Olaf Kapella
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Norbert F. Schneider (eds.)

Family Diversity

Collection of the 3rd European Congress of Family Science

Barbara Budrich Publishers

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Preface

The European Congress of Family Science has become quite an institution among experts now that its organisers – the Austrian Institute for Family Studies, University of Vienna (ÖIF), the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg (*ifb)* and University of Mainz – have come together for the third time to set up a forum for family researchers that is specially designed to have an interdisciplinary outlook[1].

The sheer diversity of family – its plurality or pluralisation – has long been a characteristic feature that appears to excellently describe key trends in recent developments of family configurations. When we take this feature to a European level, we encounter not just a variety of types and dynamics, but also differences in the national and regional settings and their developments. This extremely wide and diversified field was approached at the Congress through four thematic focuses (Images of the Family; Gender Roles in the Family; Development and Dynamics of the Family in Europe; Globalisation and Challenges for the Family).

As the first of these focuses, *Images of the Family* brought together contributions from different countries and disciplines, with experts discussing the diversity of family life concepts. They looked into cultural norms, social frameworks and empirical criteria for the many models currently applied. It was found that family images and family models act as sturdy categories for family science studies, excellently suited to open up broad access to the ideas, attitudes and norms governing family life designs from different scientific angles. The wide-open concept even allows different accents and enables us to discuss in suitable depth the diverse and even contradictory ideas that we have of the family and the roles within the family.

Change and persistency in *gender roles* are a potent field for conflict within the family. Especially changes in female role concepts and lifeplans have been supported variously across European countries through developments in their societies and social policies. The requisite processes to adapt male role expectations have emerged with varying intensity and speed, although generally with much equivocation, as is demonstrated by the findings of men's as much as women's studies, and by the marked discrepancy between ideal vision and actual practice.

While changes in the gender roles have contributed to a noticeable transformation in the *family's internal structure* over the past decades, family forms and formal structures

1 Variety of the European Family – Third European Congress of Family Science, 12-14 June 2008, Vienna/Austria. (www.familyscience.eu)

have been shaped by ever more dynamic family development processes and a decline in institutionalisation, which together resulted in a new diversity. Once again, European countries have gone their different ways, moulded by a diversity of dynamics and differentiations at the various levels. Particular interest should be accorded to the new EU member states, where our knowledge of the situation is still inadequate. Dynamic processes, transitions and changes do not just impact on society but may impinge on the course of individual or family life. In this context, the competences and resources of family members to handle and cope with such transitions have become more relevant.

This is further underlined by the growing burden of demands imposed on *families in the course of globalisation*. At an individual level, they cause ever greater vulnerability in a number of fields – such as work, income, planning horizon, trust in institutions. The trend impacts at several levels – individual, national, European and global – and it confronts us with specific challenges.

For the individual, globalisation certainly brings positive as well as negative changes, although the latter appear to prevail. Globalisation has become a widespread reference system for sociological analysis – a situation that is viewed with some criticism as it tends to disguise other possible links, such as the fact that the classic dimensions of social inequality such as strata or class models can still yield adequate explanations. Moreover, the focus should not be on economic factors alone since cultural resources are also of importance in studying family processes.

This short overview of the thematic focuses indicates the broad range of contributions, most of which are assembled in this volume. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all participants for their contributions, not just those for our scientific exchange, but also those that ensured the success and extremely friendly climate of the conference. Our special thanks are due to our guests of honour on the panel: Andrea Kdolsky (Austrian Federal Minister for Health, Family and Youth, Vienna), Ursula von der Leyen (German Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Berlin), Norbert F. Schneider (family researcher; University of Mainz), Bernhard Felderer (economist, HIS Vienna), Ulrike Baumgartner-Gabitzer (member of the managing board of Verbund Österreichische Elektrizitätswirtschafts-AG, Vienna), Wolfgang Mazal (law expert and director of ÖIF), as well as to all those who have helped make this conference a success.

Mention also needs to be made of the funding granted to us without which such an event could not be organised: our thanks are due to the Federal Ministry for Health, Family and Youth, the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, both of the Republic of Austria; the Bavarian State Ministry for Labour and Social Policy, Family and Women; ERSTE Foundation, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Federation of Austrian Industry.

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Olaf Kapella, Christiane Rille-Pfeiffer, Marina Rupp, Norbert F. Schneider
(editors)

I Introductory contributions

Ilona Ostner

Social policies, family and gender in Europe

Abstract
My presentation contributes to ongoing debates on 'policies that work' and related questions about policy learning with regard to boosting female employment, maintaining and even increasing birth-rates, and investing in human resources. I will explore and explain the differences and similarities in social policies for supporting both parenthood and parental employment in a number of European countries. Responding to the needs of working parents by providing for a better work/life balance has become an imperative social policy issue in most contemporary welfare states. It can be seen as killing two birds with one stone: increasing flexible labour forces, on the one hand, and raising the number of children and the quality of their lives, on the other. Drawing upon up-to-date, comparative empirical data, I will provide insights into policies targeting families, and, above all, women as (future) parents and workers.

1. Introduction

My contribution involves comparative country data (OECD; ISSP[1]) on the change in labour force participation, especially among mothers, and on the change (or persistence) of attitudes regarding the division of work within the family. Countries were chosen roughly in line with (1) Esping-Andersen's three worlds of welfare capitalism; (2) the feminist differentiation between degrees of "familialism" (for a first definition see Glennding/ McLaughlin 1993); and (3) the four "families of nations" identified by the working group headed by F.X. Kaufmann (Kaufmann *et al.* 2002) with a view to national family policy styles.

