of more rigorous *empirical research* has been using large-scale and longitudinal causal modelling and investigations since the early years of the 2000s (e.g. Pettit and Hook 2005; Uunk et al. 2005; Del Boca et al. 2008; Eliason et al. 2008). Each school represents a stepping stone to a better understanding of how the welfare state affects female employment: the former two provide the theory and the latter tests it. Hence, this sections proceeds by systematically reviewing each of these three academic traditions.

3.1 Theoretical framework

Theoretical scholarship on the implications of the welfare state argues that normative assumptions about the gender division of labour underpin social policy, and that the states reinforce women's role as carers and men's as breadwinners (e.g. Gordon 1988; Land 1980; McIntosh 1978). These scholars argue that the welfare state is "not just a set of services; it is also a set of ideas about society, about the family, and – not least importantly, about women who have a centrally important role within the family, as its linchpin" (Wilson 1977: 9). As a whole, "welfare policy functions to reinforce the entire social system of women's subordination, particularly their construction within the family and dependence on men" (Gordon 1990: 19). As Thane (1991: 93) put it:

"We have come to learn how social policies … are often shaped by … normative assumptions about gender roles, in particular about the sexual division of labor and of social responsibility, with its primary assumption of female dependency on male earning power. Also about how, reciprocally, sometimes explicitly and intentionally, sometimes not, social welfare policies shape, reinforce, and perpetuate such roles."

These scholars argue that the welfare state confines mothers/wives into the home, while it drives men into the public sphere (Eisenstein 1983; Gordon 1988a; 1990; Zaretsky [1982]1992). Such social arrangements lead to 'public patriarchy' of men, who use the state to dictate policies (Eisenstein 1983: 41-58). To reinforce such division of labour, the state employs two mechanisms: (the ideology of) the family wage which limits alternative means of independence of women (e.g. Land 1980; Jenson 1986; Misra and Akins 1998), and the ideology of motherhood which "persuaded married women that their role in the home was of national importance and that motherhood was their primary duty" (Lewis 1980: 224). But Hernes pointed out that the welfare state can also be 'women-friendly'. She argues that the Scandinavian welfare states provide higher and less stigmatized benefits to women. Thus, their welfare states engender a shift in women's dependence on men to their dependence on the state, or, as she calls it, "to a tutelary state for women" or a "women-friendly state" (Hernes 1987: 15, 135-7). But even these 'women-friendly welfare states' have negative implications for gender equality, albeit indirectly, because of the normative assumption that women should be the primary carers (Spakes 1989; Gustafsson 1995: 112).

Overall, scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s provided conceptual discussions and offered fruitful lines for further conceptual developments about the implications of the welfare state on gender equality. However, it was mainly thinking the realities of the English-speaking capitalist countries, and the main assumption was that the underlying principles of the welfare states were the same across the industrialized world. Scholarship on the welfare state regimes has developed this academic debate further by offering some comparative frameworks, which show that welfare states vary in the extent to which they reinforce, or challenge the conventional gender division of labour. Using the gendered-magnifying glass this scholarship developed both conceptual and analytical tools for further theory formation and testing.

The welfare state regime literature has developed as a reaction to Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990). With this study Esping-Andersen 'launched' an analytical concept of the "welfare state regime", which he sees as a distinctive configuration of the market, the state, and the family that the state has adopted in the pursuit of work and welfare.[32] Esping-Andersen's analysis draws from social democracy and political economy,

[32] Esping-Andersen (1990) compared and classified 18 industrialized countries into three welfare regimes, each characterized by shared principles of the welfare state entitlements and relatively homogeneous outcomes: *liberal*, *conservative*, and *social-democratic*. These ideal-typical models are based on three dimensions: (1) the quality of social rights and the extent to which these rights liberate citizens from the market; (2) the resulting patterns of stratification, and (3) the way in which state, market, and family are interrelated. These welfare regimes are underlain by a single continuum of decommodification; drawing on Marshall's

and his analytical differentiation into three welfare regimes has become the framework for comparative studies of welfare state research, and a starting point for what has become "an academic industry" in comparative studies of the welfare state and social policy (Abrahamson 1999: 394). There have been many critiques of Esping-Andersen's approach and some social policy analysts have found fault with the three welfare regimes as being gender-neutral and disregarding circumstances beheld solely to women (see e.g. Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993: 309). This strand of welfare state scholarship argues that Esping-Andersen's typology is based on a 'male-biased' organising principle, i.e. that the 'working male' functions as the "ideal-typical citizen in the literature on social rights" and that differences arise when considering the manner in which citizens claim benefits from the welfare system (Orloff 1993: 308). The underlying assumption that informs this scholarship is perhaps best spelt out by Orloff (1993: 303-4):

> *"[T]he character of public social provision affects women's material situations, shapes gender relationships, structures political conflict and participation, and contributes to the formation and mobilization of specific identities and interests."*

This thesis represents an important step in social policy research, and signals a direction for a more gender-sensitive social policy research. Scholars pursued in one of the three directions: (1) they 'gendered' the existing welfare state models (e.g. Orloff 1993; O'Connor 1996), (2) highlighted the aspects of the welfare state models that also 'work for women' (e.g. Gornick and Jacobs 1998; Trifiletti 1999), or (3) developed alternative welfare states typologies (e.g. Lewis 1992; Sainsbury 1999; Lister 1997; Leitner 2003). These alternative typologies led to further conceptual developments and theory formation on the gendered effects of the welfare state, and I focus on two analytical frameworks which take into account the relationship between the state and the family, and have been used to explain the shape of female employment in comparative research.

The concept of male breadwinner

To describe some of the redistributive measures within the welfare states, Lewis and Ostner (1991) and Sainsbury (1994) developed alternative typologies to Esping-Andersen's. Lewis' concept of [male] 'breadwinner', ranging from weak to strong[33], and Sainsbury's [male]

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idea of social citizenship (1950) this key concept is conceptualized as "the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation" (1990: 37). It is a measure of state intervention into the market to ameliorate the risks and inequalities generated by the market forces.

[33] Depending on the prevailing normative assumptions about gender division of labour the welfare state promotes and supports one of the following three types of male breadwinner family models: (i) *strong* (for

'breadwinner' versus 'individual entitlement' have been understood and absorbed as the principles to organize and categorize the effects of the welfare states. Lewis (1992) argues that the welfare state that values the conventional gender division of labour draws a "firm dividing line between public and private responsibility for caring work" (Lewis 1997: 169), and reinforces it through the ideology of male breadwinner. Her concept stems from the principle of the beneficiary of the welfare state programme, i.e. the man as the family breadwinner (Lewis 2001: 153). An alternative way is offered by Sainsbury (1994, 1996), who argues that one of the shortcomings of Lewis' 'male breadwinner' concept is its focus on the husband as the "principal beneficiary", whereby it neglects the policies that constitute women's unpaid work. Thus, she offers a binary typology with the 'male-breadwinner model' at the one end and the 'individual model' at the other, depending on the basis of claims to state support. Relative to Lewis, Sainsbury distinguishes women's welfare entitlements through marriage from entitlements through motherhood: in the former the unit of social benefits and contributions is the family, and in the latter an individual (i.e. the citizen).

Although this concept has led to a number of typologies, which share a common theoretical framework, many analysts have found fault with this approach.[34] Orloff (1996) argues that the male breadwinner family model has not been an inevitable or a universal stage of societal development. Evidence from a number of countries, especially the Mediterranean, highlights that welfare provisions are not necessarily channelled through the male breadwinner who in turn supports his family. In contrast, in some countries the 'dependence' is intergenerational rather than between men and women, and economic welfare for the non-employed is provided by the (extended) family provides (e.g. Bimbi 1993, 1997: 196; Trifiletti 1995). Hence, the concept of male breadwinner is not flexible enough to be used for classifying the welfare states beyond Northern Europe or the English-speaking industrialized countries (e.g. Bussemaker and van Kersbergen 1999: 15-46; Millar 1999: 29-31). Lewis herself has addressed the issue of its applicability in her subsequent work, arguing that it lacks adequate attention to care arrangements, and finds the varieties of familialism a superior analytical concept for analyzing and classifying the welfare states (e.g. Lewis 1997).

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example in Ireland or Germany), (ii) *modified* (e.g. France), or (iii) *weak* (for example in Sweden). In the more recent literature, the latter is referred to as the 'adult worker' (e.g. Lewis 2001: 154), 'dual-breadwinner' (e.g. Lewis 2001: 156) or 'one-and-a-half earner' model (2001: 154).

[34] For other typologies see, for example, Pfau-Effinger's (1998, 2004a) five-type family-model taxonomy ranging from the family economy model to the dual-breadwinner/dual-carer model and Crompton's (1999) flexible framework ranging from male-breadwinner/female-carer to dual-earner/dual-carer model.

Varieties of state familialism

Lister (1994) and McLaughlin and Glendinning (1994) developed the concept of "de-familialism", and their conceptualizations led to the more recent developments in the literature (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1999; Korpi 2000; Leitner 2003; Bambra 2004). The central idea of this theory is that the welfare states differ in "the degree to which an individual adult can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living, independently of family relationships, either through paid work or through social security provisions" (Lister 1997: 173). A de-familializing welfare state "… reduces the extent to which the satisfaction of individual needs is dependent on the individual's relation to the family" (McLaughlin and Glendinning 1994: 65). It "unburdens the household and diminishes individual's welfare dependence on kinship" (Esping-Andersen 1999: 51). A *de-familialistic* welfare state enables women's command of their economic resources independently of their familial reciprocities, and hence facilitates women to uphold an "autonomous household" (Orloff 1993: 323). In contrast, the *familialistic* welfare state "assumes – indeed insists – that households must carry the principal responsibility for their members' welfare" (Esping-Andersen 1999: 51). As women are the primary carers of dependent relatives, familialistic welfare provisions reinforce women's dependence upon their families, and impede women's access to full social citizenship (Lister 1990; Orloff 1993).

In the recent literature this concept has largely developed around social organisation of care, i.e. public policies which shape women's unpaid work (den Dilk 2001: 67). The main tenant of this scholarship is that the welfare states influence social practices of women through their policies on care (Esping-Andersen 1999; Korpi 2000; Leitner 2003). Esping-Andersen (1999) argues that the *familialistic* welfare states 'assign' a maximum of welfare obligations to the family, while the *de-familialistic* states absorb some care obligations through the state or the market. He sees public childcare provision – either as formal service provision (as in the social democratic states) or as the commercial service provision (as in the liberal states) – as the key to women's employment (Esping-Andersen 2002b: 44). On the other hand, Korpi (2000) argues that the differences exist between the welfare states on *how* they disburse social benefits, which influence the way in which these benefits are received. The states provide a mix of policies coming from various public policy institutions, i.e. the services, the money to purchase services, or the money for familial care. In order to analyse them, the principle for their classification should be whether the benefits facilitate a dual-earner family or a single-earner family (Korpi 2000: 144). He distinguishes the *general support model* of family-oriented benefits from the *dual-earner support model*. The former is characterized by, for example, child allowances, family tax benefits, and childcare

services for children from three years up to the school age, and the latter emphasizes day care services for young children and maternity/paternity leave provisions. When service provision and/or cash benefits are low, the welfare state generates care need, and women's employment depends on the household's market resources or informal care, which is characteristics of a *de-familialistic market-oriented* welfare state model (Korpi 2000: 144).

Unlike earlier scholarship, Leitner (2003) argues that each welfare state combines elements of both familialism and de-familialism, but it is their individual characteristics and their configurations that explain whether the state confines women to home (to care) or unburdens them of care obligations. Focusing explicitly on care and carers she develops the concept of familialism as a four-type analytical construct of (i) 'explicit familialism', (ii) 'implicit familialism', (iii) 'optional familialism' and (iv) 'de-familialism'. The key distinction between these types is the extent to which the welfare states assume and imply familial care. The familialistic welfare states strengthen the family in its caring function in two ways. On the one hand, *explicitly familialistic* states allow family care but also enforce it by not providing public care options. On the other hand, the *implicitly familialistic* states provide no public care service nor subsidize family care. Thus, the states leave families nearly without support, and the family will be the primary carer. Thus, both models promote and reinforce the conventional gender division of labour. In contrast, *optional familialism* provides both, care services as well as care-related cash benefits and care leave. But relative to the explicit familialism, the state does not equate the right to care with the family's obligation to care. Hence, women can engage in family care or can, unburdened from their caring responsibilities, engage in paid employment. Lastly, the de-familialistic welfare states "aim at unburdening the family in its caring function" (Leitner 2003: 358). They provide public care services either as social services or they subsidize commercial services. But while they unburden carers to engage in paid employment by means of extensive public services, time for familial care is not subsidized. Leitner (2003) argues that familialistic policies reproduce the conventional gender division of labour, while de-familialistic policies challenge it. Nonetheless, familialistic policies can also challenge the conventional gender division of labour: when policies contain "incentives to ensure that care provision is shared on equal terms among male and female family members", the states generate incentives for men to participate in care work and women in the labour force (Leitner 2003: 367).

Leitner (2003) probed the applicability of this analytical differentiation to different social policies in fifteen (old) EU member states, and found that countries cluster differently for separate social policies, while clusters differ from Esping-Andersen's (1999) revised

'varieties of capitalism'.[35] Thus, she argues that any comparative welfare state research requires a more differentiated approach, one that closely examines social policies and familialism with a set of gender-sensitive criteria (Leitner 2003: 372). In the field of childcare, familialism of the welfare state reflects in service provision and care benefits: de-familialism reflects in policies on *care services*, and familialism in policies on *childcare leave* (ibid., p. 366). Leitner argues that these two policies represent key elements of state support of the caring function of the family with respect to childcare. She demonstrates that using a modified analytical framework to analyze different policies helps to identify varieties of familialism more adequately, relative to focusing on the welfare state regimes as such – because of the heterogeneity of care policies it is very likely that countries will cluster differently for separate policies (ibid., p. 362).

3.2 Explanatory potential of social policies

Scholarship on the welfare state regimes found the highest and continuous female employment rates in the Scandinavian states. Thus, they utilized their social policies as empirical touchstones in comparative research of the effects of the welfare state on women's social position, arguing that (i) tax systems, (ii) childcare-related allowances and cash benefits, (iii) childcare leave, and (iv) public childcare services are the yardsticks by which the degree of state de-familialism should be analyzed (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2002b; Lewis 2006; Sainsbury 1999). Empirical research has used these as variables to statistically test whether, and how, they affect female employment.[36]

Tax systems - the invisible welfare state

The literature on the gendered welfare state argues that normative assumptions about family models are written into national tax codes. Tax systems espouse a certain family model through the income-tax assessment units and income-tax rates, and influence female labour supply (e.g. de Villota 2004; Ferree 1983: 159-162; Gornick et al. 1997; Jaumotte 2003: 8-9;

[35] For example, Esping-Andersen's de-familializing Scandinavian cluster is classified as optional familialism, comprising also France and Belgium. His conservative cluster is split into explicitly and implicitly familialistic models with Southern European countries (except Italy) in the latter. And liberal Ireland and the UK are located in Leitner's de-familialistic group (Leitner 2003).

[36] The first statistical tests of the theory on welfare state as a factor of female employment used descriptive statistics and aggregate data on female employment and childcare policies (e.g. Gornick et al. 1997). The first attempts to model women's employment based on pooled micro-data for a large number of countries, and to assess the effect of institutional factors are the studies by Stier et al. (2001) and van der Lippe (2001). The most recent generation of empirical studies has improved on these studies, and uses statistical modeling to test this theory (e.g. Pettit and Hook 2005; Uunk et al. 2005; Del Boca et al. 2008).

Lewis 1997: 167, 169; Sainsbury 1996, 1999). Tax systems based on family units, where income is pooled (i.e. joint tax payments), generate incentives for lower-income earners – most often women – to take other than full-time employment or withdraw from the labour force entirely (e.g. Sainsbury 1999: 192). In personal income tax systems, in which the tax unit is an individual rather than the household, an individual's tax bill varies according to the earning levels rather than the marital status. Hence, the tax system generates incentives for female employment, especially when pooling of income for tax purposes is not allowed (e.g. de Villota 2004; Rubery et al. 1998: 209-222; Sainsbury 1999: 185-206). Furthermore, higher levels of income tax rates discourage women's employment on a full-time basis, because they operate in the same way as the decrease in their wage, while the lower rates operate in the opposite direction (de Villota 2004; OECD 2007: 77-81; Rubery et al. 1998: 220-222; Sainsbury 1999: 191).

Empirical evidence about the effects of tax systems on female employment is inconclusive. First, the income-tax assessment unit had no effect on female employment in the 1980s and the 1990s: countries with the same systems demonstrated various rates of female employment (e.g. Gustafsson 1995 for West Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands; Sainsbury 1999 studied this relationship across the welfare regimes). Furthermore, Rubery et al. (1998) and Plantenga and Remery (2005) analyzed employment data from across the EU countries and found that the income-tax assessment units only accounted for the marital status, but not for the parenting status of the tax payers. Second, Immervoll and Barber argue that most of the OECD countries have moved towards a model of individual taxation and argue that *overall size of the income-related tax* has a larger effect on female employment than the tax system as such (2005: 31). But empirical evidence is mixed. For example, de Villota's (2004) study finds high correlation between activity rates of married women and her fiscal index in the EU member states in the early 2000s (similar findings reported by Del Boca and Locatelli 2006). But she also finds that the number of children, the characteristics of the family units and availability of care services have a mediating effect on this relationship. Vermeulen et al. (1994) estimated the employment rates for married women in Belgium, France and Spain, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK as if their labour supply was driven by the net financial returns, other things being held constant, and contrasted these estimates to the female employment rates: they found no association (similar findings CERC 1994). Studies using multivariate models also do not find statistically significant effect of the overall size of the income-related tax on female employment, and find that childcare services have an overriding effect (e.g. Stadelmann-Steffen 2008; Eliason et al. 2004; 2008). In a nutshell, as the OECD put it, the actual size of the female employment response to the

tax systems "*remains a subject of debate* among empirical economists after more than 20 years of analysis" (OECD 1994a: 58).

Childcare-related tax allowances and cash benefits

The literature on the welfare state argues that childcare-related tax allowances generate an incentive for female employment, as they presuppose a taxable income (e.g. Daly 2002; Jaumotte 2003; Immervoll and Barber 2005). In countries with fewer social benefits in the form of government cash transfers, tax allowances and refundable tax credits increase the attractiveness of female employment: as they lower tax payments for those returning to the labour market after childbirth, they limit the distortions of parents' employment decisions, and hence generate incentives for female employment (e.g. Jaumotte 2003: 8-9).[37] However, child-related tax deductions are often not available at the time when parents actually incur childcare expenses, but only after the tax returns have been filed and approved, conventionally in the following fiscal year (Immervoll and Barber 2005). Thus, future tax deductions offer limited support to parents with limited budgets, and parents may see next year's tax reductions as a "windfall rather than a consequence of their childcare choices" (Immervoll and Barber 2005: 17). Moreover, the effectiveness of tax deductions depends upon availability of public childcare services: if they are costly and provisions limited, the effect of tax deductions on female employment is low (e.g. Rubery et al. 1998: 214). Furthermore, some countries provide no tax relief for childcare (e.g. Jaumotte 2003; OECD 2007: 70-81). This does not necessarily imply that there is no state subsidy or compensation for childcare. The states may, for example, support childcare through subsidising public services like in Denmark, or through wage supplements like in the United States (e.g. Immervoll and Barber 2005; OECD 2007).

On the other hand, *child-related cash benefits* (in the form of child-raising allowances and childcare-related cash benefits) operate independently from the tax systems, and hence provide immediate financial support to families with children (Leitner 2003: 358; Immervoll and Barber 2005: 18-19). First, *child-raising allowances* increase disposable income of carers as they financially compensate them for the services they provide (Korpi 2000: 145). They take the financial pressure off women to seek employment, and generate disincentives to female employment when they are contingent on family care.

[37] Refundable tax credits (i.e. any portion of the credit that exceeds gross tax liabilities is paid out in cash), available in the UK, for example, are formally equivalent to cash benefits, which operate through the tax system (Immervoll and Barber 2005: 17-18).

When amounts paid are high, they promote extended or even complete career interruptions (e.g. Jaumotte 2003: 9-11). Second, *childcare-related cash benefits* reduce the net costs of childcare to working parents. They provide either partial or full compensation for certain types of childcare expenditure and are generally available only to some groups of parents or/and limited to the types of care (Immervoll and Barber 2005: 17-19; Plantenga and Remery 2005: ch. 5). For parents considering the costs of childcare, measures that direct financial support towards the users of childcare services can be equivalent to policies that affect the level and structure of fees charged by the service providers; if a mother receives an hourly supplement for each hour she works, the supplement would be regarded as an equivalent to the wage change of equal magnitude (Heckman 1974: 139-140; 159).

Empirical evidence about the effects of child-related cash benefits on maternal employment is inconclusive: (1) *Child benefits* increase disposable income of carers, and when they are high, they act as a disincentive for women to return to the labour force (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 109). Rubery et al. argue that they even lead to an "unemployment trap" (Rubery et al. 1998: 215). Combined with the nature of the income tax, the withdrawal of these benefits as earned income rises can produce high effective marginal tax rates. An individual would make too few financial gains from entering employment, or, if employed, from increasing hours of work. Women are particularly susceptible, because their lower average wages and childcare costs make them less able to escape it (Rubery et al. 1998). However, child-related cash benefits do not affect all groups of women equally. On the one hand, Jaumotte's (2003) study of 17 OECD countries between 1985 and 1999 found that the income effect of child benefits was negative only for women working in part-time jobs, and thus argues that childcare subsidies represent a preferable policy measure to increase female employment (Jaumotte 2003: 19). On the other hand, the effects of cash benefits vary with the family income: because cash benefits are largely a measure of income policy, their main aim is to promote equity between different families, and hence represent a more important policy measure for women from the lower income households (Immervoll and Barber 2005).
(2) *Childcare-related cash benefits* reduce the net costs of childcare to employed parents, but their employment effect is determined by the availability of public childcare services as well as the family income (Gustafsson 1995). Furthermore, childcare-related cash benefits generate an incentive for female employment only when there are fewer social benefits available in the form of government cash transfers (Jaumotte 2003). Overall, both cash benefits and childcare allowances only have limited explanatory power for a cross-national variation in maternal employment.

Childcare leave

The literature on the role of the welfare state argues that childcare leave positively affects female employment, particularly during or just after childbirth (e.g. Korpi 2000). By providing paid leave the welfare state secures mother's labour market position and grants her additional time off work to care for a child (e.g. Knijn and Kremer 1997). Empirical evidence from both the United States as well as other Western capitalist countries between the late 1960s through the early 1990s indicates that when women are granted paid childcare leave with job-protection they are more likely to return to the same employer than mothers who are not, and more often show patterns of continuous employment (for the US see e.g. Gruber 1994; Joesch 1997; Waldfogel 2002; 2003; for the early studies of leave effect in a comparative perspective see Ruhm and Teague 1997; Ruhm 1998).[38] Furthermore, women increasingly enter the labour force just before they give birth in order to qualify for leave benefits (e.g. Rubery et al. 1998: 223-234; Ruhm 1998). Leave effect is more ambiguous and less straightforward. Reviewing the rich scientific literature that statistically tests the relationship between leave and maternal employment I find that the overall effect of leave on female employment depends on the following six policy aspects: (i) length of leave, (ii) income support payments during leave, (iii) job protection, (iv) flexibility of leave provision, (v) parental entitlements, and (vi) daddy-quotas.

Length of leave time

Comprehensive but shorter maternity leave facilitates female employment (Winegarden and Bracy 1995; Pettit and Hook 2005). In contrast, longer leave has a negative effect on their employment (e.g. OECD 2001a; Eliason et al. 2008). Fagan and Hebson argue that when leave is 'too long' or 'too short' mothers are less likely to resume employment after childbirth (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 8-9; 85-92; also Esping-Andersen 2009: 87). The former translates into reduced job progression and lifetime earnings, while the latter reduces the return rates of leave-users, especially for women in less protected and secure jobs (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 8). Overall, the longer time women spend outside the labour force, the harder it is for them to compete in the labour force.

[38] Compared to the industrialised European countries which grant paid maternity leave, and generally provide job-protected parental leave of various length and compensation, in the United States employment-protected but unpaid family and medical leave was only introduced in 1993 (US Department of Labor 2009; Gilbert 2008: 125). The right to use twelve weeks of job-protected family leave was limited to companies with fifty employees or more. Paid leave is not a statutory entitlement, i.e. it is not required by any federal law, and hence access to paid family leave depends on the employment contract, sector of employment (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2007; also Han and Waldfogel 2003; Hofferth and Curtin 2003).

But when is leave too short / too long? In the reviewed literature, I find three suggestions. First, Pettit and Hook (2005) conducted regression analysis, drawing data from 19 industrialized countries, including four post-socialist countries (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Russia) during the mid-1990s. They find a downturn effect of leave on women's employment at about *two years*, with leave longer than that having the most adverse employment effects on women (also suggested by Leitner 2003: 370). Second, Jaumotte's (2003) study of 17 OECD countries between 1985 and 1999 finds that leave negatively impacts upon female employment when it is *longer than 20 weeks* (p. 17), while the OECD (2007) estimates that, from a narrow labour market perspective, the optimal period of leave time is between *four* and *six months* (OECD 2007: 118). The OECD finds that leave shorter than six months leads to women's complete withdrawal from the labour market, especially when mothers are unable to cope with the resuming employment. Such leave has an especially negatively impact upon the employment of women who are employed in less protected and less secure jobs with lower social protection (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 90). Third, Bruning and Plantenga (1999: 207) explored nine EU countries and found that paid leave of *one year* generates incentives for women's continuous employment (also Gornick and Meyers 2003: 122; Wall et al. 2009: 36). In sum, any leave shorter than 6 months and/or longer than a year negatively impacts upon women's employment, and generates incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time.

Income support payments during leave

Leave paid at a low rate generates a disincentive to female employment (e.g. Plantenga and Remery 2005: 48). Because of the persistent wage gaps women on average contribute less to family budgets (in a strictly monetary sense). Therefore, when payment benefits attached to leave are low, the magnitude of the household income shock is lower when it is used by women (ibid.). Because "insufficient parental benefit is a structural incentive for female child care at home" (Leitner 2003: 372), lower income support payments during leave disadvantage carers; hence, such provisions reinforce the conventional gender division of labour (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 8, 89). When benefit payments are higher and paid over a longer period of time, the same may ensue: because the state pays for home care, it generates incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time (e.g. Pfau-Effinger 2008a). Gornick and Meyers' (2003) study of ten European countries, Canada and the United States in the 1990s finds that an optimum leave policy is that of the Nordic countries, where female employment rates are the highest: their states grant an income replacement in a range from 80 to 100 per cent of previous (wage) earnings (p. 122). Wall et

al. (2009: 36), however, set this minimum at 70 per cent of previous wage, when they reviewed leave policies in forty European countries. Moreover, leave benefit payments affect different types of employment differently: when financial compensation is generous, the probability of women being in full-time employment increases, and the probability of part-time employment decreases (Kangas and Rostgaard 2007; Stadellman-Steffen 2008). Kangas and Rostgaard (2007: 248) argue that income support payments during leave act similarly as the 'reservation wage', i.e. the wage at which women are willing to work: women choose full-time over part-time job because the part-time does not pay when leave benefits are generous.

Job security for leave users

Job-protected leave guarantees that women have a job to return to after using childcare leave, and hence smoothens women's re-entry to the labour markets after childbirth (Morgan and Zippel 2003: 68-9). Furthermore, women who are entitled to job-protected leave, resume their employment sooner than other women (Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002). Gornick and Meyers argue that job security is particularly critical for ensuring continuous employment of mothers with stronger labour market positions (i.e. more highly educated women), who are more likely to return to their jobs after childbirth (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 144).

Statutory entitlements to leave

Women generally use statutory leave entitlements to the full (e.g. Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002; Morgan and Zippel 2003: 66). But Pylkkänen and Smith's (2003) study shows that women share part of total leave time with men, and hence resume their employment earlier after childbirth when the entitlement to paid leave is granted as an individual right, i.e. when each parent is eligible to claim the right with the same financial entitlement. In contrast, individual leave with transferable benefit payments, i.e. when only one parent is entitled to the payment at one time has the opposite effect: it does not facilitate parents to share it, and hence reinforces the conventional gender division of labour (Bruning and Plantenga 1999: 196; Fagan and Hebson 2005: 95). Furthermore, policy on leave generates disincentives for women's employment when the entitlement to leave and the benefits are organised entirely on a family-basis, i.e. when both parents are entitled to use it, but parents have to make a joint decision about *who* will use it (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 95). Under such scheme the father's use of leave largely depends upon the benefit level: lower income support payments represent a strong disincentive to fathers' using leave (e.g. Del Boca et al. 2008; Fagan and Hebson 2005: 98). Overall, an individual right to leave strengthens the gender-neutral

character of leave (Leitner 2003: 368), and higher income support payments during leave increase the chances that parents will share the leave time (Fagan and Hebson 2005).

Paternity leave provisions

In addition to providing parental leave with higher income support payments, women's disproportionate use of leave can be moderated by a statutory entitlement to an individual non-transferable *paternity leave*, which is paid at a high level of earnings replacement and provides enough flexibility in the take-up (Plantenga and Remery 2005: 52). While parental leave is an important time policy to challenge the conventional gender division of labour, men's incentives to participate in care increase when fathers' rights are not transferable (see e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 10, 93; Gornick and Meyers 2003: 101). Well-paid daddy-only days enforce shared care for the young child, and hence positively affect female employment (Pylkkänen and Smith 2003; Saxonberg 2009: 672).

Pylkkänen and Smith's (2003) study of the Danish and Swedish leave scheme finds a significant 'substitution effect' in Sweden, where fathers are granted individual well-paid leave of 16 weeks (with unchanged entitlement leave time for the mother): because the fathers take over the care for their young children, mothers on average resume their employment four weeks earlier. Each additional week of 'daddy days' increases job retention of women for about 4 per cent, and has a stronger effect on the employment of more highly educated couples. In contrast, no such effect was found in Denmark, where fathers were entitled to shorter leave with lower financial compensation. Overall, paternity leave entitlements influence women's decisions whether or not to stay at home with their children (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 98). It encourages the employers to revise hiring or dismissal practices and stop treating women as secondary workers (e.g. Saxonberg 2009: 672; Motiejūnaitė 2008: 18).

Flexibility in leave provision

When parents can use parental leave in a flexible way – either in a form of reduced working hours, weekly or daily part-time – leave positively affects maternal employment, even if it is long: mothers with lower income do not have to stop working when costs of childcare are high and access to public care limited, while more affluent mothers in higher occupations can better reconcile their employment and care responsibilities (Plantenga and Remery 2005: 52; Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002). For example, Swedish mothers, who can use parental leave in sections any time before child turns eight years, return to the labour force earlier and

in greatest numbers (Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002). But when parents lose a fraction of total leave time by using it in parts, they largely use it on a full-time basis (in one block or continuous period), especially when the use is narrowly limited by child's age (Bruning and Plantenga 1999: 198). Such leave provision has a particularly detrimental effect on mothers' employment, especially when leave is longer (Leitner 2003).

Public childcare service provision

Scholarship on the gendered welfare state argues that the welfare state facilitates mothers' employment by socialising care for children, i.e. by providing public childcare services. Empirical evidence largely confirms this thesis and finds that the more extensive the service the higher the mothers' employment rates. Reviewing the literature that statistically tests the relationship between childcare services and maternal employment, I find that the overall effect of policy on childcare service provision on maternal employment largely depends on the following three policy aspects: (i) affordability of services, (ii) availability of services, and (iii) the quality of service provision.

Affordability and availability of public childcare services

The neoclassical economic theory, inspired by the pioneering work of Heckman (1974) argues that childcare costs affect individual decision-making on various levels, and influence the demand for public care, as well as shape women's labour supply (for overview see Heckman 1974; Connelly 1990; Esping-Andersen 2009: 87). Childcare costs operate in the same way as the reduction in female wages: the higher they are, the lower the probability of women participating in the labour force, at least on a full-time basis (e.g. Anderson and Levine 1999; Blau and Robins 1991, 1998; Ribar 1992). In contrast, affordable child care service provision decreases women's reservation wage, and positively affects mothers' employment.

Immervoll and Barber (2005) examine data from the OECD member states and find that in 2002 the net childcare costs were substantial: on average, out-of-pocket expenses for two pre-school children in full-time care added up to 20 per cent and more of total (two-earner) net family budget. Generally, the costs are higher when service provision is market-driven and not regulated by the state (e.g. Morgan 2005: 251-2). When childcare costs are as high as in the 'liberal welfare state regime', like in Ireland, the USA or Switzerland (where on average they represented more than one third of total family income in 2002), pay-off from employment is lower when the household has to purchase childcare (Immervoll 2006: slide

12). When income gain is low, participation in the labour force does not pay for many women (OECD 2007: 150-155; Gornick et al. 2003: 194, 206-218).

An underlying assumption of these studies is the existence of the functioning commercial markets, where the supply of care services is a function of the demand. However, in much of western Europe childcare provision has been largely directed and regulated by the state (Morgan 2005: 244, 252), while the commercial service markets have been more modest in scope (e.g. Kreyenfeld and Hank 2000: 318-19; Wrohlich 2006: 2). Studies comparing different countries with different levels of state intervention in childcare provision show that when childcare provision is directed and regulated by the state, hereafter referred to as *formal childcare*, day care services are generally more affordable (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 206), and accessible (Eurydice 2009). Adequate or widespread formal childcare service provision cuts down the price in the commercial service markets (Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002). Women's reservation wage decreases, and women's employment increases (Stadelmann-Steffen 2008; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007). Pettit and Hook's (2005) study of individual-level data from the 19 OECD countries finds that each percentage point increase in public childcare provision increases the employment rates for women with children under the age of 2 years for 1.5 percent. The effect is similar for the employment rates for women with children aged between 4 and 6 years, whereas the same increase in service provision nearly doubles the employment rates for women with children under the age of 3 years.

Accessibility of public childcare services

Across Western capitalist countries the demand for day care services often exceeds the supply, and unless access to a public childcare centre is universal, i.e. a place is provided to every child without delay, a child can be refused a place based on the access criteria (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 197-206). Access restrictions determine availability of day care services, and can generate care needs. When this happens, parents resort to the (un/regulated) service markets; yet as with all consumer goods supplied by the markets, the income determines both access and the quality of service provision (Morgan 2005: 244, 252). Hence, restricted access to public day care centres negatively affects mothers' employment, especially of the low-income, low-skilled and single mothers (e.g. Kreyenfeld and Hank 2000: 318-19). Del Boca et al.'s (2008) study of 1999-2000 data from seven European countries finds that with any 10 per cent increase in public childcare provision employment of less educated women grows by 15 percentage points, while it contributes to an 8-percentage point increase in employment of women with higher levels of education.

Gornick and Meyers (2003: 206) argue that formal day care services are more affordable and access fair(er) when service provision is funded by national and municipal taxes, and the state sets a ceiling on parental fees: means-tested parental fees based on a sliding-fee scale, and services free of charge, or charged at the reduced rate for lower income families generate incentives for maternal employment (also Fagan and Hebson 2005: 108). Furthermore, national guidance on eligibility and other criteria of service provision ensure fairer access to public service for all parents, and reduce any intra-country disparity in service provision (e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2003: 195, 218-26). In contrast, when local governments are autonomous in service provision, service provision varies tremendously between geographical areas of the state (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 108-9; Plantenga and Remery 2005: 35). Any intra-country disparity in service provision negatively affects women's prospects to return to the labour force, or to actively seek a job (Kreyenfeld and Hank 2000 and Wrohlich 2006 used German data; Pylkkänen and Smith 2003 the Danish and the Swedish).

Flexibility and quality of public childcare service provision

Mothers' participation in the labour force is also influenced by the opening hours of day care centres (e.g. Bradshaw et al. 2006; Gornick and Meyers 2003: 227; OECD 2007; Plantenga and Remery 2005: 38-42). When day care centres are available for limited hours, they only address childcare needs of parents in part-time employment, but generate care needs of parents in full-time jobs (Del Boca et al. 2008: 5; Kreyenfeld and Hank 2000: 318-9). Furthermore, when childcare services are not available throughout the calendar year, the services are a patchwork rather than a guaranteed system (Plantenga and Remery 2005; Sementini et al. 2003). They generate care needs, and impede mothers' employment (Kreyenfeld and Hank 2000).

Maternal employment is also shaped by the *quality of service provision* (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 110). Higher quality of day care ensures that parents are comfortable with using public childcare while they are away, which facilitates maternal employment (also Gornick and Meyers 2003: 195; 218-26). Generally, high-quality service improves with nationally set standards and objectives of service provision (e.g. on curriculum, workforce standards, number of children cared by staff), while public oversight and national co-ordination of service provision, i.e. a capacity planning also reduces intra-country disparities in service provision (Plantenga and Remery 2005: 35).[39] In contrast, when service provision is

[39] Numerous aspects determine the quality of service provision: standards of safety and hygiene, staff-to-child ratio, the size of the groups, parental involvement, compliance with the educational policies,

unregulated, its quality is determined by parents' economic resources (Morgan 2005: 252). These policy aspects are rarely included as policy measures in empirical studies of female employment, because they are not easily quantifiable (e.g. Bradshaw et al. 2006). Generally, staff-to-child ratio is used to measure service quality, and the underlying assumption is that the higher the ratio the lower the quality (OECD 2001a; 2007; Kamerman 2000; Gornick and Meyers 2003: 195; 218-26). But as it is largely used as a component in a policy index (e.g. Kangas and Rostgaard 2007; Gornick and Meyers 2003), its individual effect on maternal employment is not known.

