European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Family life and work

Second European Quality of Life Survey

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Research project: Monitoring quality of life in Europe

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2010

ISBN 978-92-897-0865-4

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is an autonomous body of the European Union, created to assist in the formulation of future policy on social and work-related matters. Further information can be found on the Eurofound website at www.eurofound.europa.eu

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Printed in Denmark

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Foreword

The European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) was carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) for the first time in 2003, when it covered 28 countries (the 15 EU Member States, 12 forthcoming Member States and Turkey). Eurofound's second wave of the EQLS, which was carried out in 2007, offers a wide-ranging view of the diverse social realities in 31 countries – the current 27 EU Member States, along with Norway and the three candidate countries of Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Many of the questions posed in the first EQLS in 2003 were asked again, on issues such as employment, income, education, housing, family, health, work–life balance, life satisfaction and perceived quality of society. In 2008, Eurofound commissioned secondary analyses of the EQLS data around key policy themes. The selected themes for the first set of secondary analyses are the following: trends in quality of life in Europe 2003–2008; living conditions, social exclusion and mental well-being; family life and work; subjective well-being; and quality of society and public services.

This analytical report focuses on the theme of family life and work, looking mainly at how to achieve a better balance between work and family life across Europe. It analyses tensions between work demands and family responsibilities, and explores the different institutional settings, labour market structures and cultural factors, which are all important for reconciling work and family life in today's society.

According to the EQLS findings, the portrait of family life in Europe is determined by household living arrangements, the increasing labour force participation of women, and social contacts. The research focuses on working patterns of couples, single parents and individuals, as well as tensions between family and work for both men and women.

We hope that this report will fuel the EU policy debate on population ageing and on policies seeking to improve the reconciliation of work and family life, as well as policies for growth and social cohesion.

Jorma Karppinen
Director

Erika Mezger
Deputy Director

Country codes

EU15 15 EU Member States prior to enlargement in 2004 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom)

NMS12 12 New Member States, 10 of which joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) – and are sometimes referred to as the NMS10 – and the remaining two in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania)

EU27 27 EU Member States

CC3 3 candidate countries (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey)

EU27

AT	Austria	LV	Latvia
BE	Belgium	LT	Lithuania
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg
CY	Cyprus	MT	Malta
CZ	Czech Republic	NL	Netherlands
DK	Denmark	PL	Poland
EE	Estonia	PT	Portugal
FI	Finland	RO	Romania
FR	France	SK	Slovakia
DE	Germany	SI	Slovenia
EL	Greece	ES	Spain
HU	Hungary	SE	Sweden
IE	Ireland	UK	United Kingdom
IT	Italy		

Candidate countries

HR	Croatia
MK[1]	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
TR	Turkey

[1] International Organization for Standardization (ISO) code 3166. Provisional code that does not prejudge in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place under the auspices of the United Nations (http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes/iso_3166_code_lists.htm).

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Executive summary

Introduction

Demographic change and labour market developments are shaping the work and family life of Europeans, with far-reaching consequences for the future. Demographic change has been triggered by changing patterns of family formation, and shifts in the roles of men and women in the home, along with increased life expectancy and geographic mobility. Transformations in the labour market have resulted in increasing economic instability and job uncertainty, together with a rise in labour productivity and flexibility. The second *European Quality of Life Survey* (EQLS), carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in 2007, offers a wide-ranging view of the diverse social realities in the 27 EU Member States, Norway and the candidate countries of Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

This report explores the subject of family life and work across Europe, looking at ways to find a better balance between work demands and family responsibilities. Pressures for increasing flexibility in employment status (fewer long-term and full-time jobs), working hours (non-standard hours, more intense work) and mobility, as well as a rising uncertainty in jobs and professional careers, affect women in particular and contribute to tensions between work and family life. The report analyses these tensions and examines the background of different institutional settings, labour market structures and cultural factors, all of which are important for reconciling work and family life in today's society.

Policy context

EU policies that seek to reconcile work and family life have gradually shifted in their scope – from the equal treatment of women and men at work towards the need for increased employment to stimulate economic growth, ways to achieve better work–life balance and, more recently, means to facilitate an increase in birth rates. In particular, over the past decade, these policies have been redesigned to accentuate the fact that work–life balance, the gender division of paid and unpaid work, and an increase in birth rates are all equally important policy domains. According to the European Commission, 'reconciliation policies are key responses to long-term economic and demographic challenges, and should therefore be reinforced to stimulate growth'.

Key findings

Family life

The findings show a remarkable diversity in family patterns in Europe across countries and country groups. The household arrangements of Europeans differ most in the early stages of family life (starting a partnership and parenthood) and in the later stages (the 'empty nest' and dissolution phases) and have a clear gender dimension. Living as a couple with children is the predominant living arrangement among people aged 35–49 years and shows the least variation across countries.

Workload in the home is taken up primarily with care responsibilities; time devoted to children occupies much more household time than caring for elderly and disabled relatives. There are considerable age and gender disparities in the amount of time spent on unpaid work and daily involvement in care and domestic activities. People aged 35–49 years, especially women, have the greatest unpaid workload, followed by people aged 25–34 years. Unlike in the case of men, time spent by women on unpaid work and daily involvement does not differ much across countries. The extent of the gender gap is related to perceptions of gender roles, the subjective evaluation of gender inequality at home being consistent with the objective picture: men confirm that they do less than their fair share of household tasks while women declare that they do more than their fair share.

Work–family balance

Overall, Europeans are more dissatisfied with the amount of time they spend with their family than with the amount of time spent at work, family life being more adapted to employment requirements than work arrangements are to family life. Substantial differences exist between countries in terms of the reasons for unsatisfactory work–family balance. In the Nordic countries, as well as in the Benelux countries and France, failure to achieve a satisfactory work–life balance is due to a shortage of time. In the central and eastern European countries and the candidate countries, work–family balance is above all negatively affected by tiredness due to poor working conditions resulting from long working hours. Balancing work and family seems to be easier in German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon countries: this may be explained by a lower proportion of dual-earner couples and working single mothers in these countries.

Work–family balance also depends on the number of children and their age. The time squeeze gets tighter as the number of children increases, and is tighter for parents of young children. Even if caring for elderly relatives is less widespread than caring for children, for those who do this work on a daily basis it proves to be as demanding as childcare.

Work–family balance and life satisfaction

Despite less binding and more complex family and social interrelations (which raise concerns about weakening family contacts), the family remains the main sphere of sociability and support in Europe. Couples with children who can rely on family support are happier than those with no children, those without a partner or those who cannot count on any financial, moral or health support from their family or friends. Lone parents have the lowest levels of life satisfaction of all.

Europeans who have a job enjoy greater life satisfaction than economically inactive citizens and unemployed people. However, the feeling of an excessive workload due either to professional or family obligations leads to a substantial reduction in life satisfaction. Women who work outside the home and experience work–family conflict tend to be less satisfied with life than women who work solely in the home. Unemployment, nevertheless, has the most negative impact on life satisfaction: even those who report a high level of work–family conflict are far more satisfied with life than unemployed persons.

Policy pointers

- Given that growth in both employment and population levels plays an important role in ensuring sustainable growth, policies that facilitate the transition to adulthood (especially the entry into employment) need to be considered in terms of how they support partnership and parenthood.
- Policies aimed at creating appropriate conditions for combining family life with work should not only result in a better adaptation of work to family demands but should also have a beneficial influence on the work–life balance and life satisfaction of individuals in contemporary societies.
- Improvements in care services for elderly people can support family networks in carrying out their care responsibilities.
- Redistribution of care in terms of gender, formal or informal arrangements, and diversity of care services constitutes a key issue of reconciliation policies. Measures to promote care redistribution between women and men within the family are in particular needed.
- More attention should be given to the growing imbalances between demand for and supply of care for elderly and disabled relatives, especially in the central and eastern European countries.

Introduction

Better reconciliation of work and family life is increasingly recognised as being supportive to objectives of the European Strategy for Growth and Employment in relevant European Commission documents.[2] In addition to stimulating employment growth, two other important dimensions of the reconciliation policies are clearly acknowledged at European level: their impact on demographic renewal in Europe and on work–life balance (European Commission, 2007). An increase in the labour force in the short term and demographic renewal in the longer term are among five strategic policy goals outlined by the European Union (EU) to counteract the negative consequences of population ageing and the parallel shrinking of the working age population (Burniaux et al, 2004; Vignon, 2005; European Commission 2005, 2006b, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c and 2009a). Moreover, balancing competing demands of work and family life under growing individual aspirations and expectations makes reconciliation an important component of life satisfaction and quality of life.

Since women are still relatively underrepresented in employment while at the same time being characterised by their fairly high human capital, attracting them to the labour force would be highly desirable. In the EU, more than six million women in the 25 to 49 age group declare that they are forced into not working or that they are able to only work part time because of their family responsibilities. It can be expected that easing their family duties would allow these women to enter employment. However, the question emerges whether childbearing can be combined with economic activity and whether an increase in women's labour supply will have negative consequences on the fertility rate. There is, however, clear evidence that Member States where effective policies aiming to enable women and men to balance work and family responsibilities have been implemented display higher fertility rates as well as higher female employment rates (Bernhardt, 1993; Brewster and Rindfuss, 2000; Del Boca and Pasqua, 2005; Del Boca and Locatelli, 2007; Muszyńska, 2007; Kotowska and Matysiak, 2008; Matysiak, 2008; Toulemon, Pailhé and Rossier, 2008).

Population ageing, its further increase in the coming decades and the challenges that this poses are the main drivers of debates on EU development prospects and constructive policy responses, referred to in a vast majority of relevant documents (see European Commission, 2005, 2006b, 2007, 2008b, 2008c and 2009b). There is a growing awareness that population ageing requires not only reforms of the economy, public finance, healthcare and pensions. It also transforms the life course of individuals, the family and social networks, as well as both practised and expected transfers between generations. Both types of transformations at the macro and micro levels impact on intergenerational contracts at the family and social levels. Until now, the social contract has been discussed within the framework of welfare state reforms, while the family contract seems to be still underrepresented in debates on consequences of population ageing (Saraceno, 2008b, p. 3), despite the fact that the family is increasingly treated as an independent variable by social policy analysts and policymakers (Lewis, 2009, p. 6).

However, one can expect that in policy debates at EU and national levels more emphasis will be placed on the family contract. Women's increasing labour force participation along with population ageing influences not only the social division of labour between families and society but also the division of labour within the family between paid work and care, or more specifically, the distribution of responsibilities between partners in a couple (Saraceno, 2008b; Lewis, 2009).

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[2] The 2000 Lisbon Strategy covered the issue of reconciling work and family life. Its relaunch at the Spring European Council in 2005, *Working together for growth and jobs – A new start for the Lisbon Strategy* (COM(2005) 24), with stronger emphasis placed on growth and jobs, clearly indicated women's strong potential to contribute to employment growth. Furthermore, the March 2005 European Council stressed the possible impact of reconciling work and family life measures on increased participation in the labour market. There is also a specific EU Employment Guideline devoted to this subject, namely Employment Guideline 18.

Advances in ageing, foreseen for the coming decades, make elderly care provision and its various forms a highly relevant issue (European Commission, 2006b, 2008b and 2009b). The growing number of elderly Europeans generates demands for care despite the fact that with longer life expectancy the duration of healthy life is on the rise. Currently, care for elderly people is to a large extent provided on an informal basis by family members and relatives. Therefore, greater care responsibilities allocated to family and relatives may intensify difficulties to combine work and family life in the future. When accounting for a possible reduction in family care resources due to changing family structures, increasing labour force participation of women and a growing spatial mobility of the population, these care demands may be difficult to meet.

In addition, labour market developments since the mid 1980s make reconciliation between work and family life more challenging. Increasing economic instability and exposure to international competition have led to a rise in labour productivity and flexibility, as well as diversification of work patterns. Many of these organisational changes make work more attractive by its greater intensity, diversified working hours and increase in professional versatility and spread of atypical forms of employment. At the same time, uncertainty in the labour market has grown and unemployment has become more persistent (Mills et al, 2006; Kotowska et al, 2006; Mills, 2008; Kieffer et al, 2005; Pailhé and Solaz, 2006 and 2008). Pressures on increasing flexibility in employment status (less long-term and full-time jobs), working hours (non-standard hours, more intense work) and mobility, as well as a rising uncertainty in job and professional careers, affect particularly women and contribute to tensions between work and family life. This aspect of reconciliation of work and private life needs to be accounted for while analysing quality of life. Combining the two activities can result in a larger workload, especially for women, and hence may influence life satisfaction and quality of life negatively. This might be particularly the case if the situation in the labour market is uncertain and finding and maintaining a job requires large time investments. In this context, better conditions for reconciliation reduce tensions between the competing demands of work and family, and consequently counteract these negative impacts. Hence, it can be concluded that better reconciliation may contribute to an increase in life satisfaction and quality of life. Work–family balance may be considered as a good predictor of general well-being. Argyle (1989) pointed out that 'job satisfaction, family satisfaction and marriage are the three most important predictors of well-being'.

In addition to these policy relevant dimensions of reconciliation between work and family life, two equally important aspects should be mentioned. Having a job is acknowledged as the best safeguard against social exclusion and poverty in general. Therefore, better reconciliation between work and family life also needs to be considered in the context of active inclusion policies. This aspect was explicitly emphasised in the 2008 *Joint report on social protection and social inclusion* (European Commission, 2008a). Moreover, reconciliation policy is acknowledged as supporting gender equality, another important European policy goal defined in the European Pact for Gender Equality and agreed by the March 2006 European Council. Among the six priority areas for EU action on gender equality for the period 2006–2010, enhancing reconciliation of private and professional life is explicitly formulated by the European Commission in its *Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006–2010)* (European Commission, 2006a). Making it possible for women to enter employment and shifting care responsibilities between partners or family and institutions reduces gender asymmetry in family roles of partners as economic providers and care providers. However, progress in reducing gender imbalances in work, family and private life has been seen as unsatisfactory and reconciliation issues have recently

been taken up in the joint programme and declarations of the German, Portuguese and Slovenian Council Presidencies in 2007–2008.[3]

The proposed conceptual framework for studies on family life and work in the context of monitoring quality of life in Europe by means of the 2007 European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) consists of three components: 'living as a family in the EU', a phrase introduced by Linda Hantrais (2006); work–family arrangements; and the evaluation of tensions between family life and work, and interrelationships between life satisfaction and work–life balance.

In this study, incompatibilities (tensions) between work demands and family responsibilities have been analysed by taking into account both micro-level and macro-level determinants. To account for different institutional settings, labour market structures and cultural factors, which are all important for reconciling work and family life, comparative analyses refer to the typology of countries proposed by Matysiak (2008) and adopted for that study. The general analytical approach is explained in Chapter 1. The subsequent chapters present results of the analyses about these three components of family life and work in the EU. In the concluding chapter, the main findings are summarised and their policy implications are discussed.

[3] The December 2007 Resolution on balanced roles of women and men for jobs, growth and social cohesion recognised that difficulties in reconciling work, family and private life still prevail in the EU. The European Council called on the Commission to assess the current Community legal framework related to reconciliation, especially concerning the impact on labour market participation (European Commission, 2008b).

Conceptual framework 1

During the second half of the 20th century, European countries witnessed remarkable changes in family formation, dissolution and reconstitution processes. These changes can be labelled as a declining propensity for marriage and parenthood, postponement of marriage and childbearing, as well as the deinstitutionalisation of marriage and destabilisation of the family. Living as a family in Europe today means living longer in smaller (with fewer siblings), more often deinstitutionalised (non-marital) and non-co-resident families (Hantrais, 2006, p. 12), with kinship networks becoming 'tall and lean' (Saraceno, 2008b, p. 5). However, the timing and pace of these processes differ across countries, resulting in diverse family and household structures across Europe. Despite the intensification of family-related behaviours in the central and eastern European countries (CEEC) since 1989, these countries still differ visibly from the older Member States in terms of family and household structures. In the current EU candidate countries – Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey – family-related changes are at an early stage, which is reflected in the types of households in which people in these countries live.

Key characteristics of family life

Changes in family life, driven by both people's decisions about various constitutive events – such as to leave the parental home, to marry or move in with a partner, to have a child and to separate/divorce, to move house – and lower mortality rates, are analysed in terms of household living arrangements. This concept of family life, operationalised by household categories combined with the household status of its members, is crucial in the attempt to show what type of family people live in, how they arrange household responsibilities and how they reconcile the competing demands of work and family life. For the purpose of this study, the following categories of living arrangements have been defined:

- living alone;
- living with (a) parent(s);
- living as a couple without children or other household members;
- living as a couple without children in an extended household (with other household members);
- living as a couple with children and without other household members;
- living as a couple with children in an extended household;
- living as a single parent without other extended household members;
- living as a single parent in an extended household.

Using the EQLS results, the portrait of family life in Europe is defined by three dimensions: household living arrangements, distribution of household and care responsibilities, and social contacts and support.

The first dimension is characterised by household living arrangements analysed from a life-course perspective. The life-course phases are reflected by the following age groups: 18–34 years, 35–49 years, 50–64 years, 65 years and over. In addition, the presence of small children and other older non-family household members is accounted for.

The increasing labour force participation of women, which is one of the major social and economic developments of recent decades, brings positive effects for their household welfare and their economic independence. Another outcome is the redistribution of time allocated to paid and unpaid work.

Therefore, sharing domestic chores and especially care responsibilities between women and men defines the second dimension of family life in the EU to be analysed in terms of time spent on these activities as well their frequency. Here, the focus is on care arrangements for children and for disabled elderly people, which are increasingly debated within the framework of the social policy agenda in Europe (European Commission, 2007, 2008a, 2008d, 2008e and 2009a). In addition, as gender ideology might be considered a possible factor affecting both practices and perceptions about the appropriate division of household work, the household workload in objective terms needs to be compared with its subjective evaluation.

The third dimension of family life is social contacts, especially kinship networks and household transfers. Changes in family-related behaviour make families and extended close relationships increasingly complex and changeable. The study examines whether they are accompanied by weakening family contacts and support when needed. It also looks at whether families have other forms of social contacts and support. The EQLS data on frequency of contacts with people outside the household and the forms of contact as well as support expected and received make it possible to answer these questions. In an attempt to interpret these three dimensions of family life in Europe, both descriptive analyses and regression models are used in this study.

Determinants of work–family arrangements

Work–family arrangements are usually depicted by overall or age-specific employment rates of men and women and broken down by some family characteristics, such as the number of children and their age (Hantrais, 2006; Jaumotte, 2003; Aliaga, 2005). In order to demonstrate more precisely the household context within which decisions on labour force participation are made, living arrangements are taken into account in calculating employment indicators and the employment patterns of couples. In addition, the age of the youngest child as well as the number of children in a household are used to reflect the various stages of family life.

When looking at how work and family life are reconciled in the EU, the main research questions refer to working patterns of couples, single parents and individuals, and tensions between work and family life for men and women. Balancing competing demands of work and family life is considered as a multidimensional phenomenon (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). This study focuses on two of its dimensions: time and strain. For each, a separate indicator has been developed, based on the subjective evaluation of incompatibilities between work and family life, which both play a key role in analysing family–work arrangements and their impact on life satisfaction.

To search for determinants of work–family arrangements, four groups of variables, defined in objective and subjective terms, are taken into account. The first three groups relate to: 1) the household composition, and time spent on care and household work; 2) employment characteristics, such as working time, type of contract, sector of activity and job uncertainty; and 3) income in terms of the perceived financial situation.

The fourth group of determinants refers to types of structural and institutional settings, such as family policies and labour market structures, and gender norms, which are perceived to be more or less supportive for reconciling work with family life. These determinants are taken into account using the country classification based on the conditions provided for in a country to reconcile work and family life, which was developed by Matysiak (2008) and adopted for the purpose of this report. The point of departure in Matysiak's classification is the magnitude of two effects that are crucial for determining

people's fertility rate and employment decisions: the income effect, evoked by the need to satisfy material aspirations, and the substitution effect, reflecting the conflict between childrearing and work. Matysiak classified countries into different groups according to four dimensions that determine the magnitude of both effects:

- institutional (family policies);
- cultural (gender norms);
- structural (labour market structures);
- economic (living standards).

The first three dimensions determine the substitution effect, producing the so-called institutional, structural and cultural incompatibilities between childrearing and work. The fourth dimension relates to the income effect. Given the cross-country variation regarding these four dimensions, the EU Member States can be classified into six country groups that present different conditions affecting the balance between work and family life. These are referred to as 'reconciliation regimes', which are described below.

Work–family reconciliation regimes

The first country cluster is composed of the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland and Sweden. These countries score best in terms of the conditions they offer for work and family reconciliation, irrespective of the dimension considered. They stand out for their exceptionally well-developed public care services, remarkably low barriers to labour market entry, which facilitate the re-employment of mothers after family-related breaks, and relatively flexible work arrangements in terms of part-time employment opportunities and working hours. Implemented policies are not only oriented towards ensuring the well-being of families but also towards supporting gender equality. Furthermore, low institutional and structural incompatibilities between family and women's work coexist with a high acceptance of mothers' employment and a strong rejection of the male breadwinner model.

Slightly less favourable conditions for work and family reconciliation are present in the Benelux countries – Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – and France. These countries are also more diverse than the Nordic states. Belgium and France stand out in this group for their family-friendly policies that are strongly oriented towards encouraging and supporting mothers' employment. In terms of public care facilities, they score almost as high as the Nordic countries. Whereas the level of institutional incompatibilities is lower in Belgium and France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands perform much better on the structural dimension. In particular, the Netherlands offers employees exceptionally flexible work arrangements, and Luxembourg is characterised by relatively low barriers to labour market entry. Mothers' employment is generally socially accepted in this group of countries, with the Netherlands scoring particularly high in this respect. It should be noted, however, that concern about the impact of women's employment on family well-being in Belgium and France is greater than in the Nordic countries.

The third group of countries is formed by the Anglo-Saxon countries – that is, Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK). These two countries perform worse in terms of the conditions for reconciling work and family life, particularly in the institutional and cultural dimensions. Since the main principle of the Anglo-Saxon welfare state is its faith in market sovereignty, the state does not interfere in family matters unless the family or the market fails. Similarly, gender issues are not of concern to this system – women

are not discouraged from economic activity, but they are also not supported in reconciling work with family duties. The provision of public care arrangements is very low and the leave provisions offered to women are minimal. The acceptance of mothers' employment in Ireland and the UK is lower than in the countries of the first and second group – namely, the Nordic countries, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. According to the findings of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) in 2002, a common belief in this reconciliation regime is that women with young children should rather withdraw from employment and mothers of pre-school children should work part time (Matysiak, 2008). Nonetheless, the strong advantage of the Anglo-Saxon countries is their flexible labour markets, in particular in terms of low barriers to labour market entry.

The Anglo-Saxon countries are closely followed by the German-speaking countries as far as the magnitude of the incompatibilities between work and family reconciliation are concerned. Although the principles underlying the Austrian and German welfare states are different to those of the Anglo-Saxon countries, the support granted to working parents and care providers is very low. The proactive and generous family policy systems of these two countries have for a long time been organised around a traditional perception of women's roles and a belief that women's employment has negative consequences for family well-being. This attitude is manifested in exceptionally high marginal effective tax rates and an underdeveloped public care system. Family policy reforms have been introduced in Austria and Germany only in recent times, suggesting a shift towards more support for a dual-earner household model. The social acceptance of a mother's employment is still relatively low in the two countries and the barriers to labour market entry in Germany are much stronger than in the Anglo-Saxon countries; Austria, on the other hand, scores slightly better than Germany in this respect.

The southern European countries make up a fifth cluster. With few exceptions, they display high incompatibilities between family life and women's employment on all considered dimensions. In this country cluster, individuals are not supported in combining family duties with paid employment. The public care system is underdeveloped and financial assistance for families is strongly limited. The ideology underlying this highly family-oriented policy model is that families are the most relevant locus of social assistance and they seldom fail. In addition to strong institutional incompatibilities, women in Greece, Italy and Spain experience exceptionally strong barriers to labour market entry. Work arrangements are relatively rigid, especially in Greece, Italy and Portugal. Moreover, the perception of gender roles in southern Europe is rather conservative. Women are seen as homemakers and the main care providers while men are perceived as breadwinners. Consequently, the social acceptance of women's employment is relatively weak. For the purpose of this study, Malta and Cyprus are also included in this cluster.

The last country group is composed of the former socialist countries. It is characterised by strong incompatibilities between fertility and women's work on all dimensions considered. While the socialist period had ample welfare policies to support mothers' employment, the change of the political system resulted in serious cuts in expenditure on public care facilities and family benefits. Currently, the post-socialist countries, with the exception of eastern Germany, are characterised by the worst public care provision in Europe. The work arrangements in this region are much more rigid than in the other countries analysed. Furthermore, the attitudes towards women's work are highly pragmatic in the central and eastern European countries. On the one hand, individuals strongly oppose the employment of women with young children, but on the other hand women with older children are expected to work and contribute to the household budget. The strong emphasis on the economic role of women is not surprising, however, given that the average income earned in the post-socialist countries falls well

below the earnings of western Europeans. This implies that strong incompatibilities between family life and work coexist with a relatively strong income effect in this part of Europe.

For the purpose of this study, Bulgaria and Romania are considered separately from the cluster of the former socialist countries. The underlying reason for this separation is that the living conditions in these two countries are even lower than in the other central and eastern European countries, which may impact on individuals' fertility and employment decisions, as well as on their life satisfaction. Finally, the CC3 also form a separate cluster.

This country typology or classification, based on the conditions to reconcile work and family life, is applied in the detailed descriptive analyses of work patterns and work–family tensions, as well as in the study's modelling approach. Two multinomial logit models were estimated on a sample of working people. The first model estimates the relative risk of experiencing time conflict, being unsatisfied regarding family time and feeling time balance relative to being unsatisfied regarding working time. The second model estimates the relative risk of experiencing pressure at work and at home, pressure either at work or at home, and no or very little pressure. The variables introduced to control for the structural effects are: household living arrangements, sex, education, age, socio-occupational status, ownership status of employer, type of employment contract, perception of work uncertainty, working conditions (poor working conditions, work intensity and job interest), number of paid working hours, number of hours of unpaid work, perception of the household financial situation, and place of residence defined in terms of the reconciliation regime.