The main thread weaving through this discussion is provided by an issue now current in comparative and gender-sensitive research into the welfare state: whether the welfare

1 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP): The subjects of the ISSP are changed annually. The 2002 survey included questions on "Family and Changing Gender Roles III". Its national sample sizes ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 interviewees. ISSP data are available from the GESIS central archive in Cologne/Germany.

states within the European Union are about to finally dispense with "maternalism" and move towards an "adult worker" model (for the concept see Lewis 2001), converting it into a universal model that is binding upon all adults capable of work, regardless of their gender. The discussion is thus about all those developments that Ann Shola Orloff has collected in a recent comparative essay (2006) under the heading of "From maternalism to employment for all?"[2] The departure from "maternalism" – first from the conceptual standard, and then from the practice that the care of infants is first and foremost their mothers' concern – would imply a change to the "adult worker model", i.e. that all adults capable of work, regardless of their gender, are expected to be gainfully employed, both continually and on a full-time basis as far as this is possible.

Ideas (such as gender and family role models) and institutions (such as those of the labour market and in welfare) play a major part in the change-over from the single-earner to the dual-earner model – from the "male breadwinner" to the "adult worker" model (Lewis 1992, 2001; Knijn/Ostner 2008). Scientists working in a political environment and policy advisers with contacts to the scientific community have for the past decade staunchly not only advocated a new EU family model, but also recommended the reprogramming and coordination of those EU social policies that foster continuous employability of parents and boost the educational potential of their children. Such efforts were accompanied in the discussion by formulas such as "social investment" and the constant pointing at "child poverty".

The expectation was that, once the change-over to a new family model was complete, the family in the EU would have a different shape. Mary Daly identified five EU-wide trends in family policy that act as drivers of this change (2004: 150):

1) First, there is the state's interest in "family solidarity" and the discussion that redefines "family" and "solidarity": solidarity is to be extended to include neighbourhood and quarter; it also includes fathers and older generations (including non-relatives). Seen against such an extended concept of solidarity, the contribution by mothers and the core family will pale.
2) This new understanding of solidarity is also formulated with a view to achieving, as a desirable end, greater labour force participation on the part of the parents.
3) At the same time, the law and politics have been designing an individualised access to children (the law accords individuality to children; children are perceived as a public good).
4) Policy-related experts emphasise that families should prepare for a greater role of the "welfare mix" (of incomes and services): relying on a single income or a single type of childcare is outmoded – future families will draw incomes from a number of sources and have their children cared for by a number of institutions (public, market-driven, etc.).
5) And finally, expectations to be met by families and measures proposed are worded in gender-unbiased language.

2 Orloff concentrates on the US and Sweden, with some references to the Netherlands.

2. Socioeconomic and political context of family policy debates

Since the 1980s, changes in family structures and in gender roles have been coinciding with demands on the part of the EU to increase employability among the work force, to achieve a better and more continuous use of the existing employment pool, to make the work force more flexible and, related to all of this, to make families and life courses more employment-friendly (Mahon 2006: 181).

International organisations and bodies (such as the OECD or the EU Commission) have developed analyses and proposals on how to both expand employment and make even low-wage and low-skill work rewarding for the individual, as well as how to design social benefits (transfers, services) so that they encourage rather than hamper continuous employment, especially that of mothers and low-skilled persons. In *A caring world,* the OECD named three causes for the need to get rid of the male breadwinner model and maternalism and to reprogram social policies accordingly:

> "… First the growth of female labour market participation provides a forum of self-insurance to households, with the income risks attached to involuntary non-employment reduced. Second, working women become entitled to insurance-based benefits in their own right. Third, demands increase for some sort of social support (in particular, childcare, maternity and paternity leave)" (OECD 1999: 14-15).

The OECD and its policy experts have repeatedly emphasised the need for a policy change, i.a. in the introduction to *Balancing work and family life*:

> "The main policy concern addressed is that of encouraging a higher participation by mothers in paid employment. This is important to maintain their labour market skills, to ensure adequate resources for families and women living by themselves, and to make further progress towards gender equity. In addition, the skills of mothers will be increasingly needed in the labour market as the population of working age in most OECD countries begins to shrink. The chapter notes the probable relevance of the work/family relationship to fertility – the low fertility rates seen in most OECD countries will exacerbate shortfalls in labour supply if they continue" (OECD 2001a: 29).

Another important argument as to why there should be a change of policy is that "low-birth" knowledge societies, such as Europe, are challenged to obtain the human resources required now and in the future. A "social investment" in children and sustainable family policies which, i.a., provide for more external child-raising promise to kill several birds with one stone (cf. Esping-Andersen 2002a; OECD 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2005; CEC 2005).

3. Benchmark "Scandinavia"!?

Even though some scholars (e.g. Armingeon/Beyeler 2004) make little of the influence that supranational proposals may have on the member states, we nevertheless find some trend towards a more child-centred and employment-focused family policy (as outlined above) in EU member states such as Germany or the United Kingdom. Such a reorientation would not necessarily have been expected in these countries, but it takes us one step in the direction of Kaufmann's prognosis that European ideas of gender equality (identified by him as Scandinavian concepts) gradually influence national policies, thereby giv-

ing a Scandinavian touch to family models and family policies, even though the EU lacks any family policy competence:

> "… To this day, competence on family matters is lacking on the European level. However, spill-overs from the (EU–IO) principle of gender equality and children's rights are to be expected. This could enhance the influence of the Scandinavian type of implicit family policy on other nations and might also promote modernizing effects on family relationships" (Kaufmann 2002: 419).