3.3 Summary and discussion

The literature on the role of the welfare state argues that social policies determine women's, and especially mothers' employment. The first generation of scholarship on the gendered welfare state fleshes out the ideology of separate spheres of private and public, through which the welfare state reinforces the "culture of [gendered] social obligation" for care (Daly 2002: 262). The second generation provides a theoretically sound conceptual framework and argues that normative assumptions about the gender division of labour underpin social policies, through which the welfare states reinforce, or challenge the conventional gender division of labour. The degree of state familialism varies between the welfare states from strong to weak, or from familialistic to de-familialistic. Such distinction reflects two conceptual frameworks of comparative welfare state research, each with its own organising principles for clustering the welfare states into the welfare regimes: (i) in the *male breadwinner* concept the empirical touchstone is the husband as the principal beneficiary of welfare programmes, and in the (ii) *varieties of familialism* literature the social organisation of care is in the centre. The male breadwinner does not account for various care arrangements, and is insufficiently differentiated to be applied to a wider set of countries (e.g. the Mediterranean). In contrast, the literature on the varieties of familialism provides fruitful lines for further conceptual developments and theory testing. It has largely developed around public policies on care, and the main organizing principle for comparative welfare state research is the degree to which welfare states de-familialize care. It defines state familialism as the extent to which welfare states ease the burden of familial care by providing public care options, or strengthen families in their caring function, and thus offers perspectives for comparative research of female employment, in order to explore to what extent the states create conditions for women to engage in paid employment.

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qualification and remuneration of staff, but also service hours both in terms of weekly opening hours, and whether or not day care is available throughout the year (e.g. Kamerman 2000; Plantenga and Remery 2005).

Scholarship on the welfare state regimes argues that state support for mothers' employment reflects in four public policies: tax systems, care-related cash benefits, care leave and care services. Applying them as empirical touchstones, a new wave of more rigorous empirical research has statistically tested their explanatory power for the shape of female employment, and provides important insights about their effects on maternal employment. On the one hand, the effects of the tax systems and care-related cash benefits on maternal employment are inconclusive, with no clear pattern of association across Western capitalist countries. On the other hand, empirical studies repeatedly confirm the thesis about the positive relationship between childcare leave and childcare services, and find that the two explain the shape of mothers' employment.

Theory testing of the relationship between childcare policies and maternal employment is in nascent stage, as first such studies were published only in 2001 (by Stier et al. and Van der Lippe). This reflects in limited comparative knowledge about the relationship between maternal employment and childcare policies. Although statistical testing has grown over time, research has been methodologically flawed. First, comparable data on childcare policies are scant. Hence, earlier studies largely employ few policy-related variables, generally use indicators on public spending on childcare, length of leave and/or participation of children in public childcare, while neglect more specific policy characteristics (e.g. Pettit and Hook 2005; Stryker et al. 2003, 2008; Uunk et al. 2005). Many questions have been raised about how accurately these measures reflect policies (e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2003; Fagan and Hebson 2005; Plantenga and Remery 2005). Scholars argue that measures such as public spending and participation in public day care are only approximations of policies, and provide a very limited understanding of policies. Because these indicators interact with numerous mediating variables, such as national legislation, structure of social security systems and availability of day care places, they misrepresent policy characters, and underestimate/overestimate policy effect on maternal employment (Gilbert 2008: 129, 145). Second, knowledge about any correlation among different policy aspects is scant (e.g. among the leave time and income support payment during that time, or leave and service provision), and earlier studies have not accounted for any correlation between different policy components within childcare policies, nor their potential contradictions. Thus, we do not know which policy components are the most critical for maternal employment, and there is no universally agreed-upon way to weight various policy aspects. Third, earlier studies largely use the total female employment rates, generally for all women over 15 or 25, instead of maternal employment rates. Fourth, any differential implications of policies on female population have not been subject of much research. We do not know how individual

characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religiosity, disability, age of children, and age of women, to mention the most obvious – mediate this relationship.

Notwithstanding these methodological caveats, available empirical evidence is consistent and suggests that childcare leave and childcare services account for the shape of maternal employment – they both explain and predict variations in women's employment: *Leave* influences women's return strategies to the labour force after childbirth, as well as attracts women of childbearing age to enter paid labour force to qualify for leave benefits (e.g. Ruhm 1998). Hence, it generates incentives for women's continuous employment. I conclude that policy on leave positively affects maternal employment when the states grant the right to paid leave of moderate duration (from 6 months to a year) with safeguarded job while carers are on leave. Leave is gender-neutral and the policy integrates men into home care and women into paid labour force when financial compensation is high (paid at minimum 70 per cent of previous earnings), the right to leave is an individual statutory entitlement of both parents with some time targeted specifically at fathers on a non-transferable basis, and leave can be used in sections over a longer period of time. Such policy speeds up mothers' return to the labour force after childbirth, and has less detrimental effects on women's job progression and lifetime earnings. In contrast, leave of less than 6 months and leave of over a year, and especially leave of over two years generate incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time. Mothers, who use longer leave face more difficulties returning to the labour force after childbirth, are more likely to experience a job re-assignment upon their return, and face greater wage penalties in the longer run. This notwithstanding, leave is detrimental to mothers' employment when it is unpaid or paid at low rate, or is paid at high rate for more than a year with no flexibility in use of leave. When no daddy-only days are provided, and/or leave is granted only to mothers, leave policy perpetuates the conventional gender division of labour.

Formal childcare service provisions support mothers in paid employment, and indicate to what extent the state de-familializes care. The overall effect of childcare services on mothers' employment largely depends on three aspects: availability, affordability, and quality of service provision. On the household level, public childcare services affect women's decisions whether or not to participate in the labour force, and influence the opportunity-cost effects of maternal employment: adequate, accessible and affordable services of high quality increase relative attractiveness of time spent in the labour force as opposed to the time spent in the home. Public childcare service can be market-driven (e.g. the USA, Ireland, Switzerland), or directed and regulated by the state (as in much of Western Europe). When service provision is regulated by the state, part of the financial

burden of childcare shifts from parents to the tax-payers in general (through taxes and contributions), which reduces the financial burdens of parents with care needs. Regulated service provision also enhances parents' confidence in public childcare (Gornick and Meyers 2003), and reduces their costs related to 'browsing the care market', shopping around in order to locate day care service of high quality (Pettit and Hook 2005). I conclude that when service provision is directed by the state, its availability, affordability and quality are determined by access criteria, financing principles, service operating hours. State guidance, national co-ordination and public oversight of service provision enhance fair access to public childcare service and prevent intra-country disparities in service provision.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has systematically reviewed scholarship on female employment in Western capitalist countries, with the main aim to identify factors explaining the shape of mothers' employment. It should be emphasized that the conclusions I draw herein rely on the findings from studies that made it to the public domain. To overcome the underlying risk related to any "publication bias" (e.g. Scargle 2000: 91), I critically appraised the explanatory potential of each factor by systematically reviewing a large body of studies across academic disciplines. I included studies that employed varying research methods and used both small and large data sets, as well as empirical studies with different results. Overall, a caveat on comparative studies is in order: findings based on aggregate data mask variations between individual countries and among groups of countries. Studies use data from various sources, different measures, different methods, and different country mixes, which yields a different set of results. All of these cautions are to say that the earlier findings can only be taken as suggestive. But what do they suggest?

I find that explanations of female employment across academic disciplines are complementary in many ways. At any point in time women's employment is limited by the opportunities in the labour markets, i.e. the quantity of jobs available to women. But whether or not women with pre-school children engage in paid employment is also a result of their personal circumstances and the household-level decision-making processes. Numerous factors enter into this process. On the one hand, women's educational attainment and the income needs of their households have high explanatory potential among the individual-related factors: the higher they are the higher the maternal employment rates. On average, more highly educated mothers have lower household income needs, but also have less traditional gender-role values and their opportunity costs of staying out of the labour markets

are higher. Thus, they resume employment faster after childbirth and return to the labour force in greatest numbers. The public service sectors and childcare policies have the highest explanatory potential among the structural factors of female employment. The public sector generally offers more supportive environment for women: the more extensive it is, the higher the female employment rates. However, this thesis cannot fully account for the employment gaps between mothers with pre-school children and other women. Explanations that emphasize the role of childcare policies have higher explanatory potential, and studies using multivariate models to explain female employment have produced the least unequivocal results that childcare leave and childcare service provision *explain* maternal employment, as well as have an overriding effect on female employment.

Childcare services and childcare leave shape mothers' employment in two ways. On the one hand, public childcare services compensate for the absence of parental child care, family care needs subside, choices to women widen, and their employment increases. On the other hand, paid leave generates incentives for women of childbearing age to enter the labour markets to qualify for parental leave benefits. When leave is gender-neutral and of moderate duration, it speeds up mothers' return to the labour force after childbirth, and generates incentives for their continuous employment. Other types of leave familialize care, and generate incentives for women's retreat from the labour force for a longer period after childbirth. The effects of childcare policies on maternal employment depend on the configuration of various policy aspects, and there is a forceful theoretical argument for expanding the potential explanatory policy variables to broader policy schemes, in order to assess their emancipatory potential. I conclude that the following policy aspects ostensibly contribute to the effect of childcare policies on maternal employment: total leave time and income support payments during leave, job protection and flexibility of leave provision, parental entitlements to leave and daddy-quotas, availability of childcare service, its affordability and quality.

Leitner's (2003) theoretical model of familialism provides a number of useful approaches to thinking about how childcare policies shape maternal employment in a cross-country perspective. Analogous to the concept of decommodification familialism focuses on welfare state's impact on people's relations to families and the labour market. Leitner's conceptualization distinguishes between single policies, rather than between welfare states as such. It highlights the central welfare state dimensions related to care (as opposed to a wider set of welfare state interventions), focuses on carers, rather than those in need of care, and thus provides a set of organising principles for gender-sensitive policy analysis of the emancipatory potential of childcare policies.

At first glance, it might seem like the concept of the varieties of familialism has little to offer to explain high maternal employment in countries such as the USA or Portugal, where the state leaves parents nearly without support (e.g. Eliason et al. 2008). Compared to other industrial countries of Europe, these two states are considered laggards in dispensing childcare leave, day care, as well as other subsidies to aid family/paid job integration (for the US see e.g. Gilbert 2008: 125; Morgan 2005; Gornick and Meyers 2003; and for Portugal see e.g. Bimbi 1997; Trifiletti 1995). Indeed, Leitner's conceptualisation focuses on formal, state-regulated childcare policies, while it is informal and commercial service provision that largely explain mothers' employment in these two countries (e.g. Morgan 2005: 244). Focusing on qualitative differences between national policies, it can more adequately predict and explain variations in maternal employment in a cross-country perspective. However, the underlying postulates of this concept are (i) that any public childcare provision other than the formal is a patchwork rather than a guaranteed care system. Limited episodes of public day care such as a few hours with a babysitter or at a play group are not sufficient to facilitate full-time participation in the labour force (also Gilbert 2008: 126). And (ii) as with all consumer goods supplied in the commercial markets, income determines both access and the quality of commercial services (Leitner 2003; also Morgan 2005: 244, 252 and Esping-Andersen 2009: 87). Previously published empirical studies (discussed above) support these underlying theses, and demonstrate that formal childcare provisions have stronger effect on female employment rates, especially for low-income, low-skilled and single mothers. Furthermore, Leitner's (2003) analytical differentiation can be applied to a wider range of countries than, for example, Esping-Andersen's or Lewis' approach: Leitner's four welfare regimes framework considers more circumstances beheld to mothers' (employment) decisions, focuses specifically on carers, and elaborates on the emancipatory potential of childcare policies. Thus, it provides a more dynamic and flexible conceptualization of varieties of state familialism across countries and over time than other typologies; while it is difficult to fit data on women's employment patterns into Esping-Andersen's typology (also see Lewis 2010: 72), it is difficult to fit post-socialist countries into Lewis'. Overall, Leitner's analytical differentiation of state familialism facilitates a "fluctuating regime membership" (Bambra 2007: 336), offers both the theory and analytical tools to assess the emancipatory potential of childcare policies.

Chapter 4

Understanding factors that influence female employment in post-socialist countries: a review

Introduction

The literature on the transition from state socialism to capitalism is rich, and earlier empirical observations extensively document and recount the post-socialist realities during the 1990s. However, few studies used statistical analysis to explain female employment, and scholarship about the post-socialist countries is largely based on empirical evidence from a small group of countries. Thus, this chapter shifts emphasis from theory of female employment discussed in chapter 3 to available empirical evidence from the post-socialist countries. It maintains the list of potential explanatory factors, and organises the current state of knowledge about post-socialist countries around economic factors, values and attitudes, and social policies. At the same time, it summarizes information about the developments in the 1990s, and explores the explanatory potential of the theories produced on the basis of empirical evidence from Western capitalist countries.

1. Economic factors

The economic literature on female employment in Western capitalist countries argues that female employment largely depends on the level of economic development and general labour market conditions. On the one hand, a shift from industry and agriculture to services alongside privatisation has created more jobs for women, whereby the size of service economy determines the demand for female labour. On the other hand, individual and domestic characteristics affect female labour supply. But the main question is, whether these factors provide plausible explanation for a cross-country variation in maternal employment among the eight post-socialist countries.

The literature on economic development and general labour market conditions in the post-socialist countries is emerging (e.g. King 2001; Bruszt 2002; King 2002; Feldmann 2006; Mahutga and Bandelj 2008). These studies largely recount the processes and consequences of economic transformation from state socialism to capitalism, the market-making process, and the emerging varieties in industrial relations. They document significant declines in economic output after 1989 and show that in the first half of the 1990s, governments suffered significant declines in revenues, with limited options to raise taxes. Most economies slowly began to rebound by the mid-1990s, when the recovery as well as growth of economic productivity increased. And what were the consequences for female employment? During the 1990s, traditional industry and the agricultural sector declined in the eight countries, except in Poland, where female employment rates in agriculture were still comparatively high (Pollert 2005). Significant unemployment became a relatively new

phenomenon after decades of full employment, with lower unemployment rates in the Czech Republic and Slovenia (Unicef 1999). But since the male employment rates decreased too, the gender gaps in employment amounted only to a few percentage points, and were still comparable to Sweden, the leader among market economies in this area (e.g. Unicef 1999; Motiejūnaitė 2008 for the Baltic States). In the 1990s, Poland and Hungary posted somewhat wider gender gaps in employment, which nonetheless still compared favourably to those in Western countries like the USA or France (Javornik 2000; Motiejūnaitė 2008: 84).

Modernizing labour markets, especially the service sectors, offered many new opportunities to women in the early post-socialist period (e.g. Pollert 2005; UNDP 1999a; Unicef 1999). Women's positions and work experience in the service sector, which was formerly the least respected and thus female-dominated sector of socialist economies, became important "revalued resources" (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 84). Furthermore, more women than men had higher education and experience in administrative positions, while men dominated manual jobs in heavy industry, which were rapidly losing their prestige (Unicef 1999; Javornik 2000). However, the post-socialist service sectors are highly gender-segregated: across these eight countries, the male employment rates have been higher in the private service sector (e.g. banking, retail and financial mediation), while the public service sectors have become the central employer for the women (women prevailing in education, health and social work).[40]

Unlike women in Western capitalist countries, women in the eight post-socialist countries continue to work on a full-time basis, regardless of their marital or parental status (Van del Lippe 2001a; Tang and Cousins 2004: 532). Part-time employment is rare, and rarely used as a strategy to balance paid employment and caring responsibilities (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 25). Studies using multivariate models to explain the high rates of female full-time employment find that the income needs of households and male unemployment have high explanatory potential for such trends (e.g. Van der Lippe 2001a; Tang and Cousins 2004; Scharle 2007). On the one hand, they find lower overall GDP per capita in these countries than in the rest of Europe, and argue that women have to work longer hours to earn a sufficient income, regardless of their marital or parental status. On the other hand, earlier studies find positive associations between female employment and male unemployment, but the effect of male unemployment is not statistically strong (Pettit and Hook 2005; Scharle 2007). Pooling data from the 1990s, Scharle (2007) argues that the added worker effect

[40] The Unicef (1999) analysis finds some evidence of gender bias in recruitment among private employers, possibly due to the perception that female employment involves higher non-wage costs because of their family responsibilities.

cannot explain female employment in the eight countries, because initial decline in employment of both men and women was caused by severe labour market disruptions and aggregate data from the 1990s masks large variations between sectors of employment, i.e. between female and male sectors of employment.

1.1 Discussion

Few studies have attempted to *explain* female employment in the post-socialist countries with economic factors. Based on a small body of literature I conclude that the economic factors with some explanatory potential are the public service sectors and the income needs of households. In contrast, neither part-time jobs nor economic cycles explain female employment in the eight countries. In sum, earlier findings complement the economic theses from Western capitalist countries that the public service sectors create conditions and the household income needs generate incentives for women's employment. However, they have not attempted to explain the relationship between education and female employment, one of the strongest causal factors of female employment in the West.

Reviewing both strands of the literature, I find that economic theses cannot fully account for the shape of maternal employment across the eight countries. First, trends in sectoral restructuring have been similar in both direction and extent among the eight countries: most of the employed women in these countries found jobs in the public sectors after the collapse of socialist planned economy, while the agricultural production is decreasing. Second, GDP per capita, used as an indicator to measure the income needs of households on the aggregate level, has been similar among the selected countries, with slightly higher values in Slovenia and the Czech Republic (Eurostat online database). Countries have also shown similar levels of development, as measured with the Human Development Index, with Slovenia and the Czech Republic having higher values (e.g. HDR 2009; Javornik-Skrbinšek 2009: 36). And yet, Slovenia has one of the highest maternal employment rates and the Czech Republic the lowest among the eight countries. Therefore, I conclude that the shape of maternal employment in the eight countries cannot be explained purely in economic terms.

2. Social attitudes and values

As noted in chapter 2, the eight countries entered a post-socialist era with different collective experiences, which may reflect in different gender-role values. Thus, the question is whether or not socioeconomic transformations in the 1990s gave rise to attitudinal traditionalism across the post-socialist group, as argued in the earlier literature (e.g. Einhorn 1993; Funk 1993; Gal and Kligman 2000). And, does empirical evidence about the relationship between value orientation and maternal employment challenge earlier empirical findings and shed new light on the theory produced in the West?

Gender-role values in the post-socialist countries have rarely been systematically analyzed. A few studies have included one post-socialist country in a cross-country comparison (e.g. Crompton and Harris 1999; Crompton and Lyonette 2005) or a few in a pooled analysis (e.g. Fortin 2005; Haas et al. 2006). Studies that included Hungary and the Czech Republic argue that the post-socialist countries have more traditional gender-role values (e.g. Crompton and Harris 1999; Motiejūnaitė and Kravchenko 2008). A couple of more recent studies reverse the previously common research designs and compare several post-socialist countries (e.g. Motiejūnaitė and Höhne 2008; Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006; Scharle 2007; Schnepf 2006). They analyze gender-role values using data from *International Social Survey Programme* (ISSP) 1988-2002 and *European Value Survey* 1999/2000, and explore whether or not the respondents support female employment in different stages of family lifecycles.

In the early post-socialist period, the proportion of people with more traditional gender-role values (supporting the conventional gender division of labour) was slightly higher in countries which demonstrated stronger state familialism during the socialist period, like Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, while it was the lowest in Slovenia (Motiejūnaitė and Höhne 2008; Schnepf 2006; Eurobarometer 2006).[41] In the 'more traditional' group people largely supported the idea of the housewife role, without any differences between men and women (e.g. Haas et al. 2006: 758-9; Motiejūnaitė 2008). That notwithstanding, about 90 per cent of the respondents in most of these eight countries argued that both men and women should contribute to the household income. But the respondents in the post-socialist countries with stronger state familialism during the socialist period were significantly less supportive of public day care for the youngest than the Slovenian (Eurobarometer 2006). Saxonberg and Sirovátka (2006) argue that the legacy of the socialist crèches looms, as most people in these countries still believe that the state does not provide a

[41] The statement usually reads: "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and the family".

high quality day care for the youngest children. General attitudinal traditionalism towards maternal employment, public child care, as well as gender division of labour declined in all eight countries between the 2002 and 2006 measurements, which Saxonberg and Sirovátka link to the increasing levels of average educational attainment among these countries (Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006: 198; also Schnepf 2006).

Empirical studies that use multivariate analyses find that attitudinal traditionalism *does not* explain female employment in post-socialist countries (e.g. Antecol 2003; Haas et al. 2006; Motiejūnaitė and Höhne 2008; Scharle 2007; Schnepf 2006). They find that numerous mediating variables interact with the relationship between value orientation and female employment. First, Haas et al. (2006) find that household income needs explain attitude-behaviour ambivalence: women participate in the labour force regardless of their attitudes because of higher income needs of households. Second, normative attitudes of male partners have a mediating effect on women's employment (Antecol 2003). In 1994, men were more supportive of maternal employment in Slovenia and the Czech Republic, relative to Hungary and Poland, where male gender-role values were more traditional and the female employment rates lower (also Scharle 2007: 166). Third, age and education represent another set of mediating variables: younger and more educated men and women are more supportive of maternal employment and public day care for the youngest children (Schnepf 2006; Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006: 198).

2.1 Discussion

The relationship between gender-role values and female employment proved to be doubtful, and supports the evidence from Western capitalist countries, that it is not straightforward, and often, there is a discrepancy between attitudes and practices. The re-traditionalization thesis (chapter 1) was inaccurate in predicting the comeback of male-breadwinner family model, since traditional values considerably decreased during the post-socialist period, and the acceptance of full-time employment remains high and a norm for both men and women. The main distinction concerned the ascribed value of a housewife role, which could be explained by reciprocal causality and a compromise between choice and necessity. But empirical evidence indicates that a socialist legacy might have shaped attitudes towards public care for the youngest children (i.e. under the age of 2 or 3 years). On average, people in countries with stronger state familialism during state socialism more often argue against public childcare for the youngest. Chapter 2 noted that during the socialist period, state policies towards public care for the youngest children were rather tentative in the group of countries with strong state familialism, where people's attitudes towards public care are the

most negative. As female employment grew and the number of nursery services decreased rapidly in the post-socialist period, both these findings complement the conclusions of Crompton and Harris (1999: 144-147) that, challenged by choices and constraints, people re-negotiate their attitudes as well as practices/behaviour around their needs. As noted in chapter 3, the discrepancy between attitudes and practices is not some special feature of post-socialist countries, which indicates that the attitudes thesis cannot account for the shape of maternal employment in the cross-country perspective.

3. The welfare state in the 1990s

The literature on the role of the welfare state argues that social policies are the determining factor of maternal employment, and I filtered the explanatory variables to four policies which most explicitly reflect state support for mothers in employment: tax system, childcare benefits, childcare leave, and childcare services. Two main questions are: Does empirical evidence from the eight post-socialist countries support this theory? And, have socioeconomic transformations in the 1990s led to the re-familializing childcare policies?

Tax system - the invisible welfare state

Income tax arrangements remain largely intact: all eight countries continue to levy taxes on the income of individuals (e.g. Unicef 1999: 52; Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007: 366). Only Poland, the Czech Republic and Estonia permit married couples to pool their incomes and tax-free allowances, but the arrangement is optional (ibid.). That notwithstanding, the theory about its effect on maternal employment in the post-socialist countries has not been tested.

Childcare-related tax allowances and cash benefits

At the onset of transition from state socialism to capitalism, family support programmes were widely available across the region and tended to be generous and comprehensive. The eight countries introduced or even enhanced universal cash benefits to families with children, in order to cushion the impact of the removal of the non-cash support, such as price subsidies, that came with market reforms (e.g. Evans 1999; Fajth 1999; Unicef 1999). However, high inflation and the erosion of the employment-related services reduced their mitigating effect; as unemployment benefits were (still) not installed, cash benefits were effective at reaching low-income families (Unicef 1999: 50). But as the transition progressed, the eight countries spent relatively less on these benefits (Unicef 1999).

Scharle (2007) analyzed the effects of child-related cash benefits on female employment. Drawing her sample from eight post-socialist countries (alongside other 13 EU member states) between 1995 and 2004, she found that cash benefits negatively impacted upon women's employment. In contrast, public spending on childcare service has a positive effect on their employment. She found that a rise in cash transfers of 0.1 per cent of GDP implied a 0.8 percentage point drop in overall female employment in the eight countries. In contrast, a similar rise in spending on day care services increased it by 0.8 per cent (Scharle 2007).

Childcare leave and income support payments during leave

During the 1990s, childcare leave schemes in the eight countries went through various stages of transformation, until the eight countries established their systems in the late 1990s. In the early 1990s, both the length of leave time and income support payments were extended in countries from the former Eastern Bloc. Their governments buffered the impact of cutbacks in workplace nurseries largely by extending maternity leave (e.g. Unicef 1999: 54).[42] In 1993, Hungary introduced "maternity fees" for mothers with three or more children who stay at home with their children until the youngest turns 8 years (Unicef 1999: 55; Glass and Fodor 2007). The Czech Republic extended childcare leave from 3 to 4 years in 1995, while Slovakia, with the similar level of payments, kept its leave time at three years (Unicef 1999: 55; Kocourková 2002; Szelewa and Polakowski 2008: 124). On the other hand, Poland extended the leave time with wage compensation (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008), while the Baltic States kept a 112-day long maternity leave with full-wage compensation, and introduced maternity benefits on a social assistance basis as well (Aidukaite 2004; Unicef 1999: 54). As the transition progressed, policy provisions became more dynamic. Governments trimmed and then bolstered the amounts of income support payments during leave, while Poland cut back period of fully-paid leave (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008). That notwithstanding, the (longer) care leave was largely untouched, except in the Czech Republic, as noted above (Kocourková 2001, 2002). In contrast, the essential elements of the Slovenian leave policy did not change during the 1990s (Javornik 2001; Jogan 2006). More 'conservative' streams pushed once again for longer paid parental leave time, but their calls did not receive enough political support (Jogan 2000: 25).

[42] In the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Estonia childcare leave keeps its maternity designation throughout, although part of it has later become available to fathers (Wall et al. 2009).

Public childcare services

Among the eight countries, the development of the childcare service systems increasingly has been through municipal day care centres, staffed by public-sector employees, and the commercial childcare markets emerged (e.g. Unicef 1999). Slovenia shows practically no negative trend in service provision, and both nurseries and kindergartens continued to cater for all children whose parents sought public day care (Unicef 1995; Jogan 2006; Lokar and Devčič 2008; Eurydice 2009). In contrast, very austere measures to nursery service provision were introduced in countries from the former Eastern Bloc, while nurseries practically ceased to exist in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia and Poland (for the Baltic States see Aidukaite 2004; for the overview of the region see Javornik 2000; Kocourková 2001, 2002; Unicef 1999: 55).

The workplace childcare services provided by state enterprises during state socialism greatly diminished or disappeared; in the light of job losses the states largely extended parental leave, promoting the idea of stay-at-home mothers – among others to tackle high unemployment (Unicef 1999: 55; Glass and Fodor 2007). Public childcare services for children aged three years and over were less affected. In the first half of the 1990s, the number of places available in public day care centres fell, but mainly because of the overall (sharp) decrease in fertility rates, which reduced infant and young child populations (Unicef 1999: 55). Governments curbed rising fees, and local communities made successful efforts to save kindergartens from closing (ibid.). Between 1996 and 1997, kindergarten enrolments stabilized or improved in most of these countries, except in Poland, where formal childcare provision had traditionally been underdeveloped (Glass and Fodor 2007; Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007; Szelewa and Polakowski 2008). That notwithstanding, 'post-socialist' kindergarten enrolment rates reflect even sharper urban-rural divides than during the 1970s and 1980s (Unicef 1999: 55).

And policy effects on maternal employment? Earlier empirical studies are few. The main body of previous research is largely designed to document the development trends, and to generate and plausibly suggest, but not to verify or test theoretical hypotheses about the relationships between female employment and childcare policies. Further, it draws cases from few post-socialist countries. Glass and Fodor (2007) analyzed the total female employment rates and childcare policies in Hungary and Poland in 1990-1993 and 2000, while Saxonberg and Szelewa (2007) also included the Czech Republic, and explored the trends between 1988 and 2005. Both studies employed data on the total female employment rates for women aged over 15 years, and found moderate declines in their employment rates.

Glass and Fodor (2007) argue that the familialistic policy models with low public childcare provision for the youngest children – which they find in both countries – negatively impact upon women's employment. Saxonberg and Szelewa (2007) also find a sharp decline in fertility rates in their three selected countries: they report a drop in total fertility rates from above 2.0 down to about 1.3 between 1980 and 2003, and argue that in countries with long leave (or no leave like in Poland) and no public childcare options it is more likely that women adapt their fertility behaviour than to withdraw from the labour force – largely because of the high household income needs (Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007: 367).

Two studies conducted multivariate analyses to investigate maternal employment in Western capitalist countries and few post-socialist states. Pettit and Hook's (2005) study draws data from 19 OECD countries, including Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. Using data from the mid-1990s it finds that the longer the leave, the less likely are women to participate in the labour force, while public childcare services positively impact upon their employment. The study by Haas et al. (2006) draws their sample from Slovenia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (alongside other Western European countries), using data from 2001. This study found no effect of motherhood on female employment in Slovenia, whilst motherhood negatively impacted upon female employment in the other two post-socialist countries. To explain this result, authors explored national childcare policies and found that Slovenia (with high maternal employment rates) provided widespread public childcare services, while the other two countries provided long leave with no public childcare options for the youngest children. In sum, authors argue that public childcare provisions for the youngest children and the income needs of households explain maternal employment in these three countries.

Childcare policy models in the eight post-socialist countries

Seeking to evaluate and classify childcare policies in post-socialist countries, a new wave of comparative research was launched in 2000. The main body of this comparative literature comprises case studies, which thoroughly analyze childcare policies in few countries, largely those with strong state familialism, i.e. Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland (e.g. Kocourková 2001, 2002; Glass and Fodor 2007; Szelewa 2007). In contrast, studies on the Baltic States and Slovenia are few (e.g. Aidukaite 2004 and Motiejūnaite 2008 for the Baltics; and Černigoj Sadar 2005 and Lokar and Devčič 2008 for Slovenia). A series of compendia has also become available, but these synthesize policy information for single points in time (e.g. Eurydice 2009; Fagan and Hebson 2005; Plantenga and Remery 2005, 2009; Wall et al. 2009).

Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) study is one of the most comprehensive of its kind to date, and is the only study that analyzed childcare policies in all eight countries. Using fuzzy-set approach to produce the findings, it examined childcare leave and childcare services in the eight countries between 1989 and 2004, probing the applicability of Leitner's (2003) 'varieties of familialism'. Authors aimed to assess the emancipatory potential of childcare policies, and clustered countries into four policy models: an explicitly familialistic, implicitly familialistic, female mobilizing policy model, and comprehensive support model. In their study, 'explicit familialism' is used to characterize long childcare leave and low quality childcare services for children aged 3-6 years. 'Implicit familialism' provides a low paid, means-tested childcare leave with no public childcare options. In contrast, countries with the 'female mobilizing' policy model grant leave as a universal entitlement with low income support payment during leave, but the governments largely invest in formal high-quality childcare services (I find this model resembling Leitner's (2003) *de-familialism*). The states with the 'comprehensive support' policy model provide both cash allowances for home care as well as public childcare services (and hence this model resembles Leitner's (2003) *optional familialism*).

Authors find considerable policy dynamics in the period under review and argue that what seemed to be short-lived policy hiccups in the aftermath of transition to capitalism, turned out to be symptoms of larger differences, which accentuated by 2000. Between 1989 and 2000, Slovenia shifted from an implicitly familialistic model to an explicitly familialistic, while the Czech Republic and Slovakia shifted from a female mobilizing policy model to an explicitly familialistic in 1997. Polish childcare policy resembled an implicitly familialistic model throughout the period under review, but the three Baltic States showed less continuity in their policy provisions. Estonia often changed its leave during the first years of the 1990s, but has displayed characteristics of the 'female mobilizing' policy model since the second half of the 1990s. Similar holds for Latvia, which was dynamically changing its policies prior to 1999. Lithuania, on the other hand, installed comprehensive childcare policies by 1995. In contrast, Hungary provided childcare services of low quality but generous leave with high benefits throughout the studied period, except between 1995 and 1997 (known as the Bokrós period), when considerable cuts were made into its family policy. But as it increased quality of formal day care service, authors locate it into a comprehensive (i.e. de-familialistic) cluster from 2002 onwards. By 2000, their policy models stabilised and up to 2004, countries clustered into four policy models (table 4.1).

Table 4.1 The varieties of familialism in eight post-socialist countries, 2000-2004

Explicitly familialistic	**Implicitly familialistic**	**Female mobilizing[1]**	**Comprehensive support[2]**
Slovenia Slovakia The Czech R.	Poland	Estonia Latvia	Hungary Lithuania

Source: Szelewa and Polakowski 2008.

Between 2000 and 2004, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic provided long childcare leave and low quality childcare services for children aged 3-6 years. Poland provided low paid, means-tested childcare leave with practically no public childcare services. In contrast, Estonia and Latvia granted leave as a universal entitlement with low benefits, but the governments largely invested in formal high-quality childcare services. Lastly, Lithuania and Hungary cluster into a 'comprehensive support' policy model, providing both cash allowances for home care as well as public childcare services.

The underlying assumption of Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) study is that childcare policies affect maternal employment. Although their study does not explore maternal employment or test the hypothesis, authors argue that explicitly familialistic policy model generates incentives for home care, and hence would negatively impact upon maternal employment. Same may ensue for the implicitly familialistic policy model, because the state leaves parents nearly without support, and thus assumes family care. In contrast, the female mobilizing (i.e. de-familialistic) policy model generates incentives for women's employment, while a comprehensive model represents a concurrent (optional) approach to employment and family. Hence, public policies benefit both those who prefer paid employment and those who prefer to invest more time in domestic life. Although authors do not suggest the employment effect of this policy model, I assume that women, afforded more care options, would make different choices, depending on their own personal circumstances.

3.1 Discussion

The current state of knowledge about the relationship between the welfare state and maternal employment in the eight countries is limited. Available empirical evidence largely supports 'Western' scholarship on the role of the state in maternal employment: high child-related cash benefits, long leave and low childcare service provision negatively impact upon female employment, while public childcare service provision generates incentives for women's employment. In contrast, tax systems do not differ among the eight countries; the individual tax systems have remained the most prevalent type, although Poland, Estonia and the Czech

Republic introduced an optional joint income tax in the early post-socialist period. Hence, tax systems thesis does not account for the cross-country variation in maternal employment.

Earlier studies find considerable policy dynamics during the 1990s. In the first half of the 1990s, all countries except Slovenia introduced numerous small changes to the two childcare policies. But by the late 1990s the eight countries reinstated the policy models, and their contours largely resemble those before or at the onset of the transition. During the 1990s, the countries pursued three diverging trajectories. First, Hungary and the Czech Republic further extended subsidies for home care, followed by Lithuania, and to some extent Estonia. Second, Poland, but also Latvia and Slovakia focused more on income support for the low-income families. Nursery service provision fell significantly among all seven countries, but it practically ceased to exist in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia and Poland. Third, the essential elements of the Slovenian childcare policy remained generous by comparative standards: no change was introduced to its leave, and public childcare service provision for children of both age groups remained untouched. Hence, I was puzzled to see both Slovenia and Slovakia in the same country group with the explicitly familialistic policies in Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) study.

I find Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) study of childcare policies in the eight countries the most exacting and comprehensive of its kind to date. The study conducted more sophisticated analysis using a range of policy information, its results are clear, and statistics convey a voice of scientific authority. However, the measures they used to produce the findings are subject to the type of criticism I made in chapter 3: while length of leave and benefit payments, and conditions under which leave benefits are granted to parents are among the most critical components of policies on leave, the number of children aged 3-6 years in public day care, staff/child ratio in kindergartens misrepresent the character of national policies on childcare services. They indicate the delivery and use of services, which both are influenced by availability and flexibility of day care, parental care norms, national guidance on eligibility criteria and standards of service provision. Furthermore, their study does not take into account public childcare provision for the youngest children, i.e. the nursery service provision. Using indicators for familialism and de-familialism for children from different age groups could misrepresent the character of national policies, and cannot fully account for any discrepancy or contradiction between policies (Leitner 2003). Thus, their findings are open to interpretation. Do Lithuanian and Hungarian childcare policies resemble the characteristics of optional familialism (comprehensive model), or is it that cash allowances for home care and long leave only subsidize for the lack of public childcare options for the youngest children, and instead indicate explicit familialism? And, has the

Slovenian state indeed introduced familialistic policies, when earlier accounts indicate a de-familialistic policy character?

4. Conclusion

This chapter has systematically reviewed the literature on female employment and its causal factors in the post-socialist countries, and finds that empirical evidence largely complements the theses produced in Western capitalist countries. The factors with high explanatory potential are: childcare policies, education of women, the income needs of households, and the public service sector. However, not all four can fully account for the shape of maternal employment across the eight countries. Earlier studies show that women in the post-socialist countries have mainly entered the labour force through the public service sector. However, the size of this sector has been similar among the eight countries – and yet, the employment gaps vary significantly. Furthermore, the income needs of households and education (based on empirical evidence from the Western theory) each highlight different important observations. I assume that certain calculations are made and that economic considerations bear on women's decisions to participate in the paid labour force. But, do all women list all the costs and benefits of participation in the labour force, and calculate the opportunity costs in comparison to alternative choices, as suggested by the micro-economic theory? As already noted in the literature on the West (chapter 3), economic thesis cannot fully account for the shape of employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without, and attitudes cannot either.

Childcare obligations represent a critical distinction between women with pre-school children and other women – unless children are taken care of, women with pre-school children cannot engage in paid employment, regardless of their educational attainment or their income needs. Pfau-Effinger (2004) argues that socio-economic relations around everyday life are subject to the joint influence of social institutions and cultural norms (also Motiejūnaitė and Kravchenko 2008: 38). Earlier studies of the socialist and post-socialist period, as well as of Western capitalist countries, have produced substantial evidence that childcare policies have high explanatory potential for a cross-country variation in the employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without. They find that these policies create conditions for women's waged labour, and play a critical role in supporting mothers in paid employment. On the one hand, leave generates incentives for women to enter the labour force – shorter well-paid leave facilitates continuous employment, while longer leave with higher cash benefits negatively impacts upon female employment.

On the other hand, public childcare services free women's time and generate incentives for mothers' employment.