Research questions and analyses

The study considers the following questions in the analysis: How does the workload caused by one's job and by fulfilling the household duties influence satisfaction with family and work, as well as quality of life in general? Does this relationship depend on country-specific conditions to combine family life and work? To answer these questions, particular attention needs to be paid to the cross-country differences in reconciliation regimes. In some countries, it might be more difficult to combine work with family life and hence women's work and family duties may lead to higher emotional stress, which, in turn, may influence family, work or life satisfaction and quality of life negatively. Furthermore, it can be presumed that the degree of compatibility between the role of the mother and the role of the worker may play a crucial part in determining people's life satisfaction. In addition, the traditional gender roles prevailing in a society are deeply related to the way in which these aspects are managed by a couple. It affects, for instance, the possibility of combining paid work by mothers with young children and men's contribution to childcare and housework. It should be recognised that the development of a woman's role within a couple affects the family system in different ways, according to the development of the man's prerogatives and the form of gender relations within the couple. Baizan (2005) argued that the relationship between fertility and labour market participation of both members of a couple is highly dependent on each particular labour market context and the institutions governing it. For instance, in a 'male breadwinner' regime (for example, southern Europe), a husband's performance in the labour market is expected to be more indicative for the wife's life satisfaction and quality of life than in a country where the dual earner–dual carer model is more widely practised (for example, the Nordic countries). From this perspective, it is significant to analyse the labour force status of each partner when looking at the determinants of life satisfaction.

To answer these questions, this study examines the relationships between an individual's workload in terms of professional and family duties and life satisfaction in the countries surveyed. The analysis

is based on the various institutional and socio-cultural settings that are found in the country sample and uses the two indicators on the perception of work–family conflict – that is, time-based conflict and strain-based conflict.

In addition to these two objective indices, the relationship between life satisfaction and other factors that have been found to be crucial for balancing competing demands of work and family life will be explored, such as:

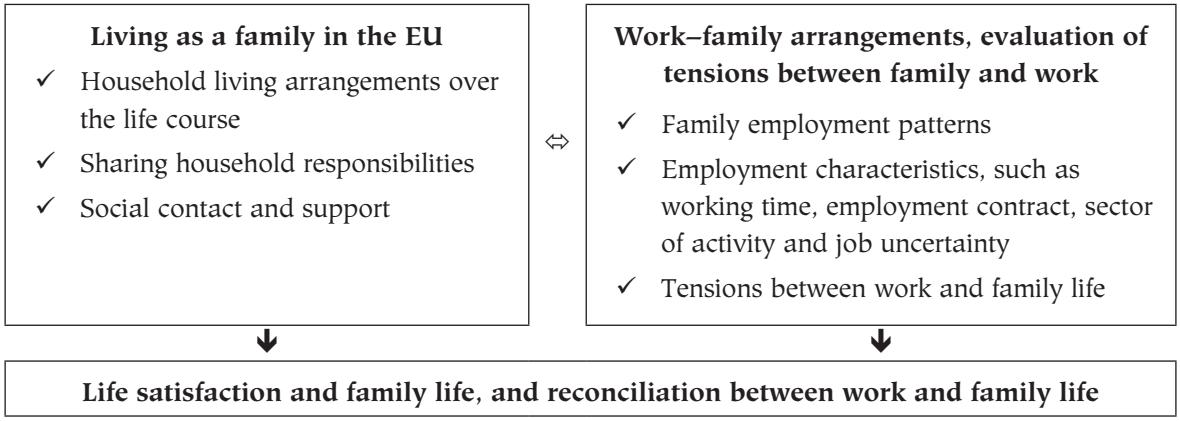
- institutional, structural, cultural and economic settings in which family and employment decisions are made (captured by the reconciliation regime classification of countries);

- family responsibilities (the presence of young children and the number of children in the household) as well as the employment status of the partner.

An ordinal logit model of life satisfaction against a set of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents is performed separately for women and for men. This approach allows for assessing the relationship between life satisfaction and indicators of balancing work and family life (such as country or country clusters, family status and subjective indicators of work–family tensions), without taking into account the compounding effect of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

The general conceptual framework proposed to study family life and work is outlined schematically in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for studying family life and work



The standard country clusters for this study are the 15 EU Member States prior to enlargement in 2004 and 2007 (EU15), the 12 new Member States (NMS12) and the three candidate countries (CC3) (see country codes at beginning of report). Another country grouping, which accounts for country-specific conditions regarding the reconciliation of work and family life (according to Matysiak's country 'reconciliation regime' classification), is used consistently in the analyses of work–family arrangements and life satisfaction. In principle, descriptive analyses of family life in the EU provide results which can be compared in broad terms with the results of the first wave of the EQLS in 2003 (Saraceno et al, 2005).

Living as a family in Europe 2

The EQLS shows that household living arrangements over the life course in the EU expose similarities and diversity between countries and between the three main country clusters – the EU15, NMS12 and CC3. The similarities and diversity in household living arrangements are based on underlying processes such as family formation and dissolution, fertility and mortality. Furthermore, the analyses of the household structures for the three main country clusters and cross-country comparisons for the youngest respondents (aged 18–34 years) aim to illustrate differences in patterns of living in the parental home which are determined by economic, demographic and cultural factors. The study presents the prevailing types of living arrangements for people aged 35–49 years and those aged 50–64 years. Finally, the analysis looks at respondents aged 65 years and older whose living arrangements are decisive from the perspective of support and care needs.

Sharing domestic chores between women and men, and especially sharing care responsibilities, is studied in objective and subjective terms. Time allocation within the household is compared across the 31 countries surveyed as part of this study, which includes the EU15, the NMS12 and the CC3. Objective measures, such as the average time spent on defined activities and the frequency of doing particular activities, are supplemented by a subjective indicator based on an assessment of fairness of time allocation to household work by men and women. The way that people organise their household duties is influenced not only by micro-level determinants (individual and household characteristics) but also by macro-level factors (institutional settings, labour market structures, wage structures and gender norms). These interrelationships are explored by use of a linear regression model.

The third dimension of family life – social contact and support – is explored by focusing on social interactions, defined in terms of contacts with family and non-family networks, the frequency and form of contacts, perceived possibilities to receive support if required and participation in social transfers.

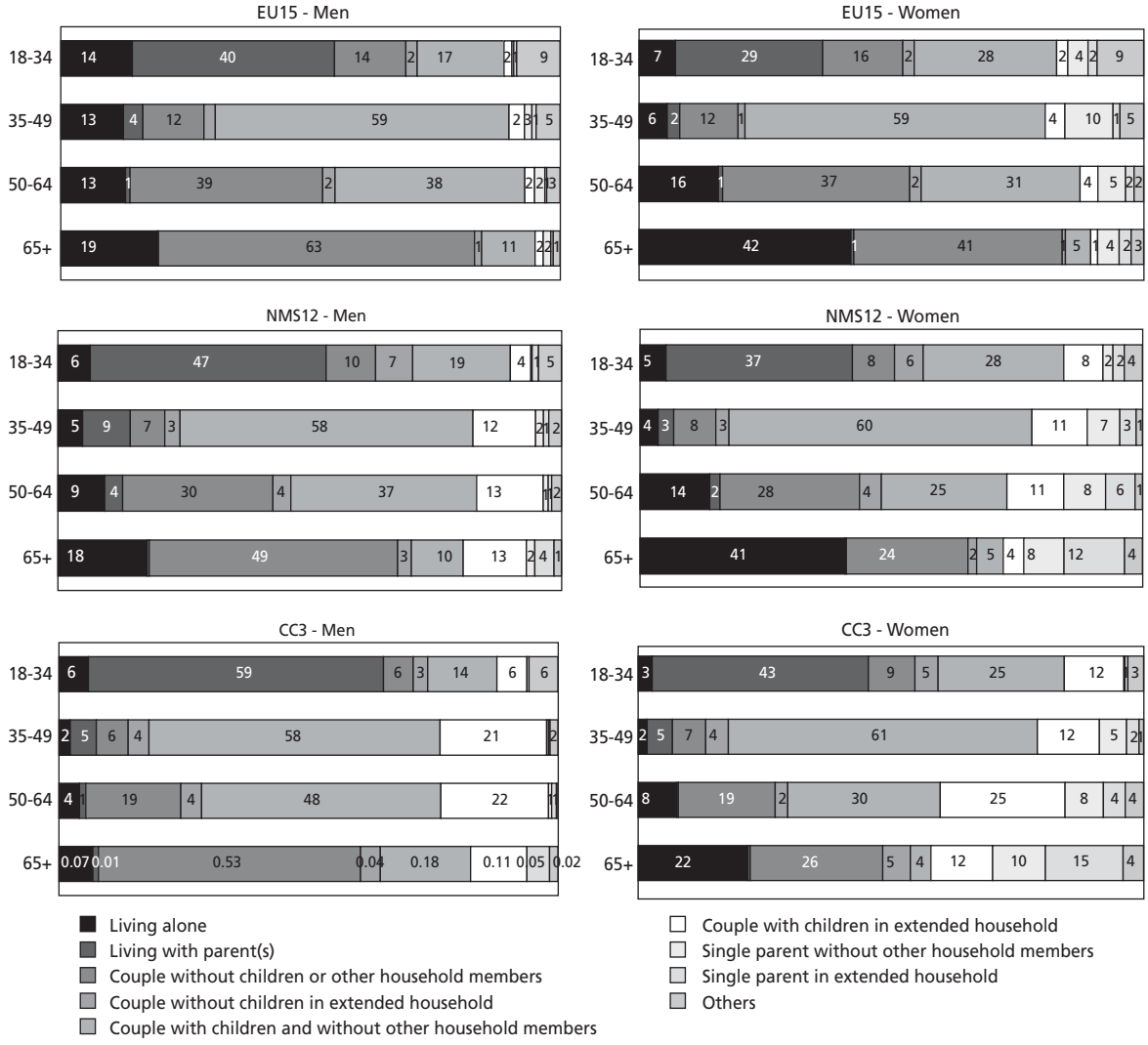
Household living arrangements

The crucial changes related to family behaviours are manifested in a decreasing propensity to marry and become parents, a growing frequency of divorce and separation, as well as the rising popularity of cohabitation and Living-Apart-Together (LAT) relationships. In the NMS12, these changes started to emerge in the 1990s, whereas in the EU15 they have been observed since the 1960s. The CC3 are currently at a stage before the main shifts in household structures that have resulted from these processes become apparent in national statistics. Moreover, cross-country differences in life expectancy and according to gender contribute to shaping living arrangements among Europeans aged 65 years and over.

Living as a couple with children and other household members is considerably more frequent for both men and women in the NMS12 countries and especially in the CC3 countries than in the EU15 (Figure 2). The average household size ranges from 2.9 people in the EU15 to 3.3 in the NMS12 and 4.1 in the CC3, and from 2.5 people in Denmark to 4.2 in Turkey (Anderson et al, 2009).

Similarly to the findings of the EQLS 2003 survey (Saraceno et al, 2005), the biggest differences across countries and across country clusters were found among young people aged 18–34 years and older people aged 65 years and over. The household position of young adults is mainly determined by patterns of leaving the parental home and their propensity to start a union or partnership with another person and to have a child (Saraceno et al, 2005; Billari, 2005). These patterns can be classified as early and late exit patterns, as well as the third pattern labelled as 'partnering in a parental household' (Saraceno et al, 2005, p. 12). Leaving the parental home later in life, reflected in the proportion of men

Figure 2: Living arrangements over the life course, by gender, age group and country groups (%)



Source: EQLS, 2007

aged 18–34 years living with parents being higher than 50%, is noticed in Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Cyprus, Malta and the CC3 can also be included in this group (Figure 3).

Estonia, Hungary and Poland, which were included in the late exit pattern in 2003, belong now to the more 'moderate' group, with the pattern of living arrangements labelled as 'partnering in a parental household'. This group covers 15 countries where the proportion of young men who remain living with their parents ranges from 33% in the Netherlands and Estonia to 47% in Poland and 48% in Hungary. In general, living alone in this group of countries is less common than living as a couple without children.

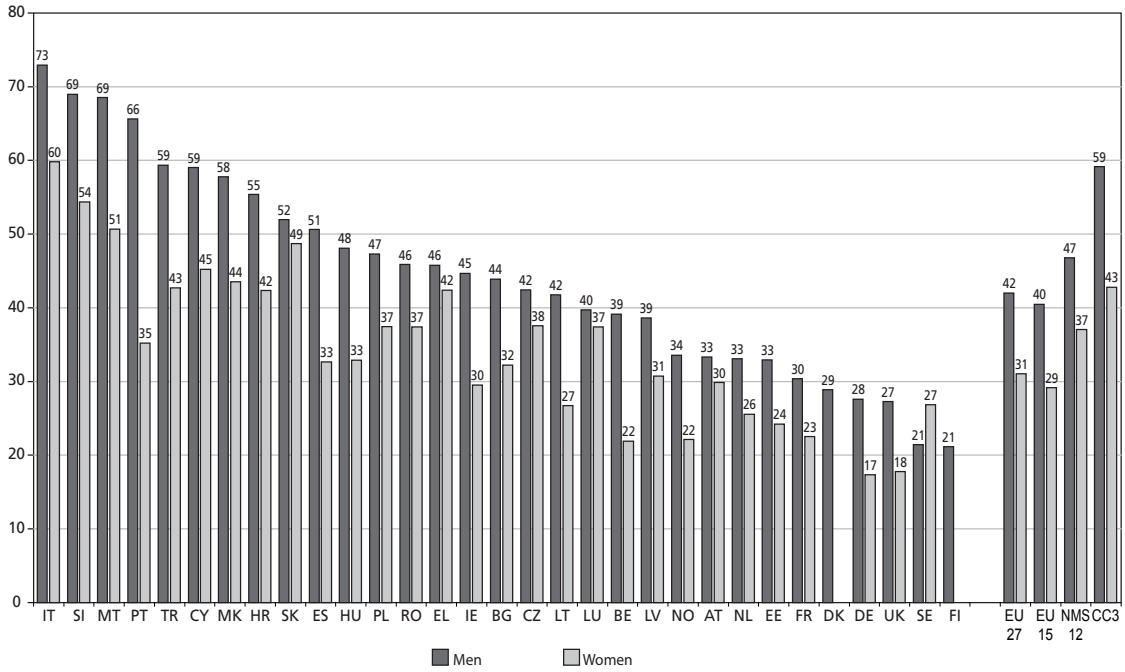
Living arrangements of young adults

The early exit pattern, illustrated in this study by a below 30% proportion of young men living with their parents, characterises the Nordic countries, as well as France, Germany and the UK. Except for the UK, young people in these countries and especially men seem to prefer living alone over living with

a partner. Compared with the situation in 2003, Austria, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands have moved to the 'moderate' group due to higher proportions of men living with their parents.

In general, young adults in the NMS12 live in the parental house more often than those in the EU15, and this proportion increases further in the CC3. Young men most often stay with their parents, ranging from just over 40% of men staying in the parental home in the EU15, to 47% in the NMS12 and 59% in the CC3 (Figure 2). For women, the situation is less uniform. Young women in the EU15 live either with parents (29%) or in a nuclear family with children (28%), while in the NMS12 and CC3 they live in the parental home more frequently (37% and 43%, respectively) than in a nuclear family with children (28% and 25%, respectively). The proportion of women aged 18–34 years who remain living with their parents is lower compared with that of men living with parents; however, the proportion is still remarkably high for women, ranging from 33% in Spain to 60% in Italy.

Figure 3: Respondents aged 18–34 years living with their parents, by gender and country (%)



Note: The sample size of women in Denmark and Finland was under 30 survey observations.
Source: EQLS, 2007

In addition to the demographic determinants interrelated with cultural factors, labour market conditions, as well as the housing situation and welfare state provisions, also contribute to the different patterns of living arrangements among young adults in Europe. When looking at the employment status of Europeans aged 18 to 34 years and the household type in which they live, it appears that those living alone have income from employment more frequently than is the case for young adults who still live with their parents. The proportion is higher in the NMS12 than in the EU15, which points to the importance of having an income for independent living. This factor seems to be crucial for starting a union with a partner. In the EU, those in employment constitute at least 70% of men and women who live as a couple without children.

Having children contributes positively to men's employment, especially in the EU15. In contrast, the proportion of mothers in paid work declines with having children, which is more often the case in the

EU15. Relatively higher levels of employed mothers in the former socialist countries might be attributed to the income effect where low wage levels make a second income necessary for economic maintenance of the family (Matysiak, 2008).

Labour market behaviour of young adults in the CC3 differs from the patterns revealed for the EU27, especially with regard to women. Almost half of the women who remain living with their parents are neither in paid work nor in education. This proportion increases to 78% for women living in a couple without children and to 92% for mothers living in a couple with children. These figures confirm a strong domination of the male breadwinner model in the CC3. In addition, the data highlight a group of young men who are neither in work nor in education. This proportion amounts to almost a fifth of men living with their parents (19%) and 11% of fathers. It seems to signal that the labour market situation in these countries is considerably worse than in the EU27 and opportunities to develop human capital of the younger generations by education are not used.

Living arrangements of middle-aged Europeans

Living as a couple with children is the predominant living arrangement among Europeans aged 35–49 years for both men and women. This form of living arrangement ranges from 65% in the EU15 to 71% in the NMS12 among both sexes, and amounts to 79% of men and 73% of women in the CC3. Only in a few countries is the proportion of Europeans living as couples with children lower than 60% – notably, in Germany, Latvia and the UK for both women and men, in Ireland for men and in Estonia for women.

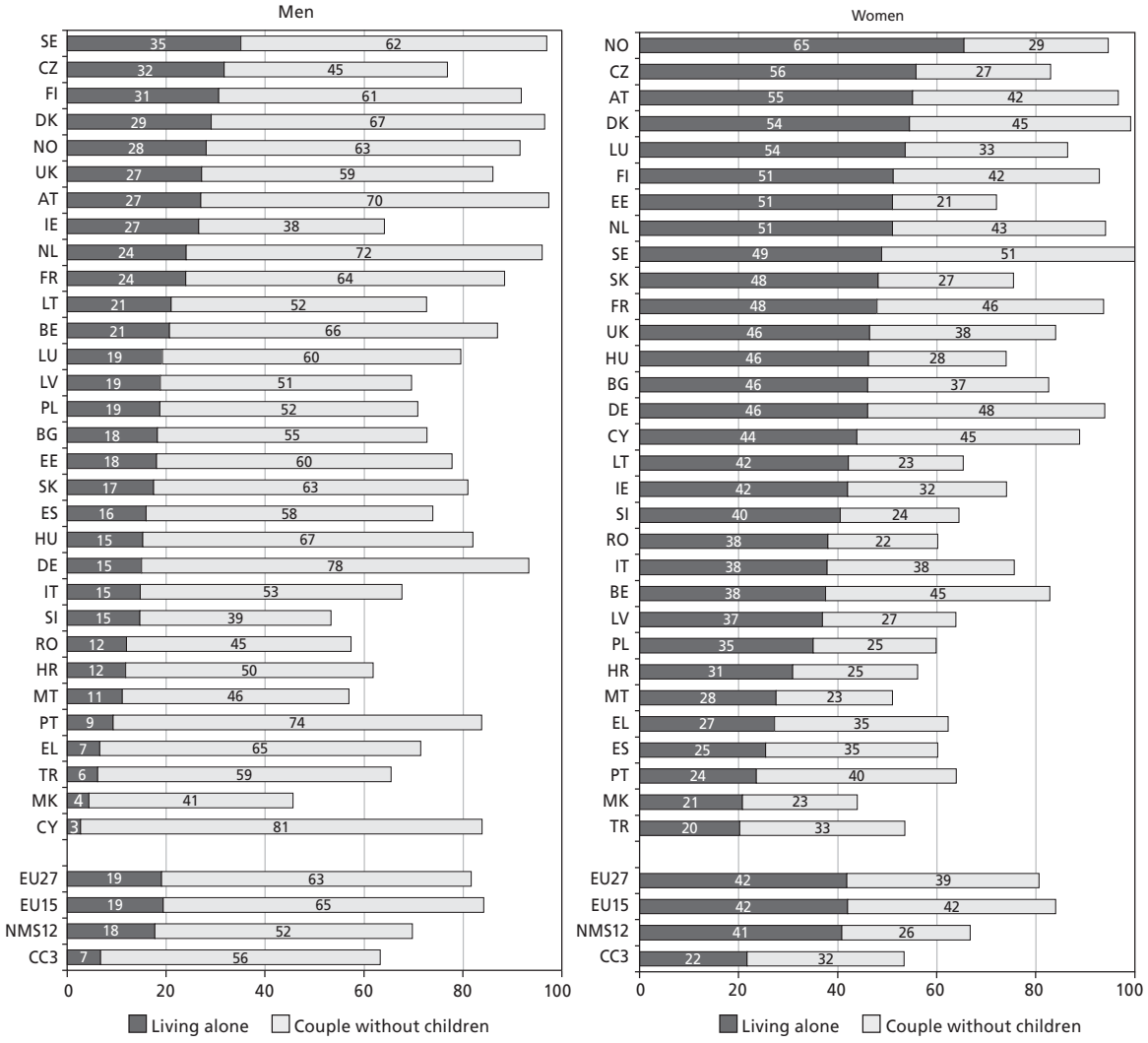
On the other hand, Europeans in the next stage of the life course (that is, aged 50–64 years) live in more diversified living arrangements. In the EU15, men in equal numbers live either with a partner and children or with a partner but without children (nearly 81% altogether), while women more frequently live together with a partner without children (39%) than in a couple with children (35%). Gender differences with regard to living arrangements increase in the NMS12 and CC3, where a majority of men live in families with children. In these two country groups, women also stay more often in this type of living arrangement than their counterparts in the EU15 tend to do. Generally, in southern European countries, Ireland and Poland, living in a couple with children is more frequent than living without children. In northern and western European countries, this pattern changes, with more people aged 50–64 years living without children at that stage of their life.

The increase in single parents, especially single mothers, is another dimension of changing living arrangements. Unfortunately, the available data do not allow for an adequate evaluation of this phenomenon at the macro level due to small counts in the EQLS 2007. Although the results suggest that overall single motherhood is more often observed in the NMS12 and CC3 than in the EU15, the picture according to age group is not so clear-cut. The proportion of single mothers among women aged 35–49 years is higher in the EU15 than in the NMS12 or CC3. However, the relation changes in older age groups, which can be explained by the late exit pattern of women from the parental home in the latter two country groups.

Living arrangements of older people

Besides gender, which strongly determines the pattern of living arrangements of Europeans aged 65 years and over, a country-specific context also matters. The EU averages according to gender mask remarkable cross-country differences. Elderly people mainly live either alone or in a couple without children. The majority of men aged 65 years and over live with a partner. However, the percentage ranges from about 38% in Ireland and Slovenia to 81% in Cyprus (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Selected living arrangements of European citizens aged 65 years and over, by gender and country (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

Living alone is less common among men in southern European countries than in other countries, with this type of living arrangement not exceeding 16% (starting from 3% in Cyprus). On average, living in a one-person household is less frequent among older men in the CC3 than in the EU27 countries (7% compared with 19%). In general, older men rely on their partner when they are in need of assistance. Conversely, older women more frequently live alone than with a partner in most of the countries studied – the proportion living alone ranges from 20% in Turkey to 65% in Norway. In two thirds of the countries in this study, this figure exceeds 40%. In 13 out of the 31 countries under examination, less than one third of older women live with a partner (between 21% and 30%). This group comprises the NMS12 and CC3 countries, as well as Norway (29%). In the remaining EU15 countries, a higher proportion of women live with their partners, ranging from 32% in Ireland to 51% in Sweden. This difference mainly reflects the impact of the remarkably lower life expectancy at birth accompanied by the wider gender gap in life duration in the NMS12, CC3 and Norway compared with the EU15 countries. Together with underdeveloped care services in the NMS12 and CC3, as well as shrinking

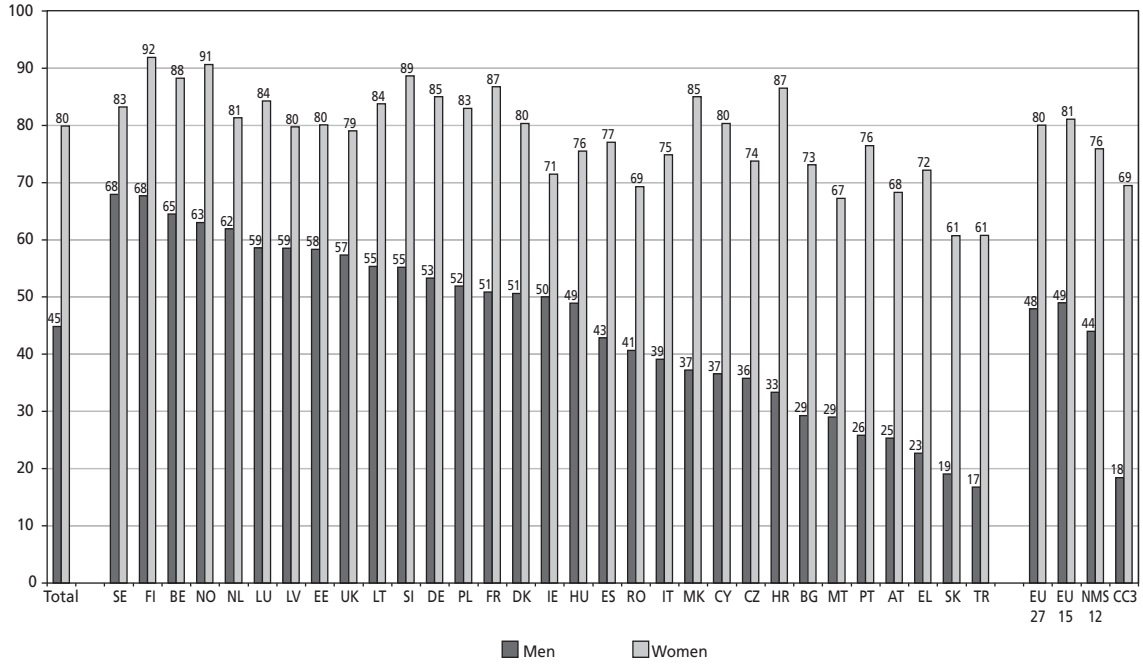
family resources for care due to declining fertility and outward migration in relation to the estimated population ageing process (Eurostat 2008 projections), this situation signals future shortages in the provision of care for elderly people in these countries. Moreover, policies that aim to increase the labour force participation of women negatively affect family resources for care roles. Analyses of time allocation within the household, which are presented in the following section, show that caring for elderly people currently consumes less time than caring for children. However, ageing will impose shifts in the time distribution between the two types of care. Therefore, a redistribution of care in terms of gender, formal and informal arrangements, and diversity of care services seems to be needed.

Sharing domestic tasks within the household

The total domestic workload can be measured in different ways. Time use surveys are a classical technique for estimating time spent on each type of activity during a definite period of observation. In these surveys, people are asked how many hours they spend on domestic work and care responsibilities each week and how often they are involved in these activities. For the present study of the EQLS results, the analysis examines time allocation to unpaid work by analysing the frequency and weekly number of hours spent carrying out three specific activities: caring for and educating children; cooking and housework; and caring for elderly or disabled relatives. A synthetic indicator of weekly time spent on unpaid work (care responsibilities and domestic work) has been created by imputing values for the missing answers according to the indicator of declared frequency (see Annex).