Supposing that the EU member states are serious about the employment policy guidelines agreed in the Treaty of Amsterdam and in the course of the Lisbon process, on the one hand, and that they actually want to implement these guidelines, on the other, most of them still have a long way to go. It is only the Nordic countries which appear to be in a position to realise these goals, which were partly realised long ago. Thus it seems that for some countries in the EU – the "low-" or "non-achievers" that still cling to the maternalist and male breadwinner (and thus gender *in*equality) model – the goal appears to be "Stockholm". The English summary of the Seventh Family Report thus emphasises that the new parental leave regulation was expressly aligned along the Swedish model and that the new – "sustainable" – family policy has begun:–

> "… to refocus families' financial benefits in order to increase their effectiveness. A major project … is to refine the previous child-raising benefit in line with successful examples in Sweden and other countries. The slump in income previously experienced after the birth of a child is hence largely avoided. Families receive support when they particularly need it. … At the same time, a parental allowance offers an incentive for fathers and mothers to return to work faster after the child-rearing phase than was previously the case. … Early promotion of children and better possibilities for gainful employment for mothers reduce poverty risks and help people to break out of the poverty spiral" (BMFSFJ 2006: 4-5, English summary).

The Nordic welfare states became pioneers in the transformation from single- to dual-earner households through their investment – exemplary for many countries – in the extension of public care (especially childcare) already in the late 1960s. They were able to do so with little more than token resistance because they could draw on a long and culturally deep-rooted tradition of state intervention in both the private sphere and everyday life arrangements, thus "socialising" parenthood (Ellingsæter/Leira 2006: 2; "politicising parenthood"). In conjunction with the movement to socialise parenting and parenthood, a specific interpretation of gender equality was fostered: an effort to individualise parenting and work in a community setting (folkshemet/Volksheim). Such concepts go quite a long way towards explaining the specificity of the Scandinavian-type welfare state and its expansion, as well as the limits encountered by other countries in emulating the model.

The results were remarkable: the Nordic countries regularly score highest on United Nations gender equality indexes; within the EU they have the highest employment rates among mothers; moreover, their fertility rates are higher in relative terms. According to Mahon (2006: 178; and, in a similar vein, Morgan 2006), Sweden and Denmark come closest to an "egalitarian blueprint", which she defines as having the following features:

1. parental leave structured to foster equal sharing of domestic childcare between mothers and fathers with additional supports for lone parent workers;
2. provision of universally accessible, affordable high-quality childcare for all;

3. children's right to age-appropriate early childhood education and care regardless of their parents' employment status;
4. care provided by skilled providers who earn equitable wages and enjoy good working conditions and employment prospects;
5. provisions made for democratic control, including a strong parental and community voice.

In her list, Mahon fails to mention the equal sharing of both unpaid (beyond parental leave) and paid care by both genders which is required to complete her egalitarian blueprint. She is not the only one to overlook (as do, i.a., Ellingsæter/Leira 2006), in her idealistic view of the Nordic welfare state model, that paid care is mostly left to the women and, more generally, that the Nordic labour market is almost uniquely gender-segregated. She also forgets about the fact that full- and part-time work is unequally divided not only between men and women, but also between mothers in two- and one-parent families. It is typically women rather than men who work (albeit long hours) part-time. In Northern Europe, it is a partnered mother rather than a lone parent who can afford to reduce her gainful employment.

Orloff thus would make light of Mahon's five egalitarist criteria as being "swedophile" (2006: 250), pointing, as she does, at bias problems in an approach to welfare state (and particular feminist) research that measures the progress made by countries in redesigning their policies by, as she expresses it, the "distance to Stockholm". According to Orloff, the Nordic way suggests that the expansion of publicly provided care and the resulting increase in jobs for women is the only adequate course to achieve gender equality[3]. It would be necessary to analyse in much greater detail the extent to which the Nordic countries, their policies, institutions and families already meet the expectations of gender equality. This, however, is neither the purpose nor the object of this contribution. Rather, the essay provides a highly preliminary and selective map of trends in changing gender and parental roles in the field of labour force participation.

4. Countries to be compared

This remainder of my essay presents some purely descriptive data on the development of women's labour force participation and on the gender-specific attitudes towards gainful employment of mothers in eight countries (see below)[4]. The eight countries involved were

3 Esping-Andersen (2002b) interprets the popularity of part-time work in the Nordic countries as expressing a "new gender contract" which, while lacking in egalitarism, nevertheless apparently best meets the wishes and requirements of women. According to him, it has produced socially desirable effects: a relatively high labour force participation rate among women, a low "family gap" (lower labour force participation of mothers) and a low "child penalty" (high continuity of participation), comparatively high fertility rates and a greater share, at least compared to other countries, undertaken by the fathers in the remaining in-house childcare work. For Esping-Andersen, all this justifies a "second-best egalitarist solution" (my words) for women because "the best solution" achieves fewer welfare gains for society. And the same as Mahon, Esping-Anderson ignores the gender segregation in the labour (i.e. paid) market.

4 The data were obtained within the course of a Northern European project funded by the *Nordic Council of Ministers' Welfare Research Programme* 2002–2005. The project was headed by: Jona-

selected on the basis of several aspects: first, in order to pick countries for a comparative analysis of the link between family and gender relations, an obvious choice is Esping-Andersen's typology (1990) which distinguishes between "social-democratic", "conservative" and "liberal-residual" welfare state regimes. For him, the Nordic countries embody the "social-democratic" type, Germany is the "conservative" type and the United Kingdom approximates the "liberal" type. The typology nevertheless has some weaknesses: its empirical basis is provided by the old-age pension systems in the OECD countries and their principles; it is not open to hybrids[5]; and it generalises the typology of variations within a given type, so that it is useful to include all five Nordic countries in our discussion. In contrast to Esping-Andersen (1996, 1999) and analogously to Kaufmann *et al.* (2002), I distinguish between variants of familialism: there is the Southern European case (which is not further discussed here) where the welfare state does not offer money or social services to families and, through this failure, acts as a "familialising" force; and in another case (Germany), family work is supported by transfers and subsidiary services. I also distinguish between variants of the male breadwinner model (cf. Lewis 1992), a model which has almost disappeared in the North of Europe, in contrast to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and (West) Germany. In the final analysis, the choice of countries is a combination of the methods of agreement and difference (cf. Skocpol/ Somers 1980): countries of one type ("social-democratic", "non-familialist" welfare state in Northern Europe) are juxtaposed with a group of "moderately familialist" countries (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Germany). The two groups should be different from each other, yet we can assume variations within each group and similarities between countries from either group.