Thus, case closed? Not at all, as there are some analytical gaps and empirical shortcomings in the current comparative knowledge, which this study aims to address. First, the issue of post-socialist childcare policies in the contemporary period needs to be revisited, in order to more thoroughly explore their policy characters. Second, previous empirical research of female employment includes few post-socialist countries, mostly the members of the OECD.[43] For other countries there exists only sporadic data and knowledge. Third, we lack information about trends in mothers' employment. Earlier studies usually employ data on the total female employment rates, generally for women aged 15-64 years. Furthermore, they do not differentiate between the employment rates for women with children of pre-school age and those without, which hinders the process of getting a more complete picture over female employment patterns. And fourth, we lack information about the development trends after the early post-socialist period, when national economies and policies were shattered. Esping-Andersen argued himself that his regime types could not be used for Eastern European countries since they were "a virtual laboratory of experimentation" (Esping-Andersen 1996: 267). In sum, previously published studies provide important insights into the post-socialist world and fruitful lines for my research. Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) classification of the eight countries makes an important contribution to comparative knowledge; probing the applicability of the varieties of familialism their study shows that the concept offers important perspectives for further research of post-socialist countries. But they bring the large picture at the expense of country-specific idiosyncratic details, and do not provide accounts of maternal employment after the tumultuous period of social and economic transformations in the 1990s. It is therefore indispensable in developing a theory of female employment to revisit the issue of national childcare policies and explore their relationship with maternal employment.

[43] Only four countries are members of the OECD: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became OECD members in 1995 and 1996, and the Slovak Republic, the last country to enter the 'Partners in Transition Programme', became a member in 2000. The former Yugoslavia had observer status in the OECD from 1961. Following its dissolution this status was annulled. By a decision of the OECD, none of the new states which emerged from within the territory of the former SFRY have succeeded in attaining the observer status held by the former SFRY. Slovenia and Estonia became the members in 2010.

Chapter 5

Research Design

Introduction

Earlier studies of female employment (chapter 3) have found substantial and consistent evidence that the employment of women with young children is most susceptible to childcare policies, i.e. public childcare service provision in conjunction with childcare leave. These are the most important pillars of maternal employment, as they influence many aspects of their daily lives, from their ability to have careers and compete in the labour markets to the ways the children are taken care of (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2009). Overall, they create conditions for women to engage in paid employment. Scholarship on the post-socialist countries (chapter 4) also sees the state and its childcare policies as the main factors of maternal employment. However, the thesis about the relationship between maternal employment and the two policies has not been tested in the eight countries, and there are some critical shortcomings in the current state of knowledge about both childcare policies and maternal employment patterns, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Should we want to develop better tools and more explanatory power, i.e. increase the interpretative capacities, we shall go on testing the theory in different contexts and compare the outcomes, in order to develop new insights, increase general knowledge, and create a better overview and understanding of their diversities. It is therefore indispensable in developing a theory of female employment to explore the links between policies targeted at pre-school children and maternal employment, and to find whether they also vary in tandem in post-socialist countries.

This study analyzes childcare policies in eight countries – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – to investigate whether, and how, different combinations of care policies lead to different maternal employment rates. As this chapter will thoroughly document and explain further below, the study proceeds in four steps. (1) The main aim of this study is to understand the nature of childcare policies, together with their implications for maternal employment rates. Hence, I first revisit the issue of national childcare policies, in order to analyze policy programmes on childcare leave and childcare service provision between 2000 and 2008. The study explores their dis/incentive effects, and aims to discern ideas about what is appropriate for women from policy logics. That is, it explores whether, and how, the states create conditions for mothers to engage in waged employment, and encourage men to participate in child care. To understand how policies combine to result in different patterns of support for families, I interrogate the inside of policies on leave and public day care provision using twelve key policy aspects that the scientific literature sees as the most critical for the shape of maternal employment (as discussed in chapter 3). To reduce the complexity of such a range of policy

measures, I combine policy aspects into a single quantifiable variable, building two policy indices with benchmarking (i.e. scoring). As this chapter will explain, this multidimensional approach to assessing policies provides a fuller portrait of policies and allows me to explore a big-picture view – overall childcare policy and changes to this policy over time – as well as a detailed perspective on policy components and their emancipatory potential. Going through data with a fine tooth comb I will obtain a more holistic view of distinct policy constellations created by combinations of familialistic and de-familialistic policies. Such approach enhances the significance of policy data, and facilitates quantitative comparative analysis, since the number of variables is reduced while their explanatory power is enhanced. (2) The study proceeds by analyzing the employment trends between 2002 and 2007, utilizing the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children, relative to other women in the same country. (3) I analyze the associations between childcare policies and maternal employment in eight countries between 2002 and 2007, using descriptive statistics. I examine the extent to which maternal employment rates vary in tandem with childcare policies. (4) In addition, this study makes a systematic illustrative comparison (an interpretative 'exploratory' analysis), in order to explore any cases where the associations between childcare policies and maternal employment are at odds. This additional analysis will provide a thorough and theoretically informed exploration of whether, and how, other potential factors, such as education, the income needs of households and informal care arrangements, shed new light on the shape of maternal employment in the eight post-socialist countries.

Hypotheses

In this study, the configurations of policy aspects take centre stage in investigating maternal employment, in order to explore whether, and how, different combinations of policies that support family care-giving and those that de-familialize care-giving lead to significantly different outcomes in terms of mothers' employment. I hypothesise that gender-neutral paid leave of moderate duration and formal childcare service provision generate incentives for women's continuous employment, and positively correlate with employment rates for women with pre-school children. Other policy models generate incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for longer period of time after childbirth. On the one hand, when the states subsidize home care, but provide no public childcare options for the youngest children, women are locked into familial care, and the mothers are likely to curtail employment after childbirth. On the other hand, when the state withdraws any public support for mothers in employment, and does not subsidize familial care or public day care services, the same may ensue, because the state assumes, and relies on the family as the primary carer.

Lastly, I hypothesise that when public policies afford parents a choice to either use formal day care service or opt for familial care, maternal employment can either be low or high, because other factors will drive mothers' employment.

1. Policy analysis and policy measures

This study analyzes national policy programmes on childcare leave and childcare service provision. Drawing from earlier studies (discussed in chapter 3), it employs policy variables with the highest explanatory potential for maternal employment, and assesses policies on childcare leave along the following six policy aspects: (i) total length of leave time, (ii) income support payments during leave, (iii) job protection during leave, (iv) flexibility of leave provision, (v) parental entitlements, and (vi) daddy-quotas (indicators are summarized in table 5.1 on page 97). Public childcare service provision is also evaluated along six aspects, which reflect (i) availability of services, (ii) their affordability, and (iii) quality (table 5.2 on page 98). These are structural indicators that determine the emancipatory potential of the two policies, but hold no information about their use or delivery.

To analyze childcare policies as configurations of a range of policy aspects, an index measure is needed (e.g. Mosley and Mayer 1998: 3; Ragin 1987a; also Gornick et al. 1997). This study creates the indices for each of the two childcare policies using a benchmarking technique (explained in details below). This is a Weberian *ideal-types* approach, which assesses and compares policies against a set of standards repeatedly in subsequent points in time and across the countries (Camp in Schütz et al. 1998: 2; Miller 2005: 68). [44] Since some policy aspects are not directly quantifiable, this study translates them into measurable variables using scores as substitutes to formal statistics. I use the scoring method or the benchmarking to assess the dis/incentive effect of national policies – that is, I assess their conformity to optimal policy entitlements that create conditions for women to engage in paid employment and encourage fathers to participate in care. This helps differentiate the emancipatory potential of national policies, i.e. to assess whether or not a given policy provides options for mothers' employment and challenges gender-specific parenting.

To set the assessing standards, against which policies are compared across countries and over time, I use policy entitlements that provide 'optimal support' for mothers in paid employment (identified in chapter 3 and discussed further below). Each policy component is

[44] The method was first introduced in the private sector to enhance efficiency by comparing and assessing the performance of one company against a certain benchmark (Schütz et al. 1998; Tronti 1998).

compared against a specific 'standard', and allocated a score using an 8-point scale, based on its emancipatory potential: the higher the score, the higher the emancipatory potential (explained in details further below).[45] Scores on policy components form a policy index and its value reflects how close the policy is to the optimum. In sum, benchmarking allows a comparison of policies across countries and over time, and helps quantifying more specific policy attributes such as flexibility and eligibility of policy. That is, it translates qualitative policy variables into measurable variables. By compounding various indicators in an index, the significance of the variable is enhanced, and quantitative comparative analysis facilitated.

An index approach with benchmarking has been used in earlier studies in two ways. On the one hand, comparative research employs it to evaluate childcare policies in Western capitalist countries (e.g. Gornick et al. 1997 and Gornick and Meyers 2003 to evaluate childcare policies across their selected OECD countries; Plantenga and Hansen 1999 and Plantenga et al. 2009 use childcare policies as part of their gender equality index; Smith and Williams 2007 to measure father-friendliness of leave policies). On the other hand, empirical research uses indices as policy variables in their statistical analyses of, but not limited to, female employment (e.g. Stier et al. 2001; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007 on female employment).[46] Earlier studies vary considerably in their strategies; indicators they use to measure policies, as well as computational techniques to building an index largely depend upon their research interests. But notwithstanding the differences in their approach to index building, earlier empirical studies drew consistent conclusions about the relationship between policies and female employment, which were also consistent with the results of studies of policy-employment relations that used other research strategies. This suggests that approach is robust enough to be used in a cross-country research. Furthermore, this study also draws from a larger body of empirical research that builds and/or employs an index to analyze various social policies, such as the OECD index of child well-being (Bradshaw et al. 2006), gender equality index (e.g. Plantenga et al. 2009), the UNDP series of development indices, such as HDI, GDI, GEM (e.g. Sen 1992; UNDP 1995, 2007).

Systematically reviewing earlier studies that used an index with benchmarking I find several advantages to applying this approach to a cross-country comparative analysis of childcare policies. First, policies can be measured with various more specific policy characteristics,

[45] According to Weber's definition, "an ideal type is formed by the one-sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view" according to which "*concrete individual* phenomena … are arranged into a unified analytical construct" (*Gedankenbild*); it is a methodological "utopia [that] cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality" (Weber 1904 [1949]: 58).
[46] Index-building with benchmarking has been used in a number of other studies which assessed other policies, such as gender equality and child well-being (e.g. Bradshaw et al. 2006; Plantenga et al. 2009).

which are not directly quantifiable, but better reflect differential realities, i.e. how policy constellations reflect conceptions of the state, the market, and the family. Using more significant policy aspects this approach excels in providing an informed understanding of policy goals and priorities; systematically focusing on policy programmes it does not conflate indicators of policy delivery and use, and hence provides a better measure of policy character. Hence, it provides a better way to convey and compare the diversity across countries and over time (e.g. Gilbert 2008; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Ragin 2009: 5; Smith and Williams 2007). Second, this approach enables fine-grained, theoretically informed analysis of policy complexity and diversity (Bradshaw et al. 2006; Plantenga et al. 2009: 25; Smith 2007: slide 13). The configurational view of policies gives a holistic view that is not present in conventional statistical methods (Kvist 2006: 184).[47] Thus, it develops a better understanding of how policy constellations reflect conceptions of the state, the family, and the market, in sharing responsibility for care. Focusing on more significant aspects of policies where significant variance may be located, this approach simplifies policy complexity in a theoretically-guided but highly analytical way. As noted, key policy components – be it a quantitative or a qualitative attribute – are assessed using the scoring method. This approach allows the exploration of both a big-picture view – overall childcare policy and changes to this policy over time – as well as a detailed perspective on its components. Thus, this multidimensional approach provides a fuller portrait of national policies, while at the same time yields a single (quantifiable) policy measure with enhanced explanatory power.

Notwithstanding the advantages of this approach, there are some shortcomings and potential problems related to its application. First, there are no universally-agreed ways of how to assess policies in a cross-country perspective and what standards to use. In this study, standards or the assessment criteria are based on the empirical evidence from Western capitalist countries. Thus, this study can be criticized for applying them to the post-socialist context, but I do not consider this to be a disadvantage. I argue that the relevance of policy components and the benchmarks used in this study is theoretically and empirically well justified: both are founded in strong and consistent theoretical arguments and evidence on policy entitlements that represent an optimal support to mothers in paid employment. Moreover, relative to averages the theoretical concepts and optimal policies are not sample specific, and allow us to operate with shades of grey (Kvist 2006: 174). Tables 5.1 and 5.2 explicitly state what is being measured, and how countries are compared. Code reliability is

[47] In its design and focus this approach somewhat resembles Ragin's fuzzy-sets approach. However, the latter is less suitable for clustering countries along more subtle policy characteristics with more qualitative attributes, because it requires indicators with quantitative values to assess the strength of membership to the set.

consistent and the validity of the scores can be tested retrospectively (see e.g. Dogan 2004: 330). The procedure is applied uniformly across the eight countries and over time. Hence, this approach is transparent and produces a uniform standard as required in a cross-country comparison, and the chosen standards are defensible, as long as the tentative basis for the generalisations is recognised. Another critical issue is that this study more than 'what it is' analyzes what facilitates women's employment; its underlying assumption is that being de-familialized and commodifies is good for women. The question is, however, if women are obliged to work to gain benefits and support themselves and their families – is this beneficial? But, there is a strong case that women both need and value paid employment. Moreover, without some sense of what is good for women it is difficult to imagine how one would choose variables that matter; in any case, it is difficult to avoid some evaluative implications (Pascall and Manning 2000: 244). Having said that, the study focuses only on policy implications in terms of women's employment, but does not consider the perspective of a child. Furthermore, I take a "whole population approach" (Sobotka 2004: 43), which hampers an analysis of policy implications for women in different situations: differential policy entitlements, such as for single parents, parents of more children, ethnic minority groups are not considered, because there is no universally agreed-upon way to draw the line between more/less supportive policy provisions. This study does not suggest that policy entitlements do not have a differential impact upon different groups of parents, but it highlights that we could arrive at erroneous conclusions about policy characters should we assess them without robust empirical touchstones or yardsticks to compare them against.

In what follows I discuss the underlying assumptions of this study, the guiding principles, such as how childcare policies are defined in this study, explain the dimensions of evaluation and the assessing criteria for each policy, computational techniques as well as discuss the data sources and any critical issues and my approach to minimize their impact.

1.1 The policy indices

The present study measures policies on childcare leave and childcare service provision with twelve most critical policy aspects with regard to maternal employment, and builds two separate indices: (1) the *leave index* measures childcare leave policies, and (2) the *day care index* measures policies on formal day care services for children of pre-school age. I create two separate policy indices, one for each policy, for each point in time between 2000 and 2008.

The leave index

The leave index measures leave policies which grant parents the time off from work to care for the child after childbirth. It comprises policy entitlements to maternity, paternity, parental and extended childcare leave. In this study *maternity leave* is a statutory entitlement to leave that is generally available only to mothers for a limited period around the time of the childbirth to allow them to recuperate. Largely, this type of leave is conditional on paid employment on a continuous basis or insurance, is job-protected, and provided with a high financial compensation (ILO 1997; OECD 2001; OECD 2001a; Morgan and Zippel 2003). By contrast, *paternity leave* is a non-transferable provision for fathers only; policies grant either an individual paternity leave in a form of a statutory non-transferable right to time off work or in a form of daddy-quotas, whereby some time within parental leave is reserved for fathers only (Plantenga and Remery 2005: 52). *Parental leave* is time granted to parents *after* the termination of maternity leave. Its concern is the care of young children, and both the mother and the father are eligible. It is of longer duration than maternity leave (generally in months), and is distinct to other forms of leave, such as extended care leave, career breaks, emergency leave – generally, it is granted to *employed* parents as an income-related statutory right to time off work (e.g. ILO 1997). The index excludes leave that is not connected to the statutory right to leave of absence from employment, i.e. any care leave granted to parents independent of their employment history and status. Moreover, it neither assesses what period of time in standard employment contract builds up the entitlement (i.e. the eligibility criterion) nor the minima or the caps installed to the benefit payments.

Policy components: Empirical indicators of leave policy

This study disaggregates leave policy by six components: total leave time, income support payment during leave (i.e. financial sustainability of leave), job security for leave users, parental entitlement (access to the entitlement), fathers-only entitlement, and flexibility in leave provision. While these policy components are the least contested factors of maternal employment, the literature does not provide the exact empirical breakpoints at which to draw the line between policy measures that are more/less optimal for maternal employment. Thus, I draw from various sources to devise the empirical touchstones, as this section will document.

The underlying assumptions of the leave index are that leave acts as an employment integration mechanism, provides options for women to participate in the labour force, and challenges the conventional gender division of labour, when the statutory entitlement:
- grants a minimum of 6 months but a maximum of one year leave;
- grants the financial compensation that largely protects an income from employment;
- protects and guarantees the same job during and after leave;
- facilitates parents to stay in touch with the labour market whilst caring for their children;
- contains explicit incentives for shared parenting.

(1) Total length of leave time assesses total time off from work to which *employed* parents are entitled. It includes maternity and parental leave. An optimal policy entitles parents to a minimum of 6 months (OECD 2007: 118; Jaumotte 2003: 17) and a maximum of one year leave (Bruning and Plantenga 1999: 207). Leave between 1 but below 2 years is considered as of moderate length (Pettit and Hook 2005). Leave between 2 but below 3 years is treated as very long (ibid.), and a 3-year leave and over as overly long (also Leitner 2003: 370). With reference to the literature, a too brief and overly long leave increase the likelihood that mothers completely withdraw from the labour market (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 8-9, 85-92; Esping-Andersen 2009: 87). Furthermore, the employer may penalise their employees for using their entitlements or/and not employing women of childbearing age to avoid any risk of their longer exits (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 90). Any leave longer than a year reduces the return rate of leave-users, particularly of women in less protected and secure jobs, but leave of 3 years is the most detrimental in terms of women's labour force attachment, and translates into reduced job progression and lifetime earnings (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 8).

(2) Financial sustainability of leave estimates the magnitude of household income shock caused by the level of leave-related cash benefits. When the magnitude of the household income loss is great when carer is on leave, policy disadvantages the user. As women are the primary leave-users, the policy impedes maternal employment (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 8, 89; Plantenga and Remery 2005: 48). If the cash benefits are high and paid over a longer period of time, the same may ensue, because the state subsidizes home care. In this study, an optimum policy ranges between 80 per cent of previous earnings to up to 100 per cent income replacement (see e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2003: 122; Wall et al. 2009: 36).

It is particularly puzzling how to assess the extent to which the earnings from employment are preserved when the structure of income support payments during leave is more complex. The question at hand is which entitlement generates dis/incentives to maternal employment: the one that pays 50 per cent of previous income for 28 weeks and the rest at higher flat-rate, the one that pays 100 per cent of previous income for 18 weeks and the rest at lower flat-rate, or the one that pays 70 per cent over 104 weeks? All three policy scenarios are less than optimal for maternal employment. While earnings-related benefits are easy to assess, flat-rate payments are not, particularly in the absence of any individual-level data. To compare financial sustainability of leave, this study adapts the method used by the OECD (2008), Plantenga and Remery (2005: 85-88) and Gornick et al. (1997; 2003). The flat-rate payments are standardized as the proportions of average monthly gross wage of full-time employees in industry and services. This variable estimates to what extent the flat-rate payments replace previous earnings, and measures them as the proportion of average wage in the country. Optimal policy grants parents one year leave (i.e. 50-54 weeks) paid at 80-100 per cent of previous earnings. Policy that is 'fairly close' to an optimum grants one year leave at 80-100 per cent payment, and the rest of care leave is unpaid or paid at low flat-rate. Hence, parents can decide whether they will use longer leave or not. Both types of policy entitlements induce a lower household economic shock if the father uses leave, and thus generate incentives for shared parenting. They encourage women to take shorter breaks from their careers, and hence speed their re-entry into the labour market (e.g. Rubery et al. 1998; Rønsen and Sundstrőm 2002; Waldfogel 2002). In contrast, leave paid at minimum 70 per cent of previous earnings for over a year induces higher risks for maternal employment. When the state grants higher replacement rates over longer periods of time, household economic shock is low(er). Leave is financially more sustainable from the household perspective, and hence generates incentives for carers to retreat from employment for longer periods of time after childbirth. In contrast, when state grants long leave but provides low cash benefits, which are contingent on full-time family care, it impedes mothers' labour

market attachment. However, the use of leave depends on other mediating factors, such as income needs or/and availability of alternative day care arrangements.

To allow for a cross-country analysis of different types of cash benefits during periods of leave, I also compute a full-time leave equivalent (FTE). This is a standardized measure which compares various types of payments during leave across the countries (see OECD 2008; Plantenga and Remery 2005: 85-88). To compute it, total length of leave time is weighted by a standardized level of cash benefit using this formula:

$$\text{FTE}(\text{in weeks}) = \frac{\text{total leave}\,(\text{in weeks}) \times \text{replacement rate}}{100}$$

Leave comprises maternity and parental leave and replacement rate comprises earnings-related payment and flat-rate payment as the proportion of average monthly gross wage of full-time employees in industry and services.

This indicator compares various leave systems according to the leave payments, and estimates the period of leave time if it was paid at 100 per cent of previous earnings. That is, it measures the number of weeks of leave that attracts 100 per cent of the previous wage. I use this indicator to estimate how un/sustainable leave is over the total period of time granted to parents, and measure the gap between total leave time and leave in full-time equivalents: the wider the gap, the less financially sustainable the leave.

(3) Job security assesses whether or not employees are protected against dismissal for requesting or taking parental leave and entitled to return to the same, or an equivalent or similar job. Further, it assesses whether or not the rights acquired at the date parental leave starts are maintained. Optimal policy secures a job and related benefits for the duration of *parental* leave, i.e. the employment-related leave. When the time of leave benefit exceeds parental leave period, i.e. the states provide payments for a longer familial care, policy leads to exclusion from protective employment legislation, and to a longer retreat from the labour force (Leitner 2003: 370; Esping-Andersen 2009: 91). Moreover, it implies higher non-wage costs to the employers: because higher cash benefits imply longer retreats from the labour force, employers avoid hiring women of childbearing age, in order to avoid any risk of their (longer) absence (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 90). Lastly, absence of any job security is critical for ensuring the continuous employment of mothers, especially of women with relatively strong labour market positions, who are more likely to return to their jobs when they have younger children (e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2003: 144).

(4) Parental entitlement assesses whether policy provides incentives for shared parenting. Optimal policy grants paid leave as an individual right, i.e. each parent is eligible to claim the right with the same financial entitlement (Pylkkänen and Smith 2003). Right to individual leave with transferable benefit payments enables both parents to use leave time, but, on the other hand, does not facilitate parents to share it, because only one parent is entitled to payment at one time (Bruning and Plantenga 1999: 196; Fagan and Hebson 2005: 95). In contrast, state generates disincentives for sharing care duties when either parent is entitled to leave time, but parents must make a joint decision about who will actually use it (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 95). Lastly, state explicitly genders family care when it grants leave only to mothers, and/or entitles the fathers to a very short portion of leave time. It should be emphasized that this dimension only assesses parental leave, i.e. excludes maternity and paternity entitlements for obvious reasons, as well as does not assess what period of time in standard employment contract builds up the entitlement.

(5) Fathers'-only entitlement assesses state incentives targeted specifically at fathers to encourage shared parenting (Smith and Williams 2007: 190). Optimal policy generates incentives for shared parenting by providing a statutory entitlement to an individual, non-transferable paternity leave, with high income support during leave (e.g. Plantenga and Remery 2005: 52). Such type of leave entitlement has a "substitution effect", i.e. mothers can return to the labour markets earlier when/as fathers take over child care (Pylkkänen and Smith 2003). Moreover, paternity entitlements afford mothers a choice whether or not to stay at home with their children (Saxonberg 2009: 672), as well as prompt the employers to revise their hiring or dismissal practices and assumptions about the women as secondary workers (Motiejūnaitė 2008: 18). In contrast, policies with no paternity provision reinforce the conventional gender division of labour, "fuel gender discrimination in the labour market", and thus reinforce women's secondary position in the labour market, relative to men (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 10).

(6) Flexibility in parental leave provision assesses whether carers are encouraged to combine parental leave with paid employment. An optimal policy entitles parents to using leave in a flexible way, either through reduction in working hours, weekly part-time or daily part-time, or in sections over a longer period of time (i.e. 'fractioning'), rather than granting them leave in one block or continuous period (Plantenga and Remery 2005: 48). Thus, it provides options for women's continuous employment: those with low-income do not have to stop working when costs of public childcare are high, and women in higher occupations can more easily reconcile paid employment and child care (ibid., p. 52). In contrast, when fractioning is limited within a shorter period of time, parents who use it lose a fraction of

total leave entitlement. Such policy drives women to use leave in one continuous period, and hence retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time (Bruning and Plantenga 1999: 198). Furthermore, policy entitlement to part-time leave with the loss of either the cash benefits or a place in public day care facility acts as a disincentive to maternal continuous employment. It should be emphasized that some countries (e.g. Slovenia and Lithuania) also grant parents with children under the age of three years the 'right to request' reduced or flexible hours in negotiations with their employer. But as this is a distinct provision to parental leave, it is not assessed in this study.

The day care index

The day care index measures policy on formal day care service provision for children aged 0 to the compulsory (pre-)primary school age. In this study *formal* day care service refers to education and care in a pre-school or equivalent, at centre-based service, a crèche (nursery) or another day-care centre, that are organised/controlled by a public structure. In this study the terms *formal* and *public* are used interchangeably and refer to any day care service, when the provider (be it a public authority or a private founder) receives some public funding and/or is subject to public control and quality standards. This study focuses on the provisions that regulate the centre-based day care, while policy regulations of public day care outside the centre (such as home-based care) are not within its scope because of data limitations.

Formal day care service is generally provided through early day care for children aged 0-3 years and pre-school education for older children (Kamerman 2000; Gornick and Meyers 2003: 198; Kamerman 2006). The former provides *care* and is generally administered under the ministry of health, and is hereafter referred to as *nurseries*. In contrast, the curricular priority of the day care service for older pre-school children is the provision of the education programmes, with child care subsumed. These programmes are generally under the education auspices, and hence more adequately cater for care needs of parents of older pre-school children (Kamerman 2006). Hereafter, they are referred to as *kindergartens*.

In this study, policies are assessed with reference to an 'average national policy standard', as 'generally applicable' policy within the country. As I have noted before, service provision has largely been a responsibility of local governments among the eight post-socialist countries, and when these are autonomous in service provision, regulations and standards are not always set nationally. However, policy information on any intra-country variation in regulations or service provision by local geographical areas is not available. This study assumes that any other arrangement than the state direction, regulation and inspection of

service provision leads to intra-country variation, and thus sets the assessment criteria accordingly, as explained further below (summarized in table 5.2).

Policy components: Empirical indicators of policy on service provision

This study assesses six aspects of policy on childcare service provision: allocation of places in the public day care facility, admission age (starting age) to public day care, compatibility of service hours with the working hours of parents, compulsory (pre-)schooling age, parental fees, and quality and intra-country disparity in public day care service provision. These components reflect availability, affordability, and quality of service provision, and are considered to have the most critical implications for maternal employment.

The underlying assumptions of the day care index are that policy on childcare service provision supports mothers in paid employment when:
- access to high-quality day care facilities is open to all children and service is affordable;
- day care service is provided by the state, or is the statutory duty of local government;
- services are provided during a typical working day, the regular working week and available year-round;
- service is free of charge to all parents. When it is not, a ceiling on parental fee is set nationally, and service is free or highly subsidised for low-income families; and
- guidance on eligibility criteria, prices and standards of service provision are set nationally by law (e.g. licensing requirement, inspection of existing facilities) and the state oversees the service provision.

(1) Allocation of places assesses eligibility criteria for a place in a public day-care setting. An optimal policy guarantees a place to all children of pre-school age without delay, and sends a clear message about social acceptability of public day care (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 197-206). When day care is open to all children, but a child can be refused a place based on the access priorities (when the demand exceeds the supply), the state fails to fully support mothers in paid employment. When local governments are autonomous in service provision and can set different inclusion/exclusion criteria (e.g. child's age, residence, parental employment status), state contributes to variant service availability across the state (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 108-9). Because service provision varies tremendously within the country, the state hinders fair access to public service.

(2) Admission age to a public day care service assesses potential contradictions between policy on leave and policy on service provision. An optimal policy opens formal day care

service to children before the end of earnings-related leave; hence, it affords parents a choice of their preferred care option. When service becomes accessible *after* earnings-related leave, parents are afforded no public day care options, and rely on familial care. This generates incentive for mothers to retreat from the labour force (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 105; Eurydice 2009: 79-80; Plantenga and Remery 2005: 38).

(3) Compatibility of service hours with parents' working hours assesses the correspondence between the opening hours of a day care facility and the regular employment hours of parents during the day, week, and a year. This determines the extent to which formal day care service serves as a supervised form of child care during parents' hours of employment (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 227). An optimal policy induces the providers to operate longer and more flexible service hours (see e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 109-10; Plantenga and Remery 2005: 38-42). When service hours are incompatible with the regular working hours of parents, day care service generates care needs, and hence acts as a disincentive to mothers employment (Kreyenfeld and Hank 2000: 318-9).

(4) Compulsory (pre-/primary) schooling age assesses whether or not the states address inadequate service provision by downward extension of compulsory schooling age. When day care becomes part of the preparatory provision for primary schooling, children are obliged to participate in the programme. Access is granted on a universal basis to all children of certain age without delay, and care needs subside. Lower compulsory schooling age removes barriers to child's participation in a public day care facility, children spend most of the day in school, and hence mothers are freed to seek or resume employment (e.g. Gornick et al. 1997: 54-5; Gilbert 2008: 6).

(5) Day care costs (parental fees) assess affordability of day care services. Childcare costs are the equivalent of a regressive tax on mothers' labour supply, and reduce financial returns from employment (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2009: 91). Thus, affordable day care generates incentives for maternal employment – especially for those with limited earning prospects (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 12). An optimal policy provides day care service free of charge to parents. However, practically no country provides such policy. Therefore, a policy is close to the optimal when state prescribes parental fees on a sliding-fee scale, and exempts low-income families or reduces their fees (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 206; Fagan and Hebson 2005: 108). When costs are high, and local governments are autonomous in setting the price as well as the operating mechanisms, service provision varies within the state. The state fails to address variant affordability of day care, and hence hinders fair access to public service (e.g. Fagan and Hebson 2005: 106-9).

(6) Quality of public day care service assesses state commitment to provide a homogeneous high-quality day care service for all children in the country, and prevents any intra-country disparities in service provision. This component assesses whether or not the states ensure fair access to public care services across the geographical areas of the state. When the state regulates service provision with nationally set standards and objectives (e.g. curriculum, workforce standards, number of children cared for by a single adult etc.), and service provision is overseen by public entities, service provision is considered to be of comparatively high quality (e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2003: 195; 218-26). High-quality day care service generates incentives for parents to use public day care options, and ensures fair access to public service (Plantenga and Remery 2005: 35; Kamerman 2006). In contrast, the state contributes to variant service quality across the state when local governments are autonomous in service provision.

1.2 Building the indices with benchmarking

As noted earlier in this chapter, I assess conformity of each policy component to optimal policies using the scoring method. To assess the above listed policy components, this study adapts the benchmarking approach used by Smith and Williams (2007). I score each policy component using a set of assessment criteria, which are applied consistently across policies, across countries and over time. These criteria are summarized in tables 5.1 and 5.2, which show the principles that guided the benchmarking procedure, and document how the qualitative breaking points between different policies are set.

Each policy component is scored with a common interval scale with a four-value set of 1-2-4-8. These continuous scores measure the dis/incentive effect of policies and indicate the emancipatory potential of each policy component:

- 8 indicates that it is very close to the optimal model, and provides options for women's continuous employment;
- 4 indicates that it is fairly close to the optimum;
- 2 is more or less remote from the optimum; and
- 1 is fairly remote from the optimal model, and generates incentives for women's retreat from labour force.

The idea behind such interval-level scale is to choose a geometric sequence, so that logarithms yield an arithmetic sequence (Coray 2009: personal communication).[48] Therefore, 8 is used as a maximum score, because 10 (as used in earlier studies) has too strong an influence on the results in a cross-country perspective. Further, the overall index score is computed using the multiplicative method (explained below). Hence, there is a problem when some of the figures are zero (to multiply by 0 means losing most information). Moreover, every country provides some policy, and hence 1 is used as a minimum score relative to 0 (used in most of the prior research). I also made tests for various different scales (e.g. 1-3-5-10; 1-3-6-10), and found marginal differences in the results. Overall, the chosen scale is robust and more in line with the multiplicative approach, because the logarithms are equidistant (Coray 2009, personal communication).

[48] Prof. Daniel François Coray from the University of Genève is an expert on arithmetic of algebraic manifolds, and theoretical applications of computational methods: http://www.unige.ch/math/folks/coray/cvres5.pdf.

Table 5.1: The leave index: assessment criteria and scores

SCORE	*POLICY COMPONENT*
	Total length of leave time
8	Minimum 6 months, maximum 1 year
4	More than 1 year but less than 2 years
2	2 years but less than 3 years
1	Less than 6 months or 3 years and over
	Financial sustainability of total leave
8	Leave paid at 80-100 % of previous earnings for 50 to 54 weeks
4	80-100 % of previous earnings for 50 to 54 weeks, thereafter low flat-rate
2	Leave paid at less than 70 % for over 54 weeks (wider gaps between total leave time and leave in full-time equivalents)
1	Leave paid at minimum 70 % of previous earnings for over 54 weeks (narrow gaps)
	Job security
8	Leave-users retain a contract and associated benefits to their previous job or equivalent during parental leave
4	Leave-users retain a contract and associated benefits to their previous job or equivalent during parental leave, but income support payment exceeds the period of a job-secured leave (i.e. covers extended childcare leave)
2	Leave-users retain a contract, but leave does not guarantee the full set of rights for persons returning from leave
1	Job not protected
	Parental entitlement (excl. maternity and paternity)
8	Individual right to leave and income support payment
4	Individual right to leave but income support payment is transferable (concurrent use available, only one parent entitled to the income support)
2	Right to leave and income support payment transferable (joint decision on the use)
1	A non-transferable right or one parent entitled to a shorter period of parental leave than the other
	Father's entitlement
8	Minimum one month and over, paid at 80-100 per cent of previous earnings
4	Minimum two weeks but less than a month paid at 80-100 per cent at the time of childbirth with extra entitlement to paternity leave that can be spread more thinly over a longer period of time with no income support payment
2	Less than two weeks at 80-100 per cent
1	No individual provision
	Flexibility
8	Leave can be used in sections over a longer period of time (8 years), reduced working hours allowed with proportional reduction in benefits
4	Leave in sections over a shorter period of time (until child turns 3 or 4 years of age) or a small portion of parental leave can be reserved (and/or taken in sections until child turns 8 years), limited gainful activity allowed (reduced working hours with proportional reduction in leave benefit payments)
2	Total leave in one block or parents lose part of unused leave, limited gainful activity allowed (reduced working hours with proportional reduction in benefits)
1	Leave benefits conditional on full-time family care

Table 5.2: The day care index: assessment criteria and scores

SCORE	*DIMENSION / COMPONENT*	
	Availability	***Allocation of places***
8		Open access to crèches and kindergartens, same criteria nationwide, central capacity/demand planning
4		Open access to both, guidelines on criteria, but may vary by municipality, no central capacity/demand planning
2		Open access to both, local government autonomous in setting the access criteria, no capacity/demand planning
1		Conditional access to crèches, open access to kindergartens, no capacity/demand planning
		Admission age to day care
8		No lower age limit
4		Admitted before end of earnings-related (parental) leave
2		Admitted at the end of earnings-related leave
1		Negative time gap between earnings-related leave and starting age, intra-country variation in admission age
		Compatibility of service hours with working hours of parents
8		Regular full-day/week/year service a norm, some flexibility in provision to accommodate parents' special working arrangements
4		Regular full-day/week/year service, no flexibility in provision to accommodate parents' special working arrangements
2		Regular full-day/week/year service a norm, spells of shorter breaks over the year
1		Intra-country variation in service hours
		Compulsory schooling age[1]
8		At age 5
4		At age 6
1		At age 7
	Affordability	***Parental fees adjusted according to:***
8		Free of charge (parents pay the meals)
4		Family income and number of children
2		Criteria other than income and family size
1		Local governments autonomous in setting the rules, no central ceiling for the fees, intra-country variation
	Quality	***National co-ordination of service delivery***
8		Service provision is a joint responsibility of the state *and* municipality, centrally set (uniform) standards of provision
4		Service provision is a statutory duty of the municipality (to establish and administer both crèches and kindergartens), norms/standards defined and regulated at state level
2		Statutory duty of the municipality (to establish and administer both crèches and kindergartens), local governments autonomous in some elements of service provision
1		Local governments autonomous in service provision, crèches at discretion of the municipality, kindergartens a statutory duty

Note: [1]A 3-score scale used because only three different provisions exist among the eight countries.

Computing the index score

The overall index score is computed to obtain a policy variable for statistical analysis of the association between childcare policies and maternal employment. This study adapts the approach used in Smith and Williams' (2007) study. First, a multiplicative method is applied to sum the products of individual scores. Second, the multiplicative coefficient is smoothened by taking an n-*th* root of a sum of the figures obtained multiplicatively. The final product score can be interpreted as the mean value of a binominal distribution (Argasinski and Kozlowski 2008: 253). I use the same approach to build both indices. In addition, I also calculate the composite index of both policies, i.e. an index with all twelve policy components, which provides an interesting 'interaction' between the two distinct sets of policies. The total index score is derived through a standard mathematical procedure for each index: only policies with consistently high scores on the policy components obtain a high overall score. Correspondingly, only policies with consistently low scores on the policy components obtain a low score.

The following formulae are used:

Leave index = $\sqrt[6]{\text{sumproduct}}$

Day care index = $\sqrt[6]{\text{sumproduct}}$

Summary index of childcare policy = $\sqrt[12]{\text{sumproduct}}$

Where*:*
sumproduct = the sum of products of individual scores: each policy is a configuration of six components, and the summary index of all twelve components

The two mathematical procedures result in the indices ranging between 1 and 8: each score reveals how far (or close) a national policy is from the optimal policy (i.e. 8). The advantage of this method over others (such as an additive method, which sums the component scores) refers to what is called "the inequality of arithmetic and geometric means" (e.g. Beckenbach and Bellman 1961: Theorem 1, p. 4). This states simply that when one takes an average over a set of *n* positive numbers by dividing their total sum by *n*, the value one gets is never smaller than the one you get by taking the *n*th root of their product. In other words, the additive method always yields a more favourable picture than the multiplicative method (tests show that the sum score is always higher than the product score)[49].

[49] The 'sum score' is derived from the additive method, which sums and sometimes averages the scores across the components. For the application see e.g. Bradshaw et al. 2006; Smith and Williams 2007, Plantenga et al. 2009.