The findings of the EQLS survey show that household chores and childcare duties tend to be divided by gender in each of the countries under examination. Country-specific results show that female participation does not differ significantly between countries, while the involvement of fathers shows a

Figure 5: Daily involvement in household work, by gender and country (%)



Notes: Question 36: 'How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work: a) caring for and educating children, b) cooking and housework; c) caring for elderly/disabled relatives?'
Base: Proportion of respondents involved in these activities who declare they do them every day.
Source: EQLS 2007

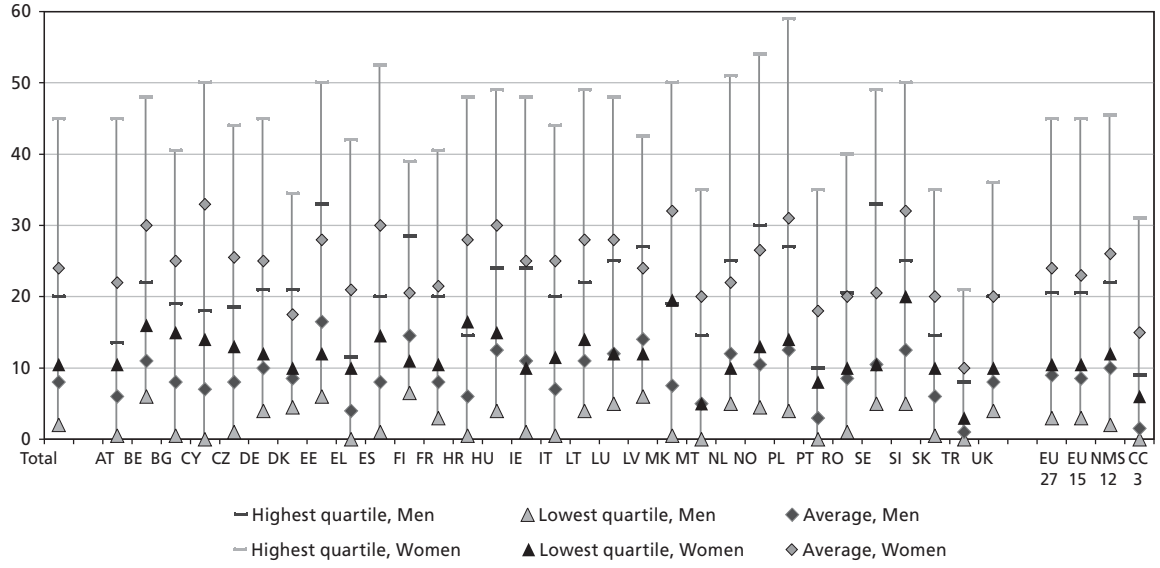
larger variance. This result is confirmed by both the indicator of the frequency of tasks, measured by the proportion of working men and women involved in daily activities (care duties or housework or both) (Figure 5), and the synthetic indicator of quantity of time (Figure 6).

Distribution of and time spent on unpaid household work

On average, 80% of women are involved daily in unpaid household work compared with only 45% of men (Figure 5). The gender gap in daily involvement in household duties is mainly determined by the extent to which men are involved – the share of women's involvement varies between 60% and about 90% while that of men ranges from 17% in Turkey to almost 70% in Sweden. The most egalitarian countries – that is, those showing the smallest gender gap in unpaid household work – are Sweden and the Netherlands, where more than 60% of men carry out unpaid work at home every day, followed by Latvia, Ireland, the UK, Estonia, Belgium and Finland.

The total time spent weekly on household tasks – that is, the amount of time spent on care responsibilities, cooking and other housework – further supports the gender-biased domestic workload. Similar to daily involvement, differences between the EU15 and NMS12 countries in the amount of time spent weekly on unpaid work are small. Residents of the EU15 slightly more often declare their daily involvement in unpaid work than those living in the NMS12. However, over the period of an entire week, citizens in the latter country group spend more time on these activities – the average time for men in the NMS12 is 1.5 hours higher than the average time for men in the EU15, while for women it is three hours higher in the NMS12 than in the EU15. The CC3 countries present a decisively different picture of domestic workload patterns in terms of gender asymmetry, frequency of tasks and time spent on these tasks. Again, the average number of hours of time spent weekly on domestic work shows more variation for men than for women, which illustrates cross-country diversity (Figure 6).

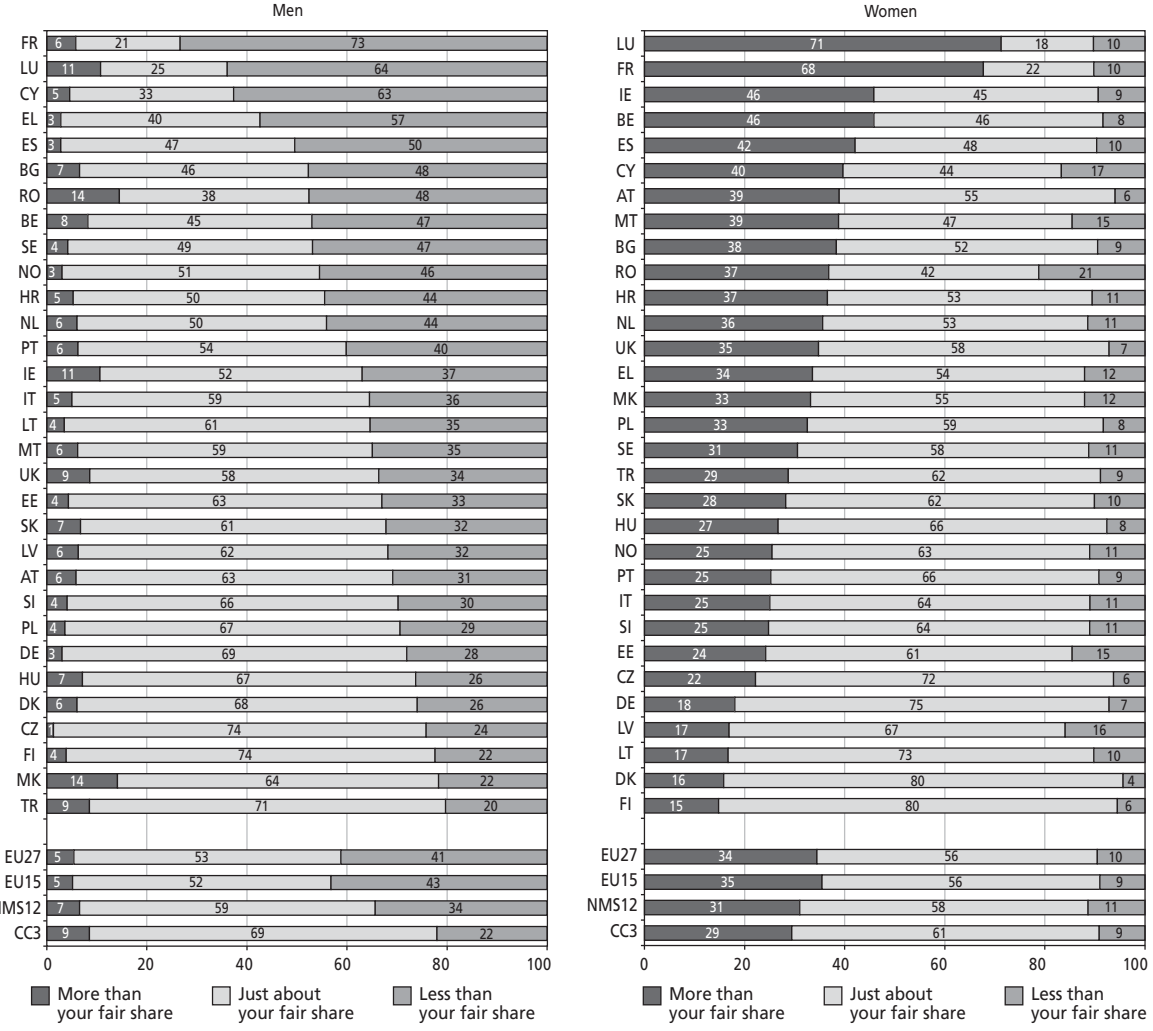
Figure 6: Weekly unpaid working hours, by income quartile, gender and country



Notes: Question 37: 'On average, how many hours in a week do you spend on these activities: a) caring for and educating children, b) cooking and housework; c) caring for elderly/disabled relatives?'
Base: Respondents who have said they are involved in these activities.
And Question 36: 'How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work: a) caring for and educating children; b) cooking and household work; c) caring for elderly/disabled relatives?'
Source: EQLS 2007

This objective picture of gender inequality in doing housework may be compared with people's own perceptions about the appropriate sharing of domestic tasks (Figure 7). In fact, many men confirm that they do less than their fair share of tasks at home – this evaluation ranges from 20% in Turkey to 73% in France. On the other hand, the proportion of women who declare that they do more than their fair share of household work ranges from 15% in Finland to 71% in Luxembourg. There is a relatively high coherence in assessments across countries in this regard, which points to a realistic evaluation of the unequal division of domestic tasks despite the fact that these opinions are influenced, among other things, by cultural factors and people's aspirations about the division of time for household work. Another interesting finding, consistent with that based on objective indicators, is that women show a more uniform pattern of opinions across countries than men do.

Figure 7: Perceptions about the sharing of household work, by gender and country (%)



Notes: Question 38: 'Do you think that the share of household work you do is: 1) more than your fair share; 2) just about your fair share; 3) less than your fair share; 4) don't know?' 'Don't know' answers are not shown.
Base: Respondents living in a household of two or more members aged 18 years and over.
Source: EQLS 2007

This general picture of the distribution of domestic chores between men and women needs to be supplemented by a more in-depth examination accounting for different demands on household tasks

over the life course. First, the gender patterns of sharing household duties by those in employment are depicted by the average time spent in a week on different household activities and daily involvement in these activities. Secondly, the study analyses the time devoted to children and the total time allocated to domestic work against a set of variables, including the socio demographic characteristics of the respondent and their households, and the region-specific context.

Distribution of and time spent on care duties

Caring for and educating children constitutes a large part of time spent weekly on domestic work. The widest gender gaps in the average time devoted to this activity are observed in the CC3 while the smallest gaps are found in the NMS12 (Table 1). This latter finding is the outcome of a higher incidence of full-time employment among women in the former socialist countries rather than being the result of greater involvement by men in care activities. In both the EU15 and NMS12, men spend on average 18 hours a week on caring for and educating children, while men in the CC3 only spend an average of 11 hours a week. Demand for time allocated to children varies remarkably among successive stages of the life course which are depicted by age intervals. Furthermore, the gender gap differs by country group. For example, in the new Member States, men aged 18 to 49 years (that is, in the most demanding stage of family life) are less engaged in these duties than those living in the EU15. On the contrary, women in the EU15 aged 18 to 49 years allocate on average more time to children (29 hours a week) than their counterparts in the NMS12 (26 hours a week). This may be explained by differences in work patterns (lower use of part-time jobs in the NMS12), take-up of parental leave as well as a higher possibility for women in the NMS12 to be supported in childcare activities by members of the extended household. A relatively low amount of time spent caring for and educating children is reported by employed women in the CC3 (22 hours), along with the lowest average time declared by men in these countries. This finding further suggests that women in the NMS12 make use of family members instead of their partners to fulfil childcare responsibilities.

Table 1: Time spent weekly on home activities by employed men and women, by type of activity and age (average hours for country groups)

	On caring for and educating children				On cooking and housework				On caring for elderly and disabled relatives			
Age group	18–34 years	35–49 years	50–64 years	Total*	18–34 years	35–49 years	50–64 years	Total*	18–34 years	35–49 years	50–64 years	Total*
Women												
EU27	34	29	15	28	13	17	17	16	9	11	11	11
EU15	35	30	15	29	13	17	17	16	9	11	10	11
NMS12	32	24	17	26	14	18	16	16	10	12	12	11
CC3	25	19	15	22	12	15	20	14	8	9	13	9
Men												
EU27	23	17	13	18	8	9	8	8	6	8	8	8
EU15	24	17	12	18	7	8	8	8	6	7	8	7
NMS12	22	16	16	18	10	10	11	10	7	10	9	9
CC3	14	10	7	11	8	7	7	7	5	9	9	9

Notes: Question 37: 'On average, how many hours in a week do you spend on these activities: a) caring for and educating children, b) cooking and housework; c) caring for elderly/disabled relatives?'

Base: Respondents who have said they are involved in these activities.

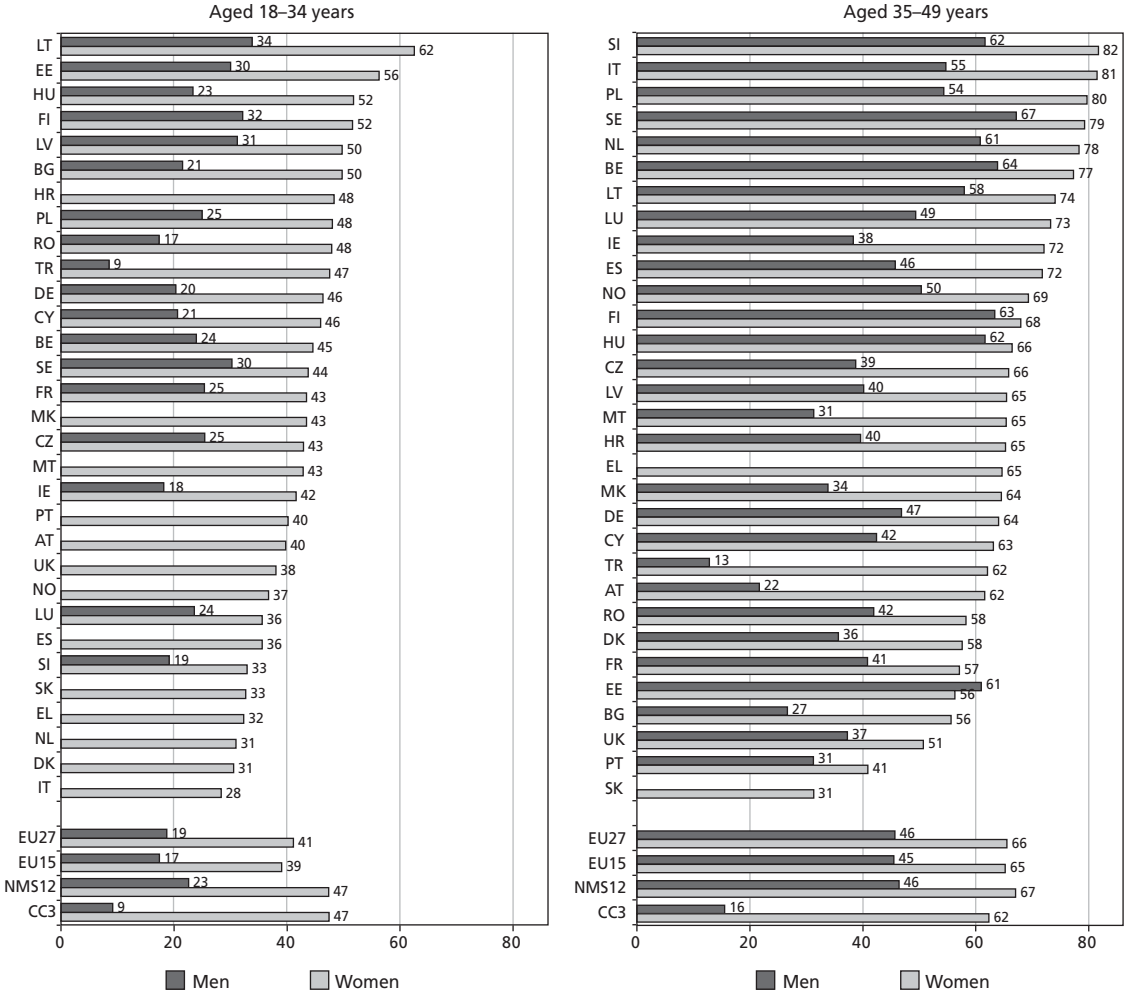
Employed respondents are those working as an employee or employer/self-employed, or as a relative assisting family farms or businesses.

* 'Total' also includes respondents aged 65 years and over (sample sizes above 30 survey observations).

Source: EQLS 2007

For the daily involvement in caring for and educating children, people aged 35–49 years, and especially women in this age group, are more burdened than those aged 18–34 years (Figure 8). The share of women in the older age group who carry out these duties every day ranges from 31% in Slovakia to 82% in Slovenia. The corresponding figures for men range from 13% in Turkey, where the gender gap in caring for and educating children is widest, to 63% in Finland, which has the smallest gender gap in this regard.

Figure 8: Respondents caring for and educating children on a daily basis, by gender, age group and country (%)

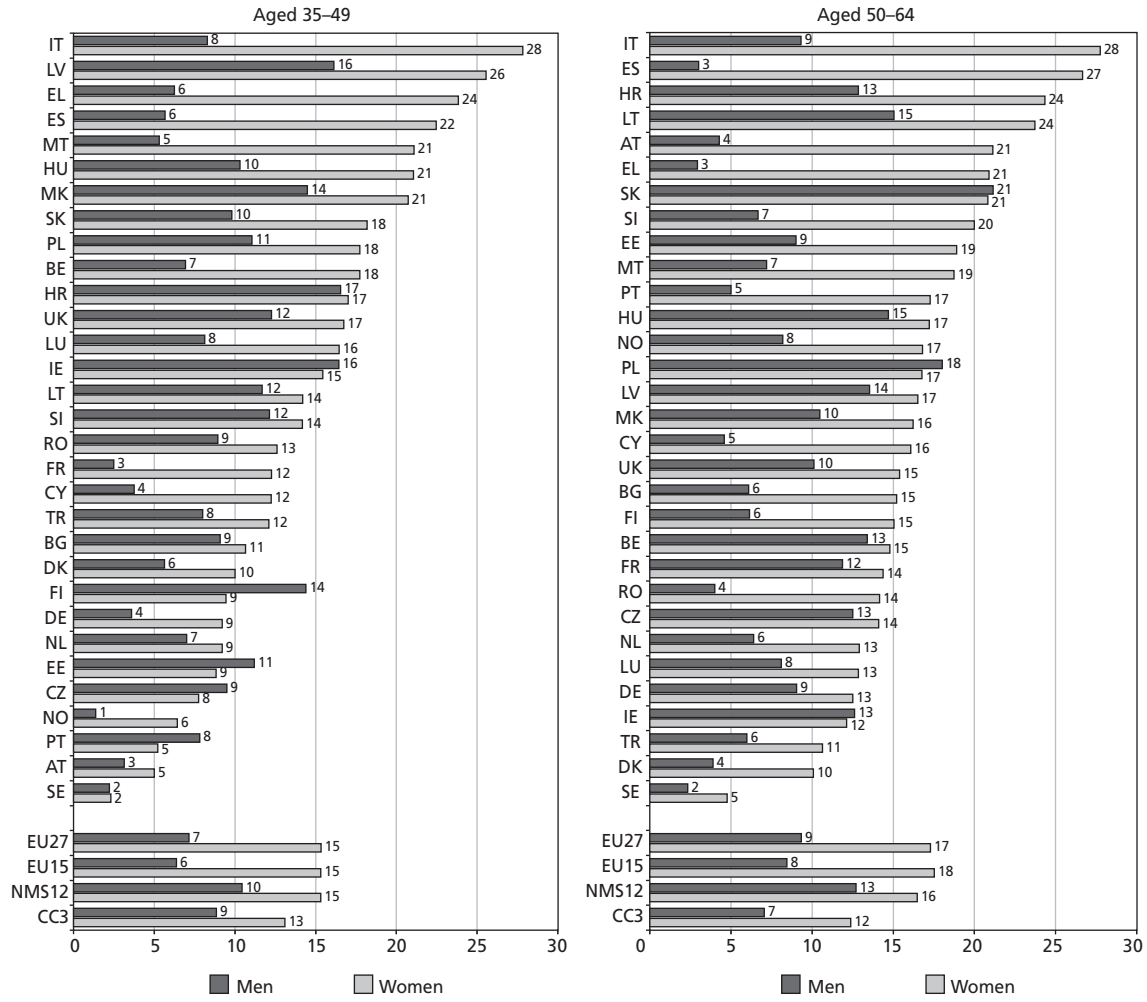


Notes: Question 36: 'How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work: a) caring for and educating children?' Missing figures are due to small counts (below 30 survey observations) for men.
Source: EQLS 2007

On average, people spend much less time caring for elderly persons and looking after disabled relatives than on caring for and educating children or cooking and doing household work. Again, this form of household activity is mostly carried out by women but the gender gap is smaller than for the other two domestic activities. In the EU27, women spend on average 11 hours a week caring for elderly and disabled relatives, compared with eight hours spent on average by men on these activities. Elderly care involvement increases with age, mostly in terms of the frequency of care. In the two groups of EU Member States, women aged 35–49 and 50–64 years devote roughly a similar amount of time

to caring for elderly relatives and show a similar frequency of time spent on this activity, while in the candidate countries those in higher age brackets spend more time on care (Table 1, Figure 9). Moving to older age groups, men increase their frequency of care rather than time allocated to caring for elderly relatives. However, respondents from the NMS12 report more caring time than those from the EU15, where population ageing is more advanced. This finding signals that in the NMS12 more caring responsibilities are taken over by the family, due not only to cultural norms and legal regulations but also to shortages in public care services.

Figure 9: Respondents caring for elderly relatives at least several times a week, by gender, age group and country (%)



Note: Question 36: 'How often are you involved in any of the following activities outside of paid work: c) caring for elderly/ disabled relatives?'
Source: EQLS 2007

Cooking and housework consumes on average 16 hours a week of women's time and eight hours of men's time in the EU27. Time patterns by age do not differ considerably. Respondents aged 18–34 years show a smaller gender gap in these activities than those aged 35–49 and 50–64 years, who spend on average more time on cooking and housework.

These findings show that care responsibilities consume the majority of time allocated to household activities. Patterns by age differ: time devoted to children declines with age while time spent on caring

for elderly relatives increases. Age does not matter significantly when it comes to time allocated to cooking and housework. In addition, cooking and housework requires much less time from unpaid work time than care does. Therefore, the total time spent on unpaid work by age is mainly determined by care patterns. The total care time of Europeans aged 18–34 and 35–49 years is higher than that of those aged 50–64 years. Taking into account an asymmetric division of care tasks among men and women in both indicators of the care involvement – amount of time spent and frequency of care – one can conclude that employed mothers, particularly those aged 35–49 years, take on a disproportional share of work. Shifting this workload, between both ages and gender, seems to be a crucial factor for work–family life balance.

Factors determining time allocation to unpaid work

Linear regression models were defined to explore how the weekly time allocated to unpaid work is determined by micro-level (individual and household-specific variables) and macro-level (reconciliation regimes) determinants. Initially, models to assess the time spent on care responsibilities (separate models for the care of children and elderly relatives) and the total time spent on domestic work were performed separately for men and women. The model specifications and estimation results are presented in Table 1A in the Annex. An outline of the variables used in the five regression models are outlined below, excluding the model of elderly care for men as its explanatory features are poor.

The presence of young children – that is, under the age of 13 years – strongly affects both weekly time spent on caring for children and time spent on domestic work. However, its impact varies according to gender. Women with children spend almost 20 hours more on care than women living in households without young children. The former group allocates 17 hours more to domestic work than the latter. The effect of childcare on men is remarkably smaller, with fathers investing 11.5 hours more in care than those living in households without children. However, men living in households without children allocate 10 hours more a week to domestic work than those living in households with children.

Age intervals – used as a proxy for life-course stages – confirm the previous findings of this study: the highest amount of domestic work and caring for children is carried out by women aged 25–34 and 35–49 years – and more so for the latter than for the former group. The weekly time spent on caring for children and domestic work by women aged 65 years or more is more than 12 hours lower than it is for those aged 35–49 years, whereas for men the decrease is four hours of time spent on caring for children and five hours of time devoted to domestic work. Furthermore, women aged 35–49 years devote almost one hour more a week to caring for elderly relatives than those aged 65 years and over, which is similar to the time spent by women aged 50–64 years.

Living in an extended household might reduce the domestic workload of survey respondents, but it might also create a demand for care. To make a distinction between these two situations, two variables have been proposed:

- the ‘family support’ variable defined as a presence of persons aged 18–69 years in the extended household, which refers to internal resources of care;
- a demand for elderly care is reflected by the presence in the household of persons aged 70 years and over.

Both variables show significant impacts on the amount of time spent on the relevant activities. People aged 18–69 years who are members of the extended household spend substantially less time on household chores – for women, it amounts in total to 5.5 hours less on childcare and 7.5 hours less on domestic work compared with three hours and four hours, respectively, for men. If people aged

70 years and over are household members, the burden of domestic work is in fact higher. Time spent on domestic duties increases by over 10 hours for women and by four hours for men, compared with the amount of time allocated to domestic work in households without household members in this age group. In addition, time allocated to the care of elderly relatives by women increases by nearly nine hours.

Employment of the respondent reduces the time allocated to care duties by women and time spent on domestic work by both men and women. Nonetheless, the employment status has no influence on men's involvement in caring for and educating children as they devote on average the same amount of time to this activity, regardless of whether they are employed, economically inactive or unemployed.

Social contact and material transfer variables, included in the elderly care model, increase the time allocated to care responsibilities by women – those who contact their family members frequently devote more time to care than women who maintain little or no contact with family. The amount of time spent on care responsibilities among women living in households that provide material transfers – that is, giving and receiving material support – is higher than that of women whose household does not participate in material transfers.

The country reconciliation regime variable, which refers to the conditions provided to reconcile work and family life, reveals interesting cluster patterns for women in relation to types of care and domestic chores. Compared with countries in southern Europe, women in German-speaking and central European countries spend more time on caring for and educating children (around one hour more), whereas women in the Benelux countries and France, as well as in the Anglo-Saxon countries, spend less time on such activities than in southern European countries (nearly one hour less). The CC3 diverge strongly from other countries, with time devoted to children by women being almost four hours lower. The amount of time allocated to children by women in Bulgaria and Romania does not differ significantly from that of southern European countries. Notably, the pattern in the Nordic countries is also similar. This means that a similar amount of time is allocated to rearing children in countries that suffer from a lack of institutional care as in countries where these services are well developed. It may be expected that in southern European countries time spent on childcare seems to be a matter of necessity while in Nordic countries it is a matter of choice.

Except for the Anglo-Saxon cluster, women in all groups of countries allocate less time than women in southern European countries to caring for elderly relatives. In the NMS12 and CC3, this outcome seems to be due to lower life expectancy levels and less advanced population ageing so far, while in the remaining EU15 countries it seems to be caused by better provisions of care services (including public and private facilities).