5. Towards gender equality? Changing attitudes and practices[6]

Since the 1960s, more and more women, and particularly mothers, have entered employment in every OECD country. Some of these countries have even found a doubling of their women's labour force participation rate. Nordic countries are among the pioneers in boosting women's employment (see Table 1); the change-over from the single- to the dual-earner model occurred early and quickly. Nevertheless, Table 1 provides only a snapshot view. While suggesting that gainful employment has become more of a norm

than Bradshaw, University of York, UK, and Aksel Hatland, Research Director, NOVA, Oslo, Norway. It included all Nordic countries as well as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany as contrasting countries. For a detailed analysis of the project, data and their interpretation see Ostner und Schmitt (2008). The discussion in this paper is based on Ostner and Schmitt (2008) and on Ostner (2008).

5 The Netherlands is a typical hybrid welfare state: It is "social-democratic" in terms of old-age pensions, "conservative" with regard to women's labour force participation, and "liberal" concerning the legitimacy of their family policy because the state restrains itself and society calls for own responsibility to be assumed by individuals and demands contributions by business in granting support to families (cf. Knijn/Ostner 2008).

6 For more details see: Ostner (2008) based on Ostner and Schmitt (2008).

among women, it still says little about whether gender standards have aligned and gender roles in the family have changed.

Women's employment rates have certainly increased in (West) Germany as well. Yet until quite recently, married women and mothers tended to pursue "sequential" gainful employment characterised by high discontinuity. Women remained dependent on their husband's income and, to the extent that it existed, his social insurance standing. Looked at in reverse: marital status, tax splitting for married couples, (non-contributory) social insurance for the woman derived from the husband's dependent employment have offered and still offer women an incentive not to enter (full-time) gainful employment, always providing the survival of their marriage and a sufficient and continuous income on the part of the husband. The male breadwinner model, accompanied by its associated gender norms, still dominates, albeit slightly modified by female part-time work.

Table 1: Change in women's gainful employment*, 1960-2004 – Germany and selected European countries**

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1981	1985	1991	1995	2000	2002	2004
Female gainful employment											
Denmark	43.5	49.3	58.0	63.5	71.8	74.5	78.9	73.6	75.9	75.6	76.4
Finland	65.9	62.6	61.4	65.6	71.1	73.7	72.7	70.0	72.3	73.1	72.3
Iceland							78.4	82.4	82.9	81.8	79.9
Norway	36.3	36.9	38.8	53.3	63.9	68.0	71.1	72.2	76.3	76.8	75.6
Sweden		54.1	59.4	67.6	75.5	78.3	80.2	75.9	75.0	75.6	75.0
Germany	49.2	49.0	48.0	50.8	53.1	51.9	61.0	61.5	63.6	64.6	66.6
Netherlands				31.0	37.9	40.9	54.5	59.0	65.2	67.1	
United Kingdom	46.1	49.0	50.7	55.1	57.3	61.4	66.3	66.2	67.8	68.6	

* Percentage of women aged 15–64, including unemployed.

** Country selection: Nordic "two-earner states" ("social-democratic" welfare states); Germany (West) and the Netherlands as representatives of the "conservative" welfare state and the United Kingdom as the representative of the "liberal" welfare state.

Source: OECD On-Line Labour Force Statistics Database, computations (Ostner/Schmitt 2008: 24).

The percentages given in Table 2 point at a structural change in women's gainful employment in Germany (West Germany until 1990), the Netherlands and the UK, i.e. in countries that practise a modified male breadwinner model: this change is driven by married women working on a part-time basis. In the Netherlands, the rise in female employment is due almost wholly to a growth in part-time employment[7]. Nevertheless, such part-time work does not make women economically independent of a second income, typically that of a partner.

In the Nordic countries, where dual-earner households have become the institutionally-fostered standard and prevailing pattern, the proportion of women working part-time is still 20-30%. Although these women typically work "long part-time hours" – almost 30

7 Working women in the Nordic countries tend to put in long hours in a part-time job (almost 30 hours per week) and their working hours therefore come close to that of men; part-time employed women in the Netherlands on the other hand are more likely to work only a few hours a week, a distinction that does not appear from the table.

hours per week on average – even this small income loss derived from their shorter working hours needs to be compensated; once a society has converted to the dual worker model, prices and, consequently, expenditures of a household will follow that model (cf. Warren/Warren Tyagi 2003), so that households will be able to maintain an average living standard only through earning two approximately equal incomes. There is quite some evidence that in Northern Europe part-time work can be afforded – at best – by married[8] women, and much less by single mothers who put in longer working hours per week (e.g. in Denmark) than do married ("partnered") mothers (cf. Skevik 2006b).