But the multiplicative method increases the difference in fitness and is selectively more neutral (also see Smith and Williams 2007: 183). Here is an explicit example. Policy in one country is almost fully supportive in terms of five out of six components (8), but the sixth is very remote from the optimum (1). With the additive method it is clear that this policy receives 6.8 points out of maximum 8 (or 41 out of 48 without calculating the mean), which is 85 % of the maximum achievable score. But with the multiplicative method, this same country receives a product score of 5.7 points out of maximum 8, which is 71 % of the maximum score. Therefore, the product score reflects the volume of the corresponding policy components, whereby each component is considered like a separate dimension. Let me give another example. Suppose we have three countries and two policy components. There is an optimum length of leave but no flexibility in Slovenia. Therefore, this country is assigned 8 for length and 2 for flexibility. In Latvia it is the contrary: 8 for flexibility and 2 for length. Finally, policy in Lithuania grants fairly supportive length and flexibility, say 5 and 5. The sum score (using the mean) yields the same figure (5) for all three countries. But with the multiplicative approach, one gets 4 for Slovenia and Latvia, and 5 for Lithuania, which is a more correct index score. Overall, the selected method with a product score produces more adequate scores across the countries.

When I compound policy components into an index no explicit weights are imposed. So, for example, to obtain the policy on leave I combine all six components. One might seek to argue that length of leave and income support during leave should be given greater weight than, for example, flexibility or daddy-only days on the grounds that the length and associated payments are more important for female employment, or even that the two are just a better or a more reliable indicator of leave. However, not only there is no evidence to sustain such arguments, there is still a question of what weight to give to each component; researches who use the indices in their empirical research actually argue that giving weights to components we could arrive at erroneous conclusions (see e.g. Bradshaw et al. 2006: 24-5; Plantenga et al. 2009: 25; Schütz et al. 1998: 41-3). Thus, in the absence of any theoretical or empirical justification for weighting I treat each component as having equal weight. Moreover, the results are sensitive to any correlation among policy components, and low values in one component can be compensated by high values in another. Each component is nevertheless making an independent contribution to the index, and each is relevant for determining the emancipatory potential of the policy, as discussed in chapter 3. Moreover, the indices are reported by their components as well as by the scores given to each component (chapter 6).

1.3 Translating policy models into the 'varieties of familialism'

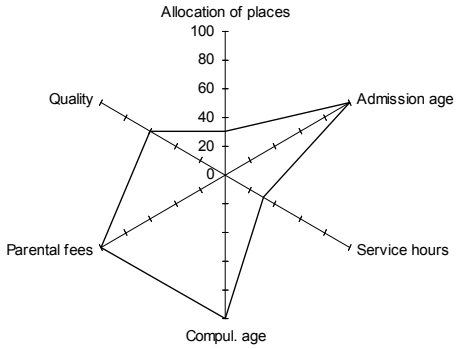
In the last step of comparative policy analysis I divide up national policies into groups using Leitner's (2003) analytical differentiation of state familialism (discussed in chapter 3). I use her four-type de-familialistic regimes to unpack the optimal policy model, one that provides options for women's continuous employment. This study uses *de-familialism* to denote an optimal state support for mothers' employment, where the states provide an optimal leave to both parents for a year, and thereafter absorb part of care obligations by providing public care options. *Explicit familialism* denotes policies that generate incentives for women's retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time after childbirth, and *implicit familialism* denotes limited state intervention. Lastly, *optional familialism* characterizes childcare policies which allow parents to choose among different care options. Leitner's (2003) regime types provide a useful and robust organising framework and allow me to better understand the patterns among the eight countries. Working with well-known groupings also allows me to situate my findings within the comparative welfare state literature, and hence to probe the applicability of the varieties of familialism literature to the eight post-socialist countries.

To group the eight countries, but also to summarize national childcare policies, and hence provide insights into the empirical material, I employ a graphical method of *radar charts* (see also e.g. Schütz et al. 1998; Tronti 1998; Plantenga and Hansen 1999; Plantenga and Hansen 1999a). The radar charts are graphical as well as analytical tools, developed in connection with the benchmarking approach (e.g. Mosley and Mayer 1998: 5).[50] Each chart provides a simplified presentation of policy, and illustrates the distance of policy components, and hence of the overall policy from the optimum. As illustrated with the demonstration chart below, a chart comprises a number of axes starting from the same point, which are integrated into a single radial figure (Chambers et al. 1983; Friendly 1991: 158-162). Each chart consists of a sequence of equi-angular spokes (called radii) with one ray or spoke for each policy component. The length of each spoke is proportional to the index score, and ranges between 1 and 8. The line connects the scores for each policy component, which gives each policy a star-shaped appearance. Each star represents a single country in a single year. In a conventional radar chart such as the six-sided chart illustrated below, the lines joining the data points graphically represent the national policy: the larger the area the

[50] This approach stems from the private industrial sector where it was applied to the product designs and later the work organizations to identify and establish standards of best practice and quality. More recently, it has been adopted in socio-economic policy to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of government policies, in particular for labour market and equal opportunities policies.

closer the policy to the optimum, i.e. to a de-familialistic policy model with gender-neutral leave.

Radar chart with six dimensions (in per cent of the maximum achievable score):



The demonstration chart depicts the optimum childcare policy in terms of three policy components: admission and compulsory age and parental fee. These policy components reach the maximum score. The chart depicts a fairly good level of quality (more than a half of the target quality), but the allocation of places and service hours show considerable pitfalls of the policy.

At first sight, radar charts are just another way of presenting the policies in the form of a two-dimensional chart. However, this approach offers a number of analytical advantages as well as a wide range of possible applications. First, it provides a simplified presentation of multiple policy components, which is highly intuitive even to a non-expert. Second, the figure formed by the axes provides not only a visual representation, but its surface area can also be used as a composite (index) indicator of the overall policy (also see e.g. Mosley and Mayer 1998). I use it to divide up the countries into groups. Third, it allows a cross-country comparison, but also an analysis of policy trends and diversity among the countries over time – theoretically, each chart can have an arbitrarily large number of lines (Mosley and Mayer 1998). Fourth, charts highlight dominant components for a given policy in a given country in a given year. They indicate any qualitative change over time, as well as allow us to analyze policies as configurations of these components. Therefore, I use the radar charts to divide up countries into policy groups, while index scores are used as policy variables in statistical analysis of the association between childcare policies and maternal employment.

Formed by a number of policy components these charts suggest tentative assignments with regard to Leitner's (2003) varieties of familialism, and the eight countries cluster together as de-familialistic, explicitly familialistic, implicitly familialistic, or optional. It should be

emphasized, however, that national policies are divided up into policy models according to their scores on policy components, where 'more' familialistic versus 'less' familialistic is defined relative to other countries in the group. Thus, countries in this study are clustered relative to each other: each policy score, as well as the country group reflect similarity and diversity of countries in this study (O'Reilly 2006: 744; Ragin 2009: 5). This method is made explicit, is applied uniformly across countries and time, and hence produces a uniform standard as required in a cross-country comparison.

1.4 Data sources

Information on leave policies derives from the Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the Member States of the European Union (*MISSOC*). MISSOC is the central information source on social protection legislation, benefits and financing in the European countries that take part in MISSOC, collected by the European Commission.[51] The MISSOC Database provides basic information about policy on parental leave in the eight countries in highly structured and comparative categories, providing information from 2003 onwards. Policy information on years from 2000 to 2002 was collated from the Mutual Information System on Social Protection in Central and Eastern European Countries (*MISSCEEC)*, which documents social protection legislation in the eight countries. The concept and structure of the MISSCEEC tables are based on the approach used in the MISSOC Database. Hence, it provides consistent information and allows comparisons across countries over time.

Information on policy programmes of formal day care services for pre-school children is collated from an extensive library of sources. The main source is the European Eurydice unit of the Education in Europe Network (2009). Eurydice is an information network set up and run by the European Commission, which prepares and publishes information on pre-primary education and care. I used their descriptions/overviews of national education systems, comparative studies and analyses of national education systems and policies and the key data on the pre-primary education in the eight countries.[52] I also used the 'Education at a Glance' series and the OECD Family Database, which brings together information from different OECD databases, and databases maintained by other (international) organisations (such as the Eurostat and the European Commission, Council of Europe, Unicef – TransMONEE Database).[53]

[51] Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/missoc/db/public/compareTables.do
[52] Available online: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
[53] Available online: http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343,en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1_1,00.html

I collated any missing information from national administrative and other relevant agencies and ministries, when information was available in English. However, national policy programmes are often not translated in other languages, and the most critical issue was the distinction between types of childcare leave, particularly in countries where leave keeps its 'maternity' designation, although the fathers are also entitled to some time off after a short period of 'mothers-only' leave (depending on a joint parental decision in the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia). Furthermore, there are important gaps in information on day care services for children aged 0-3 years. Therefore, I contacted policy experts and representatives of the national agencies from the eight countries, such as the national ministries or institutions that are responsible for the area of social protection and education, and the national experts from the eight countries who comprise a network of the official representatives to MISSOC and Eurydice. They reviewed the policy information I collated, corrected it as necessary, and provided the missing information and data.

2. Analyzing maternal employment and employment measures

To analyze maternal employment patterns, this study employs the Eurostat's tailored extracts of annual Labour Force Survey data, hereafter referred to as *LFS* (see Eurostat 2009a; 2009b; 2009c). Because no comprehensive regular data collection of maternal (or parental in general) employment is available for the EU countries, the Eurostat extracted employment data especially for the purpose of this study from the LFS 2000-2007. The key advantage of this data is that the same questionnaire is used in all countries, with consistent definitions and variables. This study covers data from 2002 through 2007: data for 2000 and 2001 were dropped because they were incomplete for most countries, and 2007 was the most recent year for which data was available.[54] A sequence of data points is used. Each point represents annual data for the country, and encompasses four reference quarters in the year (see Eurostat 2009a-2009d for detailed description of the LFS data).[55] I used six data points between 2002 and 2007, to examine the consistency of employment patterns over time, i.e. whether or not they are consistently high/low over time.

[54] All eight countries joined the European Union in 2004. Thus, the 'backdata' are difficult to create for survey statistics if they were not originally collected according to the Eurostat's requirements - which in the eight countries were not. Deriving household statistics from a sample that collects data on individual persons adds a layer of complexity. This also explains why there is a limit as to what individual characteristics are considered in this study. For example, the core labour force survey and EU-SILC data collections did not provide variables that would allow to link women's employment status to personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, religion.

[55] General information on the EU-LFS can be found in the Eurostat's page 'Employment and unemployment (LFS)', see link in section 21.2. Detailed information regarding the LFS survey methods and comparability issues is available on: http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm

2.1 Employment data: defining the sample

This study analyzes employment rates for women with pre-school children, relative to other women in the same country. Employment data is nested in eight country-level units. The unit of observation is the national aggregate, i.e. the country.

The *employment rates* represent employed persons as a percentage of same age total population. Employed persons are persons aged 15 and over who performed work, even for just one hour per week, for pay, profit or family gain during the reference week or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent because of, for instance, illness, holidays, industrial dispute, and education or training (Eurostat LFS 2009a).

In this study, employment data is filtered in three ways. First, the dataset is restricted to employed women aged between 25 and 49 years. Such sample facilitates me to analyze employment patterns of women who are most 'sandwiched' between the care for young children and paid employment (also see e.g. Lewis 2010: 32; Rubery et al. 1998: 49; EC 2008a). Before I delimited the age group, I analysed data on mean age of women at birth of first child between 1960 and 2005 and found that the mean age in this group of countries rose from 23.2 years in 1960, on average, to above 25.0 years in 2005, and has been increasing (EC 2008a). I also checked individual countries and found mean age was 25 years and above. Therefore, the underlying assumption is that employed women aged 25 years and over are on average more pressed with care obligations than younger women. Furthermore, I found that these countries displayed comparatively lower employment rates for women above 50 than other EU Member States EC (2008a). Thus, the chosen age group facilitates me to analyze employment rates for women who completed their formal schooling but are young enough to rule out a substantial outflow from employment into retirement (see e.g. Antecol 2003: 4; Scharle 2007: 167; EC 2008a: 100-1).

Second, a woman is treated as an *employed mother with a pre-school child* only if she is that child's mother (biological or adoptive). This significantly differentiates the present study from the previously published Eurostat's datasets, in which each employed woman who lived in a household with a child was treated as a mother of that child, regardless of whether or not she was their mother (Eurostat 2008: personal correspondence).

Third, maternal employment data is restricted to women with a child of pre-school age, i.e. with children between 0 and 6 years but under 7 years of age, and compared to rates for

women with older children and without children. That notwithstanding, there is some cross-country variation in the compulsory (pre-)primary schooling age, since children have access to, and/or are obliged to enter reception classes or universal schooling between 5 and 7 years. But generally, the compulsory schooling begins at age 6. Therefore, to reach a reasonable level of comparability across the selected countries, employment data is filtered for children aged between 0 and under 7 years of age.

2.2 Employment variables: the rates and employment gaps

This study analyzes employment data using two variables. An indicator of maternal employment is the employment rate (i.e. employment/population ratios) for women with children aged between 0 and under 7 years of age, relative to employment rates for women in the same country, whose youngest child is aged 7 years or over or have no children – hereafter referred to as *women without pre-school children*. To calculate these ratios the following formulae are used:

$$\text{ER women with pre-schoolers (in \%)} = \frac{\text{No. of women with children 0-6, in employment}}{\text{Total population of women with children 0-6}}$$

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

Where
ER = employment rate

I also calculate the *employment gaps* between these two groups of women in the same country, adapting the method used by Gornick and Meyers (2003). In this study, the employment gap is a relative but standardized measure of the intra-country differences in employment rates for women with preschool children and those without. Comparing intra-country differences rather than simply the maternal-employment rates facilitates me to estimate how the presence of a child affects female employment, as it isolates the effect of having a pre-school child on women's employment (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 260). The gap is computed applying the same mathematical procedure across countries and over time.

Data is analyzed for the whole group of women aged between 25 and 49 years, as well as divided up into age groups: 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-45, and 45-49 years (divided up by the

Eurostat). In order to explore women's employment in different stages in family lifecycles, I divide up the employed mothers into four groups by age of children: mothers with infants and toddlers (0-2 years), with children of play age (3-5 years), mothers with children in primary school (6-11 years), and with children in secondary school (12-14 years). I also analyzed data for mothers with older children, but did not find any significant variation across the eight countries. Data is analyzed with descriptive statistics, in order to describe their basic features as well as to manage and present it in a summary way. I used SPSS statistical software (version 15; SPSS 2009). *Mean* is used as a measure of central tendency, because data is approximately normally distributed, and gives an indication of whether country's employment rates and the gaps are high (above the mean) or low (below the mean). *Standard deviation* is used as a measure of spread to elaborate further on data.

2.3 Data and comparability issues

The coverage and quality of available international statistical data varies substantially for the eight countries, especially before 2000. More reliable Labour Force Surveys data are available only from 2000, but there is a limit as to what individual characteristics can be considered in this study. The underlying assumption of this study is that in the absence of richer and preferably longitudinal individual-level data a study of aggregate employment rates is worthwhile, because it allows me to highlight that overall female employment rates, used in earlier studies, hide very different employment patterns for different groups of women.

The Eurostat's employment data used in this study is consistently collected across the eight countries and harmonised by the Eurostat. Hence, data is fairly comparable among the countries. That notwithstanding, two critical issues need to be considered. First, employment data in this study does not differentiate between women in full-time and women in part-time employment. This would be more critical when comparing female employment rates between post-socialist countries and Western capitalist countries, because in the former group most women work full-time, while in the latter group many women work part-time (also Motiejūnaitė 2008: 27). But as this study is comparing post-socialist countries, data is not strongly biased upwards/downwards, because the proportion of the part-timers among women is low, regardless of their parental status (Eurostat 2005).[56] Second, the EU guidelines stipulate considering persons on maternity leave as persons in employment, and

[56] In the Eurostat's LFS, the distinction between full-time and part-time is based on spontaneous response by the respondent. Hence, it is impossible to establish a more precise distinction between the two types of work, since working hours differ across the EU member states.

persons on parental leave as employees absent for other reasons. However, persons on long-term leaves are treated differently in national statistics; these either strictly apply Eurostat's guidelines (any person on full-time leave for over 3 months should be considered as having a job only if they continue to receive 50 % or more of their previous wage), or long-term leave has no consequences for their employment status.[57] Thus, data can be biased downwards because parents using unpaid leave for over a year can be identified as inactive in most countries, while parents on part-time leave may be counted as employed.[58] However, lack of information on duration of absence and the receipt of salary prevents the Eurostat from assessing the effect of applying the recommendations regarding the treatment of persons absent from work.[59]

3. Statistical analysis

This study explores whether, and how, policies and maternal employment are interrelated. In this statistical analysis, childcare policies are measured with the leave and the day care indices (section 1 of this chapter), and maternal employment with the employment rates for women aged 25-49 years with children of pre-school age (as discussed in section 2 of this chapter). I first explore the associations between the two variables, using the data on the policy indices and the employment rates between 2002 and 2007. Second, I measure the associations between the two variables by calculating *Pearson product moment correlation coefficient* using SPSS statistical software (version 15; SPSS 2009). I calculate it using the following formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum\left[\left(X_i - \overline{X}\right)\left(Y_i - \overline{Y}\right)\right]}{\sqrt{\left[\sum\left(X_i - \overline{X}\right)^2 \sum\left(Y_i - \overline{Y}\right)^2\right]}}$$

r = Pearson correlation coefficient
X_i = policy index score
$\overline{X}$ = mean
Y_i = employment rates for women aged 25-49 years with children aged 0-6 years
$\overline{Y}$ = mean

[57] In Estonia, Hungary and the Czech R., however, persons absent from work because of parental leave are considered as 'not employed'.
[58] A comprehensive assessment of the use of leave would ideally include two indicators: the proportion of eligible parents among the working parents with children, and the take-up rates of leave among eligible parents. However, while information on the number of people on leave and/or the number of benefit recipients (administrative data) is available, there is no comprehensive information on the eligible population.
[59] In 2010, the Eurostat initiated a common approach to determining the labour status, which would cover all forms of care leave.

Pearson correlation coefficient measures the strengths of linear association between childcare policies (in index scores) and employment rates. The value of the correlation coefficient varies between +1 and -1, where -1.0 shows a perfect inverse (i.e. negative) association and +1.0 shows a perfect positive association. Variables that are completely uncorrelated have an *r* of 0.0. When the value of the correlation coefficient lies around ± 1, then it is said to be a perfect degree of association between two variables. As the value goes towards 0, the association between the two variables gets weaker. When the coefficient is positive, the value of one variable increases as the value of the other variable increases, and when it is negative, the value of one variable decreases as the value of the other variable increases. In some cases, two variables can be closely associated (correlation is strong), but that does not mean that there is a causal relationship between them (Diamond and Jefferies 2001: 164-170; Miller 2005: 307). In some cases, correlation can be weak. This does not necessarily mean that there is no association, but it can be that the association is non-linear. By and large, the associations and correlations are simple statistical methods, which are efficient enough to answer my research question about the relationships between two policies and maternal employment with the data at hand.

Why not regression analysis? In the social sciences, the use of regression analysis is routine when investigating relationships between two or more variables. The key issue is that one needs to select appropriate statistical analysis to the research question as well as for the data at hand. Interested in the quantitative effect of childcare policies upon maternal employment one would probably choose simple regression. I do not use it for the following reasons. First, this study explores the association between childcare policies and maternal employment in eight countries, in order to advance the hypotheses about their interrelationship in this group. It does not aim at predicting or generalizing beyond the eight countries; it uses correlation coefficient as descriptive technique rather than inferential, just to find the patterns within the data. Second, assuming that childcare policies have an effect upon maternal employment without careful attention to other factors that potentially affect it is quite unrealistic (Mood 2010: 67; Sykes 1992: 3). So, why not use multivariate regression analysis instead, as it allows additional factors to enter the analysis separately so that the effect of each can be estimated? This technique is valuable for quantifying the impact of various simultaneous influences upon a single dependent variable, i.e. maternal employment. In fact, multiple regression analysis is capable of dealing with an arbitrarily large number of explanatory variables (Mood 2010: 67). Further, because of omitted variables bias with simple regression, it is often essential even when the investigator is only interested in the effects of one of the independent variables, in my case childcare policies (Sykes 1992: 8). As with any regression (like with any other type of multivariate) analysis the sample size, as well as the sampling

techniques are critical to ensuring its validity (Miller 2005: 317; Sykes 1992: 8-9). As noted in chapter 1, this study uses a "purposive sample" of eight post-socialist countries, which were selected for their typicality (de Vaus, 2002: 363). Further, it is based on aggregate-level data and sample size is less-than-ideal to make any meaningful inferences, because there are too few units of analysis (where N = countries rather than N = individuals). I simply do not have enough information required to obtain more accurate findings, hence to meet the power and effect size requirements for (any) regression analysis (Bartholomew et al. 2008: 2, 161). My sample is not randomly selected, and thus it is not possible to do any regression analysis, i.e. any prediction and extrapolation beyond the chosen sample.

3.1 Interpretative 'exploratory' analysis

If policies serve as an incentive or a brake on maternal employment, one would expect to find the highest employment rates in countries that provide the optimal policies, and the lowest in countries that lag behind in childcare provision. If this is not the case, then what accounts for any curiously high/low levels of employment rates?

As noted above, I explore associations within the sample of the eight countries in the period under review. Because I analyze data on the level of eight countries, it is easy to spot any weak or non-linear association. To explore any such cases, I make a systematic comparative illustration, focusing on other factors of female employment with high explanatory potential (as identified in chapters 3 and 4), such as education, economic necessity, sectoral structure of the economy, working time arrangements, availability of alternative day care options, attitudes towards maternal employment and care norms. I use these factors as contextual characteristics, and conduct a descriptive 'exploratory' analysis, in order to extract any patterns of relationship from available data. I exploit the most recent available data, and 'transform' it into information about explanatory potential of each factor, using descriptive statistics. This additional analysis provides a theoretically informed exploration of whether, and how, these factors shed new light on a cross-country variation in maternal employment. In sum, this study generates informed hypotheses about underlying factors of maternal employment, but does not statistically test their explanatory power, nor aims to derive any predictions beyond this data.

Data sources for the exploratory analysis

Data for this part of analysis is collated from the Eurostat and the OECD on-line databases. These databases provide consistent and comparable aggregate-level data from the national statistical offices of their selective member states. They include survey data (e.g. employment rates are based on national labour force surveys) as well as other statistics, such as social security expenditure, demographic trends.[60] Data on informal childcare service provision are collated from the *European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC; preliminary results).[61] This is a new reference source for annual cross-sectional and longitudinal data on policy use, available in the Eurostat online database since 2009, and provides data for only few years. Data on undeclared service provision and use are sourced from the Eurobarometer's (2007) study of undeclared work in the European Union (Special Eurobarometer 284/ Wave 67.3).

[60] The Eurostat online database is available at: *http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database*, along with detailed documentation of the data. This study uses annual data from the Eurostat Population and Social Conditions theme, the Labour market, Population, Education and Living conditions and welfare sub-themes. The OECD Family database, which largely collates data for the EU member states from the previous database, is available at: *http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343,en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1_1,00.html*. In each database data are organised by (sub)themes and can be downloaded in tables, defined by the user.

[61] Available online:
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/living_conditions_and_social_protection/introduction/income_social_inclusion_living_conditions

Chapter 6

Do policies matter? Results and discussions

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of cross-country comparative policy analysis, employment analysis, and the associations between childcare policies and maternal employment in the eight post-socialist countries between 2002 and 2007. The discussion of the empirical material is explicitly cross-national and comparative, and is organised in three subchapters. First, I discuss the results of policy analysis, which demonstrates the existence of significant cross-country variation of childcare policies. I find that between 2000 and 2008, national childcare policies formed constellations that fit together in patterned ways, and countries divided up into three fairly homogeneous clusters: Slovenia and Lithuania have the sequential de-familialistic policy model; Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Estonia the explicitly familialistic policy model; and childcare policies of Poland, Slovakia, and to some extent Latvia resemble characteristics of the implicit familialism policy model. The last two policy models offer few, if any, benefits that endorse and advance the interests of mothers who prefer investing in employment. Interestingly, these policy groups also share core characteristics with Esping-Andersen's (1990) three worlds of welfare capitalism, as this chapter will show.

Second, analysis of employment patterns demonstrates significant cross-country variation in the employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without. These figures bring out very well the patterns of associations between maternal employment and childcare policies, and I find that the employment patterns for mothers with pre-school children largely correspond to the policy models. Their employment rates are the highest in countries with de-familialistic policies, but I find curiously high maternal employment rates in the implicitly familialistic policy group, where parents are left nearly without support.

Third, statistical analysis confirms the positive and fairly strong associations between childcare policies and maternal employment. However, I find different patterns of association within the clusters of countries, and empirical evidence indicates that policies and maternal employment are not interrelated in any straightforward or simple way.

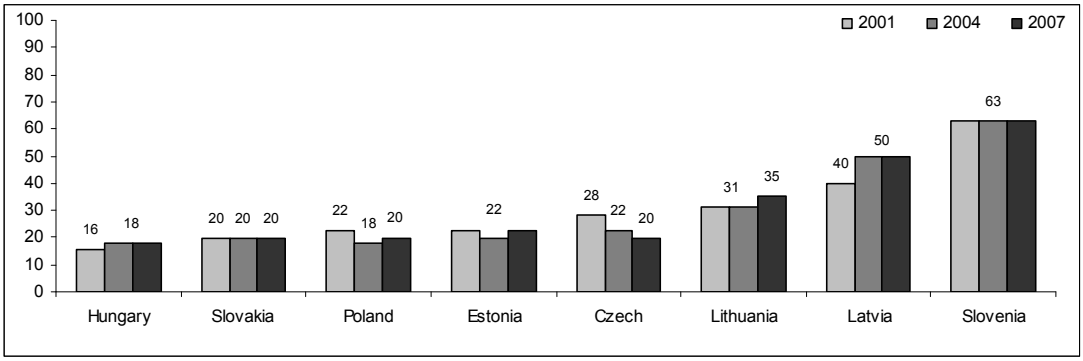
1. Childcare policies in a cross-country perspective

A close examination of national childcare policies in the eight countries reveals a very mixed panorama among the eight countries between 2000 and 2008: countries provide very heterogeneous childcare policies, with both familialistic and de-familialistic policy components within the same policy, and with considerable contradictions between the two policies. In order to have a clearer understanding of their policies, and to provide an insight into empirical evidence, I first discuss each policy separately. The radar charts summarize each policy across their respective policy components, and provide synoptic overviews of national policy models over time. Second, their policy characters can be fully accounted for only when policies are summarized. Thus, I synthesize the two national childcare policies and show how they are configured across their twelve policy components. I discuss the inconsistencies and contradictions between policies, and show whether or not they afford carers the opportunity to choose among different day care options, or instead, promote one family model over another. Because national statutory policy provisions did not change significantly over a single year, policy information is summarized in three points in time: 2001, 2004, and 2007. 2001 is chosen to report policies in the first stage of the 'stabilisation period', when the new economic order was established. 2004 outlines the policies in the period of accession to the European Union in 2004, and 2007 depicts the most recent policy developments, whereby I also discuss policy changes up to the early 2008.

1.1 Leave policies

Do national policies on leave create conditions for women's continuous employment, and encourage men to participate in care? To answer this question, figure 6.1 first presents the index scores for each country in three years: the higher the score the closer the policy to the optimal policy; the lower the score the higher the state familialism – policy generates disincentives for women's continuous employment and reinforces the conventional gender division of labour. We can see that no country under review provides optimal policy on childcare leave, and, by rule of thumb, countries divide up into three groups: the first group, with relatively high index scores, comprises Slovenia, Latvia and Lithuania. Estonia and the Czech Republic are located in the middle, and Hungary, Slovakia and Poland are at the other end. Not all differences hold over the studied period: the Hungarian and Slovak indices were constantly low and the Slovenian high, while the other five countries show more small-scale policy shifts over time.

Figure 6.1: Leave index, 2000-2008, in per cent of the maximum achievable score (max = 8)



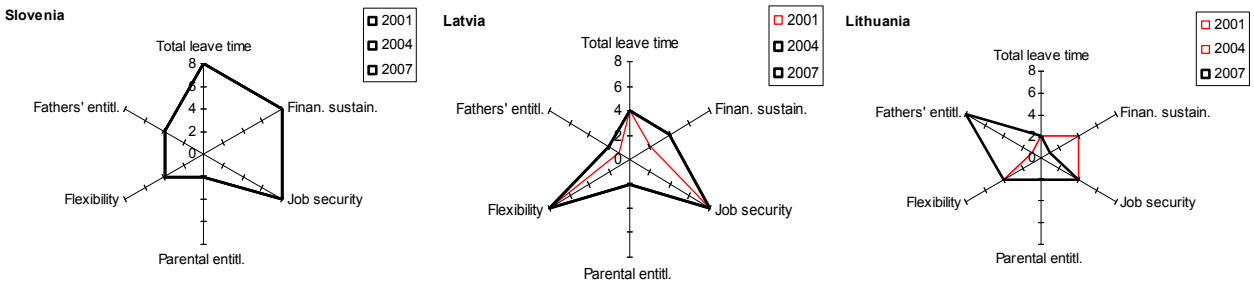
Data sources: MISSEEC, MISSOC, administrative sources.

Index scores do not reflect sufficiently how complex national policies are. To provide an insight into the rich empirical material, the remainder of this section presents and discusses the findings by policy components, as well as discusses the dynamics of change in the six policy components, in order to explain country policy models. Afterwards, each country is considered separately, in order to observe the most important changes in each of these components over the period of six years. A set of radar charts on the next page reports national leave policies, by country and by year. These charts provide a simplified presentation of policies as configurations of six policy components, and illustrate their distance from the optimal model.

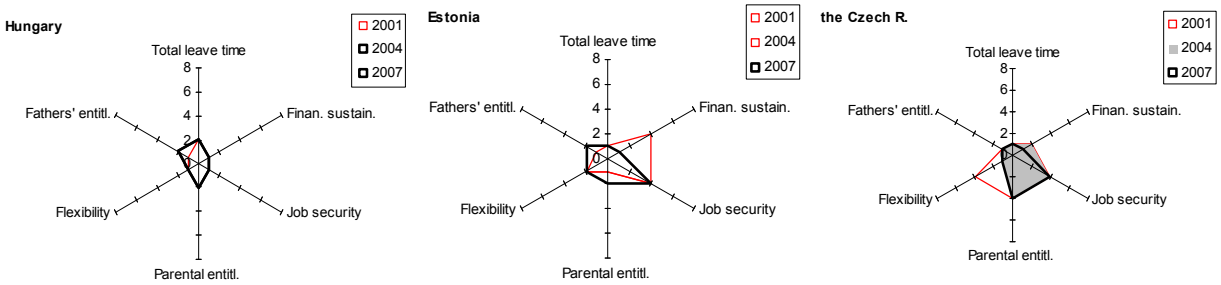
The charts should be read as follows. Each chart consists of a sequence of spokes – policy components. The length of each spoke is proportional to the index score, and ranges between 1 and 8 (a minimum and a maximum achievable score). The lines joining the data points graphically represent the country's policy and show the distance from the optimum policy model: the larger the area the closer the conformity of the policies to the optimal policy model, i.e. the policy that provides options for women to engage in employment, and challenges the conventional gender division of labour. Charts are sensible to two modes of change: from one country to another, and within a single country over time. In the presentation, the latter are depicted by different coloured lines and coloured areas within the charts. They show whether or not any qualitative change took place over time – when there is a single line in the chart, no change was introduced to the policy. To draw more systematic conclusions about leave policies, three tentative country groups are distinguished, according to the main policy characteristics. We shall see that the three country groups differ significantly in the extent to which the states subsidize family care, and encourage men to participate in care.

Figure 6.2: Policies on childcare leave in 2001, 2004 and 2007, in index scores

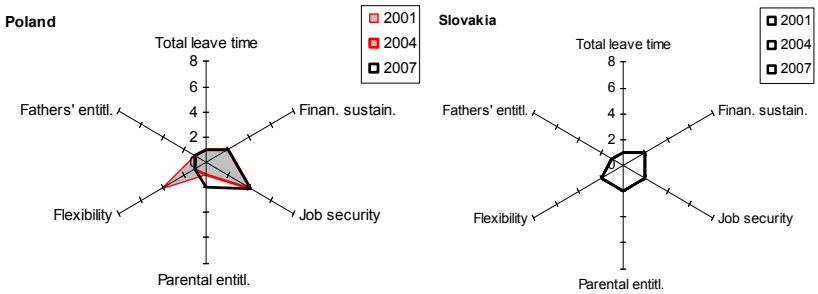
Gender-neutral leave, generating incentives for women's continuous employment



Financial investment in longer family care



Limited state intervention



The radar charts allow a fuller insight into how complex national policies really are. Overall, leave policies in Slovenia and Latvia most closely resemble characteristics of the optimal leave policy. Lithuania significantly extended its parental leave in 2007/8, but it introduced a generous paternity provision, and its leave policy challenges the conventional gender division of care. The Polish and the Slovak leave policies have the lowest scores on all six policy components and their policies resemble characteristics of the implicit familialism policy model, with limited state intervention. A similar combination repeats in Hungary, Estonia and the Czech Republic. But in contrast to the previous group, these three countries invest in family care, whilst their policies do not challenge the conventional gender division of labour. When we closely examine countries by their policy components, we find very diverging patterns, and these show how countries can provide leave policies with very contradicting elements.

Length of leave and income support payments during leave

Slovenia, Latvia and Lithuania provide comparatively more gender-neutral leave policies and entitle parents to a well-paid leave for one year, with an optimal combination of length and income support payments during leave (figure 6.3 on the next page). Parents receive from 80 to 100 per cent of their monthly earnings, parental leave is open to both parents, hence the states provide incentives for parents to share care obligations.

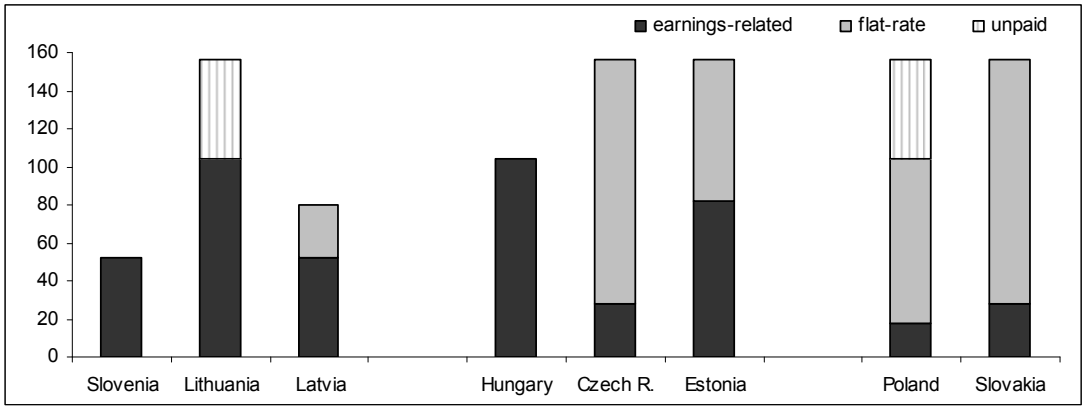
Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia provide high cash benefits for family care which largely offset wage loss over a longer period of time (figure 6.3). However, their policies do not generate incentives for shared caring. Furthermore, in the Czech Republic the duration of care-related cash benefits exceeds parental leave time – if carers do not return to their job after three years they are excluded from a protective labour market legislation connected to parental leave. Such provision generates incentives for carers to retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time (see Leitner 2003: 370).

Poland and Slovakia provide very short maternity leave, which is followed by long parental leave (figure 6.3). In Poland, maternity leave of 16 to 18 weeks is paid at 100 per cent of previous earnings, parental leave of up to 24 months is means-tested, and the remaining of up to 52 weeks is unpaid.[62] In contrast, Slovakia grants a statutory maternity pay for 28 weeks at the rate of 55 per cent of their previous earnings, while the rest of care leave is paid

[62] Means-tested benefit is paid to nearly 70 per cent of leave users (Kotowska et al. 2008: 835). Hence, I considered it as paid in assigning scores.

at low flat rate. In both countries, leave comes with low level of economic security, and hence reinforces the conventional gender division of care.

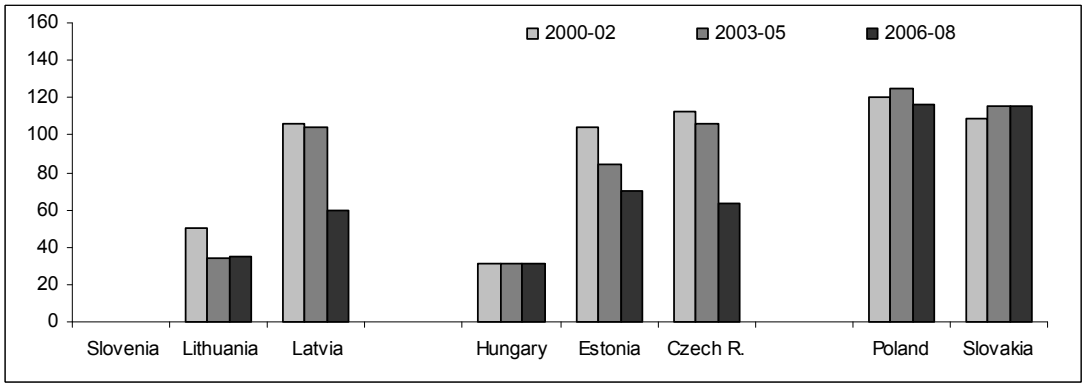
Figure 6.3: Parental leave (in weeks) by type of income support payment during leave, 2006-2008



Data sources: MISSEEC, MISSOC, administrative sources.

Is income support payment during leave sustainable, or can it cause an income shock for the household? To explore leave by benefit payments, I calculated leave in full-time equivalents (as if total leave granted to parents was paid at 100 per cent of previous earnings; see chapter 5). Figure 6.4 below contrasts total leave time granted to parents and leave in full-time equivalents and shows the difference between the two: the lower the column, the higher the payment over longer leave time; hence, the leave is more generous and thus affordable.