Similarly, the diversity between reconciliation regimes is well pronounced with regard to women's engagement in domestic chores. Southern European, German-speaking and central and eastern European countries do not differ notably in the amount of time devoted to housework, whereas other country groups – the Nordic and Benelux countries, France and the CC3 countries – show significantly lower levels (by at least two hours).

If patterns of time invested in childcare by men are less sensitive to the typology applied, this is not the case when it comes to the involvement of men in domestic work. Except for the CC3 countries, where men spend almost five hours less on domestic chores, men from all country groups allocate more time to household work than men in southern European countries (from two hours more in German-speaking countries to over four hours in Anglo-Saxon countries).

Social contact and sources of support

Notwithstanding the greater proportion of people in the NMS12 living in an extended household than in the EU15, contacts with children or parents living outside their households are extensive for most people. A majority of European citizens report contact either face-to-face (direct) or by phone, email and post (indirect) at least once a week. Contact with children is more frequent than with parents (Table 2). Direct and indirect contact patterns with children are similar in both groups of countries; residents of the NMS12, however, see their parents more often. This finding might be associated with the elderly care arrangements being based primarily on family provisions. No general differences in patterns of face-to-face contact with siblings or other relatives arise between the EU15 and NMS12, although in the former country group indirect contact is more frequent. Interactions with friends and neighbours also seem to illustrate that the secondary sphere of sociability is more developed in the EU15, where people contact their friends and neighbours more often both directly and indirectly.

Table 2: Direct and indirect contact with people outside the household, by country groups (%)

	Direct (face-to-face) contact			Indirect contact (by phone, email, post)		
Country groupings / Contacted persons	**Frequent**	**Infrequent**	**Rare**	**Frequent**	**Infrequent**	**Rare**
EU27						
Children	76	20	4	81	10	10
Mother or father	62	30	8	73	16	11
Siblings or other relatives	42	46	12	54	36	10
Friends or neighbours	84	14	3	63	20	17
EU15						
Children	76	20	4	81	9	10
Mother or father	61	30	9	74	15	11
Siblings or other relatives	42	46	12	54	36	10
Friends or neighbours	84	13	3	65	19	16
NMS12						
Children	76	20	3	79	13	8
Mother or father	67	29	5	69	19	12
Siblings or other relatives	43	47	10	50	38	11
Friends or neighbours	81	16	4	58	23	19
CC3						
Children	65	28	7	76	15	8
Mother or father	60	33	7	66	26	8
Siblings or other relatives	50	42	8	59	35	6
Friends or neighbours	88	10	2	75	18	7

Notes: Question 32: 'On average, thinking of people living outside your household, how often do you have direct (face-to-face) contact with ... a) Any of your children; b) Your mother or father; c) Any brother, sister or other relative; d) Any of your friends or neighbours?' and Question 33: 'And on average, how often do you have contact with friends or family living outside your household by phone, email or by post?'
Base: Respondents who have such relatives. 'Don't know' or 'don't have such relatives' responses are excluded.
Answer categories are aggregated as follows: 'Frequent' = 'more than once a day', 'every day or almost every day', 'at least once a week'; 'Infrequent' = 'once or twice a month', 'several times a year'; 'Rare' = 'less often than several times a year'.
Source: EQLS 2007

Family main sphere of sociability in Europe

These findings confirm that the family remains the main sphere of sociability in Europe. Like in the EQLS 2003, contacts with children or parents living outside the household are less frequent in the CC3 than in the EU (Saraceno et al, 2005). What distinguishes the results of the EQLS 2007 from those collected in 2003 is the role of the secondary sphere of sociability: interactions with siblings or other relatives, as well as with friends and neighbours, are significantly more frequent in the CC3. The opposite was found in the EQLS 2003 results.

Frequent indirect contacts by telephone, email and post with family, siblings and other relatives dominate over face-to-face contacts. Nearly 80% of EU residents report indirect interactions at least once a week with their children and 73% with their parents, compared with 76% and 66%, respectively, in the CC3.

Anderson et al (2009) show that almost all of the survey respondents would expect someone to help around the house if they were ill. In the EU27, 88% of respondents expect support either from a partner/spouse or from another family member in the case of an illness. Similar expectations exist when advice about a serious personal or family matter is needed. In general, receiving family support is more expected in the NMS12 than in the EU15.

Table 3: Support expectations by living arrangements, EU15 and NMS12 (%)

	Living alone			Living with others		
	Family members	Other	Nobody	Family members	Other	Nobody
EU15						
If you needed help around the house when ill	62	33	5	93	7	1
If you needed advice about a serious personal or family matter	59	34	7	81	17	2
If you needed help when looking for a job	22	35	43	39	38	23
If you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to	41	50	9	69	28	3
If you needed to urgently raise €1,000 to face an emergency	61	20	19	75	15	10
NMS12						
If you needed help around the house when ill	65	32	3	96	4	1
If you needed advice about a serious personal or family matter	61	35	4	86	12	2
If you needed help when looking for a job	27	41	33	42	42	17
If you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to	42	53	5	69	29	2
If you needed to urgently raise €500 to face an emergency	55	25	21	64	22	14

Notes: Question 35: 'From whom would you get support in the following situations? For each situation, choose the most important person.'
'Don't know' responses are excluded.
The answer categories are grouped as follows: 'Family members' = 'partner/spouse' or 'other family member'; 'Other' = 'work colleague', 'friend', 'neighbour' or 'someone else'.
Source: EQLS 2007

The analysis focuses on expectations about support by living arrangements (living alone versus living in multi-person households) and age (age groups 18–49, 50–64 and 65 years and older). People living

in multi-person households unsurprisingly expect to receive support predominantly from their family members (partner or spouse and other family members) (Table 3). Citizens residing in the NMS12 seem to believe more in family support when ill or when advice about personal or family matters is needed than citizens in the EU15. The latter group declares more frequently that the family might be approached when urgently needing to raise €1,000; in the NMS12 and CC3, the amount was €500 or its equivalent in the national currencies. People from both country groups equally rely on either family or other social contacts when they feel depressed and need somebody to talk to.

Living alone reduces the perceived possibility to get family support. On average, one third of respondents would expect help from other people – friends, work colleagues, neighbours or someone else – when they are ill or need advice about personal or family matters. The NMS12 citizens report the possibility of receiving family help more often in these instances. A high proportion of people living alone in the EU15 declare that they have nobody they could ask for help in certain circumstances – 12% compared with 8% in the NMS12. Social networks constituted by non-family persons play a crucial role when people living alone feel depressed (about 50% of respondents rely on this type of support). Again, when money needs to be raised urgently, family members are more often expected to respond in the EU15, although almost a fifth of respondents in both country groups report that they have nobody to help in such circumstances (Table 3).

Help from networks of friends, work colleagues and other people is important when looking for a job. However, residents in the EU15 rely less on social contacts than those living in the NMS12. This might result from the institutional and cultural contexts, such as better employment services, and people's attitudes towards these services compared with personal contacts.

Family networks main source of expected support

With the exception of help needed when looking for a job, family networks are the main source of expected support, irrespective of age, although their importance as a source of expected support varies according to the situation (Table 4). Almost all people report receiving help around the house from family members when ill, but this proportion is again lower in the EU15 than in the NMS12. However, the relevant share of people reporting such help declines with age – for instance, older people more frequently indicate that non-family members provide help. Family networks also play an important role when advice on a personal matter is needed. Nevertheless, support from other people is more often expected today than in the previous wave of the EQLS in 2003, especially by respondents aged 18–49 years. This source of support matters less for respondents aged 50 years or older. In fact, contrary to the previous findings, expectations about advice from family members increase with age. Similarly, family members are increasingly approached to talk about feelings of depression. More than one third of younger people rely on help from friends and other people in this regard while for those aged 65 years and older this proportion is only about 25%. The findings also show that urgent financial help is expected more from family networks in the EU15, where 77% of the respondents aged 18–49 years would seek money from family members as against 64% in the NMS12. The possibility of finding help to urgently raise money to face an emergency declines with age, with respectively 23% and 18% of older respondents in the NMS12 and EU15 reporting that there is nobody who can be expected to help. For all ages, the proportion of respondents who indicate that they do not know anybody who can be approached with a request for urgent financial help is higher in the NMS12.

Patterns of expectations about support when looking for a job differ more across the age groups than between the EU15 and NMS12. European citizens aged 18–49 years indicate more often that networks of friends, work colleagues and other people are a better source of help than family networks; this

belief is more visible in the NMS12. Europeans aged 50–54 years less frequently consider that these two types of social contacts can be helpful when looking for a job, with 31% of respondents in the EU15 and 26% of respondents in the NMS12 reporting that there is nobody they would ask for help in this regard.

Table 4: Expectations about support, by age, EU15 and NMS12 (%)

Age group	18–49 years			Aged 50–64 years			65 years and older		
	Family members	Other	Nobody	Family members	Other	Nobody	Family members	Other	Nobody
EU15									
If you needed help around the house when ill	89	9	1	87	11	2	84	14	2
If you needed advice about a serious personal or family matter	76	23	2	78	19	4	83	13	4
If you needed help when looking for a job	41	46	14	33	36	31	27	11	62
If you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to	62	35	3	67	29	5	70	24	6
If you needed to urgently raise €1,000 to face an emergency	77	14	9	67	21	13	68	14	18
NMS12									
If you needed help around the house when ill	94	5	1	93	6	1	86	12	2
If you needed advice about a serious personal or family matter	83	16	1	85	12	3	83	14	3
If you needed help when looking for a job	42	49	10	38	36	26	35	16	49
If you were feeling a bit depressed and wanting someone to talk to	63	35	2	71	26	3	71	26	4
If you needed to urgently raise €500 to face an emergency	64	25	11	59	22	19	62	15	23

Notes: Question 35: 'From whom would you get support in each of the following situations? For each situation, choose the most important person.'
'Don't know' responses are excluded.
The answer categories are grouped as follows: 'Family members' = 'partner/spouse' or 'other family member'; 'Other' = 'work colleague', 'friend', 'neighbour' or 'someone else'.
Source: EQLS 2007

In summary, family networks are perceived as a fundamental source of support if needed, as also shown by Saraceno et al (2005). They play a crucial role when help around the house is needed due to illness. These expectations are stronger in the NMS12. They do not differ much when accounting for the various forms of contacts and their frequency (Figures 10a and 10b).

European citizens who contact their children or parents at least once a week either face-to-face or indirectly rely more on family networks than people who rarely have contact with family members. However, the proportions for those contacting their children or parents less than several times a year are also relatively high, with at least 70% of them seeking family help when ill. The NMS12 show lower differences in expectations between these two groups of respondents, while in the EU15 the ability to keep contact with family members seems to be more indicative of a perceived possibility to get family support.

Perceived possibilities to count on family networks when financial help is urgently needed are affected to a considerable degree by the frequency of contacts with family members. In the NMS12, where expectations about this kind of family support are generally lower, the differences between respondents who contact their children or parents frequently either face-to-face or indirectly and those who rarely have contact tend to be smaller.

Relation between frequency of contact and support expectations

Differences found between the EU15 and the NMS12 regarding frequency of contacts and its interrelations with expectations about family support are consistent with results obtained by Saraceno et al (2005) on the EQLS 2003 data.

Figure 10a: Expectations about household support when ill, by frequency of direct and indirect contact with family, EU15 and NMS12 (%)

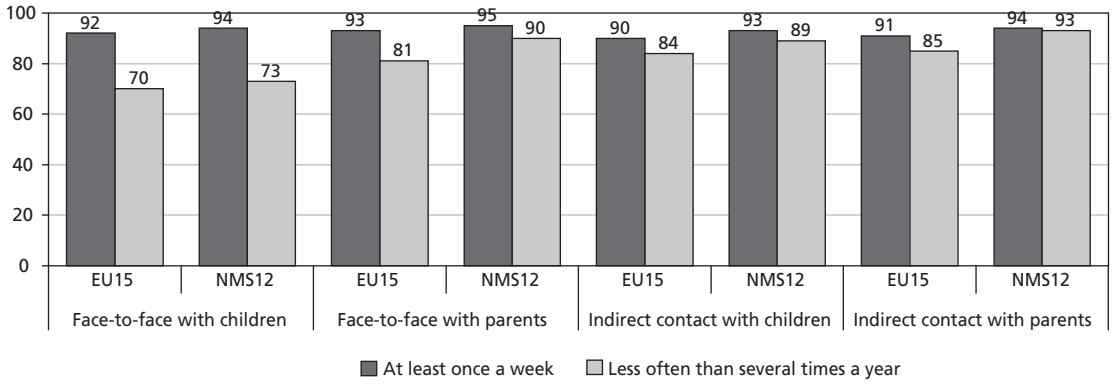
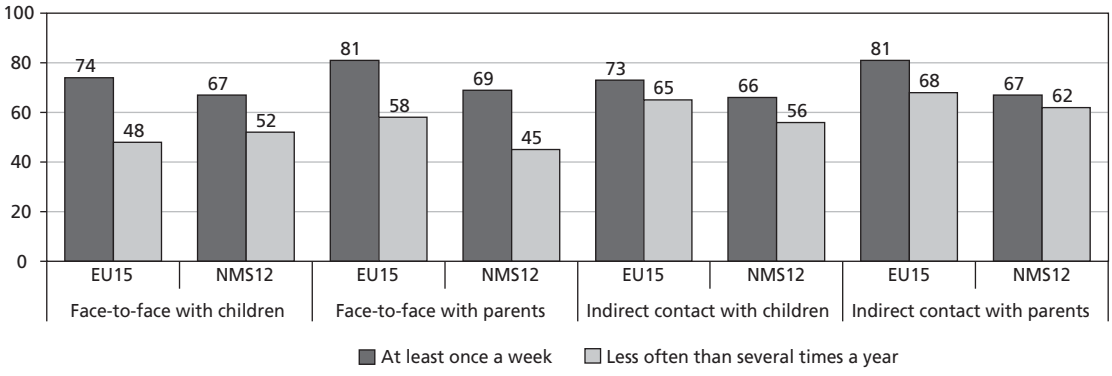


Figure 10b: Expectations about financial support in case of emergency, by frequency of direct and indirect contact with family, EU15 and NMS12 (%)



Notes: Question 32: 'On average, thinking of people living outside your household, how often do you have direct (face-to-face) contact with ...

a) Any of your children; b) Your mother or father; c) Any brother, sister or other relative; d) Any of your friends or neighbours?' and Question 33: 'And on average, how often do you have contact with friends or family living outside your household by phone, email or by post?'

Question 35: 'From whom would you get support in each of the following situations:

a) If you needed help around the house when ill;

e) If you needed to urgently raise €1,000/€500 to face an emergency?

For each situation, choose the most important person, according to the following answer categories. 'Partner/spouse' and other family members are grouped into 'family members'.

Source: EQLS 2007

Unfortunately, the EQLS data cannot be used to make a distinction between different types of material transfers – that is, transfers between respondents' households and family networks (parents, children and other relatives) as well as non-family networks. However, the EQLS data can be used to reveal to what extent people participate in social exchanges by receiving and giving money or food on a regular basis (Table 5).

The main findings of Saraceno et al (2005) regarding the frequency of social exchanges are still valid since figures given in Table 5 are almost the same. First, a majority of European citizens do not participate in social exchanges, with this proportion being higher in the EU15 than in the NMS12 and higher among men than among women. Secondly, more Europeans declare that they have provided support rather than having received it. However, the percentages of both receiving and giving material support are higher in the NMS12 than in the EU15. The proportions of those who experience overlapping transfers – that is, receive and give either money or food – is very low, although again higher in the NMS12 than in the EU15. In each country group, women are (slightly) more regularly supported than men, but no significant difference exists for those who give support.

Table 5: Receiving and giving material support, by gender, EU15 and NMS12 (%)

	EU15		NMS12	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Type of material transfers				
Only giving	18	18	21	20
Only receiving	6	7	9	12
Giving and receiving	3	4	7	9
Neither giving nor receiving	74	72	63	60

Notes: A new variable has been constructed which refers jointly to answers of the following two questions:

Question 62: 'In the past year, did your household give regular help in the form of either money or food to a person you know who is not living in your household (e.g. parents, grown-up children, other relatives or someone not related)?'

Question 63: 'In the past year, did your household receive regular help, in the form of either money or food from a person you know but is not living in your household (e.g. parents, grown-up children, other relatives or someone not related)?'

Source: EQLS 2007

Conclusion

Living as a family in Europe, defined by the three discussed dimensions, shows remarkable diversity across countries and country groups. Not surprisingly, the largest differences are noted between the EU Member States and the CC3 countries, especially in terms of household structures, living arrangements of young people by employment status, as well as in terms of sharing household tasks. However, the differences revealed among the EU countries have clear policy implications which cannot be ignored. The overall trend of household structures is towards smaller households which are composed of members of a nuclear family and mainly subjected to changes when children leave the parental home. The early and late exit patterns, as well as the third pattern labelled as 'partnering in a parental household' (Saraceno et al, 2005, p. 12), picture 'different kinds of exchange and forms of support across families and kin, as well as different options available for the young' (Saraceno, 2008a, p. 58). On the other hand, differences in living arrangements of elderly people across countries pose diversified pressures on families regarding care responsibilities. Overall, the common trend depicts a growing demand for care. The prevalence of one-person households among elderly women in the NMS12, combined with the current time allocation to elderly care and expected advancement in population ageing, clearly show that progress in care provision is a crucial factor to meet future demand for care

and ease pressures on the family to combine increasing participation in the labour market and care responsibilities.

Despite more changeable and complex interrelations between family and relatives, which raise concerns about weakening family contacts, the survey findings show that the family remains the main sphere of sociability and support in Europe. The strong position of family networks as a source of both emotional and material support is confirmed by expectations about support. Close to nine out of 10 EU citizens expect support around the house if they are ill either from a partner or spouse or from another family member.

A majority of time spent on household activities is devoted to care. Both care and housework activities are strongly gender-biased and are actually mostly carried out by women aged 35 to 49 years. Gender gaps in the amount of time spent on domestic tasks and their frequency are strongly diversified across countries, caused mainly by a large variation in the figures for men. Subjective opinions about the fairness of sharing household duties of men and women are generally consistent with an evaluation based on objective indicators. Moreover, there is a strong correlation across countries between men's and women's opinions. Men acknowledge firmly that they do less than their fair share at home while women state that they contribute more than their fair share of time to household work. Hence, there is at least a commonly perceived notion about gender inequalities associated with the division of labour in the home.

Work–family arrangements 3

Work–life relations are mostly studied at a national level through studies on the determinants of work–life balance satisfaction in a given country. Comparisons between countries using macro-level indicators – such as general welfare policies, and national cultural and social norms – are more frequent. As the reconciliation of work and family life is affected both by individual and country-specific characteristics, this chapter analyses the impact of both individual and macro-level characteristics on work–family life balance. The analysis aims to draw special attention to the relationship between work and family life, taking into account both the individual and country heterogeneity. The EQLS data make it possible to develop several indicators of work–life balance, which show the conflict between two competing activities in terms of time and strain in 31 countries at the household level. The study thus offers an opportunity to analyse the main determinants of work–family balance in a comparative perspective.

Three types of individual determinants are assumed to affect work–family balance. First, the family composition and the associated workload weight on the work–life relation is assessed. The need to care for family – children and also elderly or disabled relatives – may cause a high level of stress within the family sphere, although this also depends on the presence of a working partner. The total workload – that is, unpaid and paid work – is assumed to play a key role.

The second set of determinants is related to working conditions. Certain job features are more likely to cause strain or demand more time. It is assumed that working conditions affect work–family conflict both physically (feeling tired, extended working hours) and mentally (stress, deadlines).

The third set of determinants relates to economic aspects. The study considers that there is an income effect regarding work–life balance. The hypothesis is that economic uncertainty (the risk of unemployment, holding a short-term or insecure employment contract, or the perception of a poor economic situation) increases conflict, whereas high incomes and job security may facilitate work–family arrangements.

However, conditions to reconcile work and family life are also defined by the cultural and welfare context. Accounting for a country-specific support regime for working parents, labour market structures, living standards and gender norms are essential. The hypothesis in this case is that country-specific differences remain after taking into account individual, professional and economic characteristics which reflect the relevance of these contextual components.

This chapter first presents an overview of the working status, working conditions and qualitative and quantitative workload patterns across Europe. Instead of looking at individuals only, the analysis also applies a couple's perspective on employment patterns. However, a lack of data about partners' employment restricts use of that concept alone. In such cases, the study analyses the main determinants of work–life balance.

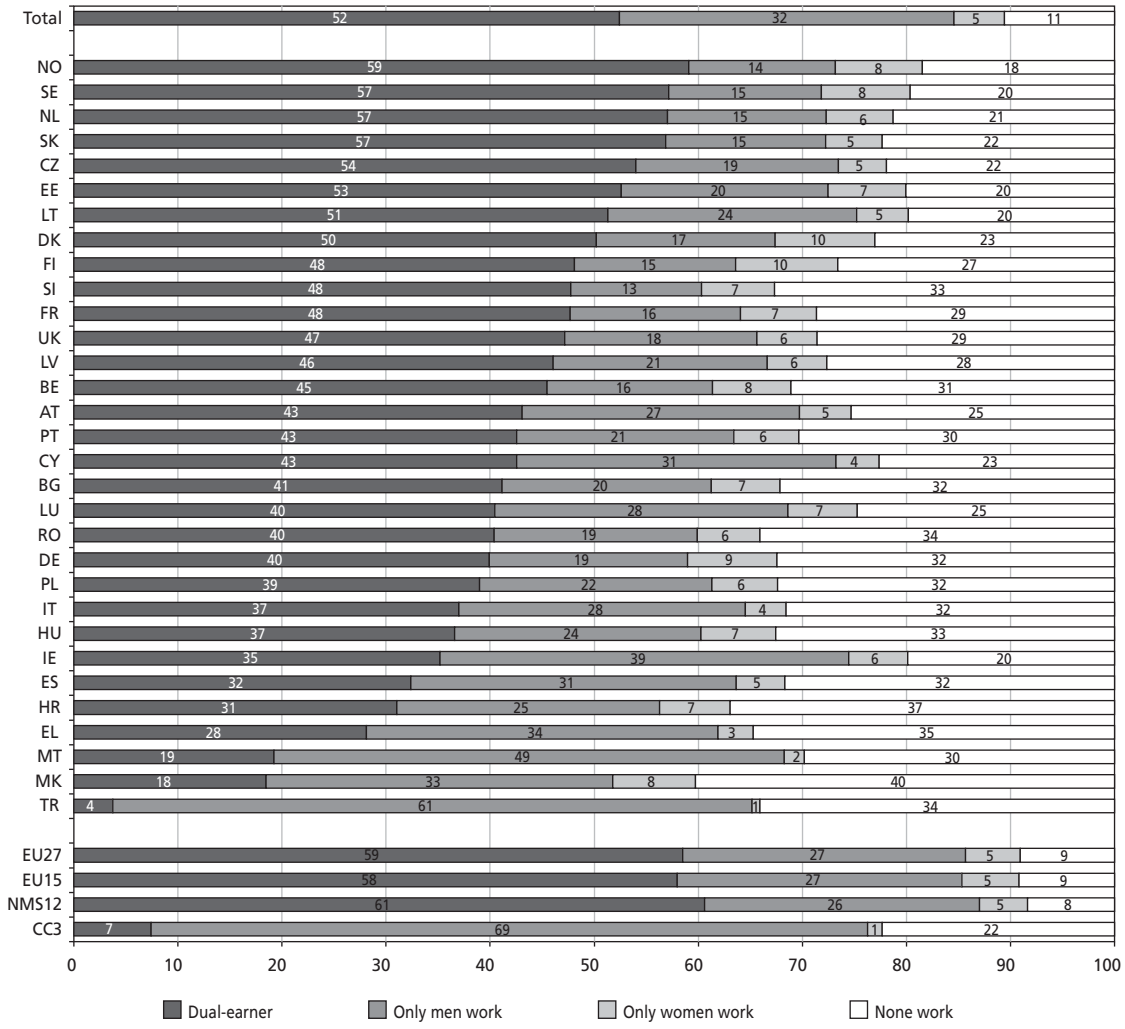
Work status

Working profiles and family status

In recent years, female employment rates have been on the rise in the EU. For the EU15, they have continued an upward trend, while for most of the former socialist countries they have started to recover from a decline imposed by the transformation processes in the 1990s. However, significant differences still arise when looking at family employment patterns. Even if, on average, more than half of all couples surveyed are dual-earner couples, this frequency is very low (7%) in the CC3 and in southern European countries such as Malta, Greece or Spain (Figure 11). The proportion of male breadwinner couples is high in these countries. At the opposite end of the scale, in countries such as Norway,

Sweden and the Netherlands, both partners are working in more than 57% of couples. The proportion of couples where only the woman works is relatively low and never exceeds 10%.

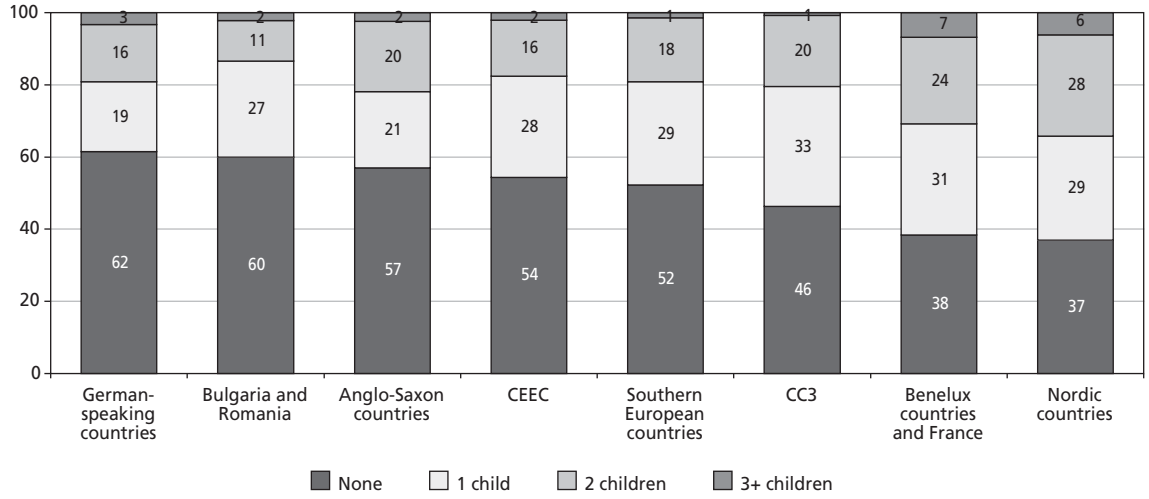
Figure 11: Working profile of couples, by country (%)



Notes: Household grid, economic status code: 'in education/student and retired' excluded.
Source: EQLS 2007

The frequency of dual-earner couples depends greatly on the number and age of children in the household. The number of dual-earner couples decreases with the number of children in the household and depends on the presence of children aged under six years (Aliaga, 2005; Kotowska and Matysiak, 2008). In Europe, among couples where the respondents are aged 25 to 49 years, 54% of couples with one child are both wage earners, compared with only 29% of couples when they have three or more children (Figure 12). The profile of dual-earner couples differs according to country and country group. In welfare state countries, such as the Nordic countries, as well as the Benelux countries and France, the proportion of parents among dual-earner couples amounts to more than 60%, whereas this proportion is only around 40% in German-speaking countries, and Bulgaria and Romania.