Table 2: Full- and part-time work of women, 1983–2004*

	1983	1987	1991	1995	2000	2002	2004
Full-time							
Denmark	63.0	67.6	71.2	74.2	76.0	77.1	75.7
Finland			89.5	88.3	86.1	85.2	85.1
Iceland			60.3	62.2	66.2	68.8	
Norway			60.4	62.5	66.6	66.6	66.8
Sweden		70.2	75.7	75.9	78.6	79.4	79.2
Germany	68.8	74.6	74.8	70.9	66.1	64.7	63.0
Netherlands	55.3	49.0	47.4	44.9	42.8	41.2	39.8
United Kingdom	59.9	58.1	59.7	59.2	59.2	59.9	59.6
Part-time							
Denmark	37.0	32.4	28.8	25.8	24.0	22.9	24.3
Finland			10.5	11.7	13.9	14.8	14.9
Iceland			39.7	37.8	33.8	31.2	
Norway			39.6	37.5	33.4	33.4	33.2
Sweden		29.8	24.3	24.1	21.4	20.6	20.8
Germany	31.2	25.4	25.2	29.1	33.9	35.3	37.0
Netherlands	44.7	51.0	52.6	55.1	57.2	58.8	60.2
United Kingdom	40.1	41.9	40.3	40.8	40.8	40.1	40.4

* Full-time: at least 30 hours per week in the primary job; part-time: fewer than 30 hours per week in the primary job; proportion of all gainfully employed persons.

Source: OECD On-Line Labour Force Statistics Database, computations (Ostner/Schmitt 2008:25).

Table 3: Labour force participation by single mothers in percent

	1990	2000
Denmark	66	69
Finland	87	66
Norway	66	72
Sweden	90	77
Eastern Germany	61	59
Western Germany	60	65
Netherlands	39	54
United Kingdom	38	51

Source: Skevik (2006a: 225)

8 Actually we should talk of "partnered" women, as Northern Europeans are less inclined to marry than people in other European countries. Women nevertheless frequently live together with a partner – one effect, as has already been noted, of the dual-earner standard.

Table 3 illustrates that labour force participation is comparatively high among single mothers in Northern Europe and – interestingly enough – in West Germany[9]. The lower values found for the Netherlands and the UK (1990) are explained by "familialising" benefits (some of which have since been abolished) for single mothers; the decline in Finland (from 1990 to 2000) has its roots in that country's introduction of childcare benefit for under-three-year-olds; the relatively high rate of working single mothers (typically in a skilled job) in West Germany[10] is the consequence of a lack of marriage-based security, i.e. a lack of incentives not to work. Apparently gender norms vary depending on family status.

It is a fact that comparatively few (West) German mothers of children up to age three are gainfully employed, a finding that is mirrored in Table 4. What comes as a surprise is the high share of non-working Finnish mothers (who probably claim the recently introduced childcare benefit) of small children. There are those who perceive gender relationships returning to traditional patterns, but the trend is compensated by the fact that a high rate (the highest in Northern Europe) of Finnish women return to continuous full-time work after their children have grown out of the infancy stage. The state-promoted option of long-term exit from work thus does not necessarily mark the return of "family mothers" and "male breadwinners". Rather it offers a choice in the otherwise continuous full-time employment to stay at home for some time and care for the child – a choice utilised almost solely by women, which, when looked at from an abstract and external vantage point, can certainly be seen as a violation of Mahon's egalitarism norms.

Table 4: Labour force participation of mothers and part-time employment, broken down by the child's age – 2002

	Labour force participation			Of which part-time	
	Child aged under 3	Aged 3–5	Aged 6–14	Aged under 6	Aged 6–14
Denmark	71.4	77.5	79.1	5.1	8.3
Finland	32.2	74.7	85.3	8.3	6.0
Sweden	72.9	82.5	77.4	41.2	41.3
Germany	56.0	58.1	64.3	46.2	59.3
Netherlands	74.2	68.2	70.1	79.0	79.8
United Kingdom	57.2	56.9	67.0	58.0	56.9

Source: Ostner/Schmitt (2008: 25) – OECD 2005.

As already noted through the OECD quotations, one objective of having both parents work is to stave off a household's poverty risk. Indeed, in countries where the single-earner model and a moderate familialism still prevail, a rise in the number of working household members causes the poverty risk to fall precipitously (cf. Table 5). This can serve as an argument in favour of changing to at least a one-and-a-half-earner model.

9 The data should be seen as illustrative only as they are compiled from a variety of sources. Unfortunately no data are available that would permit reliable conclusions on gainful employment by single mothers and on causes for their non-participation broken down by countries.

10 Instances in East Germany were too low to allow reliable interpretations.

Even though such data as have been presented above will at best serve as indirect evidence, attitudes of women and men to women's work *have* become liberalised and egalitarian, regardless of the consequences for the division of work within the family. The rates of agreement assembled in Table 6 certainly point at a substantial reorientation of gender norms in all countries studied occurring between the 55+ generation and the next following age group. Having said that, countries traditionally steeped in the male breadwinner model (with Germany foremost) lag behind the Nordic countries in terms of attitudes (though not necessarily actual practice). Yet even in the more "egalitarian" countries such as Finland, Sweden and Norway, men express more traditional thinking than do women of the same age group.

Table 5: Poverty rates of families, by labour force participation – 2000/2001

	Single parent			Couples with children			
	All	Not working	Working	All	No worker	One worker	Two workers
Denmark	7.2	22.2	4.0	1.9	19.0	6.4	0.7
Finland	10.5	25.0	7.2	2.5	25.8	5.4	1.3
Germany	31.4	55.6	18.0	8.1	51.5	6.4	1.9
Netherlands	30.3	42.8	17.7	5.2	50.7	7.8	1.7
Norway	9.9	24.7	2.8	1.7	38.0	2.8	0.1
Sweden	9.3	34.2	5.6	2.0	13.7	8.2	1.1
United Kingdom	40.7	62.5	20.6	8.7	37.4	17.6	3.6

Source: Ostner/Schmitt (2008: 31), drawing on Förster & d'Ercole 2005 (50% median income).