Figure 6.4: Gaps between total leave time and leave in full-time equivalents, 2000-2008, in weeks



Data sources: MISSEEC, MISSOC, administrative sources.

We can see that Slovenia is the only country where total leave time (52 weeks) is paid at 100 per cent of previous earnings, thus no difference. It is followed by Hungary, where leave is granted for 104 weeks, and paid at 70 per cent of previous earnings throughout the leave. Thus, the gap between total leave time and leave in full-time equivalents is relatively low, and more affordable, and shows that the state invests in longer family care. In contrast, the

gaps between total leave and benefit payment during leave are the widest in Poland and Slovakia, which means that their leave on average is not financially affordable, and may cause a significant income shock to carers and their households. The trend is improving in Latvia, the Czech Republic and Estonia, where governments extended periods of high income support payments during leave between 2006 and 2008. Thus, their leave is financially more sustainable and affordable over a longer period.

Flexibility of leave provision

The eight countries show a great cross-country variation in this policy component, with less regularity across and within policy clusters: Slovenia, Latvia and Lithuania, and also Estonia, generate incentives for carers to return to the labour market on a part-time basis with a proportional reduction in benefits (as long as the earnings from paid work do not exceed a ceiling of earnings or a maximum number of hours per week). In contrast, leave entitlements in other two groups are dissuasive for engaging into gainful activity while on leave. Gainful activity while on leave is permitted only in the Czech Republic and Poland, but it results in loss of cash benefits and/or of a place in a day care setting. In Hungary, however, parents are not allowed any gainful activity when in the receipt of parental leave benefit (known as *GYED*).

Furthermore, the Slovenian, Latvian and Lithuanian, but also the Czech and the Polish policies, permit parents to split-up leave time. In contrast, other countries grant full-time leave in one continuous period. However, countries vary significantly in the set time limit for using leave: only Latvia extends leave provision up to child's 8th birthday, while other countries restrict it to the child's 4th birthday (the Czech Republic and Poland) or the 3rd (Estonia and Lithuania). The Slovenian parents must take their parental leave no later than 105 days after childbirth, but can postpone 75 days of parental leave and use them as leave of absence either in one section or in segments any time until child turns eight years.

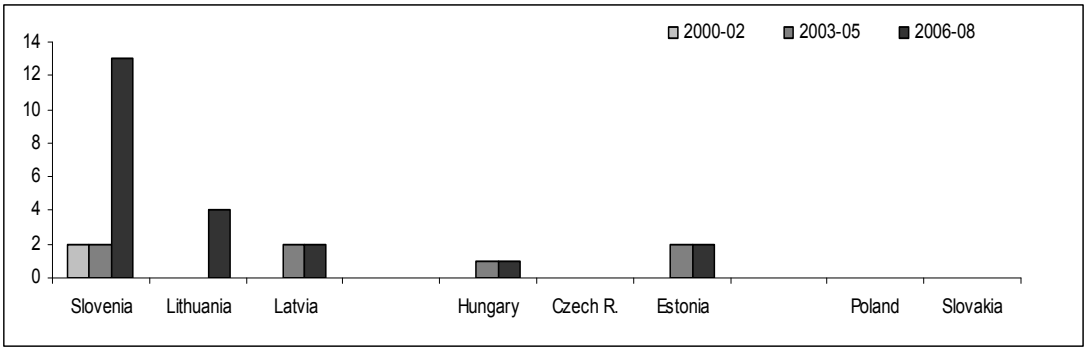
Parental and paternal entitlements

All three groups of countries take a "passive approach" to *parental* leave (Fagan and Hebson 2005: 95). While, by law, the mother can transfer part of her leave entitlements to the father in all countries, only the Czech leave is granted as an individual right and parents can share it concurrently. However, leave benefit payments are transferable, and parents in all eight countries must make a joint decision about who will receive the benefit. Furthermore, the Estonian (prior to 2007/08) and the Polish mothers were entitled to a larger share of parental

leave than fathers, and hence their policy provision most explicitly reinforces the conventional gender division of labour.

On the other hand, countries with gender-neutral leave policies offer the most generous non-transferable *paternity leave* with high income support payments during leave among the eight countries. Figure 6.5 below compares paternity leave provisions across the eight countries and figure 6.6 on the next page compares paternity leave provisions with maternity leave provisions.

Figure 6.5: Paternity leave provision (in weeks), 2000-2008



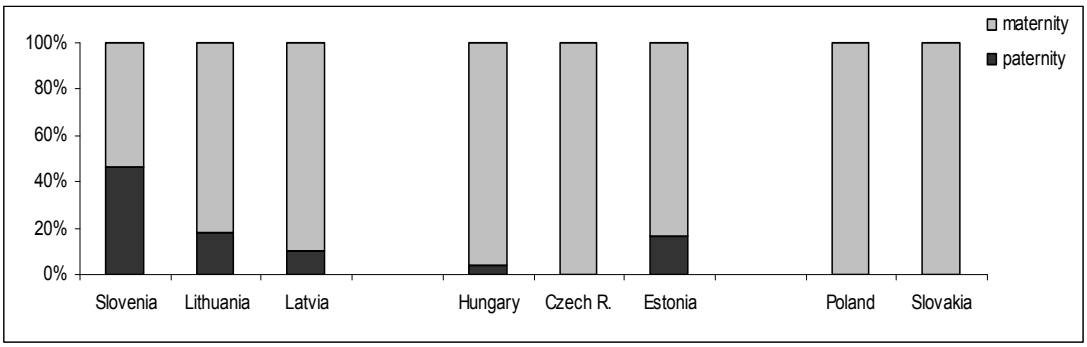
Data sources: MISSEEC, MISSOC, administrative sources.

Slovenia introduced a statutory non-transferable entitlement in 2001, granting the fathers a 90-day leave (figure 6.5).[63] Fathers must use a minimum of 15 days of total time during maternity leave, i.e. together with the mother. These 15 days of leave must be used full-time, and the father is entitled to full-wage compensation. The remaining time of leave, i.e. 75 days are unpaid (only minimum social insurance is paid by the state), and can be used at any time before the child turns 3 years (8 years prior to 2007). With reference to earlier studies (discussed in chapter 3), income loss is too high for most fathers, except for those who themselves pay only a minimum social insurance (such as the self-employed and the farmers, largely to maximise their profits). Hence, Slovenian policy was given 4 out of 8 points on this component. In contrast, Lithuania entitles fathers to a one-month paternity leave with full income support payment since 2007/08. It should be emphasized that in Lithuania paternity leave is largely devoted 'to assist women' during maternity leave, as fathers have to use total paternity leave time during maternity leave. Such provision suggests that mothers remain regarded as primary caregivers, and fathers as assisting and helping them (also Motiejūnaitė 2008).

[63] In 2001, the Slovenian parliament passed the Law on Parental Care and Family Cash Benefits to install the required changes necessary to harmonise the Slovenian legislation with that of the EU. The right to paternity leave was introduced gradually: 15 days in 2003, 45 days in 2004, and 90 days in 2005.

Hungary and Estonia provide a very short paternity leave, and the Hungarian fathers are actually entitled to a higher income support payment than the mothers on maternity leave, i.e. fathers get 5 days paid at 100 per cent of previous earnings and mothers get two years paid at 70 per cent of their previous earnings (figure 6.6). In contrast, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic grant no extra individual paternity provision as a non-transferable right of the fathers (i.e. on a 'leave-it-or-take-it basis), and their policy models most explicitly reinforce the conventional gender division of labour.

Figure 6.6: Paternity and maternity leave, 2006-2008, in proportion of total leave time



Data sources: MISSEEC, MISSOC, administrative sources.

Protection against dismissal for requesting or taking parental leave

Between 2000 and 2008, the workers were protected against dismissal on the grounds of applying for or taking leave in most countries, except Hungary and Slovakia. In the other six countries, women with permanent or fixed employment contracts have the right to return to the same or a similar job. Parents maintain previously acquired rights unless a redundancy situation has arisen during their absence or it is not reasonably practicable for them to return to their old job (in which case they have to be offered a similar job on terms and conditions no less favourable from the original). Thus, any dismissal while the employee is on leave can result only from financial difficulties of the employer (e.g. bankruptcy, negative production growth and so forth), or, of course, an illegal behaviour of the employer. In contrast, Hungary has incorrectly transposed and has been incorrectly implementing the EU parental leave directive (96/34/EC): the law does not protect workers against dismissal on the grounds of an application for *parental* leave, and does not provide for the right to return to the same or equivalent job after using leave (see also EC 2009). On the other hand, Slovakia has incorrectly implemented EU directive on equal treatment between women and men in the field of employment (2002/73/EC): national legislation does not guarantee the full set of rights for women returning from leave, i.e. the right to any improvement in working

conditions to which the woman would have been entitled during her absence (see also EC 2010).

Policy changes between 2000 and 2008

Changes in leave policies during the first half of the decade were smaller than during the second half, and the states are showing more policy dynamics around 2007 and 2008. For better comparison I summarize the trends before and after 2004, when the eight countries joined the EU:

Period 2000-2004

In that period, countries mainly changed the well-paid leave time. Latvia and Lithuania extended parental leave, and increased the pay to a 70 per cent earnings-related payment rate for 52 weeks. Poland installed more changes. First, in 2001, it extended fully paid maternity leave from 20 to 26 weeks, and cut it down to 16 weeks in 2002. Second, it reduced the flexibility of parental (means-tested) leave: parents engaging in any gainful activity lost the childcare benefits. Third, the fathers were granted access to two weeks of total 16 weeks of maternity leave. Estonia extended both fully paid maternity leave (from 126 to 140 days) as well as parental leave (from 239 days to 315 days). It installed parental leave, granting it as a family-based right after 6 months of maternity leave. Moreover, it introduced a two-week unpaid paternity leave. Slovenian parental leave in its form has existed since 1976, while government installed paternity leave entitlement in 2001. Lastly, the Czech Republic attached parental leave benefits to a full-time home care (a child can attend a public day care centre for a maximum of 5 days a month).

Period 2005-2008

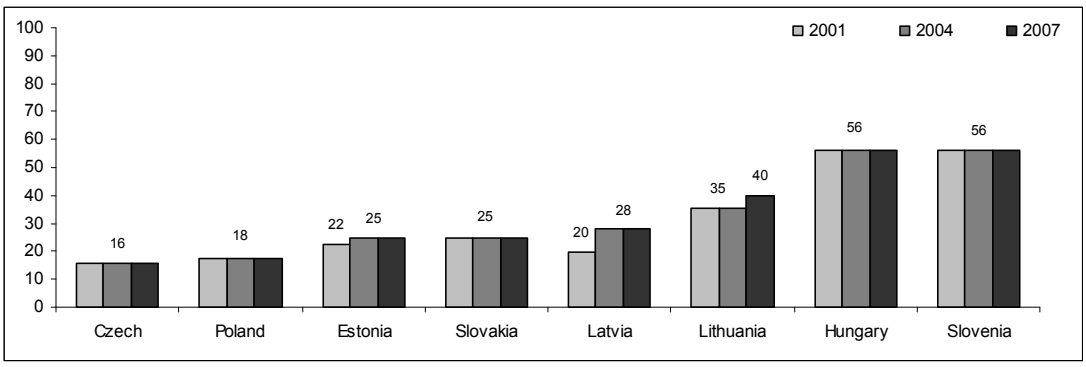
In the period from early 2006 to early 2008 national leave policies underwent more dynamic shifts. On the one hand, Lithuania and Estonia extended earnings-related leave time (from 1 to up to 2 years in Lithuania and from 315 days to 435 days in Estonia). Moreover, Lithuania installed a fully-paid one-month paternity leave, and Estonia installed a fully-paid two-week paternity leave. On the other hand, the Czech Republic introduced a differential payment system, and linked the level of income support payment to the length of parental leave: parents using a two-year leave qualify for an enhanced pay (of approximately 66 per cent of the national average monthly wage), and those using a three-year leave receive a basic pay (approximately 44 per cent). Lastly, Poland extended fully compensated earnings-related maternity leave from 16 to 18 weeks, of which 4 weeks can be shared among the parents. Moreover, it increased the amount of flat-rate means-tested parental leave benefit, and attached it to a full-time home care. Policy changes between 2000 and 2008 suggest that the

policy developments at the EU level have had some role in national policy provisions. The EU parental leave directive (Council Directive 96/34/EC) requires that member countries enact measures that provide both parents the right to leave, as distinct from maternity leave. Whilst most countries were largely in line with this directive before entering the EU in 2004, Estonia and Poland had to make marginal changes, and opened parental leave to fathers in 2003-05. However, in terms of an individual paternity provision, all eight countries were enforced to install a non-transferable paternity right. So far, only four countries have introduced it as a non-transferable right of the father, i.e. on a leave-it-or-take-it basis.

1.2 Policies on childcare service provision

The eight countries divide up into three policy groups in regards to their policies on childcare service provision. The first group, with a relatively high index score, comprises Slovenia, Hungary, and Lithuania (figure 6.7). Latvia, Slovakia and Estonia are in the middle, and the Czech Republic and Poland are at the other end. Policy analysis demonstrates that the countries' summary scores are the results of different policy configurations, but countries show significantly less policy change over time relative to their policies on leave. We can see that policies on service provision are less favourable, relative to leave. They have lower index scores, and divide up into different groups between the two policies, which shows contradictions between policies in the field of child care.

Figure 6.7: Day care index, 2000-2008, in per cent of the maximum achievable score (max = 8)

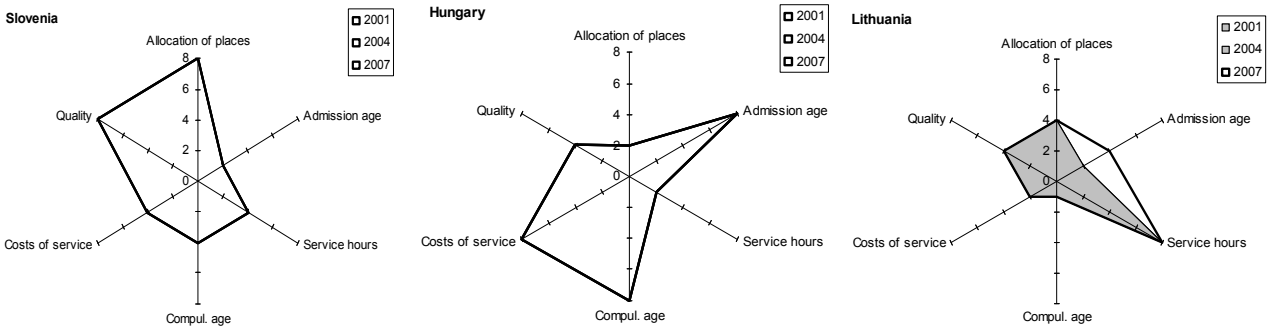


Data sources: Eurydice, administrative sources.

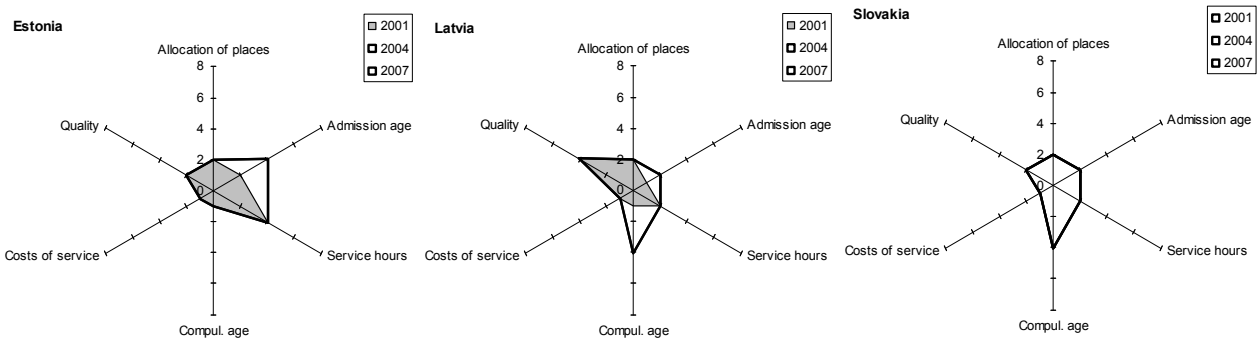
National policies on day care service lag behind the optimal policy model on nearly every policy dimension, depicted in a set of radar charts on the next page (figure 6.8). Again, there are wide cross-country differences, most significantly in the provision of nursery services; except in Slovenia and Lithuania nursery service provision is very limited, with strong urban/rural divides. Service provision for children over 3 years of age improves in Estonia, but not in Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Slovakia.

Figure 6.8: Policies on childcare service provision, 2001, 2004, 2007, in index scores (max = 8)

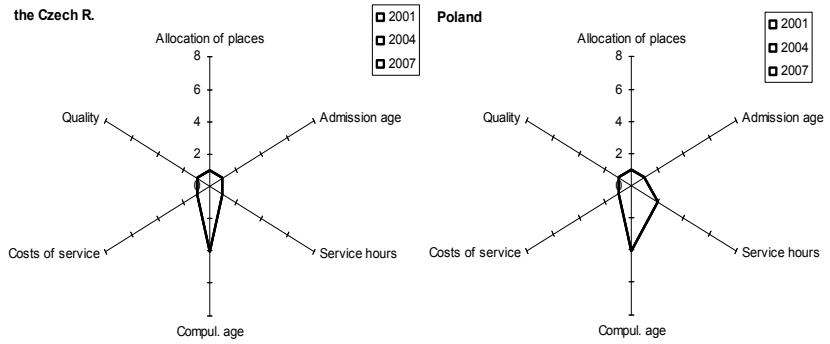
Affordable, adequate and accessible formal childcare service provision



Inadequate formal childcare service provision



Inadequate formal childcare service provision with no service provision for under-3s



As shown in the radar charts on the previous page, the Slovenian, Hungarian and Lithuanian policies provide comparatively more accessible and affordable formal day care service: Slovenia provides an optimal policy in terms of the eligibility criteria for a place in a day-care setting and shows commitment to provide homogeneous high-quality institutional day care for all children across the country. Hungary is the only country among the eight where the state prescribes nursery and kindergarten services free of charge to parents, and only the Lithuanian day care services operate longer and more flexible hours, for both the youngest and older children. That notwithstanding, the latter two demonstrate strong urban/rural divide in service provision. Policies on day care service in the other five countries generate care needs: access to formal day care service is limited, especially for children under three years of age. Intra-country differences in service provision are large, and the states do not address this issue. Further, opening hours are less compatible with the working hours of the parents. To better explain their policy characters, I document national policies by policy components in the remainder of this subchapter.

Allocation of places

No country in the study prescribes a universal guarantee to a place in public day care service. The reception classes are an exception, since a place in a day care setting becomes universal for children of compulsory schooling age. In contrast, all eight countries prescribe an open access to a day care setting. The guidelines on how to allocate a place when the supply does not meet the demand vary considerably across countries, and only Slovenia sets the monitoring of the capacities in day care as a statutory principle (running a national register since 2008).[64] In contrast, formal service provision is inadequate in Poland, Slovakia, and Latvia, with strong urban/rural divide and variation in access criteria.

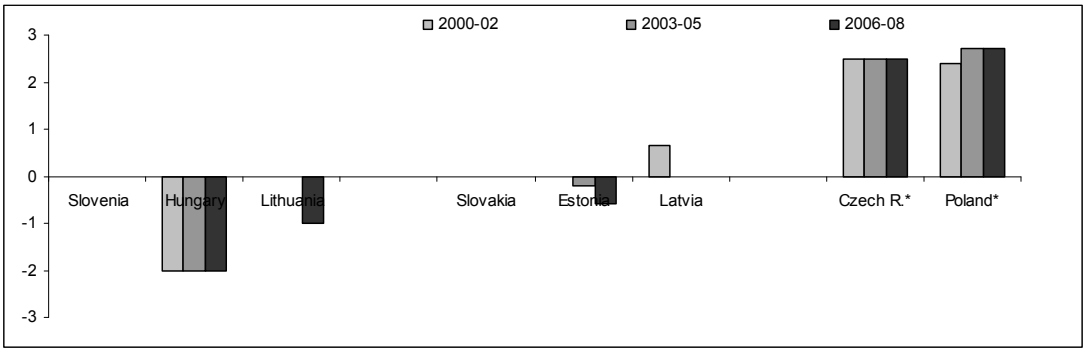
Admission and compulsory age

Are parents allowed any options between different types of care for the youngest children? As shown in figure 6.9 on the next page, in Hungary, Lithuania, and Estonia children are admitted to a formal day care centre before the end of parental leave, hence the negative value. This suggests an optional care policy model, i.e. that policies afford parents different day care options. In Slovakia, Latvia and Slovenia public crèches become available with the end of parental leave time (at the age of 6 months in Slovakia and when they turn one year of age in Slovenia and Latvia). In contrast, admission age to crèches is not prescribed in the

[64] Only 3 per cent of children whose parents applied for a place were not granted one in 2006/07 (Eurydice 2009: 83).

Czech Republic and Poland, and children can generally enter kindergarten when they turn three years of age. However, their local governments are autonomous in service provision, and service provision varies tremendously between their regions, and only few nurseries exist in only few major cities.

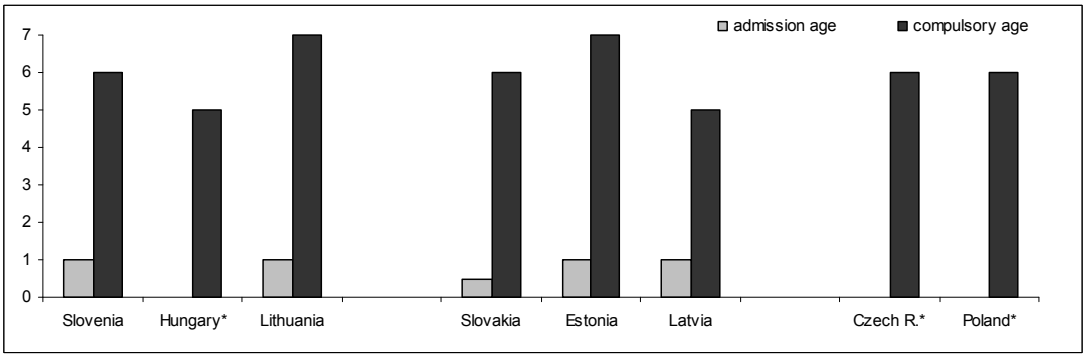
Figure 6.9: Gap between admission age to public day care facility and length of parental leave, 2000-2008



Data sources: Eurydice, administrative sources.
Notes: The gap is negative when children are admitted before the end of earnings-related leave (and vice versa). No gap when children are admitted at the end of earnings-related leave. *Admission age to crèches is not set by the state. As crèches in these two countries are largely missing, I used the admission age to the kindergarten (i.e. at age 3).

Governments generally address and correct the inadequate service provision by a downward extension of compulsory schooling to all children once they turn 5 or 6 years of age, and include the final year of pre-primary education as a preparatory provision for primary school (figure 6.10). Every child of that age gets a place in the reception class without delay, and, as part of the education programme, day care service is provided free of charge to all parents.

Figure 6.10 Admission age to day care facility and compulsory schooling age (in years), 2000-2008



Data sources: Eurydice, administrative sources. Note: *Admission age to crèches not set.

Service hours of day care

The organisation of day care services and their opening hours have implications for how the services can be used. Largely, the eight countries choose two approaches. Slovenia and Estonia support service provision on a full-day basis and provide services throughout the year. Their service hours are more or less compatible with the working hours of parents across the country. In other countries the opening hours are at the discretion of the provider, and hence service provision varies between their local geographical areas. Although opening hours have been extended between 2000 and 2008 among the eight countries, only Lithuania ensures that services operate more flexible hours, in order to respond to different care needs of parents.

Costs of day care service

Without exception, local governments are autonomous in setting the price of a day care programme, and day care is free of charge to parents only in Hungary and Poland (parents pay for the meals). However, in both countries the local providers have a statutory permission to charge parents for any extra-curricular activities. Moreover, the Polish providers are free to determine the rules and whether or not to exempt families in financial difficulties from paying.[65] On the other hand, only the Slovenian state regulates the principles under which the parental fee is set: applying a sliding-fee scale the parental fee is means-tested and adjusted according to the number of children uniformly across service providers. In other countries local governments are free to decide whether or not to exempt low-income families from paying fees. Among these only the Lithuanian state regulates the principles for fee reduction and grants a 50 per cent reduction to lone parents, student families, and to families where the fathers are conscripted.

Quality of service provision and intra-country variation in service provision

Intra-country variation in service provision is a critical issue among the eight countries, but it appears less problematic in Slovenia, Lithuania and Hungary. In these three countries the standards of care provision are, more or less, defined and regulated at the national level. Moreover, day care service is granted to parents as their statutory entitlement, hence the local governments are obliged to establish and administer both crèches and kindergartens. In Slovenia, the state also sets national auditing mechanisms for monitoring both the quality

[65] The national experts document high costs of day care, especially for the youngest children (e.g. Eurydice 2009; Plantenga and Remery 2009).

and availability of services. It ensures that quality day care service is available and accessible across the state, and acts to prevent urban/rural divide in service provision. The Hungarian and Lithuanian policies are fairly close in regards to ensuring a standardized level of day care service across the state. In contrast, the Estonian and the Slovak states also grant public day care service as an entitlement, but leave some elements of service provision to the local providers. Hence, service provision varies across their geographical areas. In Poland and the Czech Republic only kindergartens for children aged three years and over are a statutory entitlement, while local governments are autonomous in the provision of nursery services, and can provide them as deemed fit. In the two countries, only few nurseries exist in only few major cities, and the state does not act to improve access to public day care service.

Policy changes between 2000 and 2008

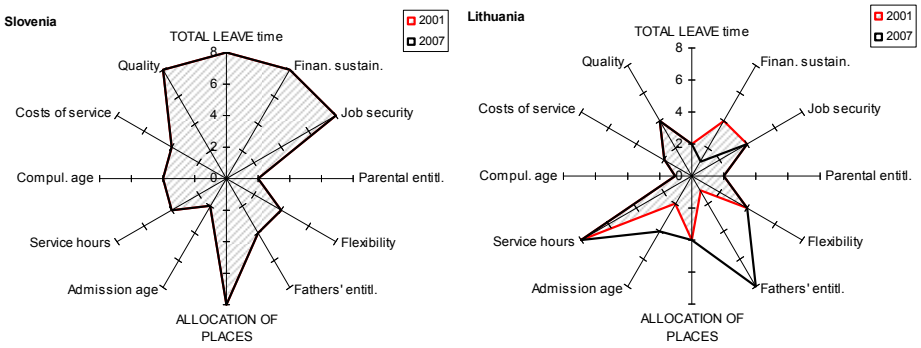
Analysis of policy change between 2000 and 2008 shows only moderate temporal dynamics and policy shifts. The only change was in the admission age. However, this indicator merely reflects the change in national leave policies – the countries did not introduce any change in the starting age itself (to bring to mind, the admission age assesses the time gap between earnings-related leave and starting pre-school age). Among the eight countries only Latvia made a downward extension of compulsory schooling (preparatory classes), and since 2004 provides universal day care service to all children when they turn five years of age (7 before 2004).

1.3 The varieties of familialism in eight post-socialist countries

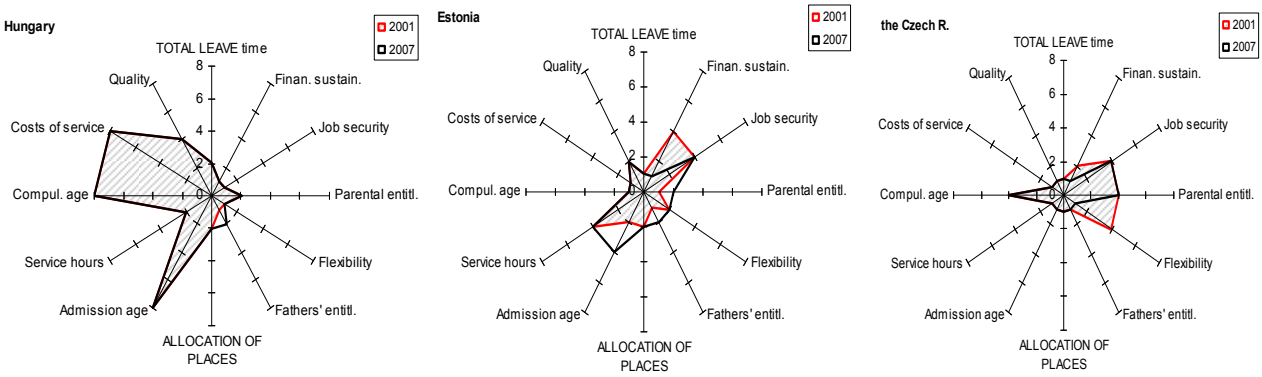
As documented so far, the eight countries differ significantly with respect to the two basic dimensions of familialism and de-familialism (figures 6.2 and 6.8). They provide very heterogeneous childcare policies, with both familialistic and de-familialistic components within the same policy. To provide a fuller portrait of policy characters, both policies are compared and contrasted, in order to determine whether or not national policies afford carers different care options, create conditions for women to engage in paid employment, and encourage fathers to participate in care. Thus, the radar charts on the next page summarize national policies as configurations of twelve policy components, which have been thoroughly documented earlier; the right-hand side illustrates the leave policy, the left-hand side the day care policy. Different lines and colours show change over time between 2000 and 2008, i.e. at the beginning of the period under review and at the end, to illustrate any policy shifts. Leitner's (2003) analytical differentiation is deployed to characterize policy models.

Figure 6.11: Policy models, 2000-2008, in index scores (max = 8)

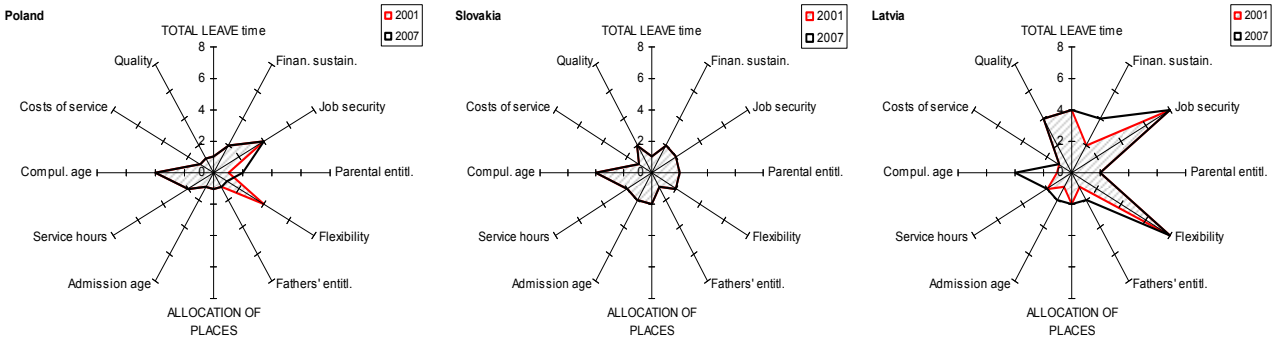
De-familialistic policy model



Explicitly familialistic model



Implicitly familialistic model



A thorough assessment along these twelve policy aspects leaves us with three fairly homogeneous country clusters, which represent three types of familialism in the field of child care: (1) *de-familialism* with a sequential policy model, where leave is provided to both parents for a maximum of one year, and is followed by a fairly adequate, affordable and accessible quality day care service provision for all children when they turn one year; (2) *explicit familialism* with subsidized family care but practically no public childcare options for the youngest children; and (3) *implicit familialism* with limited state intervention.

The *de-familialistic* policy group comprises **Slovenia** and **Lithuania**, both with the highest scores on both childcare policies among the eight countries. Their policies on leave are characterized by optimal length of leave time and income support payments during leave (where the Lithuanian parental leave is followed by a very low flat-rate 2-year leave), and the most generous paternity provisions. The familialistic element of childcare policy contains incentives for shared parenting, and encourages the employers to revise their hiring practices. Their policies provide options for mothers' continuous employment, and I hypothesise that their employment rates will be the highest, and the employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without will be narrow.

The policy models in other six countries reinforce the conventional gender division of care, and thus hinder women's employment. On the one hand, childcare policies in **Hungary**, the **Czech Republic** and **Estonia** resemble characteristics of the *explicitly familialistic* policy model. Their states invest in family care for the youngest children by providing longer periods of well paid leave. But while parents are entitled to a fairly well paid and secured leave over a longer period of time, flexibility in leave provision is low, and policies contain very modest incentives to encourage parents to share care obligations. Day care service provision for the youngest children is limited, with intra-country variations in service provision. The states rely on family care, and equate the right to family care with family's obligation to care, especially the Czech Republic. I expect these countries to demonstrate low maternal rates, and high employment gaps.

On the other hand, policies in **Poland** and **Slovakia** resemble *the implicitly familialistic policy model*. The state intervention is limited, and parents are left nearly without support. Whilst the state does not explicitly promote family care, the lack of affordable public childcare solutions for the youngest children reinforces the conventional gender division of care. Policies generate care needs, and families incur higher costs of care. Access to day care services depends largely on private resources of the family and on a limited commercial market supply. The **Latvian** state shows least consistency between the two policies: whilst

its policy on day care services resembles the implicitly familialistic model, its leave policy resembles an optimum gender-neutral policy. But, on the other hand, local governments are autonomous in service provision. Service provision varies tremendously within the country, and the government has addressed this issue only by reducing the age of compulsory schooling and admission age to day care service centre. Thus, the state leaves parents nearly without support once child turns one year. Because the state implicitly assumes family care, its overall childcare policy resembles the implicitly familialistic policy model. In sum, in all three countries with the implicitly familialistic policy model the state leaves parents nearly without support. Korpi argues that in such countries the welfare state generates care needs, and women's employment will depend on household's market resources and availability of alternative care solutions (Korpi 2000: 144; also Leitner 2003). Therefore, I expect to find different maternal employment rates in this group of countries.

Lastly, none of the eight countries resembles Leitner's (2003) optional policy model, where the state subsidizes family care as well as provides formal day care options for the youngest children. I find that policies in **Hungary**, **Estonia** (**Lithuania** since 2008) most ostensibly approximate Leitner's (2003) *optional familialism*, or the *comprehensive support* type in Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) classification. At least their policy programmes appear more diversified and multipurpose, since children can be admitted to public day care facility before the end of longer well-paid parental leave. This suggests that the state generally supports mothers in paid employment. However, in practice, adequate, affordable and high-quality day care service provision for children under three years of age is limited, with strong urban/rural divides in service provision. To compensate for the lack of nurseries, the three countries explicitly invest in home care: family care (paid from the national budget) costs less than to set up and maintain the nursery services (paid from the local budget), hence the states subsidize extensively family care for the youngest children. That notwithstanding, their familialistic policies resemble characteristics of two different policy models: the Lithuanian leave policy remains more gender-neutral despite the extension of leave time in 2008, while the Estonian and Hungarian reinforce the conventional gender division of care. First, Lithuanian parents can use leave in a flexible way, which affects the return strategies of mothers in many ways: those with low-income do not have to stop working when costs of childcare are high, and those in higher occupations can better reconcile paid employment and care. In contrast, the Hungarian parents must take it in one continuous period, while they are not allowed to engage in any gainful activity (at least not while in the receipt of the leave benefit). Second, Lithuanian policy grants fathers one month fully-paid paternity leave, whilst this entitlement is less generous in the other two countries. Third, the Lithuanian

policy regulations on allocation of places in day care centre are more favourable than the Hungarian or the Estonian. The Lithuanian day care centres operate the most flexible hours among the eight countries, while the Hungarian service providers are allowed to interrupt service provision through the year (i.e. they are allowed spells of shorter breaks over the year with alternative day care service provided elsewhere, which negatively affects accessibility and availability of care service). In contrast, the Estonian local service providers have more autonomy in service provision, and intra-country variations in service provision are wider. Considering these critical distinctions I locate the Lithuanian policy model into the *de-familialistic policy model* alongside Slovenia, and the Hungarian and the Estonian into the *explicitly familialistic model*, whereby the Hungarian policy model more closely resembles the characteristics of this model than the Estonian.

1.4 Discussion

This study has analyzed whether childcare policies afford carers options to (continuously) engage in paid employment, probing the applicability of Leitner's (2003) analytical differentiation of the varieties of familialism. Exploring legislation on childcare policies I found that among the eight countries no policy fully matches Leitner's (2003) typology of de-familialism. Leitner (2003) argues that de-familialism is characterized by public childcare service provision, but the "family's right to care is not honoured" (2003: 359). I find that Slovenian and Lithuanian policies locate in between her de-familialism and optional familialism: both explicitly familialize child care until child is one year old, while they provide widespread public childcare solutions after that. Relative to the other six countries their public childcare services are adequate, affordable and accessible, and hence *afford* family carers with options to return to the labour market after a year, and support continuous labour force participation. This finding indicates that Slovenia and Lithuania prioritize mothers' employment, which is why I classify their policy models as de-familialistic.

Furthermore, the country groupings indicate and share some core characteristics with Esping-Andersen's (1990) three worlds of welfare capitalism, as well as Korpi's (2000) typology of state familialism (table 6.1 on the next page). (1) Policies in the *de-familialistic* model could be paired with *social democratic* ideas of Nordic states: in both instances state provides generous, but gender-neutral childcare policies. They support 'dual-earner' family model (also see Korpi 2000: 144), which allows women's command of their economic resources independently of their familial reciprocities. (2) Policies in the *explicitly familialistic* cluster are generally embedded in the *socially conservative* principles about

family and gender role: in both childcare policies are shaped by the principle of 'subsidiarity', which stresses the primacy of the family (and community) for providing care for the youngest children. Hence, the welfare state supports a single-earner model family (Korpi 2000). And (3), policies in the *implicitly familialistic model* resemble characteristics of the *market-oriented* (liberal) *model* of the Anglo-Saxon countries, where social benefits are largely organised to reflect and preserve the consumer and employers markets, and most entitlements are means-tested (Esping-Andersen 2002b: 44).