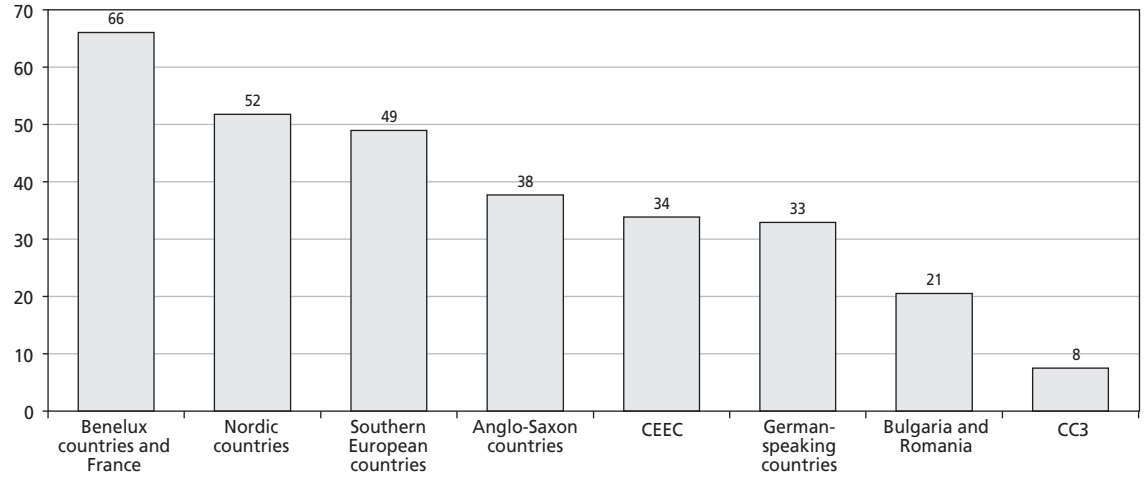
Figure 12: Dual-earner couples aged 25–49 years, by number of children and country reconciliation regime (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

The proportion of dual-earner couples also depends on the age of the youngest child: the rate of two wage earners in a couple reaches 54% for couples with a child aged six to 12 years but declines to 42% when the child is under the age of two years (Figure 13). The frequency of dual earners among couples of parents with an infant aged up to two years varies greatly according to the country's reconciliation regime and social norms regarding childcare. In the Benelux countries and France, where external childcare is available from a very young age (from two months) and it is socially accepted to make use of it for such young children, the frequency of dual-earner couples reaches two thirds of all couples with infants. In the Nordic countries, where the child spends his/her first year at home, partially because of the prevalence of late breastfeeding as well as the availability of well-paid parental leave, 52% of the couples with an infant are both wage earners. Strikingly, the share of dual-earner couples in southern European countries is also high (49%), which may be due to the provision of informal childcare and the high level of female labour market participation in Portugal.

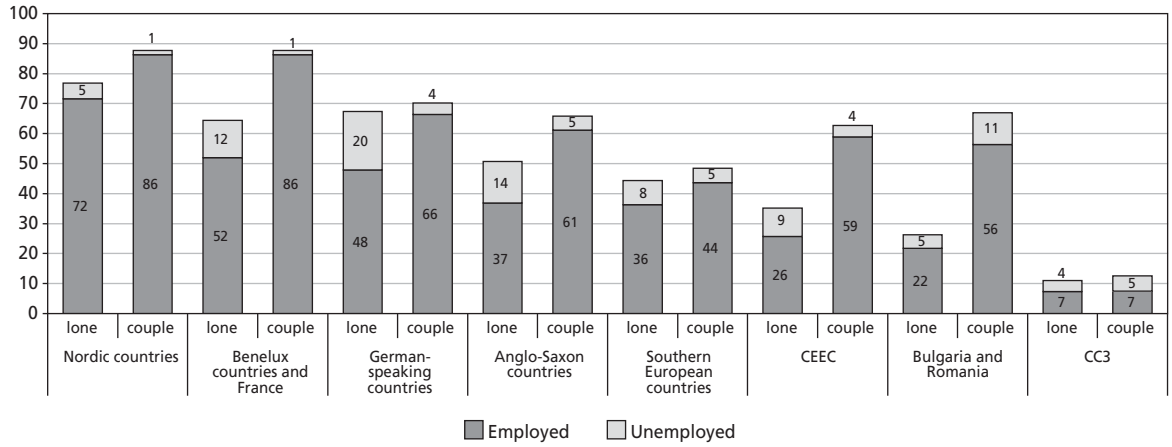
Figure 13: Dual-earner couples aged 25–49 years with children under two years of age, by country reconciliation regime (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

The employment situation of single mothers is particularly heterogeneous across Europe (Figure 14). Two general observations can be made in this regard. First, in all countries, single mothers are less economically active than mothers in a partnership; and when they are present in the labour market, they are more likely to be unemployed than is the case for mothers in a partnership. Secondly, the proportion of economically active single mothers differs according to the reconciliation regime in a country. More than three quarters of single mothers work or are seeking a job in the Nordic countries. In the Benelux countries and France, as well as the German-speaking countries, about half of all single mothers surveyed work; unemployment, however, is relatively high among this group. In other countries, few single mothers are in employment. This may be related to the targeted system of social assistance in Anglo-Saxon countries and to the lack of childcare support in southern European and other countries. The proportion of working single mothers correlates with the general female rate of employment in most countries. However, in the former communist countries, single mothers have a much lower labour force participation rate than mothers with a partner, although they are also older than in other countries.

Figure 14: Employment status of single mothers and mothers in a partnership, by country reconciliation regime (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

Certain women may choose not to work, while some women may renounce work because working conditions are too difficult to handle or the availability of good and affordable childcare is lacking. It is thus interesting to focus on the profile of non-working women using information about their last job – notably their last occupation, last type of employment contract, last sector of employment and the weekly number of hours formerly worked – and to compare this data with employment characteristics of working mothers.

Table 6 shows that the proportion of women outside the labour force (excluding students and retirees) is very low in the Nordic countries (about 9%), at a medium level in most of the other EU countries (around 20%) except for the southern European countries (about 42%), and exceptionally high in the CC3 (over 80%). Among those women outside the labour force, a significant proportion of them report being on parental leave (almost two thirds) in the Nordic countries. The uptake of parental leave is less frequent in the German-speaking and central and eastern European countries and rather rare in the remaining country groups. Clearly, these differences result mainly from childcare availability, its quality and cost, as well as from the country-specific leave schemes (length, flexibility in use, eligibility,

payment and job guarantees after returning to the labour market). Moreover, social attitudes towards care arrangements for young children are also a consideration.

Table 6: Selected indicators for women outside the labour force (%)

Women's groups	Nordic countries	Benelux countries and France	German-speaking countries	Anglo-Saxon countries	Southern European countries	Central and eastern European countries	Bulgaria and Romania	Candidate countries
Women outside the labour force as percentage of all women	9.13	20.15	19.1	22.08	41.65	17.12	25.74	83.54
Among women outside the labour force:								
% on parental leave	64.46	14.44	20.31	7.08	2.49	34.54	23.06	0.63
% of former workers	96.83	77.42	93.39	82.2	43.75	83.81	61.67	11.18

Source: EQLS 2007

Among women outside the labour force, the proportion of those who have never worked also differs according to country group. In most European countries, a majority of women were working before they left the labour force (more than 60%). Being a housewife without any labour market experience is common in the southern European and candidate countries only.

Comparisons between the working conditions of women who have stopped working and those of women in employment point to some characteristics that depict a less family-friendly working environment, most likely affecting labour market withdrawal among these women. First, women outside the labour market are more likely to be manual workers (the proportion is double) and less likely to be an employer, a manager or self-employed. This means that, for the lowest social strata, expensive childcare and low wages make work less profitable for women. Harsh working conditions or non-standard work schedules, which are more frequent among manual workers, may also influence a woman's decision to give up a job. Secondly, job insecurity may be a reason for women to withdraw from employment. Women outside the labour force less often have permanent employment contracts – 62% compared with 75% for working women. They are also more likely to have been employed on short-term contracts of less than 12 months' duration with undoubtedly poorer career prospects. Moreover, temporary work without a written contract is twice as high for those women who decided to leave the labour market after childbirth.

Job uncertainty

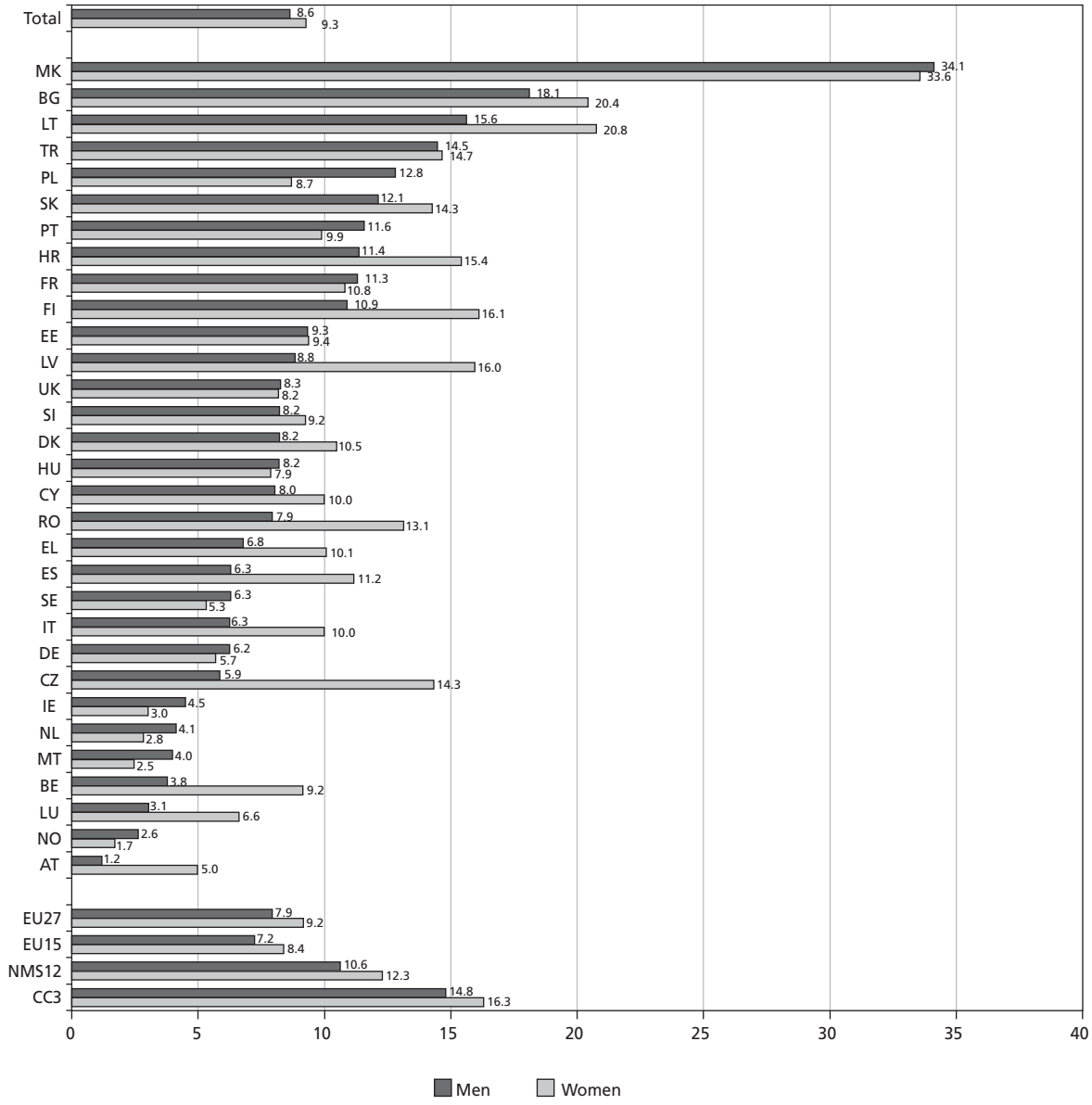
The variety of working profiles among European couples may depend on the diversity of the working environment, especially on the uncertainty of the work relationship. Two dimensions of job uncertainty are studied in this context:

- a subjective dimension that looks at the feeling of job insecurity among individuals who think they will certainly or probably lose their job in the next six months;
- an objective dimension that takes into account the current job contract and the private or public sector as an indicator of job stability.

In some countries, the feeling of job uncertainty is quite pervasive. This is especially true in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where one third of working people, both men and women, think that they are going to lose their job in the coming six months (Figure 15). The feeling of job uncertainty

is also high among working people (about 20%) in Bulgaria and Lithuania. The countries with the highest subjective uncertainty level regarding jobs are almost all eastern EU Member States. The period of economic transition and the deep changes that occurred in the labour market generated extreme uncertainty about future job perspectives. Turkey, Portugal, France and Finland are also found to be part of this group.

Figure 15: Men and women who fear losing their job in the next six months, by country (%)

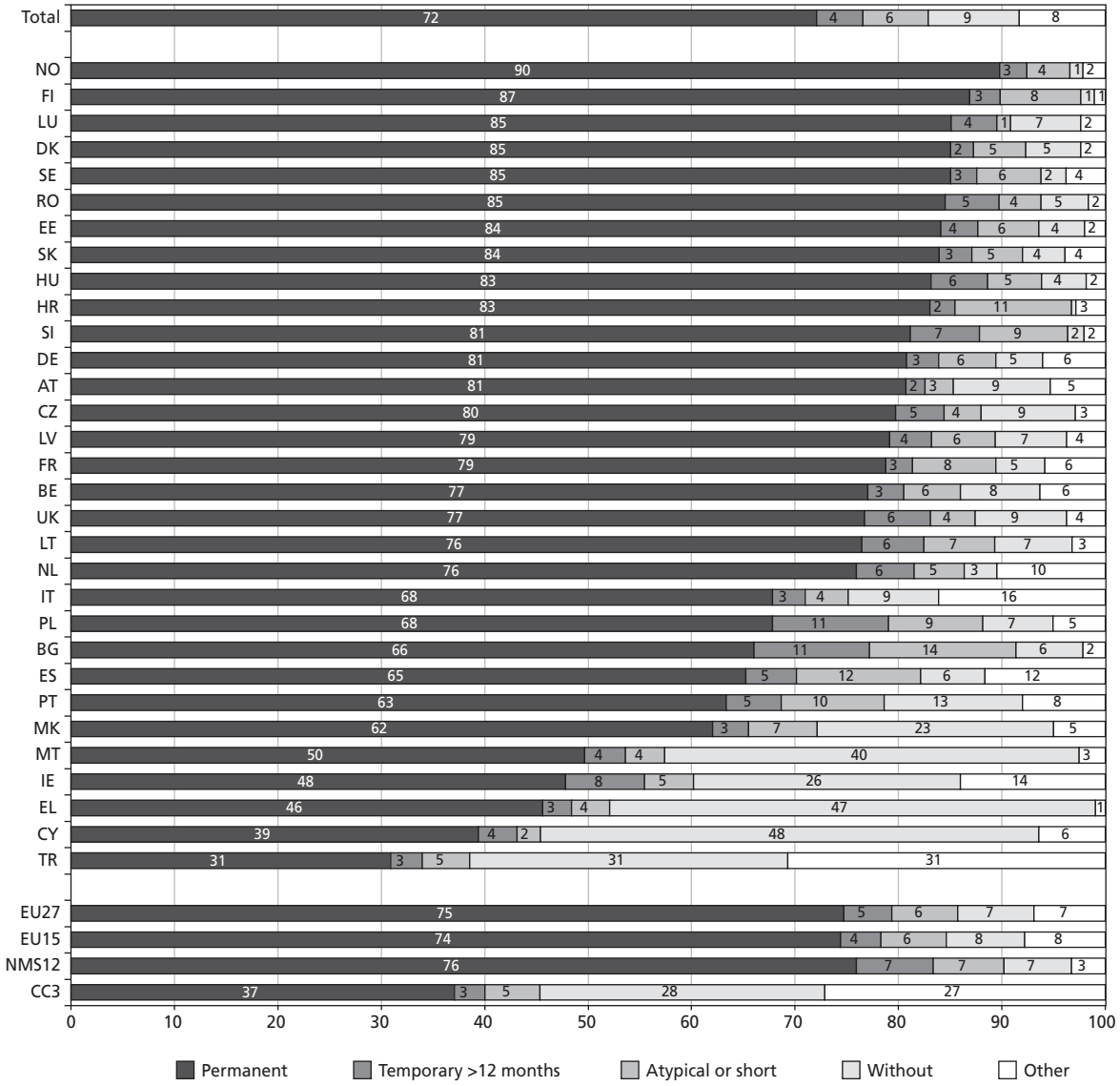


Source: EQLS 2007

The type of employment contract is a good indicator of the degree of job uncertainty. A permanent employment contract allows people to plan behaviour in the medium or long term, whereas a short-term employment contract of less than 12 months or a temporary job may slow down important decisions such as family planning. Southern European countries and two of the CC3 are found to be the countries where permanent employment is the rarest, while permanent employment contracts represent more than 80% of jobs in the Nordic countries and NMS12 countries such as Romania,

Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia (Figure 16). This is also the case in Croatia, one of the three candidate countries.

Figure 16: Type of employment contract, by country and country group (%)



Notes: Question 4: In your job, are you/were you: Permanent = code 1 'on an unlimited permanent contract'; Atypical or short-term = grouping of code 2 'on a fixed-term employment contract of less than 12 months' or code 4 'on a temporary agency contract'; Temporary >12 months = code 3 'on a fixed-term contract of more than 12 months'; Other = grouping of code 5 'on apprenticeship or other training scheme' or code 7 'other' or code 8 'don't know'; Without = code 6 'without a written employment contract'.
Source: EQLS 2007

The subjective and objective indicators are complementary, and the ranking of countries is not similar for each indicator. For instance, among workers with a permanent job, a larger proportion of individuals feel insecure about their job in the NMS12 and CC3 than in the other countries examined in this study (Table 7).

Table 7: Europeans with a permanent job who fear that they might lose their job in the next six months, by country reconciliation regime (%)

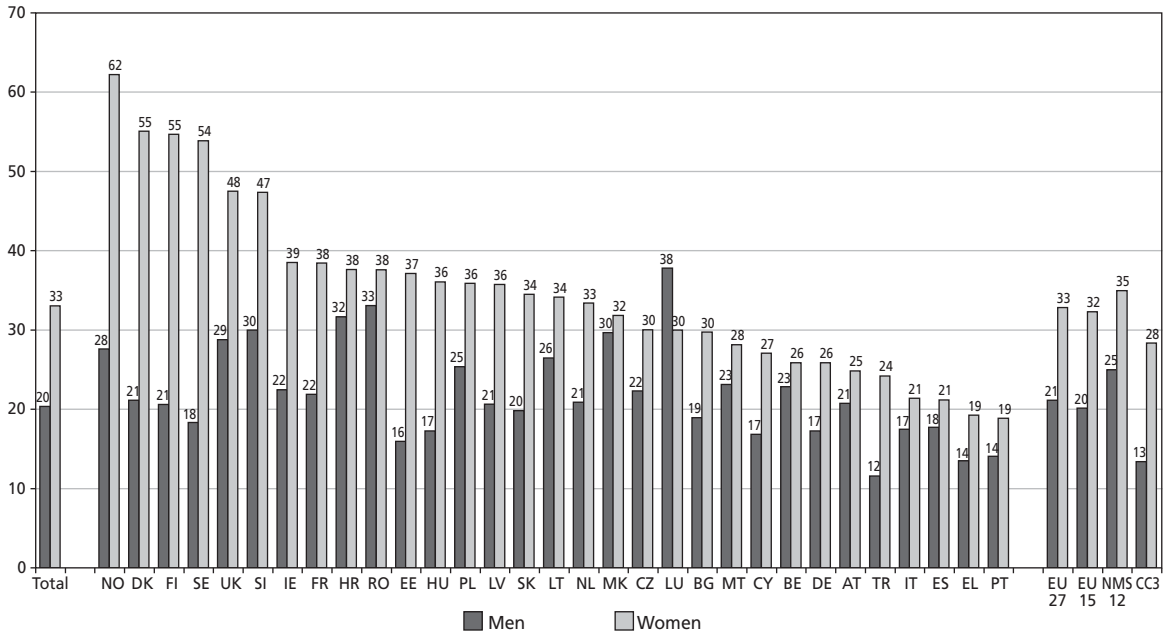
Nordic countries	Benelux countries and France	German-speaking countries	Anglo-Saxon countries	Southern European countries	Central and eastern European countries	Bulgaria and Romania	Candidate countries
5	6	4	7	4	9	11	15

Notes: Question 9: 'How likely do you think it is that you might lose your job in the next six months?' Proportions given refer to answers 'very likely' and 'quite likely'.
Question 4: 'In your job, are you/were you: 1) on an unlimited permanent contract?'
Source: EQLS 2007

Gender segregation between public and private sectors

The public sector is not equally widespread in European countries, averaging at 25% of employment across the countries surveyed in the EQLS. The public sector accounts for 13% of employment in Turkey and reaches a maximum of more than 40% of employment in Norway. More interesting in terms of work–family balance is the variation of women's employment in the public sector by country. With the exception of Luxembourg, women work more often in the public sector than men. Figure 17 outlines relatively large gender differences in some countries with regard to public sector employment. In the Nordic countries, more than half of women work in the public sector, which is almost three times more than men working in the sector. This gender segregation in the choice of sector of activity highlights that, even in countries with widespread and high levels of family policies, women continue to take jobs that allow a better balance between work and family life.

Figure 17: Public sector employment, by gender and country (%)

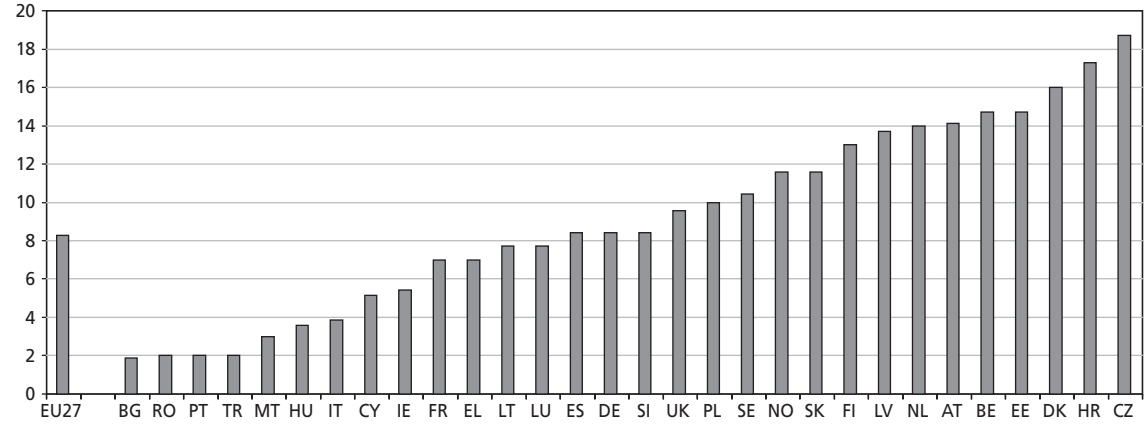


Notes: Question 5: 'Do/did you work in the...public sector?'
Source: EQLS 2007

One of the possible solutions for parents to better combine work and private life may be to telework. Unfortunately, the EQLS does not provide information on this type of work. Eurofound's fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), carried out in 2005, provides some comparative figures

on the distribution of telework among workers (Figure 18). Telework is still underdeveloped in Europe: on average, this form of work concerns only 8% of workers in the EU27. Few countries seem to be more advanced in relation to this work arrangement – in the Czech Republic, Croatia and Denmark, more than 15% of workers telework.

Figure 18: Workers who telework from home, by country (%)



Source: Parent-Thirion et al, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, 2007, p. 103

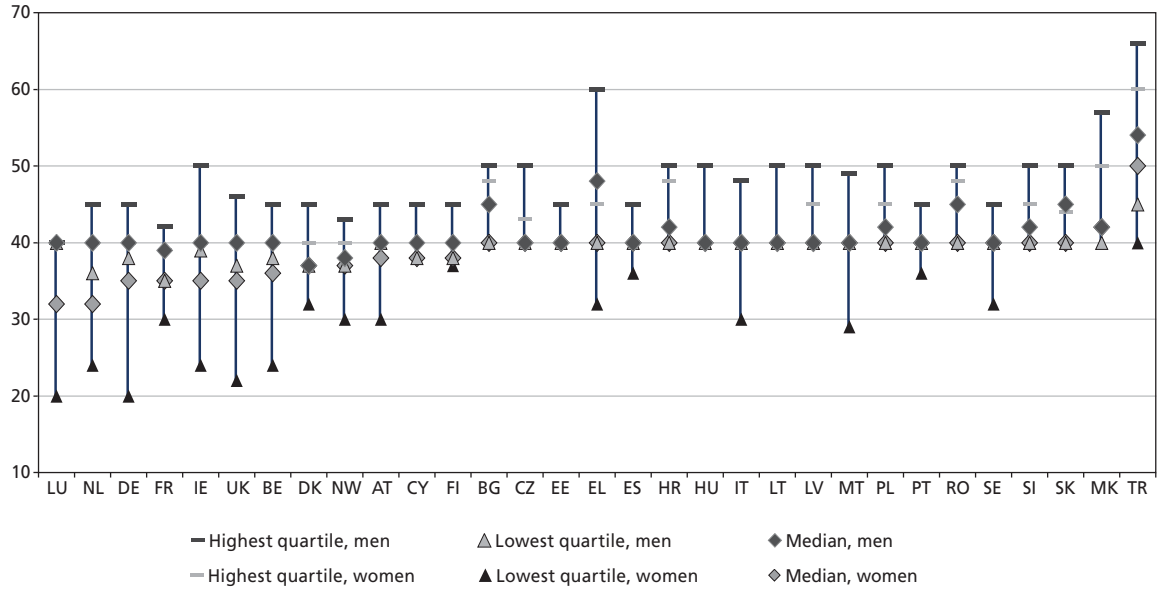
Working time

The family workload has two components: working hours and work intensity, and housework (care and other domestic tasks) performed at home. As Chapter 2 analysed time allocation to housework, this section focuses on working time.