Table 6: Agreement to the view "A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family" – by age groups, percent*

	Women			Men		
	Age 25–40	Age 41–55	Age 55+	Age 25–40	Age 41–55	Age 55+
Denmark	5.7	6.1	22.0	5.9	9.6	28.1
Finland	4.3	6.2	19.4	12.0	13.3	21.3
Norway	2.7	4.8	14.0	7.1	9.0	23.7
Sweden	1.7	2.1	11.1	6.3	7.9	18.8
Germany	13.0	14.7	30.1	14.3	16.3	40.9
West Germany	12.3	17.1	34.4	15.8	18.3	50.8
Netherlands	5.3	12.0	20.0	11.2	10.1	24.2
United Kingdom	6.6	10.2	30.1	9.2	15.0	42.0

* The ISSP categories "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined.

Source: Ostner/Schmitt (2008: 28), drawing on the ISSP 2002.

We get a slightly different picture when we look at preferences in the care of small children (Table 7). About a quarter of Nordic men (with the minor exception of the Swedish) and Finnish women of the youngest age group agree that a pre-school child – a child under the age of three in Northern Europe – would suffer if the mother were working. There is less agreement among the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish women surveyed. This can be explained by their satisfaction with public childcare services and work offers, the de-

gree to which the "adult worker" norm has become institutionalised and generally accepted, the inevitability of the mother's work (especially when she is a single mother) and the avoidance of cognitive dissonances. Compared with other countries, the level of agreement is rather high among West German women; they have thus remained quite "traditional", and their men even more so, although it should be said that Dutch and British men, too, express quite traditional views.

Table 7: Agreement to the view "A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works" – by age groups, %*

	Women			Men		
	Age 25–40	Age 41–55	Age 55+	Age 25–40	Age 41–55	Age 55+
Denmark	17.9	22.0	43.2	25.8	37.6	53.6
Finland	24.2	27.3	57.2	27.8	38.1	63.7
Norway	11.3	17.9	33.0	24.8	27.0	47.7
Sweden	11.2	16.0	28.6	18.2	36.6	38.4
Germany	40.5	40.2	50.2	43.2	51.9	66.8
West Germany	45.1	46.0	59.5	52.7	59.0	75.0
Netherlands	28.5	33.9	42.9	34.8	43.6	62.7
United Kingdom	23.1	36.1	41.1	32.2	51.5	55.2

* The response categories "strongly agree" and "agree" were combined.

Source: Ostner/Schmitt (2008: 28), drawing on the ISSP 2002.

With the exception of Finland, attitudes in the Nordic countries clearly differ from those in other countries. The former accept working mothers to a much greater degree. Still, the figures of Table 8 show that only a minority of Nordic men and women are in favour of full-time work for mothers of pre-school children: the majority prefers women to work part-time. Finland once again is the exception among Northern European countries: the women and men polled there largely agree that women should stay at home with children under school age. Full-time work for mothers is rejected not just by West Germans but also by British women and men.

Table 8: Agreement to the view "When there is a child under school age – Should women work?" – Women and men with children in the same household*

	Women			Men		
	Work full-time	Work part-time	Stay at home	Work full-time	Work part-time	Stay at home
Denmark	18.3	69.3	12.4	19.4	61.1	19.4
Finland	16.9	47.0	36.1	21.9	38.6	39.5
Norway	14.1	65.3	20.6	20.3	54.9	24.9
Sweden	10.6	73.1	16.3	20.1	64.9	14.9
Germany	8.5	62.4	29.1	8.8	41.5	49.7
West Germany	3.5	58.8	37.7	1.9	33.3	64.8
Netherlands	11.9	62.7	25.4	20.0	53.8	26.3
United Kingdom	5.8	47.4	46.9	3.9	39.9	56.2

* Adults surveyed who live together in a household with children under the age of 18.

Source: Ostner/Schmitt (2008: 29), drawing on the ISSP 2002.

Not surprisingly, attitudes to maternal work change once the children go to school (Table 9). At that time, only a small minority of women and men, even in Germany, advocates that mothers stay at home. Nevertheless, a large majority is in favour of mothers working part-time, even in Northern Europe, which can be partly explained by the wide scope of the definition (any work that takes up less than 30 hours a week).

Table 9: Agreement to the view "After the youngest child starts school – Should women work?" – Women and men with children in the same household*

	Women			Men		
	Work full-time	Work part-time	Stay at home	Work full-time	Work part-time	Stay at home
Denmark	35.6	64.0	0.5	48.5	48.5	3.0
Finland	27.5	65.3	7.3	41.8	49.6	8.5
Norway	35.6	61.3	3.1	40.5	53.0	6.5
Sweden	22.0	76.1	1.9	39.0	59.6	1.5
Germany	15.3	79.0	5.7	20.3	68.4	11.4
West Germany	7.3	85.5	7.3	8.5	76.4	15.1
Netherlands	19.1	79.8	1.1	30.4	65.8	3.7
United Kingdom	17.0	79.0	4.0	17.9	73.9	8.2

* Adults surveyed who live together in a household with children under the age of 18.

Source: Ostner/Schmitt (2008: 30), drawing on the ISSP 2002.

Looking again at Table 6, the trend towards egalitarism at the transition to the youngest age groups seems rather inconspicuous. What is noticeable, however, is the great popularity of maternal part-time work indicated in Table 9, even in the Northern European countries which have been successfully "defamilialised" to become two-earner countries.

6. Summary, outlook

The contribution presents focus data on expectations regarding maternal behaviour in the context of the still conflict-prone zone of combining work and family (childcare) and differences in labour force participation of women and men, all in a contrasting comparison of data from eight countries. It looks at expectations that women and men have of their own and the other sex. Men are found to be more conservative (less egalitarian-oriented) in their attitudes towards working mothers than women, even in Northern Europe. Compared to women, they are almost uniform in their strong rejection of full-time work for mothers of small children. However, only a tiny minority of women wants to work full-time when the children are still small, surprisingly even in countries where the "child penalty" (impediment to gainful employment for mothers due to inadequate public childcare services) is low. Childcare services alone apparently do not suffice to get mothers and fathers alike to work full-time.