Table 6.1 Comparing the welfare state typologies

The present study*	**Leitner (2003)**	**Esping-Andersen (1990)**	**Korpi (2000)**
Sequential de-familialism	Explicit familialism De-familialism	Social democratic	De-familialistic dual-earner support
Explicit familialism	Explicit familialism	Conservative	General family support - single-earner model
Implicit familialism	Implicit familialism	Liberal	De-familialistic market-oriented model
	Optional familialism		

Author's compilation. Note: *Based on policies on parental leave and *formal* childcare services.

These findings suggest that the welfare-state principles underlying Esping-Andersen's clusters are highly correlated with those that shape family policy (Gornick and Meyers 2003: 23). As childcare policies of the eight post-socialist countries share core characteristics with these established welfare-state regimes, Esping-Andersen's three regimes could represent an organizing framework, i.e. 'ideal types of welfare states', around which other (e.g. post-socialist) welfare states oscillate.

On the other hand, country clusters in the present study only partially correspond with Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) grouping (authors used Leitner's (2003) analytical framework to group eight post-socialist countries between 1989 and 2004). The two studies yield different results, and as shown in table 6.2 on the next page, classification between the two studies corresponds only with regard to the Czech Republic with the explicitly familialistic childcare policies and Poland with the implicitly familialistic childcare policies.

Table 6.2: Comparing classifications of the eight post-socialist countries (coloured when matched)

	Familialistic		**De-familialistic (*Female-mobilizing*)***	**Optional (*Comprehensive*)***
	Explicit	**Implicit**		
Czech Republic	This study Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)			
Estonia	This study		Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)	
Hungary	This study			Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)
Latvia		This study	Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)	
Lithuania			This study	Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)
Poland		This study Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)		
Slovakia	Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)	This study		
Slovenia	Szelewa and Polakowski (2008)		This study	

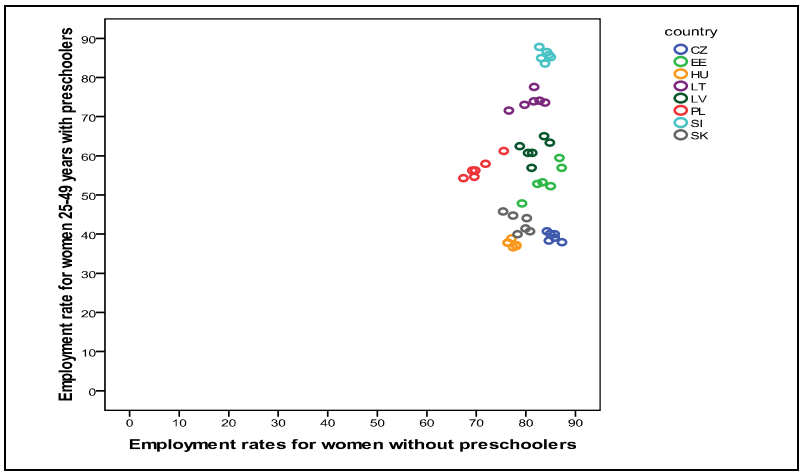
Author's compilation.
Notes: *Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) terminology, but I find that the characteristics of their models resemble Leitner's (2003) de-familialism (female mobilizing) and optional familialism (comprehensive).

Different findings can be partly explained by different time periods under review, and partly by different methodological approaches to comparative policy analysis. First, Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) study of national childcare policies extends only up to 2004, while the present study investigates the two policies between 2000 and 2008. My analysis of more recent policy developments reveals more dynamic policy shifts in the second half of the decade. For example, the Estonian policy became more explicitly familialistic after 2004, when the state increased subsidies for family care over longer period of time, in order to address inadequate service provision for the youngest children. Second, authors of the earlier study utilize policy indicators related to the policy delivery and the use. Their chosen policy measures interact with numerous mediating factors, such as availability of day care, parental care norms, national guidance on eligibility criteria and standards of service provision, which partly explains different findings between the two studies. Third, Szelewa and Polakowski's (2008) study does not take into account public childcare provision for the youngest children, i.e. the nursery service provision. The present study finds that the eight countries significantly differ in nursery service provisions, which also affects national policy characters. In sum, the present study demonstrates that the selection of policy indicators significantly affects the results, and indicates that we will fail to understand the varieties of familialism correctly unless we analyze the in/consistencies between the policies, and include a wider range of policy characteristics.

2. Do employment rates correspond with the policy models?

Drawing upon employment data, I examined the employment rates for women with pre-school children, relative to other women in the same country. Employment statistics between 2002 and 2007 confirm a paradoxical panorama and shows a wider cross-country variation in employment rates for mothers with pre-school children than discussed in chapter 1. Figure 6.12 below illustrates that between 2002 and 2007 the employment rates for women *without* children of pre-school age were the highest in Slovenia and the Czech Republic (about 85 %), and the lowest in Poland (at around 65 % in 2002 to shy of 70 % in 2005, having increased up to 76 % in 2007). However, the employment rates of mothers with pre-school children drop sharply in most countries, except Slovenia and Lithuania.

Figure 6.12 Employment rates for women with pre-school children, relative to those without, all women 25-49 years, over 2002-2007, in per cent



Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

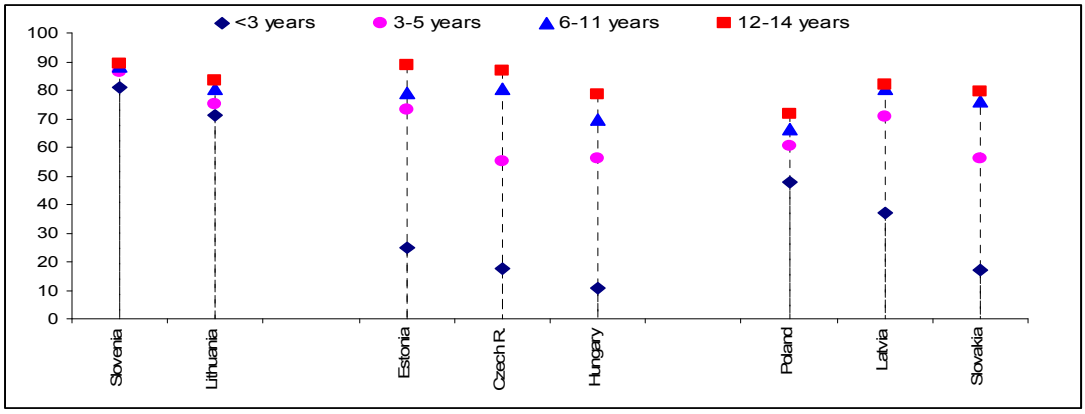
These findings are not significantly different from the earlier Eurostat's data, which motivated this study. But unlike earlier studies (e.g. Eurostat 2005), which documented the employment rates for women with children aged up to 12 years, I find a significant variation in the employment rates for different groups of mothers, both by age of children as well as by age of mothers. In the analysis that follows, I focus on these cross-country variations and begin by contrasting women's employment rates in different stages in their family lifecycles, and then focus on the employment rates by age of mothers with pre-school children, relative to other women in the same country.

2.1 Maternal employment rates

Maternal employment rates by age of children

Figure 6.13 below illustrates the distributions of female employment data (all women aged 25-49 years) across the eight countries between 2002 and 2007, and contrasts employment rates for women with children of different age. As explained in chapter 5, I divided up the employed mothers into four groups by age of children, in order to explore women's employment in different stages in their family lifecycles, and find that mothers with pre-school children are indeed more pressed with care obligation, relative to other mothers.

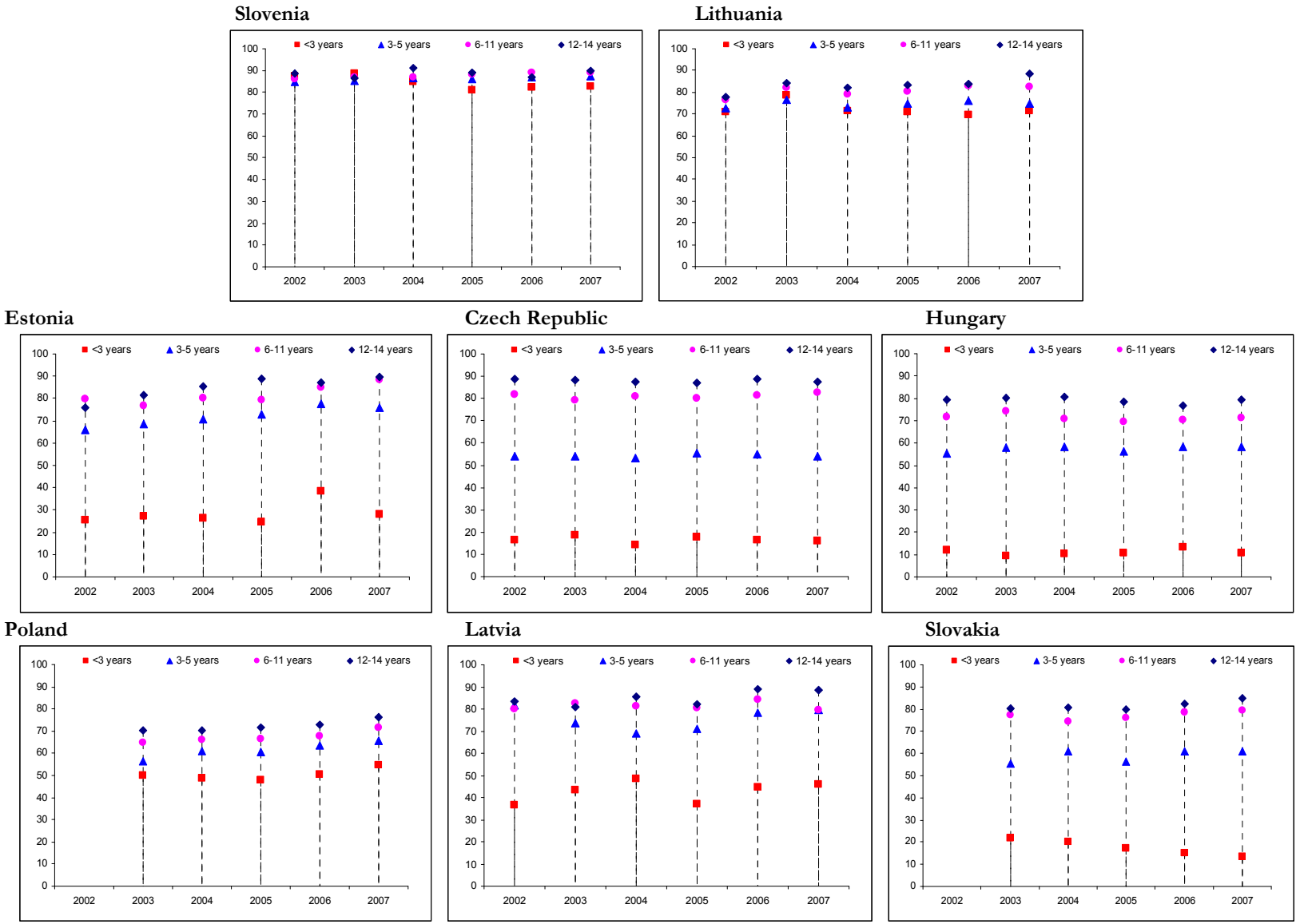
Figure 6.13: Employment rates for mothers aged 25-49 years, by age of children (in years), mean values over 2002-2007 (in per cent of total female population aged 25-49 years)



Data source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys 2002-2007. Note: Data for mothers with children under 3 years of age can be biased downwards because parents using unpaid leave for over a year can be identified as inactive in most countries, while parents on part-time leave may be counted as employed (Eurostat).

Empirical evidence demonstrates a discernible overall trend: among the eight countries, employment rates are the lowest for women with children under the age of three years (hereafter referred to as *the under-3s*), followed by women with older pre-school children. That said, a cross-country variation in their employment rates is the widest. Figure 6.13 illustrates the widest gaps between mothers with the under-3s and older pre-school children in countries with the explicitly familialistic policy model (Estonia, the Czech Republic and Hungary), and the narrowest in the de-familialistic policy group (Slovenia and Lithuania). These are followed by Poland, where state leave parents nearly without support. The differences between countries are smaller in terms of the employment rates for women with older children. As children grow, maternal employment rates increase across the eight countries, which suggests that care needs subside once children are in school. As we can see in figure 6.13a on the next page, employment trends are fairly stable over time in most countries, except the Baltic States, especially Latvia, where maternal employment rates fluctuated significantly over the period under review.

Figure 6.13a: Employment rates for women aged 25-49 years with children, by age of children, 2002-2007 (in per cent of the population), by country and policy model

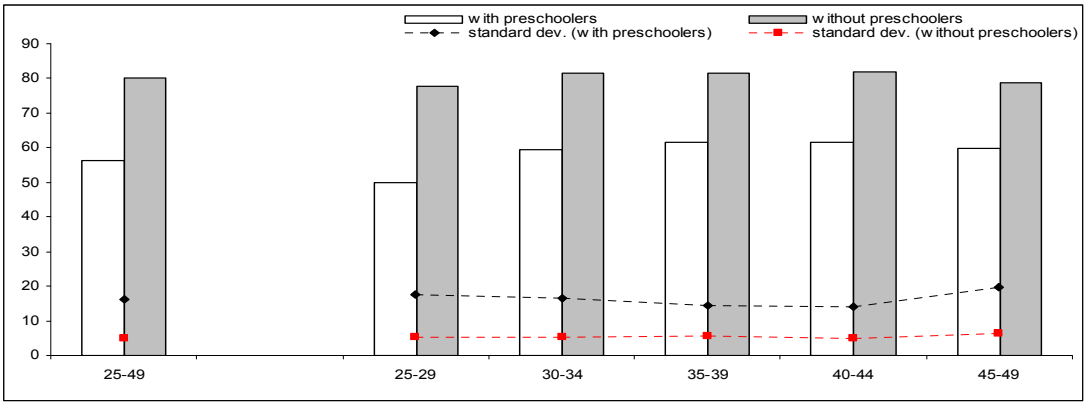


Data source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys. Note: Data for Poland and Slovakia for 2003-2007.

Employment gaps between women with pre-school children and women without pre-school children

Employment data among the eight countries is approximately normally distributed. Thus, figure 6.14 reports the mean employment rates. Standard deviation is used as a measure of spread, in order to give a complete summary of distributions. We can see in the figure below that between 2002 and 2007, the employment rates for women aged 25-49 years with pre-school children were on average lower than for women without pre-school children. On average, the employment rates are the lowest for mothers aged between 25 and 29 years, followed by mothers aged between 30 and 34 years. A cross-country variation in their employment rates is wider, and standard deviations for these age groups are slightly higher than for older mothers or mothers aged 25-49 years (19.5 %, relative to 16.3 %). In contrast, the pool of women aged 40-49 years with pre-school children significantly shrinks among the eight countries (and the sample sizes decrease). Together, these findings suggest that in these countries women between 25 and 34 years of age are on average more pressed with care obligations for pre-school children, relative to women aged between 35 and 49 years.

Figure 6.14: Employment rates for women by age (in years) and by presence of a pre-school child, over 2002-2007, means and standard deviations (in %)

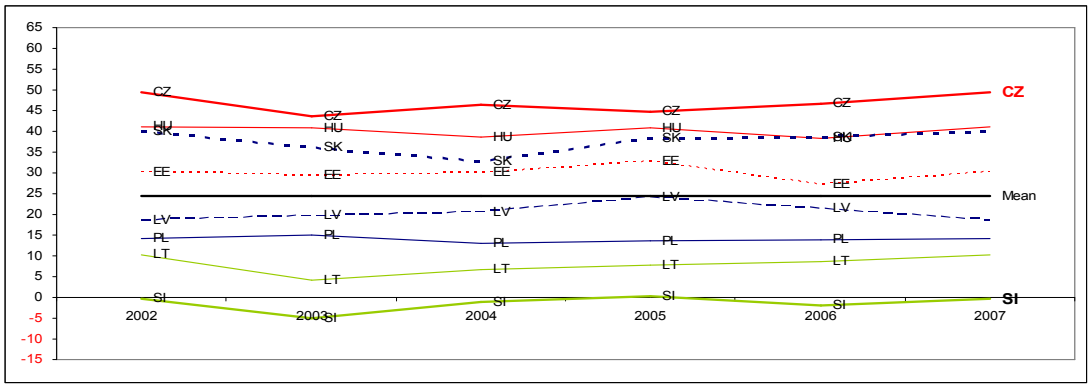


Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Figures 6.15 – 6.17 on the next page illustrate the employment gaps by countries between 2002 and 2007. As explained, the employment gaps indicate the effect of having a child of pre-school age on mothers' employment, relative to women in the same country whose children are older, or do not have any children. In the analysis that follows, I focus on the employment rates for women in the age group 25-49 years, and separately for women aged 25-29 years and 30-34 years. To find whether or not the national employment rates vary with the policy profile, I use a simple analytical approach – countries are coloured according to their policy clusters:

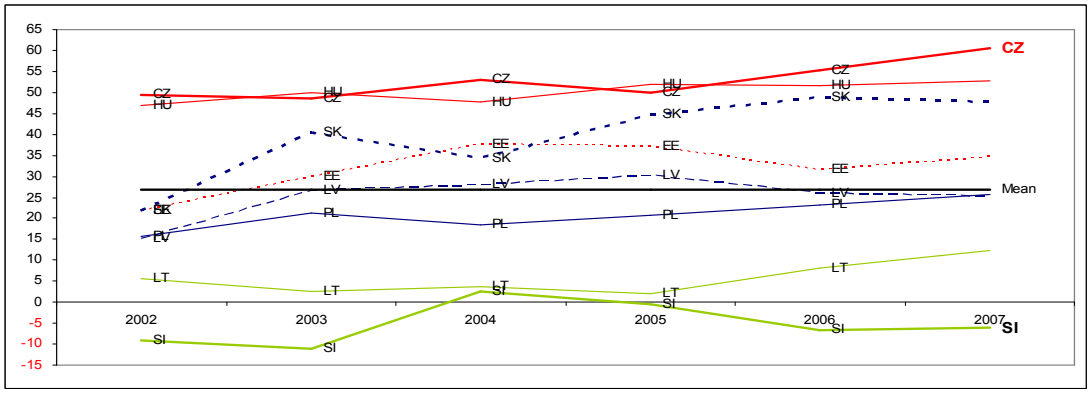
the green lines illustrate countries with the de-familialistic policy model, the blue the implicitly familialistic policy group and the red lines the explicitly familialistic policy group. The means are used as measures of central tendency for the eight countries, to show whether the values are high (above the mean) or low (below).

Figure 6.15: Employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without, women 25-49 years, 2002-2007 (in percentage points)



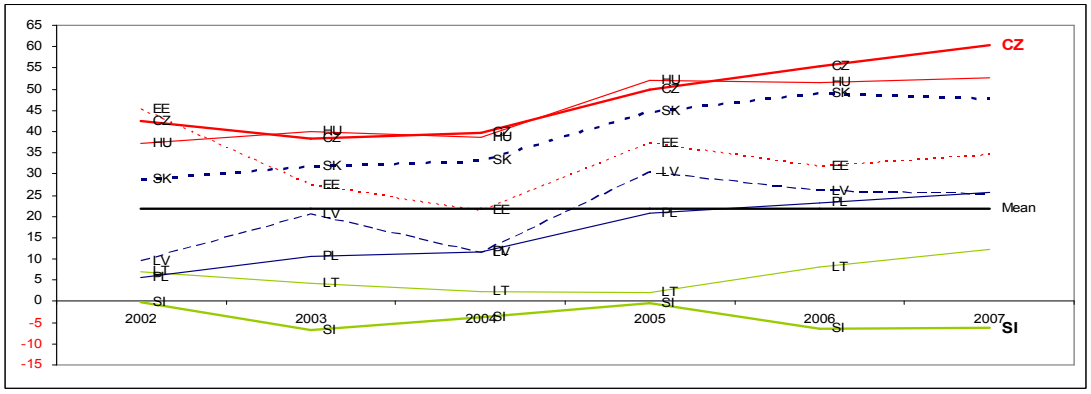
Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Figure 6.16: Employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without, women 25-29 years, 2002-2007 (in percentage points)



Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Figure 6.17: Employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without, women 30-34 years, 2002-2007 (in percentage points)



Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Analyzing the employment gaps for women aged 25-49 years between 2002 and 2007, and separately for women aged 25-29 and 30-34 years, we can see discernible overall trends: the maternal employment rates are the lowest and the employment gaps the widest in the Czech Republic and Hungary with the explicitly familialistic policy model (red lines), and Slovakia with the implicitly familialistic policy model (blue dotted line). The Estonian employment gaps are also above the mean value for the eight countries (Estonia provides explicitly familialistic policy model, but shows a weaker membership in this policy group).

The trends are the opposite in Slovenia and Lithuania with the de-familialistic policy models (green lines). Slovenia is actually the only country among the eight, where the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children are higher than for other women, and their employment gaps oscillate between -5.1 and +0.3 percentage points (figure 6.15). In Latvia, and especially Poland – the two countries with the implicitly familialistic policy models – the employment gaps are below the mean value for women aged 25-49 years, and their maternal employment rates are higher than I have expected. However, these two countries have wider employment gaps between women aged 25-34 years, than women aged 25-49 years, with a significant dynamics over the period under review: the gaps for women aged 25-29 years increased for about 10 percentage points over a period of six years (the two countries actually have similar values at the beginning and at the end of the period under review); and for women aged 30-34 years for about 20 percentage points. This finding suggests that in these two countries women with the youngest children struggle with acute care needs.

The employment gaps in the eight countries largely correspond with policy changes, and they generally widen as governments extend leave and/or install more generous leave payments (e.g. in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania). This includes the three countries with the implicitly familialistic policy model – their governments slightly increased the amounts of flat-rate leave payments over the period under review, and Latvia also extended universal access to formal day care to all children aged 5 years, in order to address low service provision. Now, the question is whether the association between maternal employment and childcare policies is positive, strong and linear.

2.2 The associations between childcare policies and maternal employment

As discussed in Chapter 5, this study uses the index scores for each policy and employment rates for women with pre-school children to explore the associations and to measure the correlation coefficients between policies and maternal employment in the eight countries. I use index scores for each policy as well as the score for both policies, in order to consider the associations between childcare policies and maternal employment. I report correlation coefficients in table 6.3 below, but it should be made explicit that these are reported only to describe and quantify association between policies and maternal employment (this information is not used for any inference purposes, i.e. for inferential statistics).

Table 6.3: Correlation between maternal employment rates and childcare policies over 2002-07, correlation coefficients

	Coefficient
Overall childcare policy (N=48)	**0.762***
without SI (N=42)	0.461*
without PL (N=42)	0.822*
without SI and HU (N=36)	0.706*
without SI and PL (N = 36)	0.610*
without SI, HU, PL (N=30)	0.834*
Leave policy (N=48)	**0.802***
without SI (N=42)	0.583*
without PL (N=42)	0.840*
CZ, EE, HU, PL, SK (N=30)	0.978*
Policy on day care (N=48)	**0.361***
without HU (N=42)	0.873*
without PL (N=42)	0.392*
without SI and HU (N=36)	0.741**
without SI, HU, PL (N=30)	0.864**
without SI, HU, LT (N=30)	0.401*
CZ, EE, LV, SK (N=24)	0.673**

Note: *statistically significant at $p < 0.05$; **statistically significant at $p < 0.01$

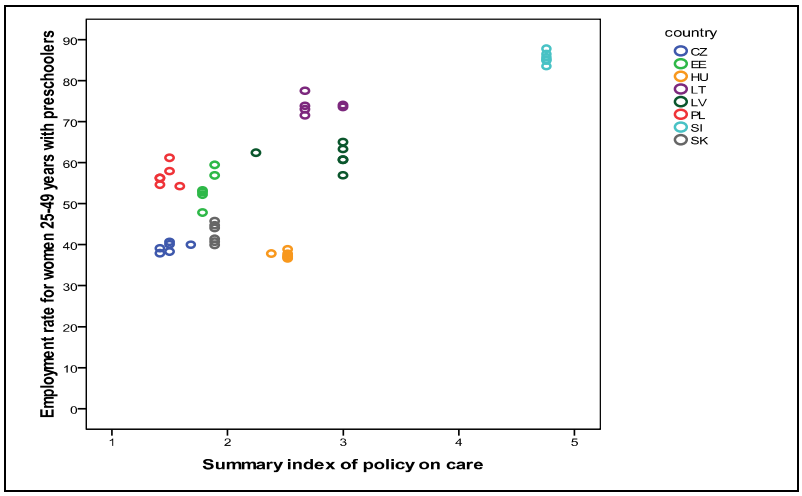
Are policies and maternal employment correlated? The correlation coefficients indicate that the more de-familialistic the policy, the higher the maternal employment rates. Overall childcare policies (all twelve policy components) and maternal employment rates are fairly strongly and positively correlated ($r = 0.76$). When I exclude Poland – a country with the lowest scores on public policy provision – the correlation increases ($r = 0.82$), and decreases by excluding Slovenia ($r = 0.46$). The results by individual childcare policies tell a more nuanced story: while maternal employment rates are positively correlated with both policies, the correlation is stronger with the policy on leave ($r = 0.80$) than it is with the policy on service provision ($r = 0.36$). I find an almost perfect positive association between leave and maternal employment in countries with the familialistic policy models ($r = 0.98$), and an association between childcare service provision and maternal employment increases when I excluded Hungary ($r = 0.87$), and then both Hungary and Slovenia ($r = 0.74$), the two countries with the highest index scores on

childcare service provisions. These results indicate that the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children increase with gender-neutral leave of moderate duration and with adequate, affordable and accessible childcare service provision, but differences exist within the clusters of countries.

Does the more de-familialistic policy associate positively with maternal employment rates? To answer this question, figures 6.18-6.20 on the next page illustrate the association between employment rates for mothers with pre-school children and childcare policies, defined in terms of index scores. Figure 6.18 illustrates the association between childcare policies as configurations of twelve policy components and maternal employment. Figure 6.19 illustrates the association between policies on leave and maternal employment, and figure 6.20 between policies on childcare service provision and maternal employment. Generally, we can see a positive association: mothers in countries with the explicitly familialistic policies have the lowest employment rates (i.e. the Czech Republic and Hungary), and countries with de-familialistic policies the highest (i.e. Slovenia and Lithuania).[66] Furthermore, Slovakia with the implicitly familialistic policies also has very low maternal rates, as expected, and trends are similar to those in the explicitly familialistic policy group. For the other three countries, the association is non-linear (relationship is not straightforward), especially for Poland and Latvia, where employment rates are higher despite their low index scores. In order to better understand this pattern, we need to have a closer look at all three scatter plots on the next page.

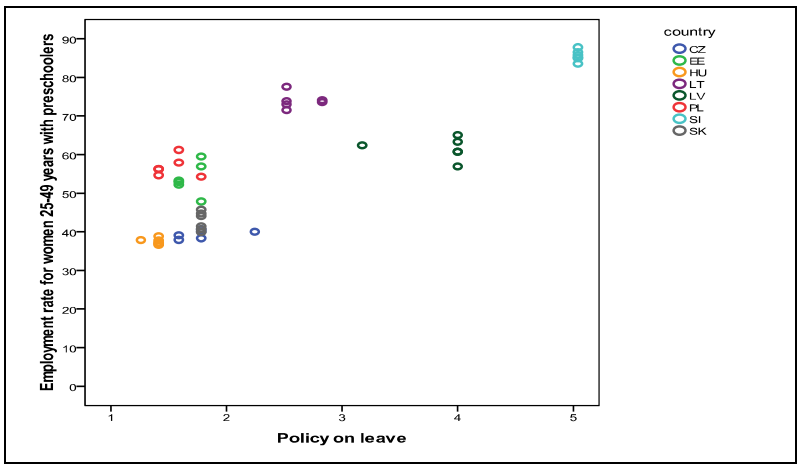
[66] The association is negative between the employment gaps and overall policy – I found a downward slope (not reported).

Figure 6.18: Employment rates for women 25-49 years with pre-school children (in %) and summary policy index (in index score for leave and day care services together), 2002-2007



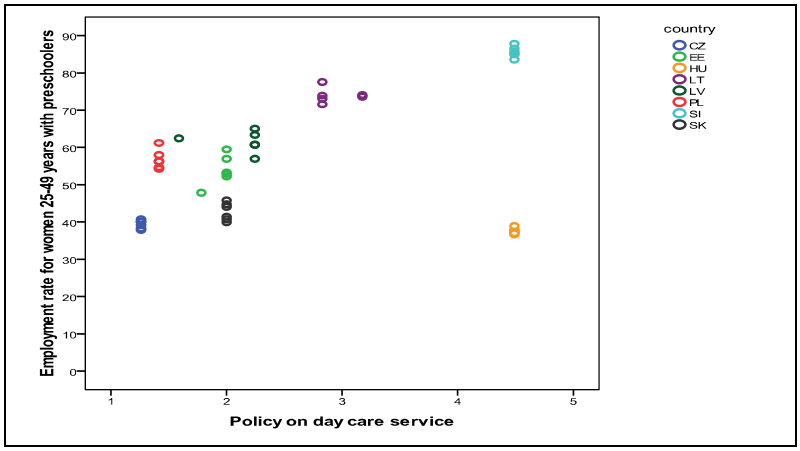
Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Figure 6.19: Employment rates for women 25-49 years with pre-school children (in %) and leave index (in index score), 2002-2007



Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Figure 6.20: Employment rates for women 25-49 years with pre-school children (in %) and day care index (in index score), 2002-2007



Data source: European Labour Force Survey data, Eurostat.

Empirical evidence illustrates that differences exist within the same clusters of countries, but also within the same country by policy, and I find the following discernable patterns. The Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia show a strong positive association between their policies and maternal employment rates: the higher the score, the higher their maternal employment rates. Estonian maternal employment rates decrease as state extended paid childcare leave, which suggests that an explicitly familialistic leave generates incentives for mothers with the youngest children to retreat from the labour force. Hungarian maternal employment rates also decrease with explicitly familialistic leave. But what accounts for no association between their policy on childcare service provision and maternal employment rates – we can see in figure 6.20 that Hungary has one of the highest index scores on day care service provision, but also one of the lowest maternal employment rates among the eight countries?

To understand this pattern for Hungary, we need to revisit figure 6.11 (p. 129), which illustrates their policies on service provision. The radar chart for Hungary indicates that service hours as well as allocation of places are less favourable in this country (i.e. lower scores). Further, Hungarian local governments have more autonomy in service provision, relative to Slovenia or Lithuania, which are in the same policy group. For example, the Hungarian national guidelines prescribe day care service as free of charge to all parents (hence higher index score), but the local providers are allowed to charge parents for any extra-curricular activity. This could explain why the Hungarian parents find service provision expensive, especially the nursery services, which are on average more costly (e.g. Eurydice 2009). In sum, empirical evidence suggests that the Hungarian service provision is *in practice* less affordable and less adequate, than its policy programme suggests – and I have already noted that a stronger urban/rural divide exists in this country. I assume that, given the opportunity, parents with the youngest children resort to a well-paid home care for a longer period of time, which reflects in low maternal employment rates (figure 6.15 on p. 139).

Latvia and Poland show a different pattern. On the one hand, Latvia grants parents optimal leave, and association between this policy and maternal employment is positive (figure 6.19). Figure 6.13 also demonstrates high employment rates for mothers with children under-3s, which suggests that the leave policy generates incentives for women to enter the labour force before childbirth, in order to qualify for the benefits (as suggested by Ruhm 1998). However, the Latvian state leaves parents nearly without public options once child turns one year of age – but their maternal employment rates are higher nonetheless. But when we compare Latvia to other countries with low index scores on childcare services (left-hand corner in figure 6.20), we see a positive association, especially after Latvia had downward extended mandatory school age: children get a place in a public day care facility without delay once they turn 5 years of age, and

maternal employment rates slightly increase. On the other hand, Poland is an exception in this group; given that the state leaves many parents nearly without support, it shows curiously high employment rates for mothers. Its employment rates for mothers with pre-school children are on average below the employment rates for women with older children, but its employment rates are closer to the mean values for the eight countries, and are higher than in the explicitly familialistic policy group. These findings suggest that in countries with the implicitly familialistic policies the relationship between childcare policies and maternal employment is not straightforward – Poland and Latvia being the prime example.

2.3 Discussion

If childcare policies serve as an incentive or a brake on maternal employment, one would expect to find the lowest rates in countries that lag behind in service provision – Poland, Slovakia and Latvia being the prime example. Contrary to other countries in this study, in these countries the state leaves the vast majority of working parents without support. But if the Slovak employment rates confirm this hypothesis, what accounts for the higher maternal employment rates in Poland and Latvia?

One plausible explanation would be that my findings are the result of the methodological approach and data used in this study. First, in the present study, childcare policies are defined relative to each other in the distribution of index scores. Hence, the index scores reflect the decisions about similar/different policy characteristics, the computing techniques and, nonetheless, the selected set of policy components. Second, all policy components have equal weight and low value in one policy component can be compensated by higher values in other policy components. Third, we do not know whether or not there is any correlation between policy components, which could also affect the outcome. Fourth, the index scores in this study reflect policy characteristics, and do not measure policy delivery or the use. Hence, any substantial gap between the programme and the policy delivery could affect the findings (like in Hungary, for example). Fifth, employment data from the Labour Force Survey may be biased towards the leave-users because of a cross-country variation in statistical counting of their employment status (explained in chapter 5). With respect to maternity leave the differences in the core LFS are minor as the leave-takers are treated as employed in practically all countries. That notwithstanding, their classification of employed persons may depend on the number of months one has worked prior to using leave. The distinction may be more problematic in countries with longer leave, where parents on leave can be treated differently: either as employed but absent from work, or inactive.

Bearing in mind these methodological caveats, some explanations might be provided at this point. With Poland and Latvia being exceptions, a fairly regular pattern of association in other countries indicates that childcare policies positively and fairly strongly correlate with the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children: these are the highest in countries with the de-familialistic policies, and the lowest in countries with the explicitly familialistic policies, and Slovakia with the implicitly familialistic policy. That said, empirical evidence from Poland and Latvia complements this hypothesis, because they both have wide employment gaps between women with pre-school children and those without. The differences are vast in the employment rates for women aged 25-29 years, and for mothers with children under the age of three years. Moreover, it should not be neglected that about 50 per cent of mothers aged 25-49 years, who raise children under the age of 3 years, retreat from the labour force in these two countries. Overall, such results indicate that childcare policies could account for the shape of employment of mothers with pre-school children in this group of countries, while the results from Poland and Latvia indicate that this interrelationship is neither straightforward nor simple. The question is what accounts for their higher maternal employment rates if the states leave them nearly without support. In order to have a clearer understanding of their employment patterns, analysis that follows in chapter 7 focuses on the oddity of these two countries.

Chapter 7

Understanding higher maternal employment rates in countries with the implicitly familialistic policy model

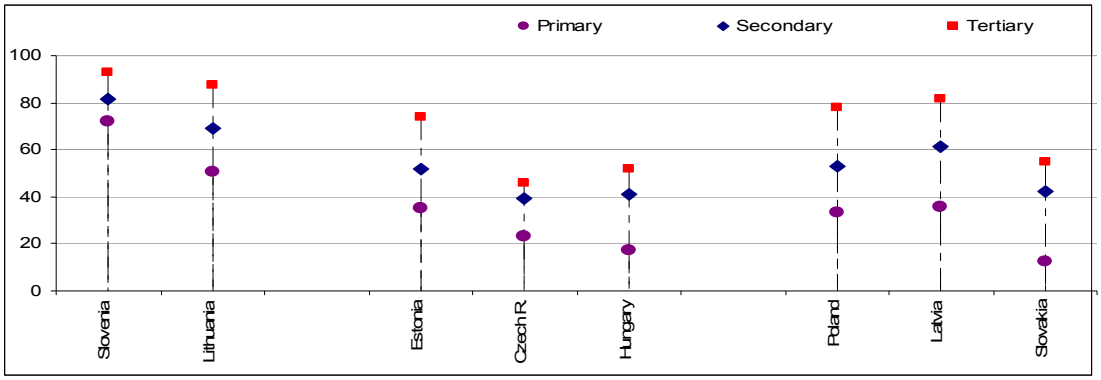
Introduction

What accounts for the curiously high maternal employment rates in countries where the state leaves working parents nearly without support? What are the underlying factors that drive mothers with pre-school children to the labour markets and who cares for their children if formal options are not available? Empirical evidence from Western capitalist countries suggests that education, the income needs of households, the sectoral structure of the economy, working time arrangements, and availability of alternative day care solutions shape mothers' employment. On the one hand, the income needs of households drive women from the lower-income groups into the labour markets, and undermine the lack of formal day care service provision (e.g. Gordon and Kammeyer 1980; Mammen and Paxson 2000: 142-5; Jaumotte 2003: 20). On the other hand, the opportunity cost effect explains employment of more highly educated and more affluent mothers (e.g. Del Boca et al. 2005; 2007; Steiber and Haas 2009: 646). The economic theory argues that occupational and sectoral structure of national economy shape demand for female waged labour: the public service sector mostly employs women with higher levels of education, whereas others sectors, especially the agricultural, demand labour of women with lower levels of education (e.g. Oppenheimer 1970; Eliason et al. 2008). But who cares for the children when their mothers are at work? As informal day care has been traditionally provided and used among the selected countries, I hypothesise that a more widespread semi-formal economy, i.e. undeclared childcare service, provides another plausible explanation for the employment of mothers in this policy cluster (also Korpi 2000). In the analysis that follows, I focus on Poland and Latvia, two post-socialist countries where about 50 per cent of mothers aged 25-49 years who raise pre-school children are employed, although the states leave parents nearly without support. To better understand their employment patterns, I conduct an exploratory analysis, in order to provide a thorough and theoretically informed exploration of whether, and how, these factors shed new light on maternal employment rates in these two countries.

1. Educational attainment

Educational attainment as a causal factor of female employment has a high explanatory potential in Western capitalist countries. It positively associates with maternal employment in two ways: through the opportunity cost effects and through the purchasing power – determining both the consumer choice and women's choice to participate in the labour force. The human capital theory argues that human capital stock affects female employment, as women try to use it as profitably as they can (e.g. Del Boca and Locatelli 2006, 2007; Del Boca et al. 2009). Exploring maternal employment by levels of education I find consistency with earlier studies: employment rates for women with pre-school children increase with levels of education (figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Employment rates for women 25-49 years with pre-school children, by level of attained education, mean value over 2002-2007*, in per cent



Data source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys.
Note: *National data show a consistent pattern between 2002 and 2007, hence only the mean value is reported.