According to the Eurostat Labour Force Survey (LFS), the average number of working hours in the EU is 38.5 hours a week, and men work a greater number of hours a week (41.5 hours) than women (34.3 hours). Since part-time employment is more widespread among women than men, the variation of average working hours is greater for women than for men (Figure 19). The part-time employment rate for women amounts to about 30%, ranging from below 10% in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia to more than 40% in Austria, Belgium, Germany and Norway. A record rate of 75% of part-time employment among women is reached in the Netherlands (Anderson et al, 2009).

Except for Turkish men, who have a longer working week with 55 hours a week on average, men in other countries work shorter hours: between 38 hours a week in the Netherlands and 45 hours a week in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece and Poland. In most countries, there are legal or implicit weekly working hour norms, and the average weekly working time amounts to 40 hours in most countries. Nonetheless, the average number of weekly working hours is lower in Denmark, Norway and France, but it is higher in the former communist countries.

Figure 19: Total weekly working hours, by gender and country



Notes: Question 6: 'How many hours do/did you normally work per week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime?'
'Don't know' responses are not included.
Source: EQLS 2007

Work–family balance

Work–family balance is a multidimensional phenomenon (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Two dimensions of work–life conflict or balance are assessed here: time and strain. First, the ability to reconcile work and family life is affected by the time available. As time is limited to carry out all tasks, working people have to find a balance between two demanding spheres: between work and family life, or as more generally stated, between work and private life. A work–family balance depends on the time devoted to each sphere. There is a time balance if individuals consider that they spend the right amount of time at work and the right amount of time with family and on other social commitments. On the other hand, time-based conflict occurs when time demanded by family competes with work activities. Strain-based conflict occurs when stress or tiredness from one domain spills over into the other, creating an overlap between family and professional spheres. A strain in one sphere alters the amount of energy required to fulfil a role in the other sphere. Thus, a work–life conflict is 'bi-directional' (Frone, Yardley and Markel, 1997) as work may interfere with family life (work-to-family conflict) or the pressure from household duties may interfere with work (family-to-work conflict).[4] To develop a subjective assessment of difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities, two indicators have been constructed (see box below).

[4] See Greenhaus et al (2003) for a discussion of how to measure work–family balance.

Two indicators of work–life balance

Two indicators have been computed in relation to each component of work–life balance.

The first indicator – time-based conflict – is related to the time balance between work and other social commitments, such as time with family members living in the household or elsewhere, time allocated to other social contacts or time for hobbies and interests. It is established from Question 39: 'Could you tell me if you think you spend too much, too little or just about the right amount of time in each area?

a. My job/paid work

b. Contact with family members living in this household or elsewhere

c. Other social contact (not family)

d. Own hobbies/ interests.'

Four cases can be identified.

- Time conflict occurs when time spent on activities in one role impedes the fulfilment of activities in another role. Here, it relates to when people feel that they spend too much time at work and too little time with family members or with other social contacts or on their own hobbies and interests.
- In relation to time balance people consider that they spend the right amount of time at work, with family members, with other social contacts and on their own hobbies and interests.
- Dissatisfaction related to time devoted to one's family role and social commitments (either too much or not enough time) while time spent at work is enough.
- Dissatisfaction related to time spent at work (either too much or not enough time) while time spent in the private sphere is enough.

The second indicator – strain-based conflict – is related to energy and strain. It is computed from Question 11: 'How often has each of the following happened to you during the last year?

Several times a week / Several times a month / Several times a year / Less often – rarely / Never / Don't know

a. I have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done

b. It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spend on the job

c. I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities.'

Again, four cases can be distinguished.

- Pressure at work and at home: individuals declare that they suffer strain both at work and at home at least several times a month. They find it difficult to concentrate at work because of their family responsibilities and have come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done or it has been difficult for them to fulfil their family responsibilities because of the amount of time they spend on the job.
- Pressure at work or at home: individuals declare that they suffer strain in one sphere, either at home or at work, at least several times a month.
- Weak pressure: individuals declare that they suffer strain either at home or at work more rarely (several times a year or less often).
- No pressure: individuals declare that they have no pressure at all, either at home or at work.

Time conflict

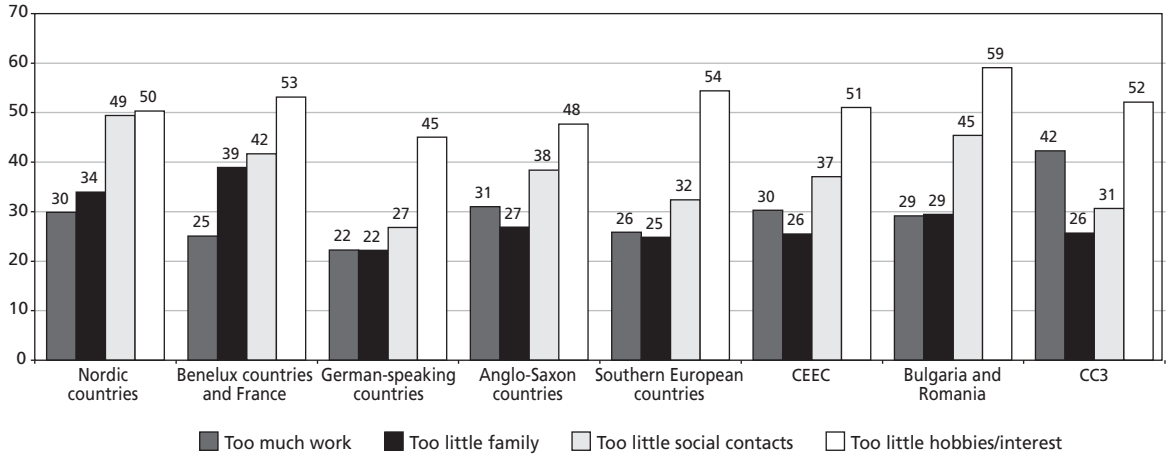
Before describing the synthetic indicators of work–family balance, it is possible to draw a general picture of the dimensions of life in which people feel constrained by time. More than a quarter of workers in the EU feel that they spend too much time at work (27%). This proportion is much higher in the CC3 (42%), where weekly working hours are longer. About 30% of workers perceive that they work too much in the Nordic countries, Anglo-Saxon countries, and central and eastern European countries, while 22% of workers in German-speaking countries, 25% in the Benelux countries and France, and 26% in southern European countries consider that they work too much (Figure 20).

On the other hand, 28% of EU workers believe that they spend too little time with their family. Cross-country variations are less pronounced in this respect, even if workers in the Benelux countries and France, as well as in the Nordic countries, more frequently report a shortage of time to spend with their family (39% and 34% respectively). This result confirms Steiber's (2009) finding about high levels of time conflict in Nordic countries. Two main explanations for this situation can be offered: the emancipation process – that is, the multiplicity of employment options in western European countries – causes time pressure (Van der Lippe et al, 2006); the sample selection effect – that is, a conflict is more pronounced in countries where most women are employed, including those who do not find it easy to combine work and family responsibilities.

A high proportion of workers in the EU think that they do not have enough time for other social contacts (36%) and their own hobbies and interests (51%). The feeling of a lack of time for social contacts is particularly high in the Nordic countries (49%) and in Bulgaria and Romania (45%). There are fewer cross-countries variations concerning time devoted to one's own hobbies and interests. As for the other activities of daily life, workers in German-speaking countries report fewer time constraints.

Women are more likely to report that they have too little time for activities of daily life than men, while men are more likely to declare that they spend too much time at work. However, there is no gender difference in the Nordic countries regarding time spent at work and with family.

Figure 20: Time pressure indicators, by country reconciliation regime (%)



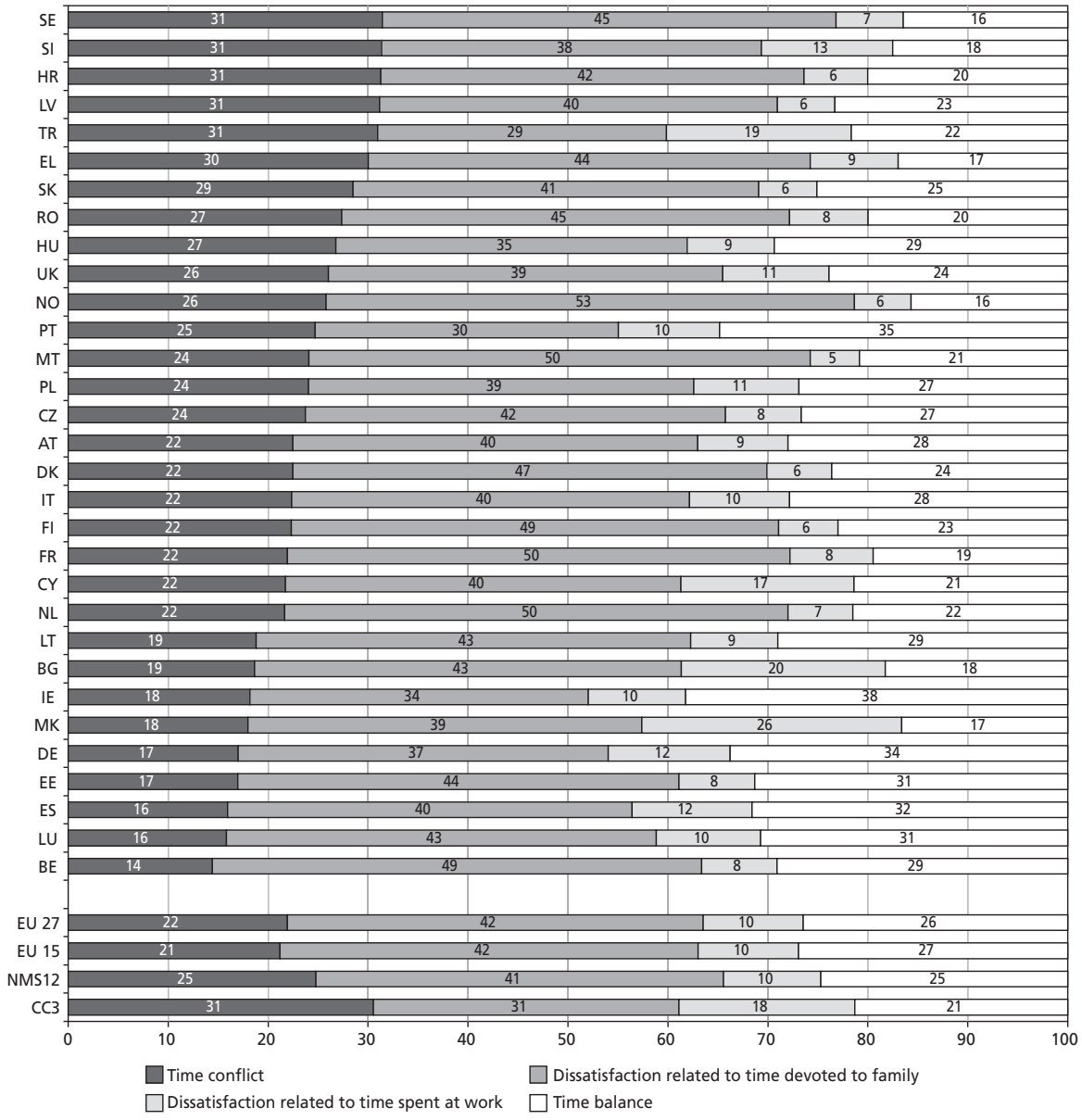
Source: EQLS 2007

The synthetic indicator created as part of this study takes into account these four dimensions of time pressure. About one quarter of the EU workers surveyed consider that they can balance their working time and time devoted to family and other social commitments, while one worker out of five reports a time conflict between both spheres of activity. Moreover, 40% of workers feel that they do not have

enough time for family and other social commitments; however, they consider that they spend enough time at work. There is little difference between men and women in this respect.

Figure 21 shows marked differences between countries, from a minimum of 14% of Belgian citizens encountering a time conflict to 31% of respondents in Sweden. Conversely, 38% of people manage to balance time between family and work in Ireland, compared with only 16% in Norway. These differences do not match the typology of the reconciliation regimes that have been defined in Chapter 1 (Figure 22a). Such differences may be explained by different expectations regarding the allocation of time to different activities between countries; for instance, a large proportion (more than half) of Nordic people feel that they have too little time for social contacts or their own hobbies or interests.

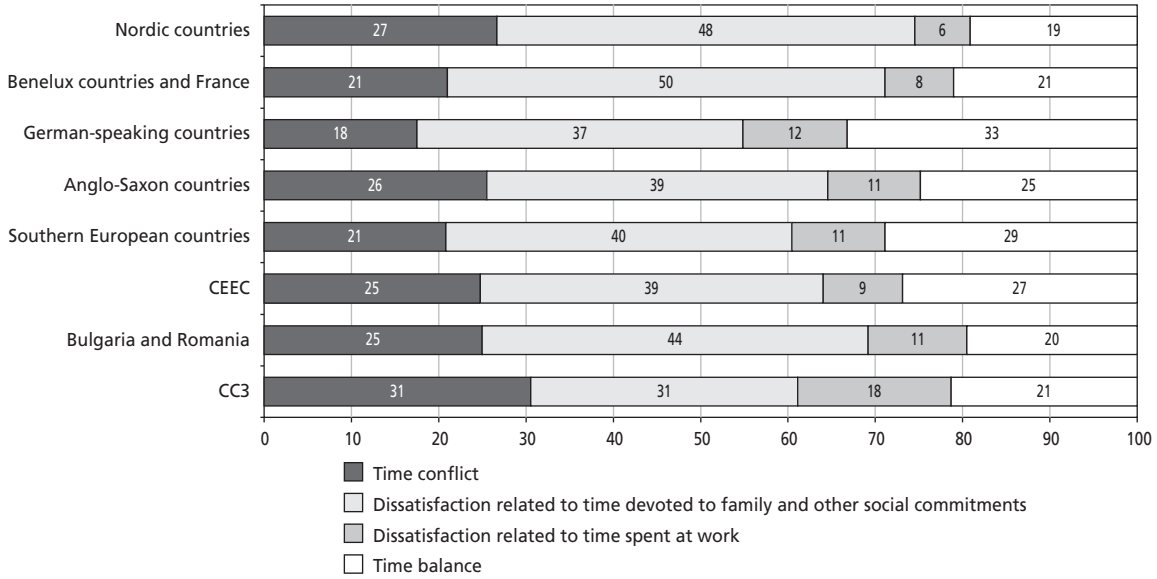
Figure 21: Time conflict between work and family life and other commitments, by country (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

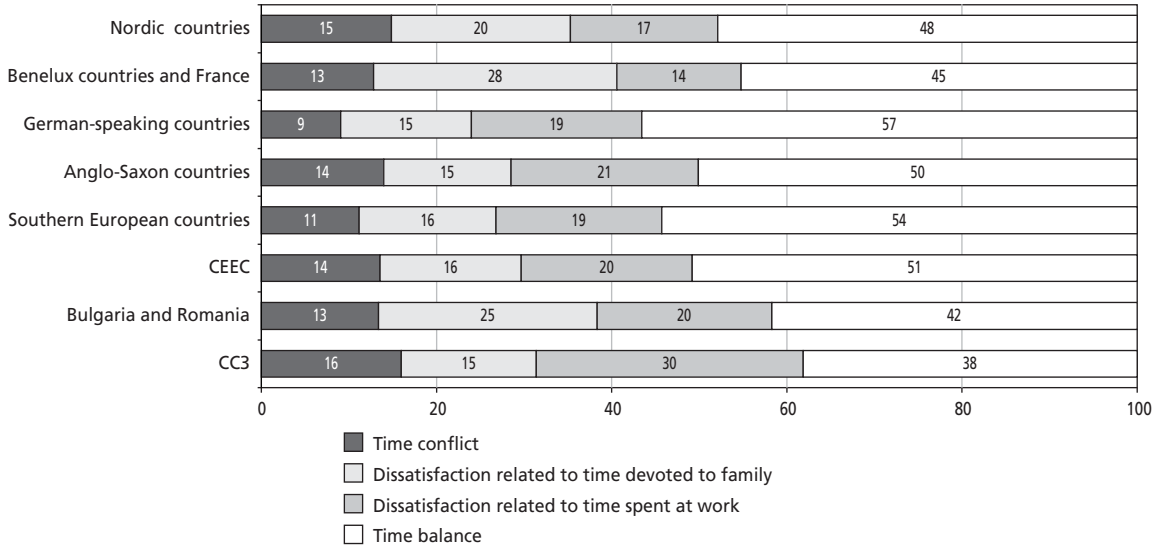
Work–family balance is better achieved when the analysis is limited to the time spent at work and with family members – that is, when time devoted to other social contacts and own hobbies is not taken into account (Figure 22b). About half of the people surveyed manage to balance these two spheres, with proportions of respondents indicating time conflict being much lower in all country groups.

Figure 22a: Time conflict between work and family life and other social commitments, by country reconciliation regime (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

Figure 22b: Time conflict between work and family life, by country reconciliation regime (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

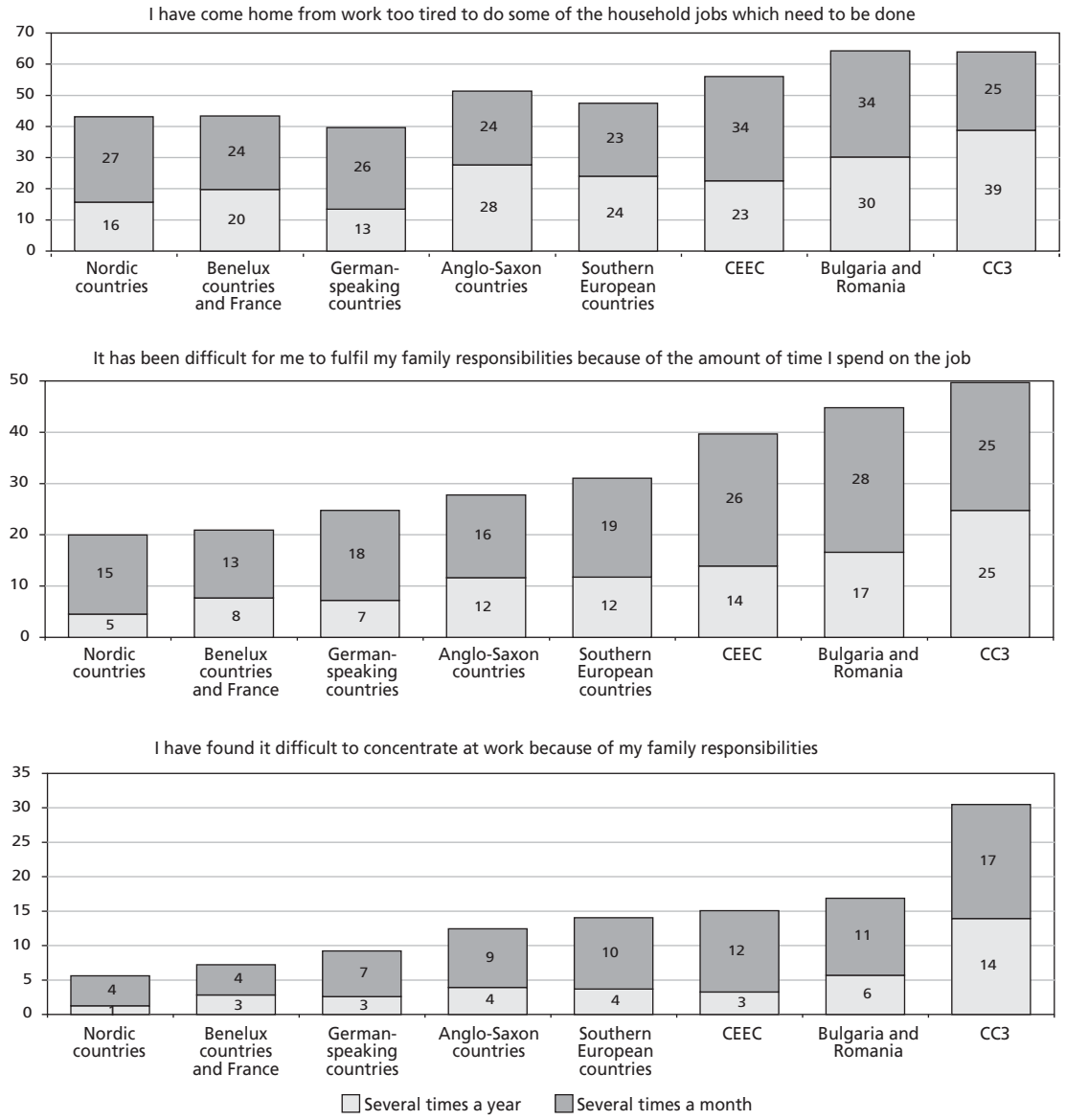
Strain-based conflict

This analysis considers whether the perception of workload mirrors people's perception of time overlapping between activities. The second dimension of work–life balance, strain-based conflict, shows contrasting results, revealing another facet of work–family balance (Figure 23).

A significant proportion of workers have difficulties in fulfilling family responsibilities due to the intensity and time allocated to paid work. Some 22% of EU workers declare that they come home from work too tired to do some of the household jobs which need to be done at least several times a week, while 26% of workers state that this is the case at least several times a month. The amount of time spent at work impedes 10% of workers in fulfilling their family responsibilities at least several times a week and 19% of workers declare that this is the case at least several times a month.

In contrast, fewer respondents report pressure at work that is due to family responsibilities. This form of time conflict is higher in the CC3 countries, and Bulgaria and Romania but less frequent in the Nordic countries.

Figure 23: Strain-based conflict between work and family life, by sources of strain and country reconciliation regime (%)

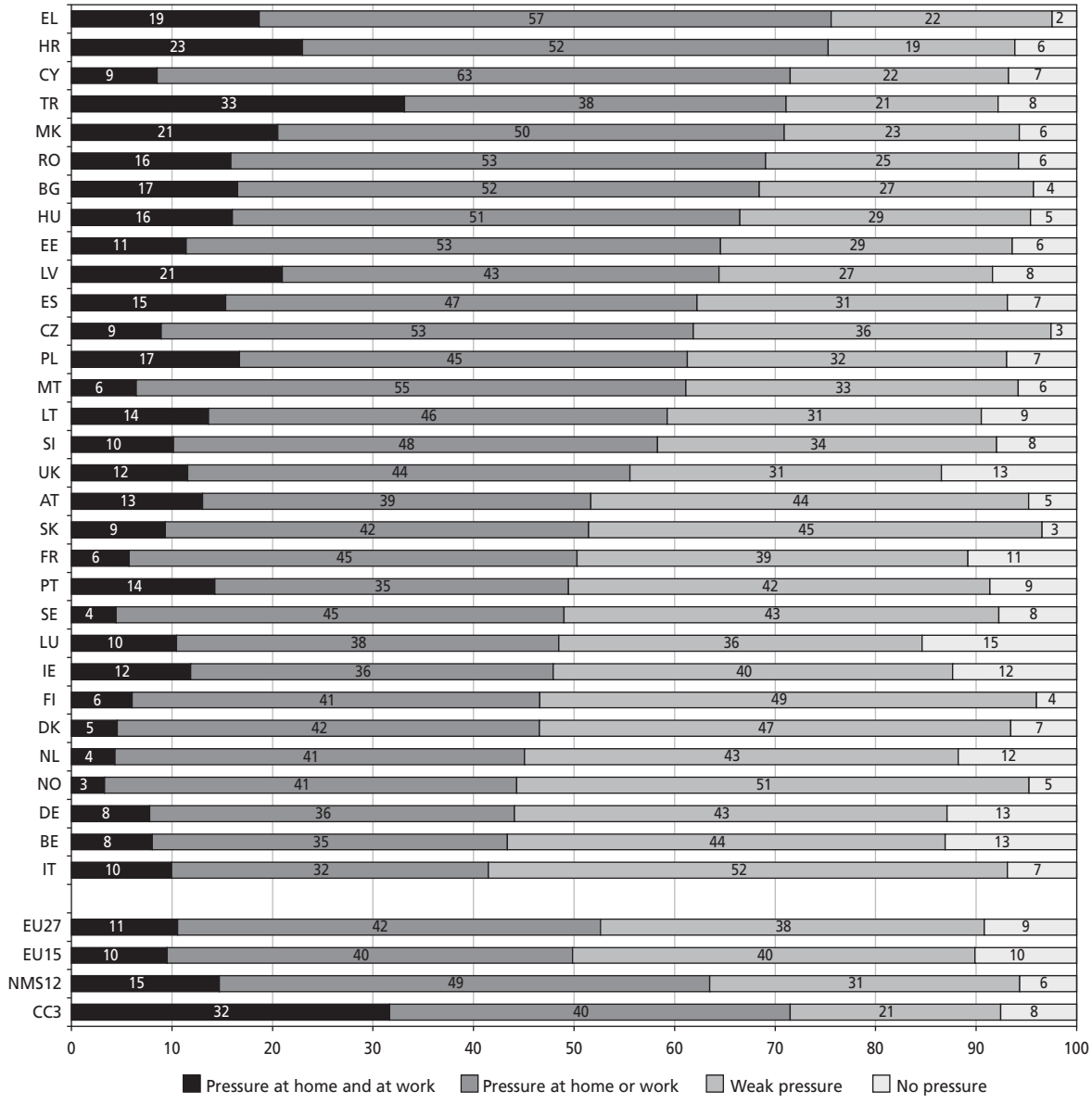


Source: EQLS 2007

Due to the overload that women suffer from household work, one can expect significant gender differences in time pressure at work. In fact, women cite this pressure more often than men, especially in the NMS12. In total, 12% of women in employment in the EU15 and 17% in the NMS12 report experiencing difficulties at work due to family responsibilities at least several times a month, compared with respectively 10% and 14% of men. The gap is more pronounced regarding pressure at home due to working time or work intensity. Some 61% of women in the NMS12 compared with 51% of women in the EU15 indicate that they have time difficulties at home.