The overall surprise is in the variations between Northern European countries: Finland is the outlier because many mothers stay at home for a longer time after giving birth. Yet the same as their Finnish peers, Norwegian women and men are more negative about early external full-time childcare than are the Swedes and Danes. Variations between the

Nordics appear to be almost as great as between the two country groups presented (Northern Europe vs. United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany). At the same time, we find considerable differences between East and West Germany which cause East German attitudes to range nearer to Northern European ones.

Individualist values and traditional attitudes towards childcare may well go hand in hand, as is evidenced by the British and Dutch figures. Although it is the West Germans who are the persistent "traditionalists", yet in this characterisation we are in danger of forgetting that it was women who, in the course of the 20th century, undertook a new – modern! – pattern of maternality which, urged on by a trend towards individualisation, was marked by a high exclusivity of affection and tenderness between parents and children (and especially between mothers and children) (Tyrell 1981: 424-5).

The perception obtained from the data on the progress in harmonising gender norms fails to provide any clear-cut contours. Harmonisation processes contrast with persistent unequal sharing of gainful employment, bolstered by normative convictions of how women and men are supposed to behave. "Equality" has been realised, if at all, only in fragments and fighting against countertrends all the way.

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Lieselotte Ahnert

Today's families: The child's perspective

Abstract
Changes and diversification of family patterns in Europe have led to a redefinition of the criteria of family life. These are centred on concepts of reconcilation of work and family, enabling men and women to access various options of arranging their lives and allowing for an equal division of tasks. However, this new perspective has been accompanied by a changing image of the child. More than ever before, the child is nowadays perceived from the viewpoint of his/her developmental needs. Unfortunately, developmental and behavioural disorders in children have significantly increased during the last decades. These disturbances have been categorised as learning disorders, attention deficits and hyperactivity, emotional dysregulation and proneness to violence. Changes in early childhood socialisation have been regarded as being the cause of these so-called "new children's diseases". Given the changes in the relationship structure, are today's families still capable of fulfilling their tasks in bringing up their children? Can families still ensure their children's "natural socialisation"? Can public childcare facilities provide support for them? In this article, these questions will be discussed against the background of attachment theory perspectives and recent research in developmental psychology.

Today's societies, with their demands for a high level of mobility and flexibility, have given rise to a new perspective of a partnership-based division of tasks in families and solidarity between the sexes. But they have also centred on a new image of the child, characterised by the perception of the child as an active and autonomous individual who contributes to his/her own development from the outset. On top of that, they have brought forth childhood patterns that not only push children into individuation earlier and more intensively but also expose them to a greater extent to various social substructures characterised by contrasts and transitions.

As described by Bronfenbrenner (1976) in an ecological socialisation model, the experience background of children does not actually derive from their family alone but from diverse impressions received from other mesosystems, such as neighbourhood and public care facilities, which in turn are influenced by various exo- and macrosystemic factors. Given this complex care ecology, is it at all possible to properly identify children's development needs and requirements? Are today's families at all capable of ensuring a child's

"natural and original socialisation"? After all, developmental and behavioural disorders in children have significantly increased over the last decades, identified primarily as learning disorders, attention deficits and hyperactivity, emotional dysregulation and proneness to violence, most notably at the start of school. However, there can be no doubt that the root cause of these so-called "new children's diseases" is attributed to changes in early socialisation, which becomes manifest in the Europe-wide debate about public childcare, in particular for very young infants, i.e. those under three years of age. This paper will outline the situation and perspectives of these children within and outside their families by discussing four theses against the background of relevant research literature and the author's own studies.

Thesis I: Throughout human history, it has been rare for children to grow up solely in the care of their core family or their parents, let alone just their mother.

The process of child rearing comes in a vast number of forms of caring for offspring. This makes it extremely difficult to evaluate the consequences for children's development. Such attempts at evaluation therefore tend to focus on the question of childcare as practised by our ancestors, i.e., one of the oldest and most original forms of caring for offspring. To gain insights into the early humans' ways of living and reconstruct their ecological conditions, it is still possible to seek out hunter-gatherer communities. After all, humans used to live in such communities for 95 to 98% of their history. Such communities can still be found in tropical rainforests and adjoining savannahs along the equator.

In the 1970s, systematic anthropological studies carried out on the !Kung in the Kalahari Desert called attention to an exclusive maternal care model. Children are cared for almost continuously by their mothers in close physical contact, being carried on the mother's back for a total of some 7800 km up to age four (Lee 1979). This care model subsequently influenced West-European notions of the "natural" care for offspring.

However, this attitude is now contrary to views such as those held by Hrdy (1999), who argues that exclusive maternal care cannot have been our ancestors' general care model that has made human evolution so successful. This type of investment would not have sufficed to rear the number of children required to achieve today's spread of humans across the globe. "Cooperative breeding allowed our ancestors to successfully rear large, slow maturing offspring and, at the same time, to take advantage of new resources to move into habitats … additional care providers reduce the cost of parenting, and a division of labour can develop during reproduction (ibid. 102)." In fact, collective support for offspring care by additional caregivers (alloparents) in the Central African savannah is practised to such an extent that two research teams set out in the late 1980s in order to analyse this model in detail on two pygmy tribes: the Efe (Tronick/Morelli/Ivey 1992) and the Aka (Hewlett 1989). They observed the children from a few weeks after birth, recording (a) how long children were being carried, held on the lap, breast-fed, i.e., had physical contact with their mothers and caregivers; (b) the number of these caregivers; (c) the extent of alternating caregivers expressed as hourly transfer rate; and finally, (d) the latency period of response to the infants' restiveness and crying. It was found that, in the first weeks of life, infants already spent an average of more than 50% of the time (occasionally up to 80%) with their caregivers, who alternated five times (occasionally up to

twelve times) within an hour of observation. Moreover, each of the observed babies had an average of 14.2 different caregivers, some of whom even breast-fed the children. Although alternation of caregivers was practised less frequently during a hunt or in the forest camp to avoid endangering the baby, multiple care practices were evidently the rule even under such circumstances.