Figure 7.1 illustrates that in Poland and Latvia, the employment rates for mothers aged 25-49 years with tertiary levels of education are significantly higher than for mothers with the primary levels. Because significant employment gaps between these two groups of mothers affect the total maternal employment rates, education provides a credible explanation for the curiously higher employment rates for women with pre-school children in Poland and Latvia.

How can we interpret such high employment rates for mothers with higher levels of education? First, the opportunity costs of staying at home are significantly higher for the more highly educated women; because the state does not subsidize home care, foregone earnings affect in a direct way family income (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2009: 86). Given that education can be used as an approximation of women's potential wages, the loss of income from staying at home on average matters more for the more highly educated women (Steiber and Haas 2009: 646). As noted earlier (chapter 3), longer time out from the labour markets deteriorates women's labour

market skills, and damages future career paths and earnings (Edin and Gustavsson 2005, 2008; Görlich and de Grip 2009; Mincer and Polachek 1974). Employment conditions frequently change for mothers taking longer leaves: mothers who use longer leave find it more difficult to return to the labour market, are more likely to suffer the consequences of job re-assignment upon their return, and experience greater wage penalties (Ondrich et al. 2002; 2003). Second, in all eight countries individual tax systems are the most prevalent type, while Poland also introduced an option of filing a joint income tax (see e.g. Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007: 366). Since couples can opt for the most favourable option, more affluent families are not sanctioned when women are in the labour force (e.g. de Villota 2004; Rubery et al. 1998). Third, women with higher levels of education are afforded more options whether or not to participate in the labour force, but they also have higher purchasing power, and hence more consumer choice. Again, given that education is an approximate for women's potential wages, mothers with higher levels of education have greater economic resources (see e.g. Steiber and Haas 2009: 646). Furthermore, given the educational homogamy among couples, their partners also have higher earnings (ibid.). Therefore, more highly educated women have more resources to shop around for day care service: they can purchase a more expensive commercial service in the limited day care market, or in the semi-formal (unregulated) market. Empirical evidence in this study supports this thesis: the correlations are weaker between childcare policies and the employment rates for more highly educated women ($r = 0.62$) than they are for women with lower education ($r = 0.79$).[67] In sum, relative to women who are constrained by their household income needs, more highly educated women are afforded with opportunities to engage in paid employment also in the absence of formal day care service provision. Fourth, earlier empirical studies of post-socialist countries indicate that more highly educated women have higher levels of attitudinal egalitarianism, and are thus more supportive of maternal employment and public child care (e.g. Schnepf 2006; Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006: 198). Moreover, the implicitly familialistic policy model does not set strong normative care norms for either types of child care; as it generally does not induce guilt among the employed mothers, it facilitates their decision to return to the labour market after childbirth. Overall, empirical evidence in this study suggests that more highly educated mothers lose more from staying out of the labour markets than mothers with lower levels of educational attainment. Therefore, they return to the labour markets in greatest numbers, although they face lower income needs (due to the potentially counteracting effect of their partners' earnings, given the educational homogamy among couples).

[67] Correlation between maternal employment and overall childcare policy (score) for eight countries over 2002-2007.

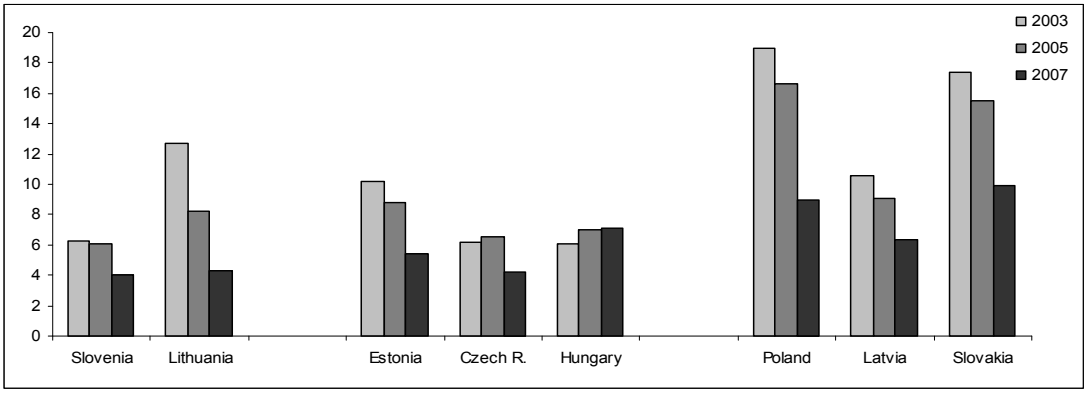
However, mothers with lower levels of education, who on average have more traditional attitudes (e.g. Schnepf 2006; Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2006: 198), as well as lower incomes to purchase commercial day care services do not withdraw from the labour market either – at least not to such extent as, for example, women in Slovakia, or women in countries with the explicitly familialistic policy model (figure 7.1). What accounts for their employment rates?

2. Added worker effect and household income needs

Earlier scholarship on maternal employment argues that the female employment rates reflect two countervailing tendencies, which relate to their labour supply: an added worker effect, and household income need (e.g. Jaumotte 2003: 14, Rubery et al. 1998). The former thesis explains female employment as the response to their husbands' unemployment spells, and understands women's labour supply as a household consumption smoothing response to the household income shocks due to husbands' job loss (see e.g. Finegan and Margo 1993; Jaumotte 2003: 14).

As shown in figure 7.2 below, male unemployment rates are indeed the highest in Poland, and are similar to those in Slovakia. Hence, their maternal employment rates can be understood as a response to the household income shock due to husbands' job loss. But an added worker effect was stronger in the earlier years of the post-socialist period, when unemployment insurance systems were also underdeveloped, and hence the rise in male unemployment created incentives for women to participate in the labour force (Scharle 2007: 161).

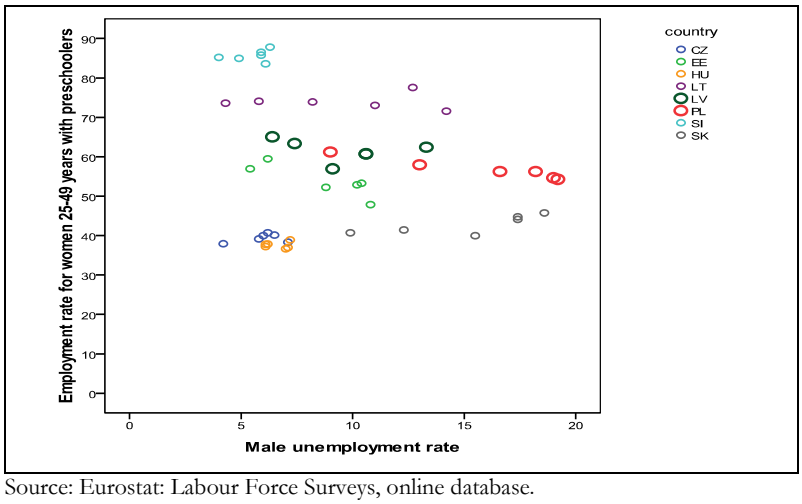
Figure 7.2: Male unemployment rates (% of labour force aged 15+), 2003, 2005, 2007



Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys, online database.

But is there any association between male unemployment and maternal employment? Figure 7.2a shows that Latvia and Poland have different male unemployment rates, but similar levels of maternal employment, and in Poland the maternal employment rates actually decrease as the male unemployment rates increase. In order to determine whether changes in employment situation and male unemployment have an effect on the household income, we should take a look at other measures that represent the household income needs.

Figure 7.2a: Employment rates for women 25-49 years with pre-school children (in %) and male unemployment rates (% over total population aged 15+), 2002-2007



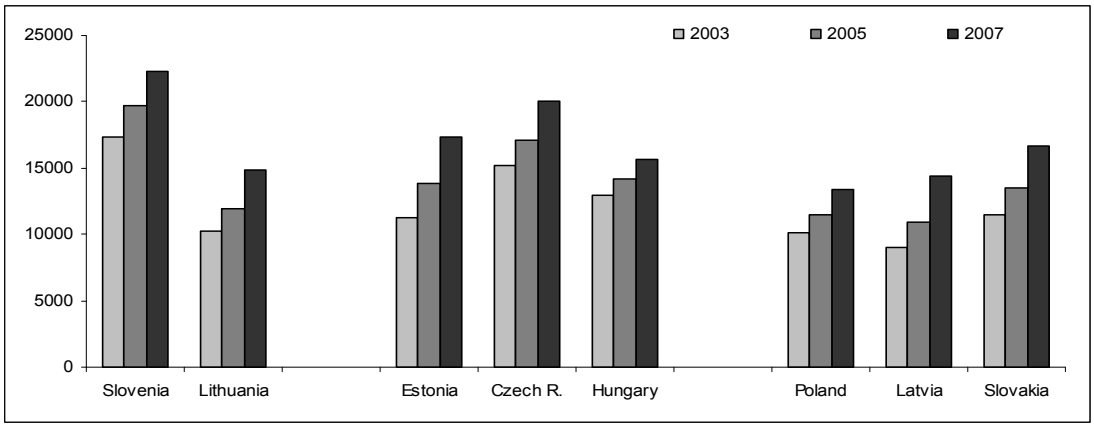
Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys, online database.

The measures of the household income needs indicate some specific features of the Polish and the Latvian maternal employment rates, and complement the thesis that female employment is shaped by household total income and women participate in the labour force to smoothen the household consumption (e.g. Mammen and Paxson 2000: 142-5). To determine any relationship between the household income needs and maternal employment in these two countries, I adapted the method by Uunk et al. (2005) and first measured the household income needs with per capita gross domestic product (GDP). Then I explored the average gross earnings by economic activity (in full-time units), as suggested by Crompton and Lyonette (2006). Lastly, I explored the households' economic strains, measured with household's ability to make ends meet and the at-risk-of-poverty rates (both collated from the EU-SILC). Empirical evidence indicates that the household income needs could account for higher employment rates for women with lower levels of education (i.e. lower-income women).

The GDP per capita in countries with the implicitly familialistic policy model is on average lower, which suggests that families have on average lower income (figure 7.3 on the next page). However, figure 7.3a indicates that the maternal employment rates in Latvia are not associated

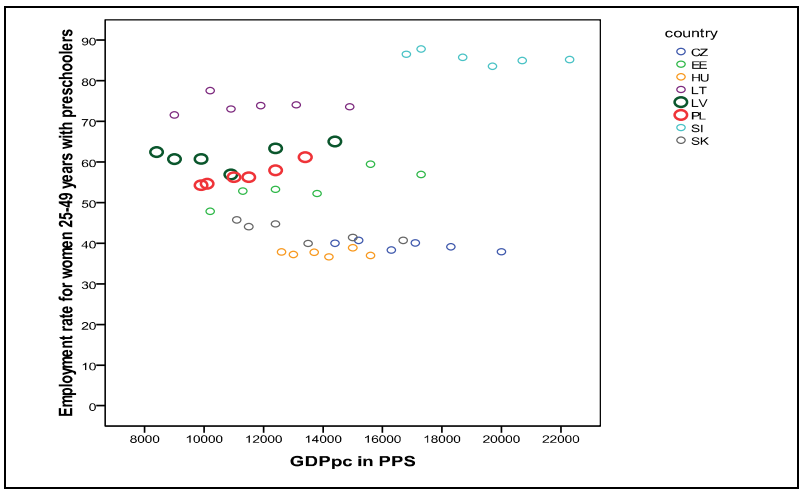
with GDP per capita, and an association between maternal employment rates and GDP in Poland is positive. This evidence goes against the income needs explanation, and at first glance complements the opportunity thesis, which argues that female employment grows as economies grow. Empirical evidence also goes against Scharle's (2005) thesis that female employment varies across post-socialist countries, owing largely to differences in their levels of national income. But we should take a look at other potential measures of the income needs, in order to have a clearer understanding of the household income needs in these two countries.

Figure 7.3: GDP per capita (in PPS), 2003, 2005 and 2007



Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys, online database.

Figure 7.3a: Employment rates for women 25-49 years with pre-school children and GDP per capita (in PPS), 2002-2007

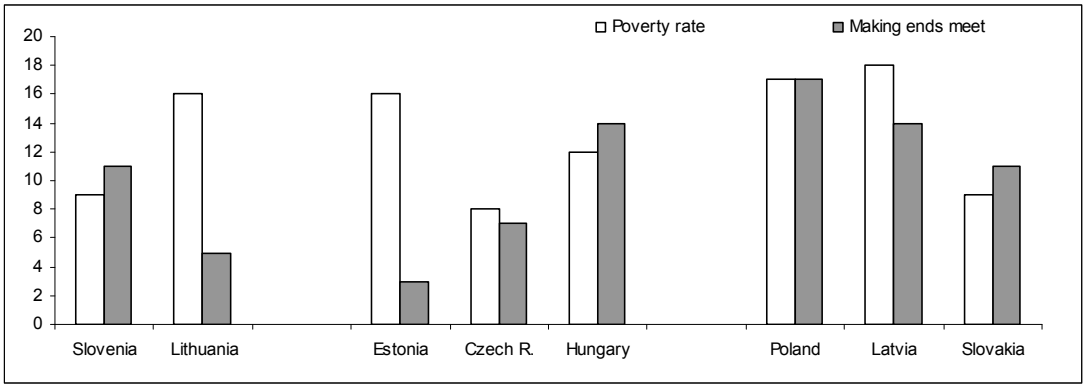


Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys, online database.

The income needs of households become more obvious when using different measures, and the analysis of average earnings and poverty rates presents a more coherent picture. Between 2002 and 2007 the average earnings were the lowest in Poland and Latvia (the Eurostat online database; not reported) and the poverty rates the highest among the eight countries (figure 7.4).

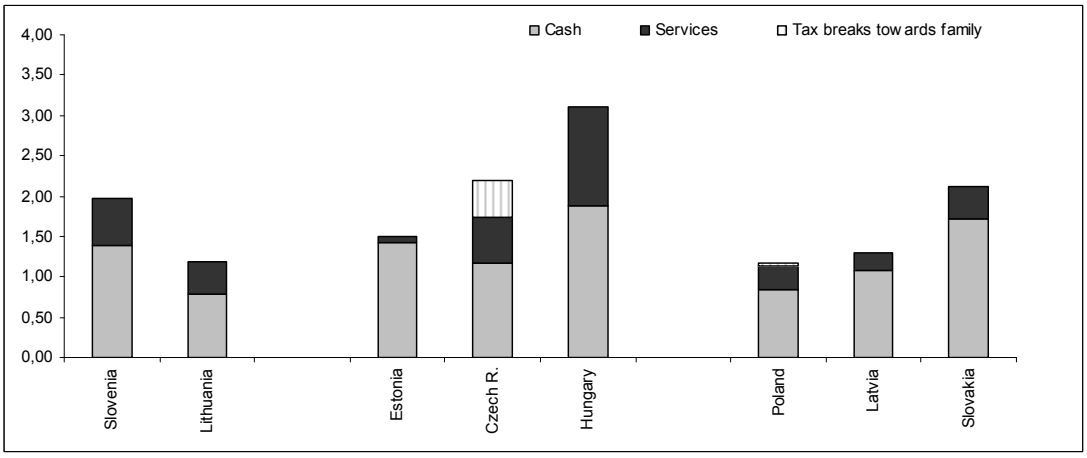
Their shares of people with difficulties in making ends meet were also the highest in 2007, while the public spending on family benefits (i.e. any cash transfers, public spending on services, tax expenditures) was the lowest in Poland and the Baltic States, and Poland in particular stands out at the other extreme (figure 7.5). This indicates that the income needs of households in these countries are somewhat higher, relative to other countries in the group, which complements the income needs thesis that the lower-income women engage in paid employment to uphold the living standards of their households.

Figure 7.4: At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers (% of population 18-64 years) and the proportion of households making ends meet with great difficulty (as % of total population), 2007



Source: Eurostat: online database. Note: Cut-off point: 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers.

Figure 7.5: Social expenditure on family benefits, in per cent of GDP, 2005



Data source: The OECD Social Expenditure Database (www.oecd.org/els/social/expenditure), data retrieved November 2009; ESSPROS.

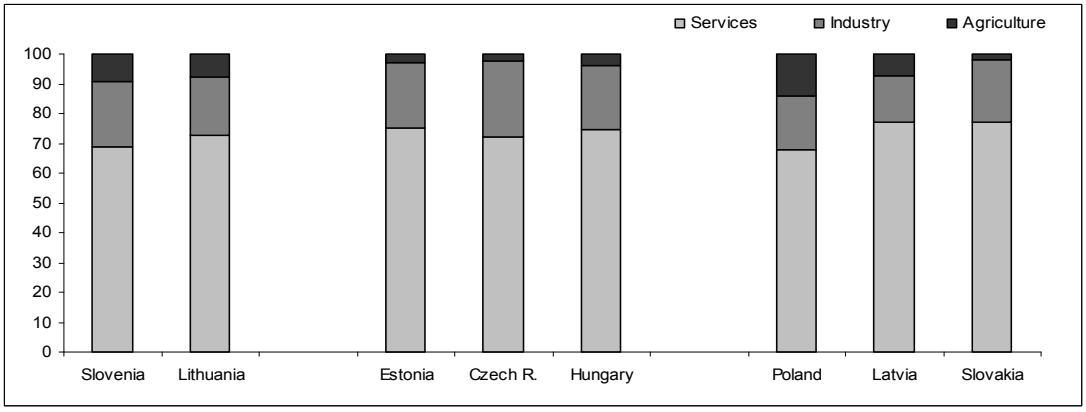
Notes: Public spending on family benefits includes financial support exclusively for families and children. Spending recorded in other social policy areas, such as health and housing, is not included. Cash transfers include child allowances, public income support payments during parental leave, and public childcare support through earmarked payments to parents. Public spending on services for families with children includes direct financing and subsidising of day care providers, public spending on assistance for young people and residential facilities, public spending on family services, including centre-based facilities and home help services for families in need. Tax expenditures include tax exemptions (e.g. income from child benefits that is not included in the tax base); child tax allowances (amounts for children that are deducted from gross income and are not included in taxable income), child tax credits, amounts that are deducted from the tax liability. If any excess of the child tax credit over the liability is returned to the tax-payer in cash, then the resulting cash payment is recorded under cash transfers.

Overall, additional aggregate-level data seems a more accurate measure of the household income needs than GDP p.c., and supports the thesis that mothers with higher income needs undertake paid employment to sustain the levels of household consumption. I assume that in Latvia and Poland the lack of cash benefits in combination with higher household income needs drives the lower-income women into the labour markets, and undermines other factors of their labour supply, such as low formal day care service provision. However, with reference to earlier studies (discussed in chapter 3) supply-related factors do not fully account for the shape of maternal employment, and have to be contextualised with factors that determine the opportunity-constraint frame for their employment. As the demand for female labour might provide some explanations of such a discrepancy between childcare policies and maternal employment, the next section explores the sectoral structure of national economies.

3. Sectoral structure of the economy

Among the eight countries, the service sector economy is the most common workplace for women – about 70 per cent of all women are in the service sector (figure 7.6). This sector is of similar size among the eight countries, and there is no association between maternal employment and service sector (not shown). This finding suggests that the service sector cannot fully account for the shape of maternal employment among these countries. However, this same figure indicates that the agricultural sector is larger in Poland and Latvia, relative to the other six countries, especially in Poland (also Pollert 2005).

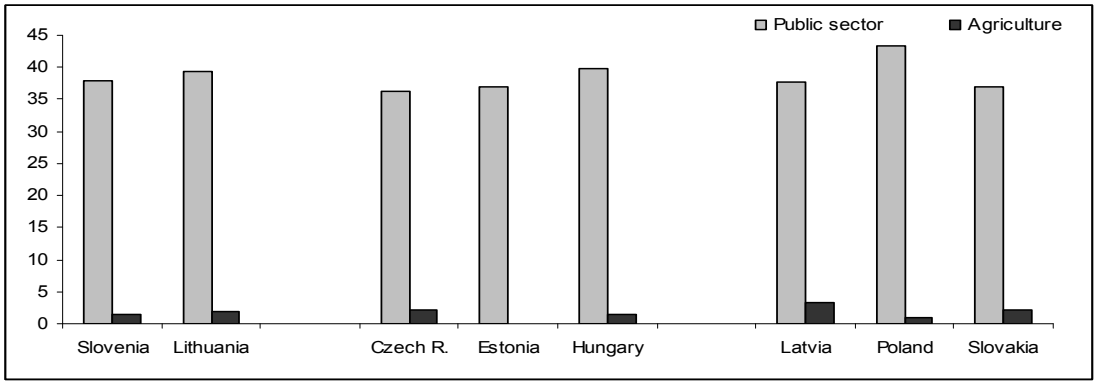
Figure 7.6: Female employment rates by sector of economy, 2007 (in % of total female employment, women aged 15 years and over)



Data source: Eurostat online database, accessed Nov 2009. Note: Employment in service sector increased in all countries between 2002 and 2007.

To further explore the thesis about the role of the agricultural sector, as well as the role of the public service sector, figure 7.7 below compares the employment rates for women aged 25-49 years in the public service sector (in a restricted sense)[68] and the agricultural sector. We can see that in Latvia, more women in this age group are in the agricultural sector, relative to the other seven countries, while in Poland more women in this age group are in the public sector, relative to the other seven countries.

Figure 7.7: Female employment in agriculture[1] and public sector[2], women aged 25-49 years, 2007



Source: Eurostat: online database (data retrieved Dec 2009).
Notes: [1]Data refer to 1983-2008 NACE rev. 1.1 and include employment in agriculture, hunting and forestry (activity A). No data for Estonia. I found a downward trend across the countries in the period 2002-2007. [2] Data refer to 1983-2008 NACE rev. 1.1: adapting the methodology employed in the OECD study on public employment, the data include employment in activities from L to O: public administration and defence (L), education (M), health and social work (N) and other community, social, personal service activities (O).

On the one hand, the agricultural sector has traditionally demanded female labour, and provided jobs for women with lower levels of education (chapter 3). Thus, it could provide a plausible explanation for why maternal employment rates for women with lower levels of education are higher in Poland and in Latvia (also Pollert 2005). Moreover, the literature argues that women in the rural areas have better access to alternative care, largely by their families (e.g. Einhorn 1993; Heinen and Wator 2006). Therefore, I assume that higher demand for female labour in the agricultural sector in combination with access to a more widespread informal day care could account for higher employment rates of mothers with lower education. On the other hand, the volume of public service sectors provide additional explanation for the higher employment rates for more highly educated women, because this sector has largely employed more highly educated women (see chapter 3). Since both countries have high employment rates for more highly educated mothers, I would suggest that the thesis about the role of the public service sector has some explanatory potential. This thesis argues that, on average, jobs in public sector

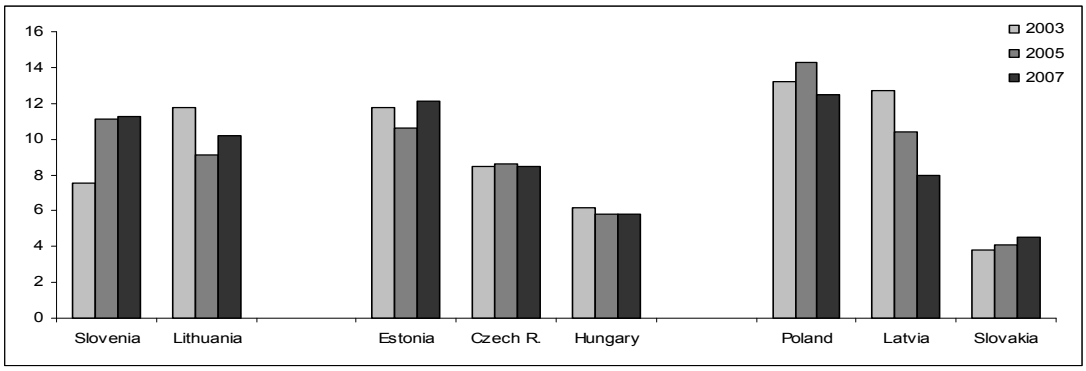
[68] Neither the Eurostat nor the OECD provide any comparable data on public employment. According to the most consistent classifications (proposed by the OECD) public sector includes employment data in services provided by government-owned or government-controlled organisations, but also services funded by government but provided by private organisations.

are more secured, and women with regular contracts (again more often in the public service sector) enjoy a substantial amount of employment protection (e.g. Rubery et al. 1999: 243). Furthermore, public employers are more likely to provide more enhanced reconciliation measures than the private, such as flexible working hours and tele-working (e.g. O'Connor 2004: 192; Fagan and Hebson 2005: 86). Thus, I assume that women employed in the public sector have more incentives to stay active in the period of active motherhood than women with less protected and less secured jobs, and more enhanced reconciliation measures allow them to better reconcile employment and family life, especially when the states leave them nearly without support (e.g. Rubery et al. 1999: 243).

4. Working-time arrangements

With reference to the existing literature on the role of the working time arrangements, the reduced work-hours generate (limited) incentives for the carers to participate in the labour force (e.g. Blossfeld and Hakim 1997; Esping-Andersen 2002a; OECD 2007). As reduced hours free remunerated time, they afford carers options to allocate their time between the labour market and care-giving. Drawing from earlier studies (discussed in chapter 3), I, too, use part-time work as a measure of working-time arrangements. As discussed in chapter 4, part-time employment is comparatively low among the eight countries. Extending review of employment data up to 2007, I find the highest share of part-timers in Poland and Latvia (figure 7.8).

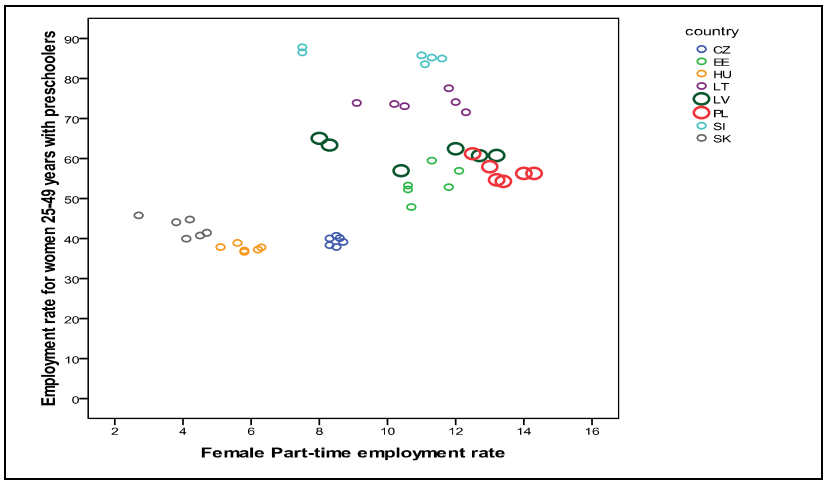
Figure 7.8: Female part-time employment (as % of total employment of women 15+), 2002-2007



Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys.

To determine whether, and how, part-time employment associates with maternal employment rates in these two countries, figure 7.8a on the next page plots the two values and indicates that maternal employment rates in Latvia and Poland do not associate with part-time jobs.

Figure 7.8a: Employment rates for women aged 25-49 years with pre-school children and female part-time employment (as % of population 15+), 2002-2007



Source: Eurostat: Labour Force Surveys.

Although higher than in the other six post-socialist countries, their shares of part-timers are still comparatively low, relative to other EU countries. Further, there is a striking variation in the level of voluntary and involuntary part-time employment: the incidence of the involuntary part-time employment has been high among the eight countries (Eurostat 2008). Involuntary part-time employment is largely associated with the downward economic trends and increased unemployment levels, and among the eight countries the economic downturns have been more pronounced in Poland and Latvia (e.g. OECD 2007: 179-81). Therefore, I assume that higher levels of part-time work in Poland and Latvia reflect their national labour market organisations and economic conditions, but cannot account for their higher maternal employment rates (also Tang and Cousins 2004: 532).

5. Access to alternative day care arrangements

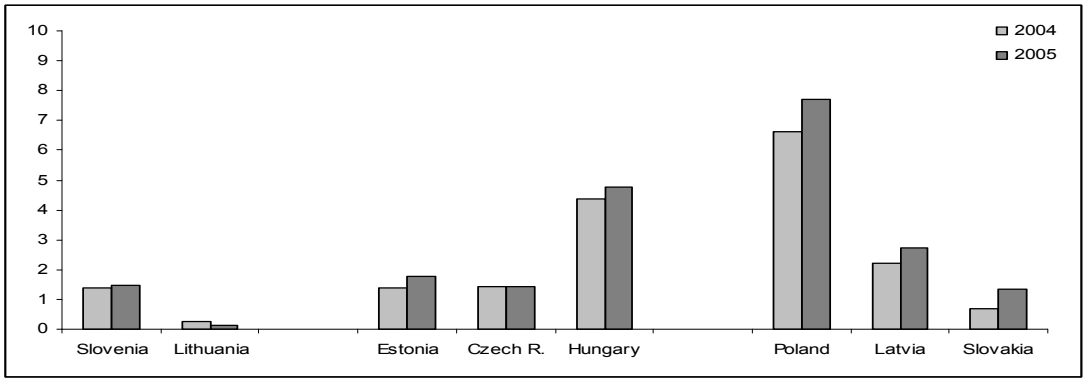
The last pending question is: Who cares for the Polish and the Latvian children when their mothers are at work? Data indicates that the fathers do not absorb childcare: in all eight countries the employment rates for men with pre-school children are higher, relative to other men in the same country.[69] Thus, the employment trends indicate that parents craft their own day care solutions. Available data on the use of different types of day care illustrate that their care arrangements are a patchwork: parents purchase services in the (limited) commercial

[69] I analyzed fathers' employment rates as well as their employment gaps between 2002 and 2007. I used the same database and approach as for the women and found that the male employment gaps were positive – employment rates for fathers with pre-school children were higher, relative to other men in the same country. The patterns were persistent across the eight countries, and resemble male employment patterns in other countries of the European Union (e.g. Eurostat 2005; EC 2008).

service markets, in the unregulated service markets (as undeclared service work in the shadow or grey economy), and rely on (un/paid) care by other family members.

Regulated commercial service markets are still limited among the eight countries, and less than 10 per cent of all children aged 3-6 years were in private services between 2004 and 2005 (figure 7.9). But there is a discernible pattern: the use of commercial services increases by policy groups – the more adequate the formal day care service provision, the lower the use of commercial services. In contrast, the commercial service markets are the most developed in Poland, where about 8 per cent of children aged 3-6 years were in private day care facilities in 2005.

Figure 7.9: The use of regulated commercial childcare services, children aged 3-6 years (as per cent of population 3-6 years), 2004-2005



Data source: Eurostat online database.

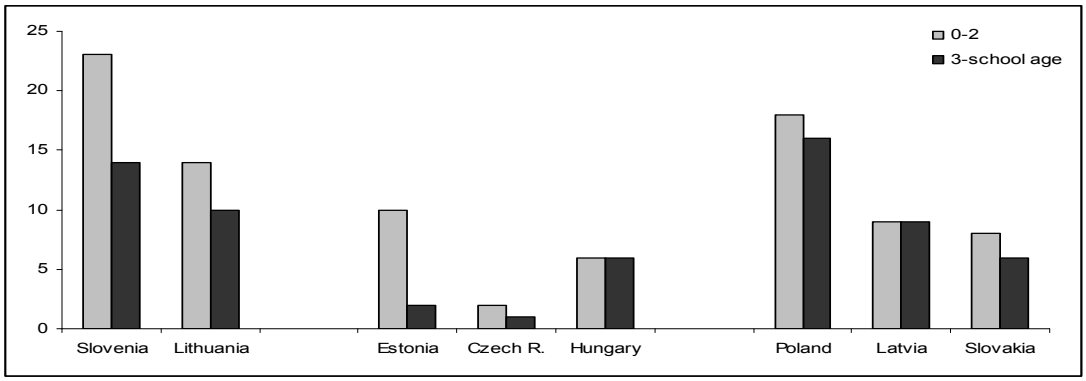
However, commercial service is very expensive, with practically no public subsidizing of day care providers (Eurydice 2009). Therefore, as with all consumer goods supplied in the commercial markets, income determines access to this service (Leitner 2003; also Morgan 2005: 244, 252). This suggests that only more affluent parents can find care options in the very limited commercial service market. But who cares for the children of other employed mothers?

Informal day care has had a long tradition in all eight countries, and has been widely used since the socialist times (e.g. Michel 2006; Einhorn 1993). But data on the use of informal day care arrangements is limited. To measure the size of informal (i.e. unregulated) day care services, I used data from the EU-SILC study on informal day care in 2006. Figure 7.10 on the next page indicates that the proportion of children in full-time informal day care (for 30 hours or more) is higher in Poland (and Slovenia) than in other countries under review.[70] But while the use of

[70] Conducting a detailed analysis, I found that informal day care in Slovenia is combined with high share of full-time formal day care (not reported). Since the national Eurydice report documents almost full access to the formal day care, this curiously high rate seems more consistent with the attitudinal pathway – some

informal arrangements subsides for older children in most countries, including Latvia, it continues to represent the main day care solution in Poland. In contrast, parents in other countries use informal day care for shorter hours – I assume that they combine various day care arrangements to assure care for children outside the regular service hours, in order to cover their full working day.

Figure 7.10: Use of informal[1] day care services, children under 3 years and 3 years-to-school age (as per cent of population), 2006



Data source: Eurostat: EU-SILC 2006. Note: [1]In this database 'informal' day care is defined as childcare by a professional childminder at home, care by grandparents, other household members, other relatives, friends and neighbours (parents are excluded). It comprises both paid and unpaid day care, as the distinction between the two is statistically not valid because of the low number of observations.

Plantenga and Remery found that in countries with shorter leave public day care is generally more acceptable once child turns one year (like in Slovenia or Lithuania), while in other countries the attitude is that children should not attend public day care facility until they are at least two years old (Plantenga and Remery 2009: 52-34). As discussed in chapter 2, the legacy of the socialist crèches looms – many believe that the state does not provide a high quality nursery service for the youngest children. However, relative to parents in the other five countries, parents in countries with limited formal service provision do not have many care options. Thus, the informal day care markets play an important role for mothers' employment, especially in Poland, where formal service provision is the lowest among the eight countries.

In order to provide a more informed analysis of alternative care arrangements, I also explored data on undeclared service work, using the Eurobarometer's (2007) study of undeclared work in the EU. I find that informal service economy is widespread among the eight countries, and both undeclared goods and services are frequently supplied and used, and child care is one of the

parents may prefer informal care for the youngest children over public care, or the formal day care service does not correspond to their working hours. As the sum of all three day care arrangements exceeds 100 per cent, I assume that parents combine various day care arrangements, most likely to cover their full working day.

most typically supplied and purchased among the services.[71] Their report highlights that among the eight countries the undeclared household services were most often supplied and purchased in Poland, the Baltic States, and Slovakia. Furthermore, undeclared service work represents a substantial side income in these countries, especially among the unemployed women (Eurobarometer 2007: 284). Given that child care is among the most frequently purchased and supplied services in these markets (Eurobarometer 2007), the use of undeclared household services can be used as an indicator of extensive and widespread unregulated service markets in these countries. Moreover, Eurobarometer reports that the unemployed women are over-represented in an undeclared service work. In order to have a clearer understanding of the relationship between the unregulated service provision and female unemployment, I also looked at female unemployment rates (not shown). Female unemployment rates (as proportion of women in the labour force aged 15+) were the highest in Poland (between 21 per cent in 2002 and 10 per cent in 2007). In Latvia, they were between 11 per cent in 2002 and 5.6 per cent in 2007. I assume that the unemployed women increase the pool of potential and available carers: given that both the formal and commercial day care options are limited, the demand for 'informal' day care is high, and women with the need for additional income engage in (developed) 'shadow' economy by supplying informal child care services. Overall, access to the unregulated service markets and day care by other family members (be it paid or unpaid) provides a credible hypothesis for higher maternal employment rates in Poland and Latvia.

6. Summary and discussion

This chapter has presented the findings of a theoretically informed exploration of contextual factors of maternal employment in Poland and Latvia. It finds that overall, mothers' educational attainment and their income needs are the two most plausible factors of higher maternal employment rates in these two countries. On the one hand, empirical evidence supports the thesis about educational attainment – the employment gaps between women with tertiary level of education and women with primary levels of education are wide, thus contributing to the total maternal employment rate. Although women with higher levels of education on average face lower economic needs to participate in the labour force, they return to the labour market in greatest numbers after childbirth, because their opportunity costs of staying at home are the highest. Largely, they find employment in the public service sectors. Moreover, these women have more resources to purchase an expensive commercial childcare service in the limited private commercial service markets, or purchase the service in the undeclared service market.

[71] The size of the semi-formal economy is also influenced by the intensity of deterrents implemented by national governments.

Overall, relative to women who are constrained by the income needs of households, more highly educated women are afforded with more opportunities to engage in paid employment also in the absence of formal day care service provision.

And mothers with lower levels of education? I find that the income needs of households provide a plausible (structural) explanation for their employment rates. Given that their total household income is low, women's wages help uphold living standards of their households. In Poland and Latvia, these mothers often find jobs in the agricultural sector. This sector is larger than in the other six countries, and hence the demand for women with lower levels of education higher. But who cares for their children? The commercial service markets are limited, and the price of services inevitably steep – especially in countries, where the states do not subsidize any type of day care. This means that lower income families are priced out of the market (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2009: 87; Leitner 2003). This study indicates that parents self-service in the unregulated service markets, and rely on other family members, and thus suggests that the existence of these two alternative care arrangements play a critical role for the employment of mothers with pre-school children.

As noted earlier, informal day care has had a long tradition among the eight countries – be it provided by family members other than the parents or by the (largely untrained) childminders in the semi-formal service markets. The demand for this type of child care has been especially high in countries with limited state intervention in childcare service provision, where the unregulated markets have thrived and expanded, owing, among others, to the availability of the growing share of the unemployed and the low-waged, especially among women. It seems that the widespread unregulated service markets, as well as a long tradition of parents self-servicing in these markets take the pressure off the governments to address the issue of public support for the mothers in paid employment (also Morgan 2005: 258).