About 50% of EU workers report an overlap of time demands between family and work due to pressure at work and/or at home. The main problem in this case is that work disturbs family life more than the reverse (Anderson et al, 2009). Less than 10% of workers surveyed experience no pressure in any direction. There are marked differences by country, but the ranking of countries differs from that

Figure 24: Strain-based conflict between work and family life, by country (%)

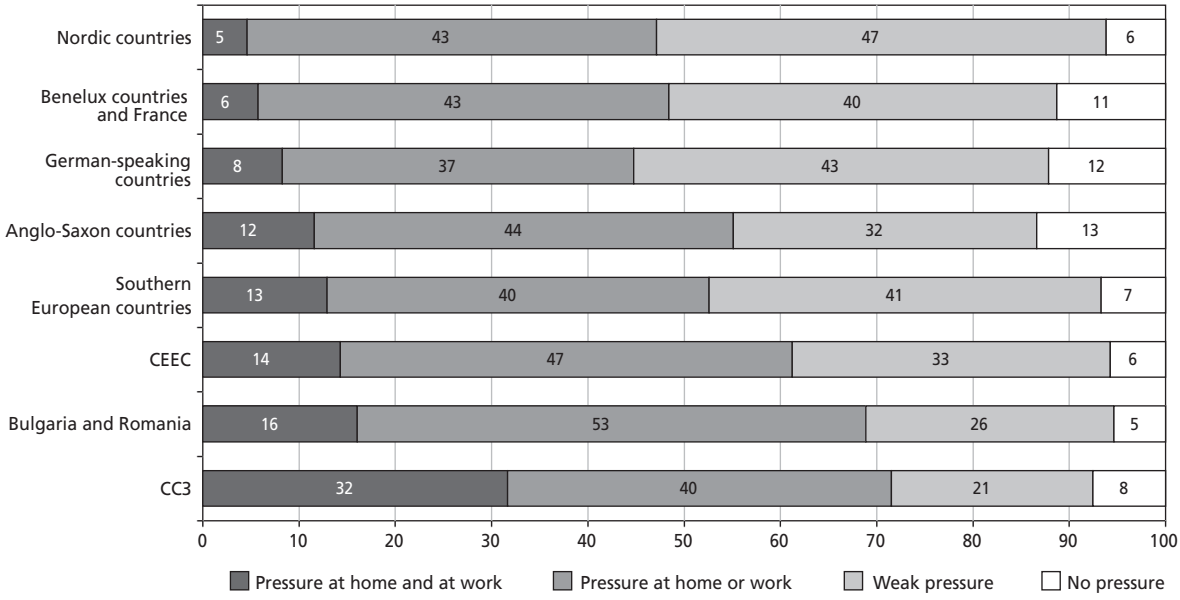


Source: EQLS 2007

regarding a balanced allocation of time between work and family life and other commitments. The country typology based on work–family reconciliation conditions shows how distant the NMS12 and CC3 countries are from the Nordic countries in terms of supporting a balanced approach to work–family life. Residents of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands stand out among the EU Member States, with 5% or less of Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch and Danish workers experiencing pressure at work and at home. The five countries with the most respondents citing problems in this domain are in the CC3 and the southern and eastern European countries (Figure 24).

Strain-based conflict is much lower in the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries and France, as well as in German-speaking countries, whereas it is more significant in the central and eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Romania, and the CC3 (Figure 25). Discrepancies between the EU country groups indicate stronger difficulties in the NMS12 to reconcile work and family life. From a subjective evaluation of pressure, these differences seem to suggest that family life can be adapted to employment requirements; however, more adjustments in paid work are required to reduce the imbalance across the countries under examination.

Figure 25: Strain-based conflict between work and family life, by country reconciliation regime (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

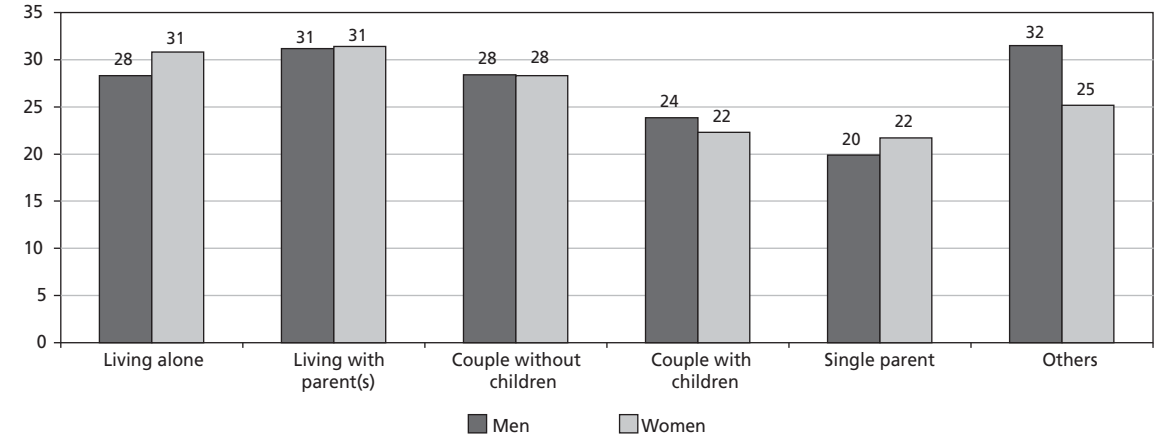
Overall, strain-based conflict is slightly higher for women, except in the NMS12. In the latter country group, 32% of men and 29% of women experience pressure at work and at home, compared with 52% of men and 54% of women in the EU as a whole. As women are more stressed and overloaded with work than their partners, they have a tendency to believe that their work hinders them from performing their parental role.

Work–life balance and family responsibilities

As work–life balance depends on the time devoted to each sphere of life, two indicators – time balance and strain-based conflict as perceived by the survey respondents – have been used to assess people's satisfaction or dissatisfaction in this regard, thereby establishing work–life balance indices for women and men.

Time balance between work and family life varies according to household living arrangements (Figure 26). The ability to balance the time available for work and family is clearly lower for people with children and for single-parent families in particular. Only 23% of people with children and 21% of single parents are satisfied with the time balance between working hours and family or social commitments. Compared with people living in other household arrangements, people with children are much less satisfied with the time devoted to their family or social commitments. Conversely, achieving a time balance is easier for people living with their parents or alone.

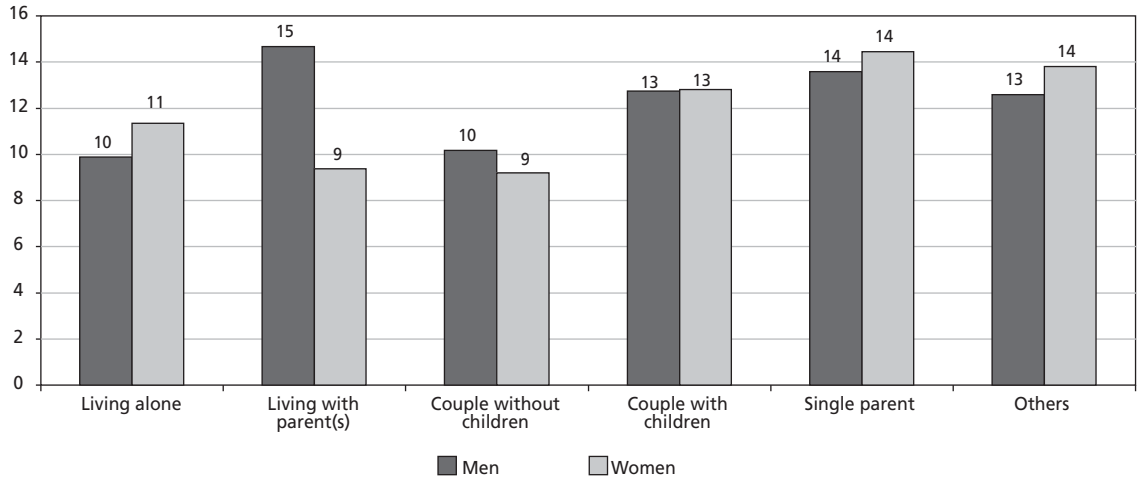
Figure 26: Satisfaction with time balance, by gender and household living arrangements (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

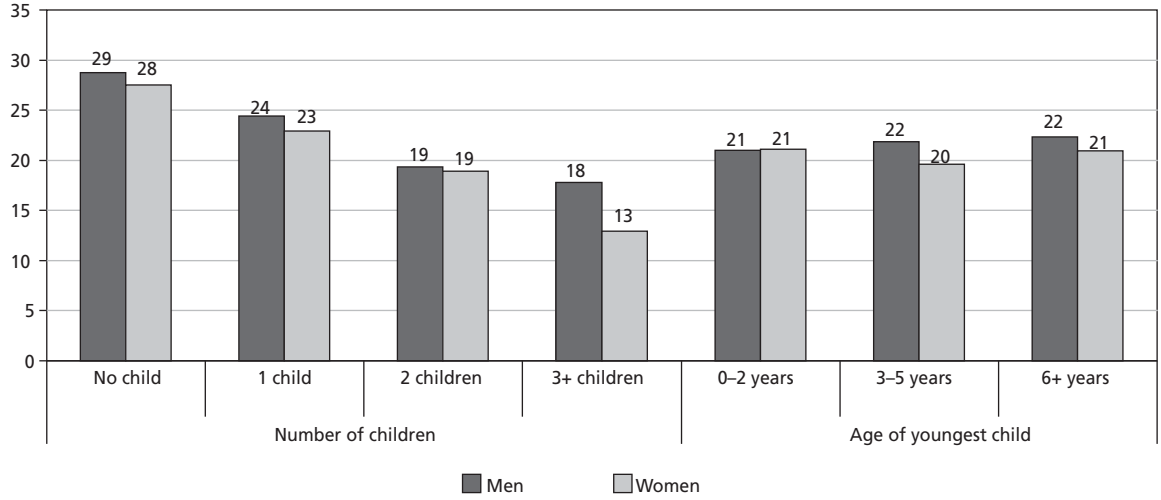
Strain-based conflict also varies somewhat according to household living arrangements (Figure 27). It is higher for single parents and couples with children. Interestingly, single women suffer strain relatively often, while men living with their parents perceive a high level of strain-based conflict. Moreover, 14% of single mothers and 9% of women in a couple without children suffer strain both at work and at home at least several times a month. It is worth noting, however, that 22% of single mothers and 31% of single women consider that they spend the right amount of time at work, with family members, with other social contacts and on their own hobbies or interests.

Figure 27: Perception of strain-based conflict, by gender and household living arrangements (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

Figure 28: Satisfaction with time balance for men and women, by household living arrangements and age of children (%)

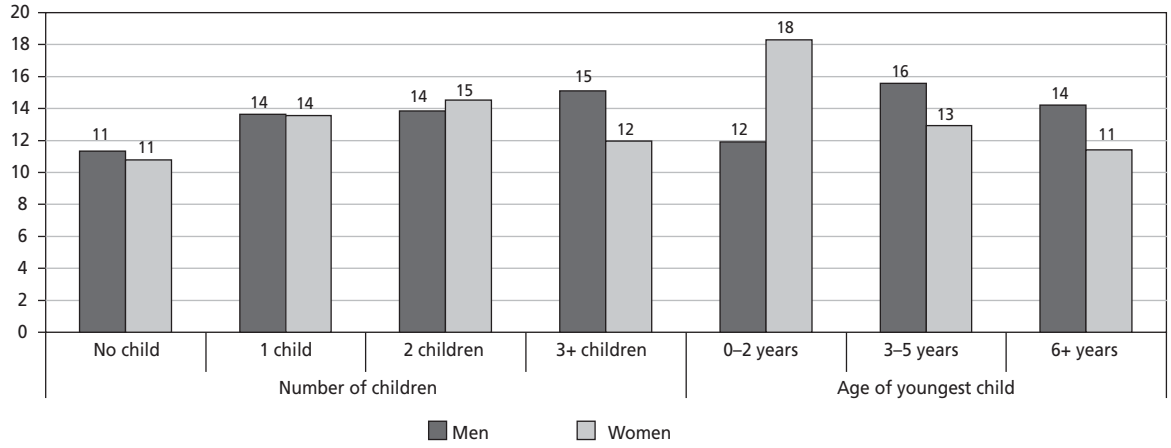


Source: EQLS 2007

Work–family life balance depends greatly on the number and age of children in the household. Time balance decreases with the number of children (Figure 28); it is particularly low for working women with three or more children. The time squeeze is higher as the number of children increases. Strain-based conflict also rises with the number of children in the household. However, working women with three or more children report conflict less often than mothers of one or two children. These women are probably a highly selective group: as a significant proportion of mothers of large families give up working altogether, those who continue to work are most likely employed in jobs that allow them to combine work and family responsibilities, with less poor working conditions, stress and work intensity. In total, 13% of women with three children or more and 28% of women with no children consider that they spend the right amount of time at work, with family members, with other social contacts and on their own hobbies or interests.

The age of the youngest child has no visible effect on time balance while it does play a role on strain-based conflict (Figure 29). A significant proportion of working mothers with a child under three years of

Figure 29: Perception of strain-based conflict for men and women, by household living arrangements and age of children (%)

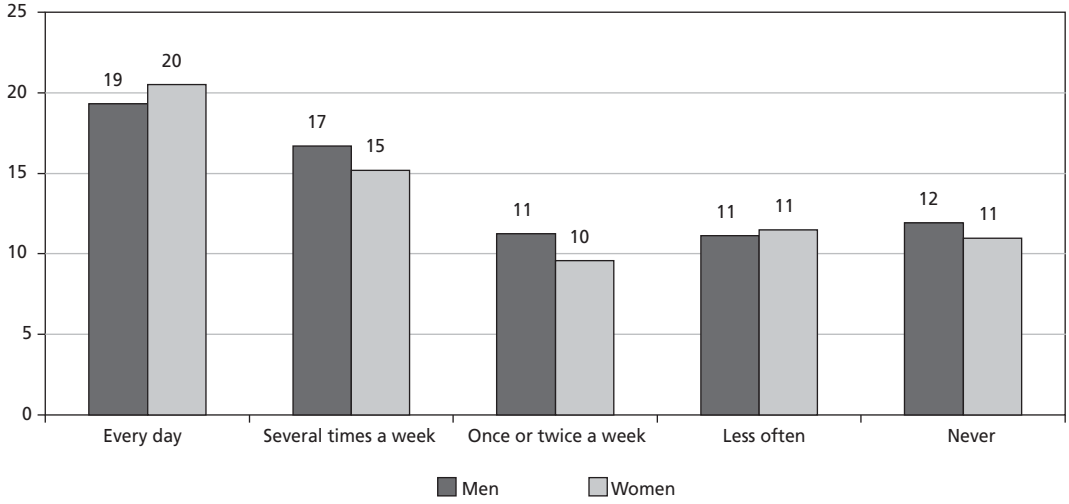


Source: EQLS 2007

age suffer from strain both at home and at work. In total, 18% of women with a child under three years of age and 11% of women with a child older than six years suffer strain both at work and at home at least several times a month. The level of strain decreases for women as the youngest child grows older. Men report more strain when the youngest child is aged three to five years, probably because men are more involved in their children's education as they grow older.

Caring for elderly relatives on a daily basis is as demanding as caring for children every day: 20% of women who are involved in caring for elderly or disabled relatives on a daily basis report feeling pressure both at home and at work. The same proportion of women involved in caring for children every day feels such pressure. Strain-based pressure increases with the frequency of caring for elderly or disabled relatives. Those involved in such care roles every day cite pressure both at home and at work twice as much as people who do not have such care responsibilities (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Strain-based conflict between work and family life due to involvement in caring for elderly or disabled relatives, by gender (%)



Source: EQLS 2007

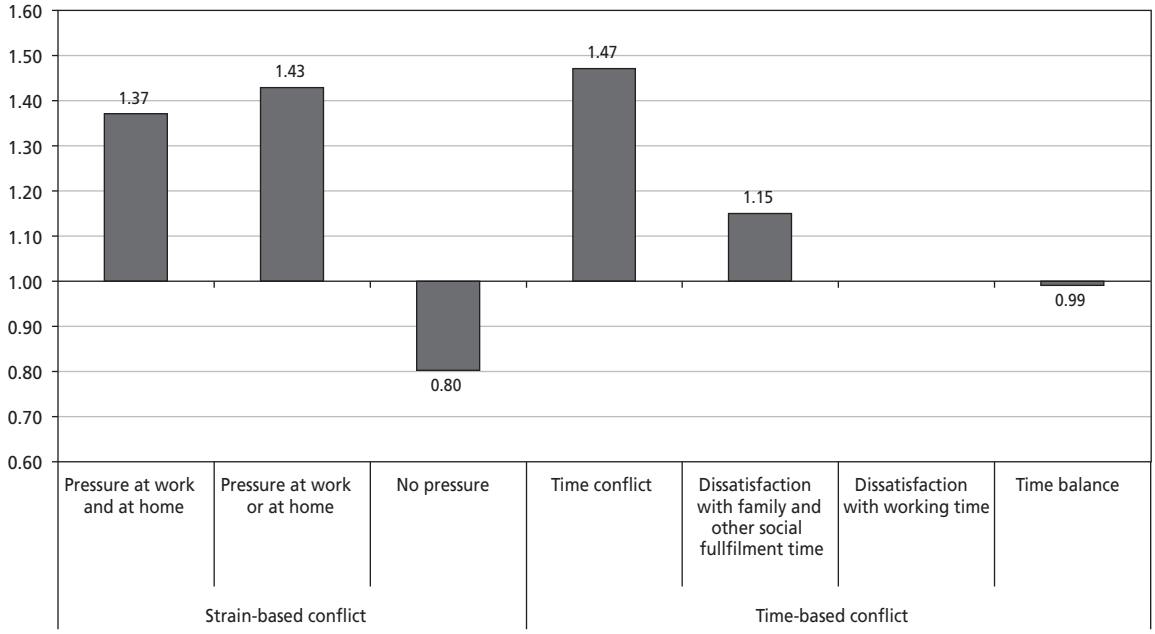
Using regression modelling (for the model specifications see Annex), the study examines the impact of family composition, working conditions and job characteristics, workload, the financial situation and the country groupings together on the work–family tension indices. Once individual and professional characteristics are taken into account, work–family tension is higher among women irrespective of the tension index. Women report feeling more rushed than men and they experience more strain (Figure 31). Descriptive statistics show much lower gender differences because women have on average fewer working hours, a less demanding job and jobs that make it easier to combine family life and work.

An odds ratio compares the likelihood of an event between two groups: a ratio greater than one implies that the event is more likely in a particular group than in the reference group; an odds ratio less than one implies that the event is less likely in a certain group than in the reference group; and an odds ratio of one implies that the event is equally likely in both groups.

Being female increases the odds of undergoing pressure at work and at home rather than weak pressure by a ratio of 1.37. It also increases the risk of experiencing pressure in one sphere of life rather than weak pressure by 1.43. Meanwhile, it reduces the odds of feeling no pressure. Similarly, being female increases the risk of experiencing time conflict rather than being dissatisfied with working time by a

ratio of 1.47. It increases the odds of dissatisfaction regarding time spent with family or on other social commitments by a ratio of 1.15.

Figure 31: Effect of gender (being female) on work–family tension: strain-based conflict and time-based conflict indices (odds ratios)



Notes: Reference category for strain-based conflict: weak pressure, odds ratio = 1.00; reference category for time-based conflict: dissatisfaction with working time, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

The multivariate analysis confirms that work–family balance varies according to household living arrangements: parents encounter significantly more time conflict and have a higher probability of feeling strained (Table 2A in Annex). For the same type of work and the same workload, single parents and especially women are more likely to experience time-based conflict.

The volume of paid and unpaid work has a negative impact on time pressure and on strain-based conflict. People with high volumes of paid work and unpaid work are not only more rushed than those with low hours of work but are also more stressed. The effect of the amount of paid work on work–family tension is slightly stronger than the effect of the amount of unpaid work. Moreover, poor working conditions, lack of interest in the job and high work intensity generate work–life tensions. Perceptions of job uncertainty and a poor financial situation also make people more stressed. Parents with long working hours and/or tight work schedules, poor working conditions and insecure work positions are among those who experience more tension.

After controlling for structural characteristics, the levels of work–life conflict vary across the countries studied. Compared with the Anglo-Saxon countries, time conflict is higher in the Nordic countries and in the Benelux countries and France, while it is lower in German-speaking countries, Bulgaria and Romania, and the CC3 (Table 3A in Annex). These differences may be explained by the variation in the proportion of dual-earner couples between regions, which, as shown previously, is much higher in the former group of countries than in the latter. Hence, the analysis restricted to parents and controlled for the working partner does not show significantly higher time conflict for people in the Nordic countries and the Benelux countries and France. It can be argued that the real time crunch occurs

within households where both partners are working. The second explanation highlights the importance of time devoted to social contacts and own interests in the Nordic countries (Anderson et al, 2009).

Conversely, strain-based conflict is much lower in the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries and France as well as in the German-speaking countries, while it is higher in Bulgaria and Romania, and the CC3. This result suggests that people can better balance family life and work in countries where childcare facilities and flexible working time schedules are more widespread.

Conclusion

This chapter offers a contrasting picture of work–family life balance in Europe. The balance between work and family life depends greatly on the number and age of children in the household. The time squeeze is higher as the number of children increases and is particularly high for women with three or more children. Stress and tiredness are also greater for parents of young children, creating an overlap between family and professional spheres. Even if caring for elderly relatives is less frequent than having children, it is as demanding as caring for children for those who are responsible for such care on a daily basis.

In the Nordic countries, as well as the Benelux countries and France, work–family life balance is much more a question of a shortage of time to carry out all tasks: people consider that the time devoted to their work competes with time that should be spent with family, friends and on their own interests. In the central and eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Romania, as well as in the CC3, achieving work–family balance is primarily affected by tiredness among household members due to poor working conditions associated with long working hours. In this case, pressure from work interferes with family life. Balancing work and family life seems easier in German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon countries. However, this relatively comfortable situation may be explained by a lower proportion of dual wage earners in a couple and of single mothers in employment in these countries, compared with the Nordic countries, and the Benelux countries and France. In these latter countries, the likelihood of taking up work for women with a very young child or with three or more children is higher than elsewhere in Europe. Differences in female activity rates are the result of cultural and societal norms; however, they are also due to a lower availability of options allowing work and private life spheres to be combined. The 'choice' (which is not always deliberate) for women to leave the labour market is also strongly determined by working conditions. It appears clearly that women exposed to poor working conditions and with an insecure employment contract are at greater risk of exiting the labour market.

Influence of family status and work–family balance on life satisfaction

4

Documented findings have identified a wide range of institutional, economic and ecological determinants of life satisfaction (Bjørnskov et al, 2008). However, while a great variety of variables has been suggested as determinants of life satisfaction, the impact of tensions between work and family on life satisfaction has not been widely examined. The few studies carried out on this issue were conducted by Greenhaus et al (2003), Saraceno et al (2005) and Wallace et al (2007). Saraceno et al (2005) used the 2003 EQLS data to verify whether the variables that they found crucial for defining work–family balance, such as gender and household status as well as the country (or country group) of residence, are related to individuals' satisfaction with family life. They found no clear relationship and concluded that although individuals with young children perceive the greatest difficulties in combining paid employment and childrearing, these difficulties do not result in any clear differences in satisfaction with one's own family life (Saraceno et al, 2005, p. 43). Wallace et al (2007) went further and, using the same EQLS dataset, tested the impact of the perception of work–family balance on life satisfaction, finding only minor negative effects.

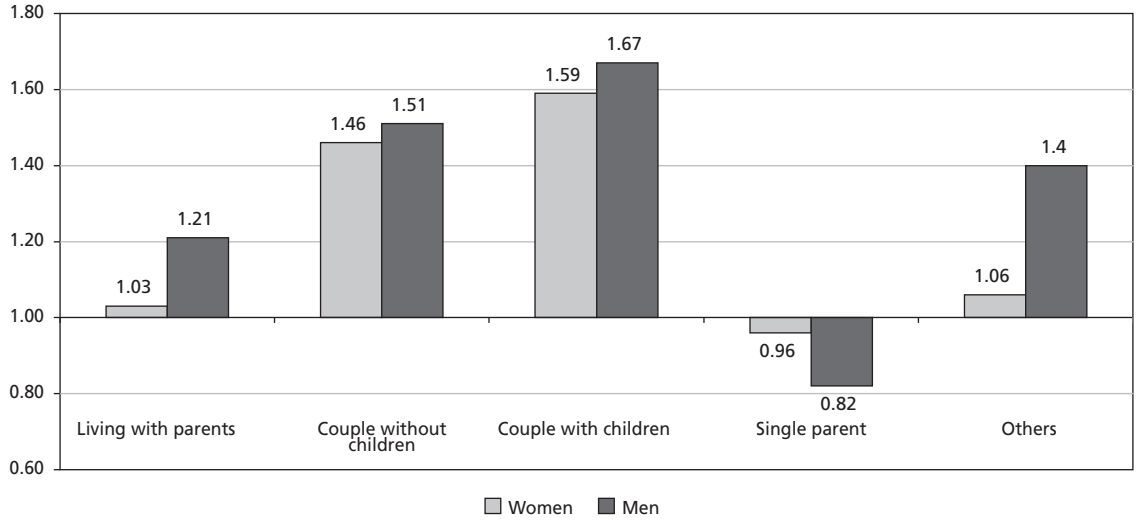
This chapter first focuses on the family, analysing how the fact of living in a family and a feeling of family support are related to life satisfaction. Since family responsibilities may conflict with employment, the analysis then verifies whether people who experience work–family tensions are less satisfied with life. In this way, it is possible to extend the approach adopted by Saraceno et al (2005). The tensions between family life and work are measured by the use of the indicators on the perception of work–family balance proposed in Chapter 3 – time-based conflict and strain-based conflict. This further distinguishes the approach taken here from that of Wallace et al (2007). In addition to the indices of work–family balance, this chapter also explores the relationship between life satisfaction and other factors that have been found crucial for work–family balance, such as institutional, structural, cultural and economic settings in which family and employment decisions are made (captured by the country reconciliation regime) as well as work uncertainty. On the whole, this chapter brings together the discussions introduced in Chapter 2 on living as a family in Europe and Chapter 3 on work–family arrangements, scrutinising their impact on life satisfaction in general.

All of the numeric findings presented refer to the EU27 and the CC3. These are results of ordered logistic regressions of life satisfaction, compared with the main explanatory variables as well as a set of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, estimated separately for women and for men. This approach allows an assessment of the relationship between life satisfaction and indicators of family status and work–family balance, without taking into account any compounding factors. The method and the variables included in the analysis are presented in the Annex. The figures presented represent the findings of the ordered regression analyses, which express a relative difference in life satisfaction between the analysed category and the reference category.

Family status and life satisfaction

The findings clearly illustrate that living in a couple is related to higher life satisfaction (Figure 32). Partnered women and men are about twice as satisfied with life as people living alone. Life satisfaction is particularly high for couples with children. Parents are more satisfied with life than people with no children, only if children are raised within a couple, however. Single parents display much lower life satisfaction; in fact, single parenthood represents the living arrangement in which people are least satisfied with life.