However, as the children grew older, the caregivers fulfilled certain functions (such as playing or just supervising) only under specific conditions (e.g. that it would not interfere with their own work). By contrast, it was now the primary task of the mothers to take care of the children's wellbeing and health as well as their development. While during the day the mother's play periods with the child did not exceed that of other caregivers, the nights were spent exclusively with the mother and used extensively for activities such as playing, telling tales and singing. The emerging special status of mothers within the system of care provision ultimately led to the infants increasingly refusing to be breast-fed by other women. Their attachment-related behaviour was now primarily directed at their mothers. And the mothers proved to be not only the most reliable caregivers in various situations but also ensured the most reliable fulfilment of basic infantile needs (feeding, transportation and emotional support). As a result, the children also preferred to turn to their mothers in scary and insecure situations (Morelli/Tronick 1991).

All in all, we can say that children's original socialisation is a form of offspring care embedding both child and parents in a broad-based support system, with mothers retaining their outstanding importance for the child.

Thesis II: As a rule, complex care ecologies have a strengthening rather than weakening impact on the socialisation function of the core family.

Conventional notions that childcare support systems might cause families to outsource one of their essential functions and subsequently invest less in their own childcare efforts are refuted by the work of Susan Crockenberg from the 1980s (Crockenberg 1981). Not only was no evidence found for such a link, but the opposite was shown to be true: Extended relationship networks help mothers to invest a degree of sensitivity in their own care provision, thus contributing to the development and maintenance of a good mother-child relationship quality. A research study carried out in Berlin and Moscow comparing the interrelation of maternal behaviour and attachment development clearly indicated that the larger the families, the less effort (in the form of maternal sensitivity) had to be made by the mothers in order to develop and maintain a stable attachment to their children. The reasons for such variations were seen in the structurisation of the mothers' relationship with additional caregivers (Ahnert/Meischner/Schmidt 2000).

Thesis III: Complex care ecologies are characterised by relationship structures that take diverse forms and need to be organised on a partnership basis.

The most important contribution to the exploration of relationships maintained by children with their social environment was made by attachment research (Bowlby 1973 [1976]). Accordingly, the mother-child attachment is the prototype of relationships; to begin with, it fulfils functions related to providing security and reducing stress, thus

helping the child to regulate negative emotions and alleviate irritations and anxieties. Beyond this, the mother-child attachment is characterised by an exchange of positive emotions that reward mutual awareness and concern. Further essential characteristics of maternal care include assisting children with their activities and supporting them in their explorations (Booth/Kelly/Spieker/Zuckerman 2003). To explain the fact that such relationship experiences develop a sustainability on which the growing child models his/her expectations to subsequent relationships and structures them against this background, Bowlby (1973 [1976]) introduced the "Internal Working Model" (IWM) to attachment theory. According to this theory, IWMs are mental representations that reflect the child's relationship experiences in various qualities. As shown by long-term empirical research, attachment qualities range from so-called secure attachment relationships that are the result of sensitive care, permit proximal interactions with a lot of physical contact and are intent on good emotional regulation and development of the child, to so-called insecure attachment relationships reflecting insensitive care with distal forms of interaction, in which emotional regulation and development support are considered less important; this type includes disorganised attachment relationships (Ahnert 2004).

Is it possible for a non-maternal caregiver to achieve sustainable relationship structures? Systematic observation studies carried out 20 years ago by Cummings and associates (Cummings 1980; Barnas/Cummings 1994) in day nurseries have shown that childcare workers can actually become security-providing persons whose proximity is sought by the children, such as when they want to be comforted. Yet, generally, attachments between childcare workers and infants not only were found to be weaker compared to the mother-child attachments but also need to be evaluated differently in terms of their functions: childcare facilities are group-oriented and learning-focused, while the relationship provided by parents is individual-centred and emotional (Ahnert 2004).

By now, there are 40 international studies that deal with attachment development in public childcare. A meta-analysis of these studies (Ahnert/Pinquart/Lamb 2006) showed that attachments between childcare workers and children undergo changes depending on both gender and age. Although childcare workers can play an important role in a child's life, they normally assume only specific functions that lose their relevance in the course of the child's development. For instance, as children evolve their own security and stress reduction strategies, they are less dependent on the childcare worker's support, while their increasing exposure to social conflicts lets them rely more on the childcare worker for intervention. In this context, a secure attachment between childcare worker and child would ensure that the child retains confidence in his/her own skills. Consequently, later relationships between childcare workers and children are of similarly great relevance; they even serve to predict enjoyment of learning and willingness to exert themselves at school. Regrettably, later attachments between childcare workers and children are largely gender-dependent, in a way that implies that boys are less likely than girls to develop secure attachment relationships to their childcare workers (Ahnert/Harwardt 2008).

Naturally, the shared domain of family and public care requires organisation. One of the focuses of the current debate about public childcare is how to organise a more effective child-rearing partnership between parents and childcare workers (see also Ahnert/Gappa 2008). In order to jointly manage child-rearing responsibility, it is necessary not merely to accept the multiple attachments in the relationships between parents and child