That said, it should not be ignored either that in these two countries a large proportion of mothers with very young children retreat from the labour force after childbirth, especially the mothers with lower skills, who are usually employed in less protected and less secured jobs – and yet, it is these mothers whose earnings are vital for family welfare (Esping-Andersen 2009: 91). I also found stronger positive correlation between their employment rates and childcare policies, relative to other women in the same country. If we compare these findings with the findings for the de-familialistic group (Slovenia and Lithuania), where the employment gaps between different groups of women are narrow, we could conclude that public childcare policies help minimize interruptions around childbirths: moderate childcare leave is critical for ensuring continuous mothers' employment after childbirth, and formal (affordable) day care service

provision is one major way to reduce women's opportunity costs. Overall, empirical evidence complements the earlier conclusions about the childcare policy explanation, and indicates that in the eight post-socialist countries, access to public day care options is a necessary precondition for women from different socio-economic groups to engage in paid employment, and the widespread unregulated service markets might account for higher maternal employment rates in countries with limited state intervention. In sum, patterns identified in this chapter indicate the need to test for interactions between maternal employment and childcare policies, mothers' educational attainment, the income needs of households, as well as the use of the unregulated service markets in the multivariate model.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

1. Summary and the main findings

This study sought to explore why the employment rates for women with pre-school children are so different in eight most advanced post-socialist countries that joined the EU in 2004. Based on a systematic review of the rich scientific literature recounting their socialist past (chapter 2), the Western literature on factors that influence mothers' employment (chapter 3), and earlier studies of post-socialist countries (chapter 4) I concluded that the three strands of the scientific literature emphasized childcare leave and public childcare services as the strongest factors of maternal employment. But while earlier studies of post-socialist countries produced important insights into the decade after the fall of state socialism, they did not systematically cover all eight countries. This study contributes to the rich scientific literature by conducting an in-depth and theoretically informed analysis of childcare policies in eight post-socialist countries between 2000 and 2008, together with their implications for mothers' employment (chapters 6 and 7).

The main research question was whether, and how, policies on leave and childcare service provision account for the shape of mothers' employment in the eight countries. Drawing upon detailed policy characteristics this study found compelling cross-country variations, showing that different combinations of policies that support family care-giving and those that de-familialize it lead to significantly different outcomes in terms of mothers' employment. One unambiguous finding is that national policy programmes fall clearly into three categories: Slovenia and Lithuania create conditions for women's continuous employment, while policies in the other six countries undermine women's continuous employment. Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia provide financial incentives for women to retreat from the labour force for a longer period of time after childbirth, while Poland, Slovakia and Latvia leave parents nearly without support. Drawing upon maternal employment data, the study found evidence in favour of the childcare policies explanations. In countries with gender-neutral leave of moderate duration and affordable, adequate and accessible formal childcare services the employment rates for mothers with pre-school children are significantly higher than in other countries. Such policies are especially important for the employment of low-skilled and low-income mothers with pre-school children. The study indicates that educational attainment and the income needs of households suppress rather than rival the childcare policies explanation, and that the unregulated service markets and day care by other family members provide options for mothers' employment in countries with limited state intervention. Its findings underpin the importance of well-paid leave of moderate duration and adequate, affordable and accessible high-quality *formal* childcare service provision for enhancing women's continuous employment. Any other type of childcare provision depresses employment of mothers with pre-school children, and

reinforces the conventional gender division of labour. In sum, the study sheds new light on childcare policies and maternal employment trends in eight post-socialist countries. It helps differentiate their overly simplistic characterization in earlier comparative research, and provides some perspectives for a more meaningful discussion of how childcare policies influence the employment of women in these countries.

The theoretical foundations of the study

This study has evaluated the emancipatory potential of national policies on leave and childcare service provision between 2000 and 2008, and analyzed whether, and how, childcare policies afford carers the options to engage in paid employment as well as challenge gender-specific parenting. The varieties of familialism literature (chapter 3) provided the theoretical foundations for this research and offered perspectives of how the states use childcare policies differently to challenge, or reinforce the conventional gender division of labour – and in so doing shape mothers' employment.

I deployed Leitner's (2003) analytical differentiation of state familialism (discussed in chapter 3) and used it to unpack childcare policies that provide options for women's continuous employment, and encourage fathers to participate in care. This study used this analytical concept to assert that the role of the state can be understood by observing whether, and how, policies on leave and childcare services provide or deny options for parents and their care decisions, and hence allow mothers to engage in paid employment. I have utilized *de-familialism* to characterize policies close to the optimal policy model, where the states provide fully paid flexible leave to both parents for a year, and thereafter absorb part of their care obligations by providing adequate, accessible and affordable public care options. Such policies allow mothers to fulfil their dual roles as carers and paid workers, while both the *explicitly* and the *implicitly familialistic policies* undermine the importance of women's continuous employment for their lifetime earnings and personal autonomy, and reinforce the conventional gender division of labour. The states that provide *optionally familialistic* childcare policies recognize that women have different lifestyle preferences, and afford parents the options to choose among different childcare solutions – and lifestyles.

This study has analyzed national policy programmes on childcare leave and childcare service provision, in order to assess how responsive the eight post-socialist states are to mothers' employment (chapter 6). It has evaluated national policies using twelve policy aspects, which the scientific literature sees as the most critical for the shape of maternal employment (these were identified with a systematic literature review in chapter 3). To evaluate their emancipatory

potential, I have utilized an index approach with benchmarking, in order to manage the complexity of these policies in a cross-country perspective. This multidimensional approach has provided a fuller portrait of national policies; it has enabled exploration of both a big-picture view – overall childcare policies and changes over time – as well as a detailed perspective on policy components, and has yielded a single (quantifiable) policy measure with enhanced explanatory power.

Varieties of familialism

This study found compelling differences in childcare policies among the eight countries between 2000 and 2008, and countries divide up into three fairly homogeneous clusters, which represent three types of familialism in the field of child care: *de-familialism, explicit familialism*, and *implicit familialism*. Despite variation within clusters, variation between clusters is greater; what most markedly distinguishes one from the other is the extent to which the states create conditions for mothers with pre-school children to engage in paid employment, and encourage fathers to participate in care.

(1) In Slovenia and Lithuania, the contemporary policies resemble the characteristics of the *de-familialistic* policy model: the states prioritize mothers' employment, and challenge the conventional gender division of labour. Owing to generous income support during parental leave for the first twelve months of a child's life, almost no children are in public childcare before the age of one year. Their policies on leave (i.e. the familialistic policy element) generate incentives for mothers' continuous employment, actively encourage fathers to participate in care, and encourage employers to change their hiring practices and stop treating women as 'secondary workers'. Municipal child care centres open access to all children aged between one year and mandatory school age, and there are few privately run centres that receive public funds. The states regulate and oversee service provision, and ensure fair access to public services across the geographical areas of the state.

(2) The Hungarian, Czech, and Estonian policies resemble the *explicitly familialistic* policy model. The states reinforce the conventional gender division of labour and generate incentives for women to withdraw from the labour markets for a longer period of time after childbirth. They subsidize family care for all children under three years of age, while providing inadequate, expensive public nursery services – especially the Czech Republic, where nurseries practically do not exist. Although children can be admitted to public day care facility, service provision, especially for the youngest children varies between municipalities. Intra-country variation in

service provision reduces parents' opportunities to choose among alternative day care options, but their policy programmes do not address strong urban/rural divides in service provision.

(3) Policies in Poland, Slovakia, and Latvia resemble characteristics of the *implicitly familialistic* policy model. The states leave parents nearly without support: they provide low subsidies for family care and no public childcare options, especially for children under the age of three years. Instead, they let private childcare markets thrive and expand. Latvia is a particular case: the state provides a generous, gender-neutral childcare leave for a year, but does not provide adequate public services, which raises some ambiguity about its membership in the country group with the implicitly familialistic policy model. My decision to locate its policy model within this group stems from the fact that the state leaves parents without support once children are one year old. The issue of inadequate public service provision emerged onto the political agenda in 2009, and the programme looks good, but it is a planning for the future.

Do policies associate with maternal employment?

Chapter 6 analyzed the associations between childcare policies and maternal employment in the selected eight post-socialist countries between 2002 and 2007, and found significantly higher employment rates for mothers with pre-school children in countries with the de-familialistic policy model, relative to other countries. The opposite was found in countries with the *explicitly familialistic* policy model, where the states actively support families as the main carers and parents are afforded fewer public childcare options. The employment gaps between different groups of women are the widest, with the most significant drop in employment rates for mothers with lower levels of education – especially in Hungary and the Czech Republic, where the states subsidize family care over a longer period of time. This finding complements the micro-economic rationality thesis: child care benefits increase carers' disposable income and the income from cash benefits takes the financial pressure off women to seek employment. Because affordable public care options are limited, a family would make too few financial gains from women's participation in the labour force. In contrast, countries with the *implicitly familialistic* policy model leave the vast majority of working mothers nearly without support – Poland and Slovakia, and to some extent Latvia, being the prime example. Thus, one would expect to find the lowest rates in countries that lag behind in service provision. But only mothers in Slovakia withdraw from the labour market after childbirth, especially those with lower levels of education (chapter 7). But the employment rates in Poland and Latvia, where about fifty per cent of mothers with pre-school children are in employment, suggest that state intervention is not the only powerful factor affecting mothers' employment.

Against this background, chapter 7 explored other possible influences for maternal employment, and found that the educational attainment of mothers, the income needs of households, the size of the public service sector and of the agricultural sector, both as proxies for employment opportunities for women, had some explanatory potential. However, the unregulated service markets play the critical role for mothers' employment in these countries. As highlighted in chapter 7, mothers with higher levels of education return to the labour markets in greatest numbers, because their opportunity costs of staying at home are the highest, especially when no income support payments are available during leave (paid only to low-income families). More highly educated women largely find employment in the public service sectors, which offer more secured jobs and better working environment (chapter 3). Hence, women employed in the public service sector have more incentives to stay active in the period of active motherhood. Moreover, more highly educated women have more economic resources, and can shop around for different forms of care: baby sitters who provide services in the unregulated service market, purchase expensive childcare services in the limited commercial service markets, or rely on care by other members of their families.

Considering the choice a higher educational attainment brings, why do we also see higher employment rates for mothers with lower levels of education – on average they have more traditional attitudes as well as lower incomes to purchase commercial day care services? Chapter 7 documented that higher income needs of households provide a plausible explanation. Given that their household income is on average low, and that the states provide no (or meagre) family cash benefits, women's wages increase disposable income, and help to uphold living standards of their households. In Poland and Latvia, these mothers seem to find jobs in the agricultural sector, where the demand for women with lower levels of education is higher. But who cares for their children?

Chapters 2 and 7 noted that the informal day care markets have had a long tradition in all eight countries – be it provided by family members other than the parents or by the (generally untrained) childminders in the semi-formal service markets. Self-service in these markets has been especially developed in countries where public childcare options are limited, especially in Poland and the Baltic States, owing to a growing share of unemployed and low-waged women. Findings indicate that these offer day care services in the second economy, largely to uphold the living standards of their households. In sum, the widespread unregulated service markets and day care by other family members (paid and unpaid) provide options for mothers to engage in paid employment, and take the pressure off national governments to address the issue of public support for the mothers in paid employment. Thus, they could account for the shape of maternal employment rates in countries with limited public child care options.

2. Contributions to intellectual inquiry

Although this study focused specifically on eight post-socialist countries, some of its arguments and findings apply to a wider range of cases and offer perspectives for further research of how childcare policies shape female employment. Overall, this study offers some conceptual perspectives, which are of both methodological as well as of theoretical value to comparative research.

Contribution to comparative policy analysis

One of the most valuable features of this study is its attempt to engender a dialogue between theory and the data, whereby it paid explicit attention to the challenges of measuring and analyzing childcare policies in comparative research. The methodological discussion focused on the measurement of childcare policies, in particular on the possibilities of how to characterise and measure national policies, while efficiently managing their complexities. In the methodological respect this study challenged the emphasis on the quantitative policy data; arguing against excessive recourse to less adequate quantitative data it employed a new multidimensional approach to assessing policies, in order to provide a fuller portrait of childcare policies. I have developed an encompassing analytical tool for evaluating their dis/incentive effect and emancipatory potential, which assesses how the intersection of familialistic policies (supporting family care) and de-familializing policies (undermining family care-taking), i.e. different constellations of policies lead to different levels of family support, and whether, and how the state challenges gender-specific parenting (chapter 5). Chapter 6 showed some empirical payoffs to approaching childcare policies as configurations of more detailed policy aspects: the policy index as created in this study is like a high resolution lens which reveals the nature of childcare policies and the extent of state support for mothers in employment. Overall, this multidimensional approach to index-building represents a valuable addition to the family of instruments, which can be used to explore childcare policies in a cross-country perspective. It enables fine-grained, theoretically informed analysis of both policy complexity and diversity, and thus provides a better understanding of how policy constellations reflect conceptions of the state, the market, and the family, i.e. policy assumptions, goals and priorities.

By using an index approach with benchmarking this study helped differentiate the overly simplistic characterization of national policies in earlier comparative research. It showed that policy indicators available in international databases misrepresent policy characters, and conflate policy delivery, policy use, and policy legislations. For example, in the eight post-socialist countries local governments play a key role in financing and providing childcare

services, but use different funding streams to finance childcare services. Furthermore, they use the central government funding stream to municipalities in many different ways (e.g. to finance childcare support for social assistance clients), which is not reflected in national statistics of state investment in childcare, especially when local governments do not report on spending on childcare services. Moreover, cross-national databases on public expenditure on childcare and early educational services (such as the Eurostat and OECD family database) only cover information on the pre-primary education programmes, which does not include services for children under the age of three years. Thus, these measures provide a limited understanding of policies. In contrast, using a multidimensional approach to assessing policies this study more adequately revealed the nature of childcare policies and a vivid spectrum of challenges facing the governments. In sum, different policy measures could account for different results between empirical studies, and shed some light on why the present study and a similar study of the eight countries conducted by Szelewa and Polakowski yielded different results (chapter 4 and chapter 6).

We are likely to go wrong in assessing the varieties of familialism if policy indicators for familialism and de-familialism do not correspond with the age group of the cared for children. This is because any such analysis is likely to mask any inconsistencies and internal contradictions between policies on leave and childcare service provision, and may critically impact upon women's ability to engage in employment. The Hungarian and Estonian policies illustrate that point well. Their states couple what seem supportive childcare policies with more restrictive policy provisions: while policy programmes recognize "multiple social identities" of women as mothers, workers and citizens (Haney 2002: 241), formal service provisions, especially for the youngest children, are plagued with inequalities. Any such discrepancy in turn critically affects public care options. Overall, examining policies with a range of more specific policy indicators provides a more informed understanding of their characters. This study offers a potential avenue for future statistical analysis of whether, and how, various policy aspects correlate and affect maternal employment, and contributes to further academic debate on the use of policy regulations as variables in comparative policy analyses.

Applicability of the varieties of familialism to post-socialist countries

Systematic comparative examination of care provision in eight countries using the varieties of familialism as an analytical framework enabled me to focus on qualitative differences between countries, in both their policies as well as their employment outcomes. As this study has shown, Leitner's (2003) four-type analytical differentiation is applicable beyond Western capitalist countries. This study has demonstrated that the concept of familialism allows a better

understanding of important variations amongst the broadly similar states – focusing on qualitative differences in specific policies, it helps create a better overview of national policies, whereby the configurations of various policy aspects take centre stage in investigation. While my application of this approach simplifies some of the complexities in differences between national policies, it places the range of broadly similar states into recognizable clusters, which largely connect with the employment patterns. Moreover, it indicates that despite variations within clusters, variations between clusters are greater. Such differences emphasize the need for a more dynamic model of welfare state typology, and enhance the interpretative capacities of Leitner's strategy of deconstructing welfare regimes, in order to address the question of how welfare regimes relate to women in different roles.

This study offers some perspectives for further conceptual development of the varieties of familialism. Two national policy models in my group of countries raise some ambiguity about how to classify them, using Leitner's (2003) typology of state familialism. On the one hand, this study located a policy model in between Leitner's de-familialism and explicit familialism – a model that resembles a 'sequential de-familialism', or Korpi's (2000) *dual-earner support model*. Policy models in Slovenia and Lithuania, similar to Sweden, combine explicit familialism (the state actively supports family in its caring function for a year) and de-familialism (provides public care options once child turns one year of age). Their models create conditions for women's continuous employment, as well as encourage men to participate in childcare. Moreover, they encourage employers to revise their hiring practices (e.g. stop treating women as secondary workers because of their (potential) care obligations). Because the states actively support mothers in paid employment, and also challenge conventional gender division of labour, this model offers some perspectives for further differentiation of de-familialism. On the other hand, this study located a policy model in between Leitner's explicit familialism and implicit familialism: the Latvian state provides a favourable parental leave for a year, which generates incentives for women to enter the labour force to qualify for leave and income support payments during leave. But it leaves many parents nearly without support once leave ends. Hence, such policy model raises some ambiguity about how to classify it, using Leitner's (2003) typology.

Furthermore, chapter 6 emphasized that country groupings share some core characteristics with Esping-Andersen's (1990) three worlds of welfare capitalism. (1) Characteristics of the sequential de-familialistic policy model as found in this study resemble social democratic models: in both groups the role of the state is central, and women are expected to be part of the labour market. Childcare is viewed as social responsibility and the state supports 'dual-earner/public-carer' family model, which allows women's command of economic resources

independently of their familial reciprocities. (2) Policies in the explicitly familialistic cluster are generally embedded in the socially conservative principles about family and gender role. Both models stress the primacy of the family (and community) for providing care for the youngest children. And (3) policies in the implicitly familialistic model resemble characteristics of the market-oriented (liberal) model, where social benefits are largely organised to reflect and preserve the consumer and employers markets (Esping-Andersen 2002b: 44). Care is a private responsibility, for which childcare is not likely to be organized, regulated or paid for by the state. On the one hand, these findings suggest that the welfare-state principles underlying Esping-Andersen's welfare state regimes are correlated with those that shape childcare policies. On the other hand, they show a more nuanced picture of the most advanced post-socialist countries, which challenges the conventional expectations that these countries form one single (policy) group. In sum, this study is relevant to the literature on welfare state typologies. By finding different regional clusters that share core characteristics with three worlds of capitalism, it also contributes to further academic debate about the applicability of the welfare state regimes literature to the post-socialist countries.

Relevance to the literature on historical institutionalism and path dependence

This study extended policy analysis to the periods before and after the 1990s. In so doing, it located the institutionalization of childcare policies in the period of state socialism. It found that the eight countries experienced long periods of relatively stable policy arrangements between the 1950s and 2008, with moments of dynamism and reform between 1989 and the second half of the 1990s. In retrospect, this period appears to be a period of policy consolidation and stabilization; intra-group diversities are not simply hiccups in an otherwise smooth regime categorization, but are the symptoms of larger, more sustained differences. These findings challenge the dichotomy between the 'socialist past' and the 'post-socialist present', as well as the thesis about re-traditionalization in cultural norms and gender-role values.

Small-scale policy changes were continuously taking place in the eight countries, a process Hall calls "normal policymaking" (Hall 1993: 278-80). But policy alterations largely remained within the overall logics of their national policies. Chapter 2 showed that the eight countries entered the 'post-socialist era' with mixed legacies and different collective experiences in regards to mothers in paid employment and social organisation of care. Chapter 4 indicated that in retrospect, the 1990s by all accounts represent a decade of intensive social transformation and policy re-adjustments, as all national policies, except the Slovenian, reflect the change in the political and economic climate of a period marked by high unemployment and fiscal constraints.

But this study found that policy changes and shifts during the 1990s did not fundamentally challenge their policy characters, as between 2000 and 2008 most countries showed "policy continuity rather than a significant change" (Morgan 2005: 111). Estonia and Lithuania might be exceptions, because their policies are still prone to change – their policy makers have significantly extended parental leave between 2000 and 2008, several times in Estonia, but have not addressed inadequate service provision for the youngest children. The slow accumulation of smaller-scale changes, i.e. moderate extensions of leave time in Estonia could strengthen its currently weak conformity to the explicitly familialistic policy model. And unless the Lithuanian state increases the investments in public service provision, especially for the youngest children, it will shift towards the explicitly familialistic policy group, which may negatively impact upon mothers' employment. Moreover, contrary to common beliefs, the three Baltic States divide up into three different policy groups; focusing on more qualitative policy characteristics I found considerable intra-group differences in their national policies, which largely correspond with their employment patterns.

Putting policies in historical perspective, this study also challenges earlier theses about a resurgence of patriarchal order, ascendancy of neo-familialism, and women's retreat to domestic life in the eight post-socialist countries (discussed in chapter 1). It finds that neither the explicitly familialistic nor implicitly familialistic states placed responsibility for child care back to the family after 1989, because public child care options, especially for children under three years of age have traditionally been underdeveloped. These findings complement earlier studies that claimed against re-traditionalization in childcare policies and cultural norms (e.g. Van der Lippe and Fodor 1998; Motiejūnaitė 2008). I would argue that historical legacies and institutional arrangements certainly play an important role in how these countries deal with female employment and gender roles. In sum, this study contributes to further academic debate about continuity and path dependence in childcare policies and offers some perspectives for further research that could derive more generalizations about the stability/change in the varieties of familialism.

Contributions to scholarship on female employment

Total female employment rate misrepresents employment behaviour of women with children, and masks large variations between countries. This study found considerable variations in employment rates for different groups of women and demonstrates that we are likely to go wrong about trends in maternal employment if we only examine total female employment rates. Too simplistic an interpretation of trends in the total female employment rates should be

avoided, especially when one is interested in the employment behaviour of different groups of women.

Moreover, I systematically reviewed the rich scientific literature on female employment, and explored and critically appraised the explanatory potential of numerous factors of female employment, as proposed across academic disciplines (chapter 3). Chapter 4 synthesized scholarship on causal factors of female employment in post-socialist countries and explored whether empirical evidence in post-socialist countries complements the theses produced on the basis of empirical evidence from Western capitalist countries. With reference to both strands of the literature this study finds that structural and individual-level explanations of female employment are complementary in many ways. At any point in time women's employment is limited by the opportunities in the labour markets and the jobs available to women: the service sector, especially in the public labour markets, has high explanatory potential for cross-country variations in female employment. But whether or not women engage in paid employment is a result of their personal circumstances and the household-level decision-making process. A range of factors enter into this process, such as women's opportunity costs and their reservation wage, and the economic necessity of households. Mothers' educational attainment and the income needs suppress rather than rival the childcare policies explanation, and the unregulated service markets and day care by other family members provide options for mothers to engage in paid employment, when the states leave parents nearly without support.

Optimal leave and formal service provision play the critical role in the employment of *low-skilled* and *low-income mothers* with pre-school children, who are usually employed in less protected and less secured jobs, with lower levels of social protection. Among the eight countries, these mothers had the lowest employment rates in countries where childcare options were limited, and the positive correlation between their employment and childcare policies was stronger (chapter 7). Thus, this study complements the thesis that childcare services and leave have a stronger impact upon employment of women with lower levels of education (e.g. Del Boca et al. 2009). It also complements the micro-economic rationality thesis that women make a (rational) consumption choice between their potential market income and the value of time spent outside paid work: a low income family with childcare needs would make too few financial gains from a woman's participation in the labour force when affordable formal childcare options are limited. In sum, the study highlights that childcare policies are the main precondition for mothers' employment, and have broader social implications upon women's economic and social autonomy. Thus, many issues raised in this study are also relevant to social and employment policies more broadly.

3. Suggestions for future research

This study is based on descriptive exploratory analysis of childcare policies and their association with maternal employment in eight post-socialist countries. Its conclusions on the relationship between childcare policies and maternal employment refer to the aggregate-level data from the sample of eight countries, and thus more general conclusions about their interrelationship cannot be generated beyond this sample. Instead, the findings should be read as theoretically informed hypotheses that raise issues for further research, which could enable the rich data generated on childcare policies in this study to be further utilised. In this respect, patterns identified in this study highlight the need to test interactions between maternal employment and childcare policies, mothers' educational attainment, the income needs of households, but also the unregulated service markets in the multivariate model.

By utilizing individual-level data and larger samples the statistical analyses could shed new light on interactions among policy aspects, and their individual explanatory potential for maternal employment. In this study all policy components were weighted equally (justified in chapter 5). But if we compare countries under review by their index scores, and contrast them to the radar charts which present policies by individual policy components (chapter 6), we see that the policy indices compensate low values in one policy component by higher values in another. This study has shows that it is important to understand how policies combine, but multivariate analyses could inform empirical research about ways to weight different policy components, and how to account for multi/collinearity as well as interaction between them. Moreover, this study used synchronic data, not giving enough weight to any time lags. These include the time between enactment of a specific legislation, its promulgation, its effective implementation and the time it takes the public to learn to make full use of the new opportunities (also see Dogan 2004: 333-4). However, time lags are crucial in understanding causality, the question is, however, how much later an impact will take place and have observable results. Further, this study is based on annual series, and did not explore patterns in time series data. Thus, time trend analysis could account for the calendar and seasonal adjustments, and shed new light on any bias in the employment data.

The study is based on the assumption that the intra-country diversity is less significant than the differences between the countries. In reality, as this study has highlighted, most countries are characterized by important internal diversity, either regional or vertical in terms of social strata: the social, economic, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, to name but few, makes women-friendliness a difficult concept. This study has already raised an issue of differential implications of statutory entitlements for different social groups of women. Policies on leave

and formal childcare service provision emerge as critical factors of mothers' employment, affecting most critically the employment of low-income mothers, who retreat from the labour force in greatest numbers after childbirth – and yet, it is especially these mothers' earnings that are vital for the household income and family welfare. Future research, utilizing individual-level data and multivariate models, should investigate how childcare policies affect employment prospects of different groups of women, such as for single parents, parents of more children, ethnic minority groups, as well as same-sex partners, especially when childcare policies are based on the assumption of a 'conventional' family model, and hence explore whether, and how, childcare policies curtail their social rights.

Furthermore, this study applied a variable-oriented approach to cross-country comparative research of maternal employment. Thus, there is a limit as to what factors of maternal employment were considered, and the factors analyzed in this study are by no means exhaustive. Moreover, this study focused on policy programmes, which hold no information on policy delivery or the use. Therefore, further research should explore any discrepancies between policy programmes and policy delivery, and include other potential determinants of maternal employment. For example, comparative knowledge about the role of employers as policy agents and providers of childcare services is limited. Their human resource management practices and working conditions can depress or facilitate maternal employment (also Fagan and Hebson 2005). On the one hand, cases of discriminating practices of employers are not rare, and employers often treat women as 'secondary workers', which might guide their hiring or dismissal practices (e.g. Burchell et al. 2007; Motiejūnaitė 2008: 18). This may be particularly critical in countries, where both normative and regulative pressures are not strong enough to induce the employers to implement the statutory entitlements of their employees. On the other hand, workplace policies such as flexible hours and tele-working, as well as any special type of family leave and childcare services provided by the employers increase incentives for women to stay active in the period of active motherhood. Few studies already indicate that employers in the eight countries are gradually increasing their activity in childcare service provision, as well as providing additional reconciliation measures to the parents, especially in Slovenia and Latvia (e.g. Plantenga and Remery 2005; OECD 2010). Thus, empirical research about the role of employers would provide fruitful lines for further theory formation about mothers' employment.

The time women spend commuting to work, the distance to and from work, access to suitable travelling arrangements, as well as access to formal day care centres represent another set of potential factors, which may interact with women's opportunity costs and reservation wage: as chapter 3 noted, financial returns from employment must be sufficient to reward an individual for giving up time which would otherwise be spent for household and leisure. Further, women

and men have different preferences, as suggested by Hakim's (2000) preference theory. Thus, these could shed new light on women's decision making about care/work integration. Moreover, chapter 3 reviewed earlier findings about the employment effects of the current economic recession, but did not address this issue fully, because it was too early to account for its (full) effect on employment patterns. Eurofound's report has already noted that the Baltic States have been worst affected by the recession, and that the pressures on public finances as a result of the recession have had repercussions for public sector pays, staffing and working patterns (Hurley et al. 2010). While employment levels in the public sectors have been more resilient than in the private, it is plausible that public sector employment may have experienced subsequent declines. As documented in chapter 7, this sector has been the main employer of (more highly educated) women in most countries, and thus it would be essential to analyze how recent developments have impacted upon women's employment. Moreover, comparative analysis of the effects of the recent economic recession, as well as the role of the active labour market policies would contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and maternal employment.

Systematically reviewing the rich scientific literature, I also found a strong research focus of employment/care analysis on women, which leaves male employment/care behaviour and their attitudes out of the picture. I found that men in all eight countries intensify their employment when they become fathers. Given such trends, accounting for their decisions and practices would contribute to a better understanding of maternal employment and care solutions.

Analyzing patterns in other post-socialist countries would enable further theory formation about female employment. Whilst there is emerging research for the new member states of the European Union, for the rest of the region comparative knowledge is scant. There has been a vast regional variation in terms of living standards, social composition of population, sectoral structure of their economies, the character of socio-economic transformation of the 1990s, ethnic and religious differences, and other long-standing cultural differences. A wide cross-country variation highlights the need for the incorporation of these countries into comparative research, in order to get a more complete picture over the region and to better understand the intensity of economic and social changes in this region in the post-socialist period. In sum, comparative research of these countries would contribute to a more in-depth understanding of the specific contexts in different post-socialist countries, which could shed new light on factors that influence mothers' employment.

4. Availability of data on childcare policies and maternal employment

For the eight countries under review even relatively simple cross-country analysis is hindered by lack of detailed policy and employment data. Time series in available international databases are short, detailed indicators that measure policy provision and the use are scant and flawed. Administrative data are inconsistent across countries, often not translated into other languages, and hence are less serviceable for cross-country research. In many respects, comparative research would greatly benefit from more widely available data; given the importance of various types of data for policy-making and analysing employment/care patterns, its wider availability is warranted for further comparative research.

Despite important contributions that have highlighted the need for systematic incorporation of more detailed policy information into empirical research, available databases have not kept pace with such developments. The joint UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat data collection provides important comparable and consistent data on pre-primary education, but it largely excludes programmes on early care for children under three years of age. Sementini et al. (2004) have already prepared an elaborated compendium of policy indicators and data, which would more accurately measure policy delivery and its use across the EU countries, and made a feasibility study for the Eurostat. In the short-term, the expansion of data availability could proceed in two ways. First, international statistical institutions such as the Eurostat and the OECD could utilise the existing sources more (e.g. data from the EU-SILC statistics), and produce *standard* tabulations of employment data by parental status, data on policy delivery and the use, including the provision for children under three years of age. The OECD online family database is a good example – it brings together information from different OECD databases, as well as databases maintained by other (international) organisations. Second, the Eurydice could systematically collect data on childcare service provision for all children, for example following the structure of the Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the Member States of the European Union. Furthermore, it could collate and organise policy information from currently widespread and scattered library of sources. This would significantly improve access to consistent and comparable policy information.

5. Policy recommendations

Welfare systems are dominated by employment-led social policies. While the prevalence of work as a source of welfare entitlement makes labour market participation more compulsory, mothers' employment has also become a more pressing necessity for the majority to protect against falling living standards and insecurity. However, women's access to independent

income is still largely structured by widespread gender division of caring. Whilst social policies assume that men and women equally need to earn for their own security (Pascall and Lewis 2004: 391), they do not necessarily assume that they both have equal obligation to care for children.

In the current economic climate when jobs are scarce, and companies are in constant pursuit of cheaper production and lower labour costs, people are more cognizant of any conflicts between their employment choices and parenthood. Failure to reconcile motherhood and career provokes a trade-off between having children and pursuing employment, autonomy and increasing household income (Esping-Andersen 2009: 81). When women with children are perceived as disadvantaged, they become more 'risk averse', and delay family formation until they feel they have reached a position to assume the costs of mothering, and/or have fewer children (e.g. Castles 2003; McDonald 2006; Sobotka 2004). Demographic trends across the eight countries suggest that women are more likely to leave 'the reproductive market' by delaying family formation than to exit 'the labour market' (also Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007).

The state is of particular importance for women's employment: its actions facilitate or hamper the level and the quality of their labour market participation. Collective commitments illustrate clearly the intersection of state, market and family – they shape the scope of women's choices and employment opportunities. On the one hand, public provision and investment in the form of childcare policies sets limits to care responsibility for individuals, and hence determines free time for paid work for carers to earn incomes and pensions. On the other hand, they reflect social commitment to children and could be seen as a compensation for women's unpaid work. In sum, this study underlines the importance of the state in regulating, funding and providing early childcare services as well as challenging the conventional gender division of caring. Childcare policies shape the family-market nexus by determining whether, and how, women pursue employment or remain in the home and provide care for their children, as well as challenge, or reinforce conventional parenting roles. Thus, they help minimize any 'penalties' of motherhood. The de-familialistic childcare policies have the potential of closing many social cleavages: by enabling all women access to independent income they enhance their autonomy and social security (i.e. lifelong earnings), and thus advance an inclusive citizenship.

Policy matters. Both the balance of policy instruments and their nature matter, and a fine-tuning of policies is crucial for mothers' employment. Childcare policies are obviously not the only factor; in the absence of policy, families are coming up with their own reconciliation strategies. However, if governments strive to increase women's employment, they should adopt policies with the following characteristics:

- Total leave should be between six months and one year long, fully paid with job and the benefits secured. Parental leave should be an individual right, employees should be allowed to use it more flexibly, whereby part of the leave should be targeted at men.
- Affordable public day care services should be available to all pre-school children from early age. They should be accessible and flexible, and regulated and financed/organised by the state.

Figure 6.11 on page 129 illustrates how far the national childcare policies are from the optimum: the larger the area the more supportive the policy of mothers' employment. Between 2000 and 2008, none of the eight post-socialist countries provided an optimal childcare policy in terms of mothers' employment or gender division of care. I would suggest that the states extend their childcare policies beyond established realms and offer more flexibility in leave and service provision, remove disincentives to shared parenting, and introduce measures to address strong urban/rural divides in service provision, and hence ensure fair access to public service across their geographical areas.

Measures for shared parenting

Absence of policy measures that effectively encourage shared parenting is critical. For example, a forceful 'use it or lose it' incentive and/or a bonus to fathers in a form of extra days of leave could be introduced. The recently revised Council Directive on Parental Leave (agreed by EU ministers in December 2009) will only slightly improve current provisions. Whilst the EU extends an *individual* right to parental leave from three to four months, only one of the four months is non-transferable. This new Directive will encourage the states that lag behind in paternity provisions to revise their provisions, but one month is too short to spur any significant substitution effect (i.e. fathers absorb care for the small child, while mothers return to the labour market), especially when the states grant very long parental leave, or financial incentives to using leave are modest.

In this light the Slovenian experience is informative. With one of the most generous (optimal) systems of parental leave among the EU member states, it has been at the forefront of efforts to increase fathers' involvement in child care. After a 2001 reform, the Slovenian fathers have been entitled to 260 fully paid days of parental leave, plus another 90 days of paternity leave, of which 15 days are fully reimbursed. Paternity leave has to be taken by a father at any time until the child turns three years of age. As anticipated, the Slovenian fathers responded to such policy incentive by using longer leave, but they predominantly use only the fully-paid part of paternity leave (e.g. Javornik and Skledar 2005; Vertot 2009). This indicates that limiting paid time cuts

the use of leave, and does not lead to a substitution effect, i.e. changing men into carers. Hence, the question is to what extent such policy provision spawns a more fundamental change in parental roles and care norms, especially when the public opinion lags behind the policy.

Measures that allow more flexible use of parental leave

Flexibility of leave provision is limited, which can be critical in countries with longer leave. The states should introduce measures which allow parents to divide longer leave into shorter periods of absence from work, with the right to use leave at any time until child reaches compulsory school age, as well as allow parents to combine parental leave with reduced working hours without losing the right to a place in public day care facility. This way leave generates incentives for women to return to paid employment after childbirth and facilitates their continuous employment: those with low-income do not have to stop working when costs of childcare are high, and women in higher occupations can more easily reconcile paid employment and child care.

Measures that improve flexibility in day care service provision

In the eight countries, service hours of care centres are largely incompatible with working time of employed parents. The states should address parents' care needs by encouraging local providers to extend service hours during the day and to provide services continuously throughout the year.

Fair access to public service

High-quality services for young children are unlikely to be guaranteed without state involvement in regulation and provision. When municipalities are autonomous in service provision, and service provision is financed from local budgets, access to public services varies between the geographical areas of the state. This has negative implications for fair access to public services. The states should coordinate and oversee service provision, set uniform standards of service provision, eligibility criteria, set a ceiling on parental fees by law, as well as monitor local service provision. Further, governments should actively address the issue of inadequate service provision by increasing the supply, instead of merely extending leave time. At the same time, they should tackle the issue of thriving and widespread unregulated service markets and ensure fair access to early education and care of high quality. By sharing part of childcare costs with parents they would increase available household income; affordable public childcare service provision would decrease women's reservation wage and would positively impact upon their employment. Furthermore, public day care has many positive consequences for quality of care, welfare of the child, as well as for social inclusion and social citizenship in

general. Overall, informal and voluntary sectors lack the capacity for childcare to underpin women's employment, and privatized care has many negative consequences in terms of quality of care, as well as for social divisions and access to the labour market.

Governments have some room to manoeuvre public service provision. On the one hand, they should introduce measures which encourage the growth of regulated commercial care markets. However, the state should oversee service provision and ensure that all public options remain affordable, otherwise access to independent income and continuous careers is likely to be a privilege attained by more affluent parents. On the other hand, the states should introduce measures (e.g. subsidies) which encourage the growth of family day care centres, like in Sweden or France. These are more flexible in service provision, and are cheaper than day-care centres, because they rely on lower-skilled labour. This is one way the unregulated service markets could become part of the formal economy. Furthermore, the states should actively involve other stakeholders in service provision; in many countries publicly funded voluntary organizations are a critical layer between the state and the family and could offer a pluralistic range of services.

Moving policy agendas towards more flexible provisions

State efforts to address care needs and support mothers in paid employment should not result in a one-size-fits-all approach that endorses one family model or another. Moving policy agendas forward and reframing them through a dual earner-carer family model would challenge the conventional gender division of labour. Such policy agendas do not hamper women's access to paid employment, or trade-off freedom of choice between different lifestyles. Policies mindful of pluralistic needs of families could close many social cleavages and lead to inclusive citizenship, could positively impact upon the demographic outlooks, as well as win some electoral votes.

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