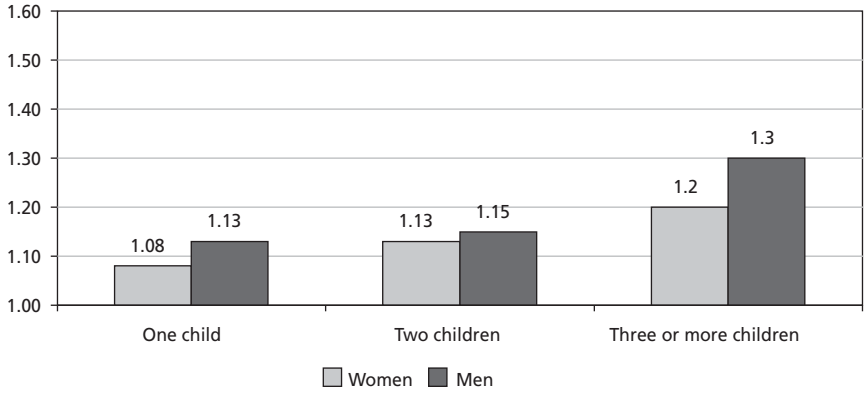
Figure 32: Life satisfaction, by gender and living arrangements (odds ratios)[5]



Note: Reference category: living alone, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

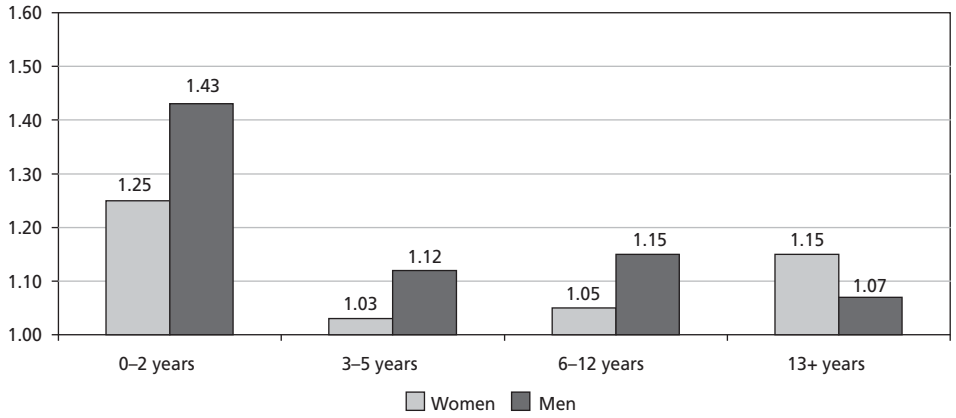
Parents are more satisfied with life than respondents who do not have children (Figures 33a and 33b). Life satisfaction increases with a rise in the number of children in the household. Particularly high life satisfaction is observed among parents of very young children, under the age of two years. This finding illustrates that increased family obligations resulting from childrearing do not necessarily lower life satisfaction. In contrast, people with children appear to be happier. This finding is in line with the results obtained by Saraceno et al (2005). It is notable, however, that the difference in life satisfaction between parents of three or more children or parents with young children compared with people without children is much larger for men than women.

Figure 33a: Life satisfaction, by gender and number of children (odds ratios)



[5] All figures in Chapter 4 (Figures 32–41) illustrate the results of ordered logistic regression analyses of life satisfaction. The odds ratio is used to compare the probability of response with regard to life satisfaction for each group in relation to the reference group (see note to each figure). An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that the life satisfaction for that group is higher than in the reference group, and an odds ratio less than 1 indicates the opposite situation.

Figure 33b: Life satisfaction, by gender and age of youngest child (odds ratios)



Note: Reference category: no children, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

In order to account for different types of support expected to be received, the analysis defines three indicators of support as explained in the box below.

Indicators of support

Based on the answers to Question 35 of the EQLS, indicators of three types of support were constructed:

- Health support refers to the situation in which one may rely on support when one needs help around the house when ill.
- Financial support refers to the situation in which one may rely on support when one needs to urgently raise €1,000 (€500 in the NMS12 and CC3) to face an emergency.
- Mental support refers to the situation in which one may rely on support when one needs advice about a serious personal or family matter or one is depressed and would like to talk to somebody.

Not only the fact of having a family but also a feeling that one can receive support, whenever one is ill, experiences financial problems, is depressed or needs advice, is related to higher life satisfaction (Figures 34a–34c). Financial support is particularly important for women, while men value health support most. In general, life satisfaction does not depend on the source of support, that is, whether it is provided by family members or other people such as friends, neighbours or work colleagues. The only exception in this regard concerns mental support, which is appreciated most strongly when it comes from family members.

Figure 34a: Life satisfaction, by gender and receipt of health support (odds ratios)

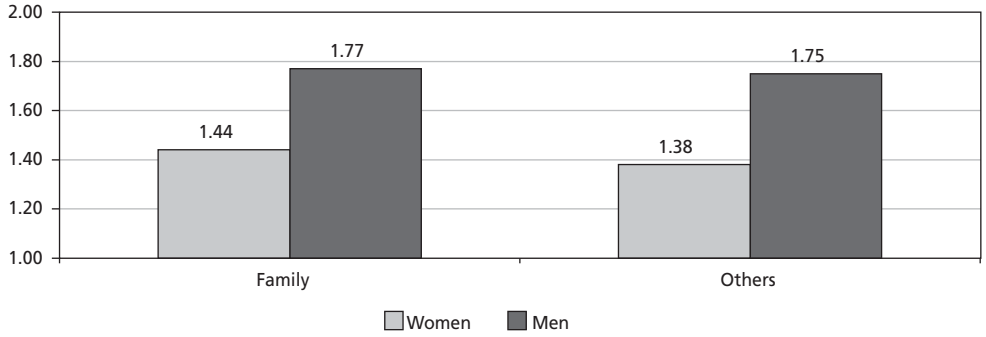


Figure 34b: Life satisfaction, by gender and receipt of financial support (odds ratios)

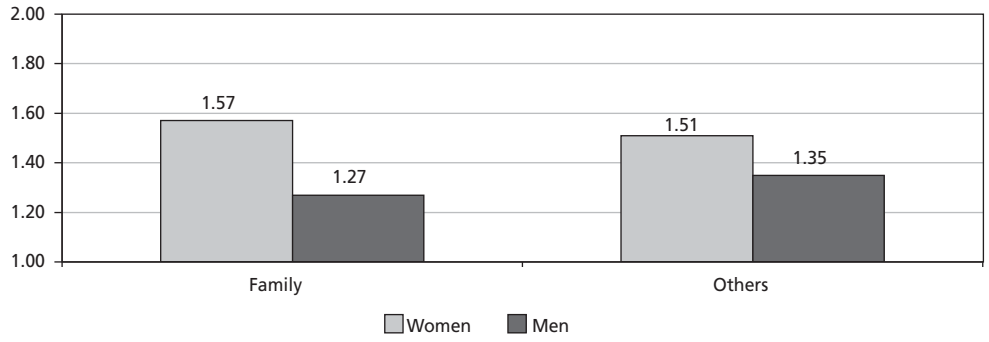
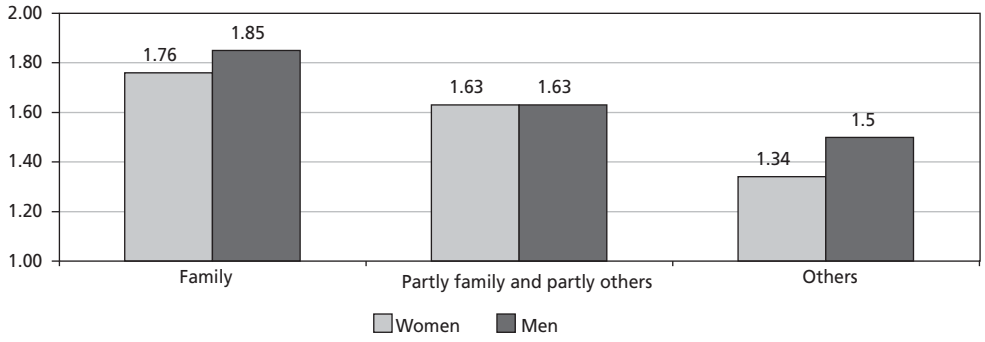


Figure 34c: Life satisfaction, by gender and receipt of mental support (odds ratios)



Note: Reference category: nobody, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

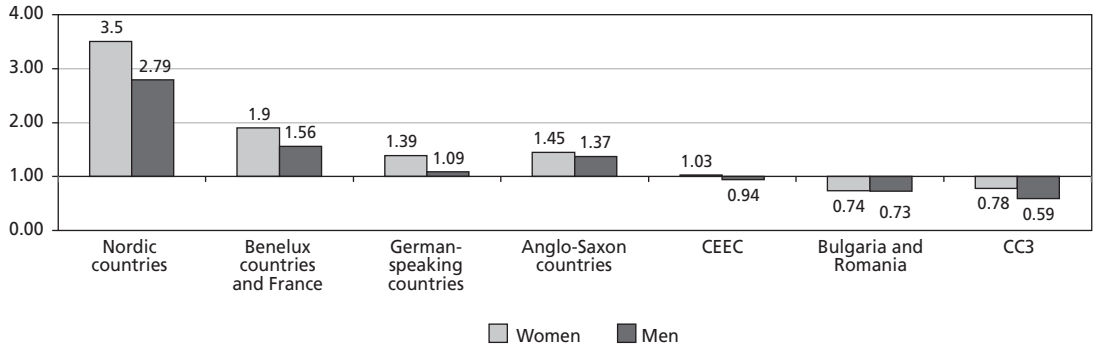
In general, the findings demonstrate the importance of the relationship between the life satisfaction of European citizens and family status and family support. People living in a family and especially in a couple with children are more satisfied with life despite their increased obligations. The only, albeit important, exception applies to single parents, who display not only lower life satisfaction than couples with children, but who also score lower regarding life satisfaction than non-partnered people who live alone or with parents.

Work–family balance and life satisfaction

This section takes a closer look at the relationship between work–family balance and life satisfaction. Although the findings presented in the previous section do not suggest that family obligations lead to a decline in life satisfaction, problems may arise once these obligations conflict with professional life. For an initial overview of the relationship between work–family balance and life satisfaction, differences in life satisfaction are presented according to the country reconciliation regimes (Figure 35). The analyses reveal the highest level of life satisfaction in the Nordic countries and the lowest in the CC3. Residents of the Benelux countries and France take up second position in the ranking of this country clustering by life satisfaction. They are followed by people living in the German-speaking countries and the Anglo-Saxon countries. A lower satisfaction with life is observed in southern European countries (the reference category) and the central and eastern European countries excluding Bulgaria and Romania, which score just above the CC3 countries. A large variation in life satisfaction is thus found to exist not only between the EU15 and NMS12 and the CC3, but also within the EU15. The fact that Nordic women are 3.5 times more satisfied with life than women in the southern European countries, while for men this difference amounts to a factor of almost 2.8, illustrates the magnitude of this difference most vividly.

The variation in life satisfaction across the different reconciliation regimes is greater for women than for men. Overall, the results suggest that people tend to be more satisfied with life in countries where the conditions for reconciling work and family life are better – a finding that is in line with the theoretical arguments presented in the conceptual framework of this report (Chapter 1) and on the basis of which the study grouped the European countries according to the proposed classification of reconciliation regimes.

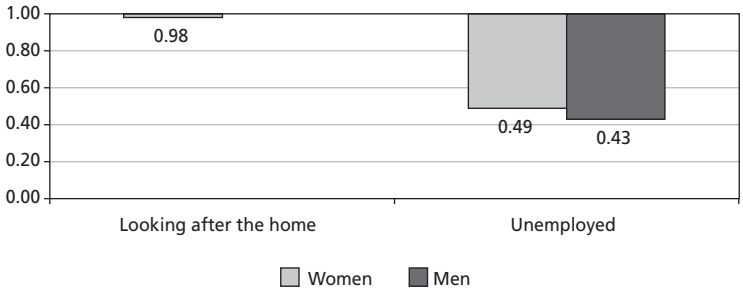
Figure 35: Life satisfaction, by gender and country reconciliation regime (odds ratios)



Note: Reference category: southern European countries, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

At first glance, it may seem surprising that those in employment appear relatively satisfied with life. While housewives are as satisfied with life as those who work for pay, unemployed people are significantly disadvantaged on the life satisfaction scale (Figure 36). Unemployment has a particularly negative effect on the life satisfaction of men.

Figure 36: Life satisfaction, by gender and employment status (odds ratios)

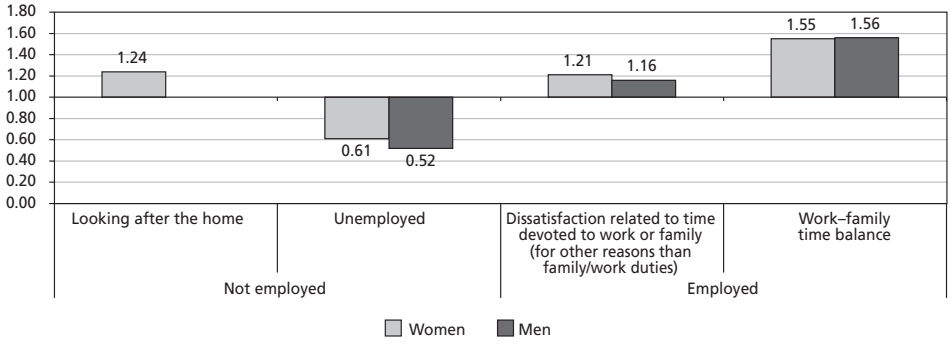


Notes: The category 'looking after the home' is not included for men due to the low level of responses (below 30 survey observations).
Reference category: employed, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

A more thorough investigation of the relationship between work–family balance and life satisfaction reveals that it is not people who have children nor those who are employed but those experiencing excessive workload due to either professional or family duties who are less satisfied with life. Without taking into account the compounding effect of variables regarding children in the household, the constructed indices of the perceived balance between paid work and family life both provide important results. The regression analysis shows that employed people are more satisfied with life than those who are not employed as long as the work–family tensions that they experience are not too strong. For example, both women and men who have established a positive work–life balance are up to almost 60% more satisfied with life than those who perceive work to conflict with the time spent with their family and on their social life (Figure 37).

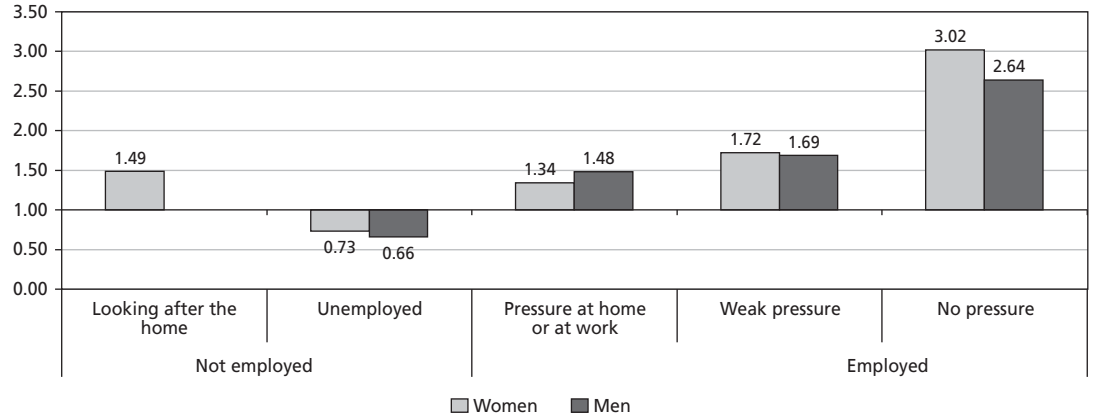
The indicator of strain-based conflict shows even larger differences in life satisfaction among those who experience such conflict and those who do not (Figure 38). If such tensions are strong, the life satisfaction of employed women is lower than that of women who have decided to stay at home to take care of domestic and care responsibilities. Nevertheless, the labour market status with the most negative impact on life satisfaction is unemployment. Even those who perceive a strong conflict between family life and work tend to be far more satisfied with life than unemployed people.

Figure 37: Life satisfaction, by gender and perception of time-based work–family conflict (odds ratios)



Notes: The category 'looking after the home' is not included for men due to the low level of responses (below 30 survey observations).
Reference category: work–family time conflict, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

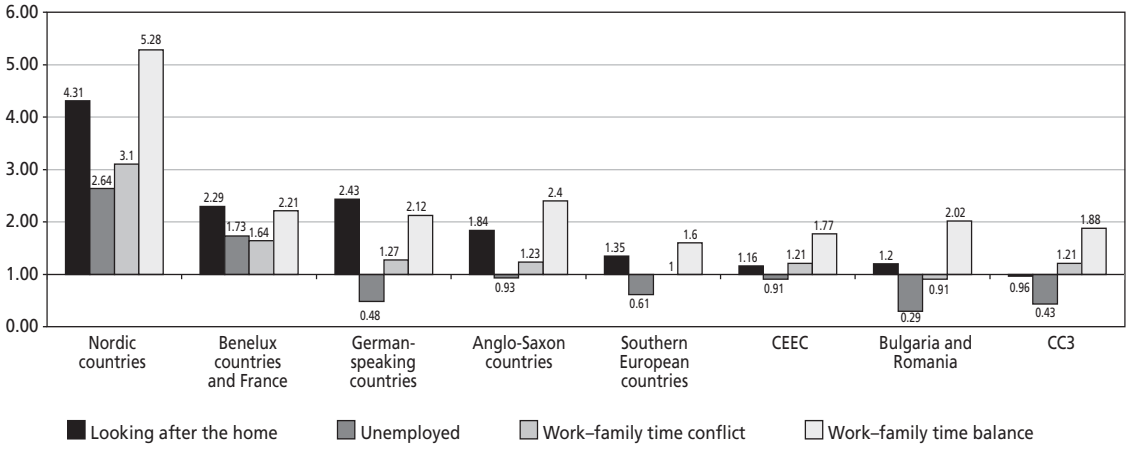
Figure 38: Life satisfaction, by gender and strain-based work–family conflict (odds ratios)



Notes: The category 'looking after the home' is not included for men due to the low level of responses (below 30 survey observations).
Reference category: pressure at home and at work, odds ratio 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

The study also considers whether these effects are mediated by a country-specific setting. Throughout the EU, employed women who have reached a positive work–life balance are more satisfied with life than those who experience time conflict or who are unemployed (Figure 39). Likewise, working women who reach a balance between work and family life are generally happier than housewives, apart from women in the German-speaking countries, where exactly the opposite is observed, and in the Benelux countries and France where practically no differences between the two groups are found.

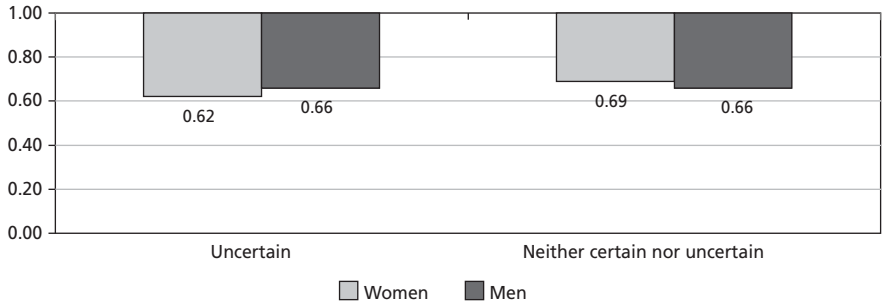
Figure 39: Life satisfaction among women, by time-based work–family conflict and country reconciliation regime (odds ratios)



Note: Reference category: southern European countries/work–family time conflict, odds ratio 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

Work uncertainty is a job characteristic that potentially plays a major role in determining people's life satisfaction in contemporary societies, separate from the perception of work–family balance (Figure 40). The reason for this is that instability of employment contracts in modern labour markets may jeopardise chances of finding and maintaining employment. Indeed, the results of this study show that both women and men whose job situation is uncertain endure up to 35% lower life satisfaction levels than those who describe their jobs as secure.

Figure 40: Life satisfaction, by gender and job uncertainty (odds ratios)

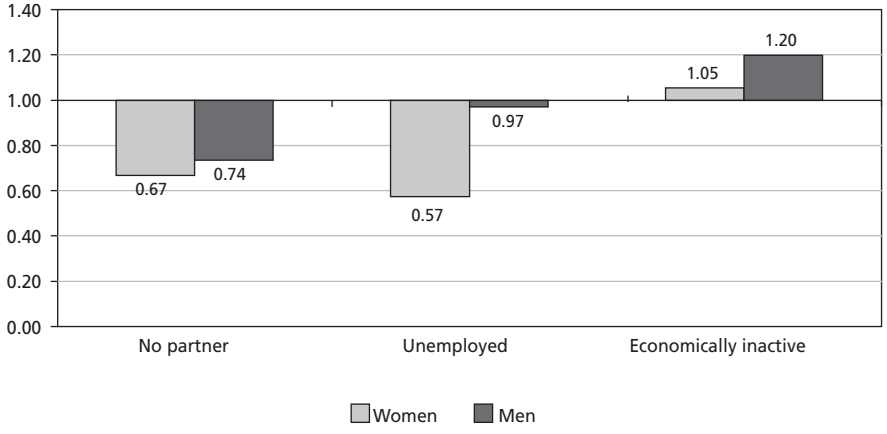


Notes: Reference category: job certainty, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

On the whole, the findings suggest that employed European citizens are more satisfied with life than those who are not employed as long as the job is not too uncertain and tensions between family and work are not too strong. It should be noted that the analysis controlled for differences in the financial situation of respondents, which implies that higher life satisfaction of employed persons cannot be explained by better material circumstances.

The study has shown that the degree of compatibility between work and family life is strongly related to life satisfaction. It also appears interesting to explore the association between the labour force status of a partner and life satisfaction. The analysis demonstrates that not only having a partner but also the partner's employment status is significantly correlated with life satisfaction (Figure 41). The employment status factor impacts differently on men's and women's perception of life satisfaction. Women with an employed or economically inactive partner are more satisfied with life than those without a partner. However, their life satisfaction falls below the levels observed for non-partnered women if the partner is unemployed. For men, the unemployment of the partner is not of major importance for their life satisfaction – they are as satisfied with life as men with an employed partner. What matters for men is the partner's labour market inactivity – men whose partner is economically inactive are about 20% more satisfied with life than men whose partner is employed. These findings reflect a perception of gender roles in the analysed countries that remains rather traditional.

Figure 41: Life satisfaction, by gender and partner's employment status (odds ratios)



Note: Reference category: employed partner, odds ratio = 1.00.
Source: EQLS 2007

Conclusion

Saraceno et al (2005, p. 43) stated in the EQLS 2003 report that 'although individuals with family responsibilities, and particularly with young children, perceive the greatest difficulties in reconciling work and family life, these difficulties do not result in linear differences in satisfaction with one's own family life'. The current analysis further confirms this finding: not only are family obligations not related to lower life satisfaction but, on the contrary, couples with children who can rely on family support are happier than couples without children, persons without a partner or those who cannot count on any financial, moral or health support from their family, relatives or friends. The only exception in this regard is single parents, who are even less satisfied with life than persons without a partner, living alone or living with parents.

In addition, this study has shown that employed European citizens enjoy higher life satisfaction than non-employed Europeans and particularly more so than unemployed persons. A deeper investigation of the relationship between work and family tensions and life satisfaction illustrates that, regardless of whether there are children in the household, employed people are more satisfied with life than non-employed people as long as the work–family tensions that they experience are not too strong. The feeling of having an excessive workload either as a result of professional or family obligations leads to a substantial reduction in life satisfaction. Moreover, women who experience work–family conflict tend to be less satisfied with life than housewives. This conclusion holds true for all country reconciliation regimes in Europe, with the exception of the German-speaking countries. Its implications are straightforward. Policies targeted at creating appropriate conditions for parents to combine family life with work may not only bring about an increase in birth rates and women's employment – both of which are pivotal factors in dealing with the profound ageing of the EU population – but should also have a beneficial influence on the general life satisfaction of individuals in contemporary societies.

Policy implications of main findings 5

The growing relevance in the EU policy debate of policies seeking to reconcile work and family life is reflected by a gradual shift in their scope: from equal treatment of women and men at work towards the need for increased employment to stimulate economic growth, work–life balance and, more recently, to facilitating demographic renewal (European Commission, 2008a, 2008d and 2007; Lewis, 2009). In particular, over the past decade, these policies have been redesigned to accentuate that work–life balance, gender division of paid and unpaid work, and an increase in birth rates are all equally important policy domains. The renewed social agenda (European Commission, 2008d), with its focus on empowering and enabling individuals to realise their potential while also helping those who are unable to do so, is very much in line with recommendations of the EU Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006–2010 (European Commission, 2006a). The October 2008 European Commission document on better work–life balance (European Commission, 2008a) and the February 2009 Commission report on equality between women and men strengthen the role of gender equality and reconciliation policies for growth and social cohesion:

> *'Equality between women and men is not just a goal in itself: it is a precondition for fulfilling the overall EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion [European Commission, 2009a, p. 5].... Reconciliation policies are key responses to long-term economic and demographic challenges, and should therefore be reinforced to stimulate growth. A better work–life balance for both women and men requires a more equitable share of time spent on paid and unpaid work. Women's time is more tied up in domestic and family responsibilities than is the case for men. Reconciliation measures need to target men too, since the promotion of gender equality implies changes and new opportunities for both sexes' (European Commission, 2009a, p. 9).*

The findings of the EQLS 2007 survey support the view that these policies really matter: they reduce tensions between family life and work, and positively influence the life satisfaction of individuals in contemporary societies. Moreover, in countries where the conditions for reconciling the demands of work and family life are better, both women's employment and fertility rates are higher than in countries with worse conditions to reconcile work and childrearing. This interrelationship needs to be accounted for when discussing increases in employment and fertility, both of which are pivotal factors in dealing with the profound problem of an ageing population in Europe. Furthermore, the country typology that was adopted in this study to reflect country-specific conditions for reconciling family life and work – such as institutional settings, labour market structures, living standards and cultural factors – is in line with the recommendation for future research that 'work–life balance should be analysed separately in terms of different institutional arrangements across Europe' (Wallace, Pichler and Hayes, 2007, p. 59). The approach taken in this analysis has demonstrated that cross-country differences in conditions for reconciling work and family cannot be ignored if progress is to be made in reconciliation policies.

To assess what family life looks like across Europe and how family responsibilities are combined with work in the context of monitoring quality of life, 'living as a family' (Hantrais, 2006) and paid work have been examined as two interacting life activities which jointly affect life satisfaction. Since labour market participation has been considered in terms of combining work and family, this is referred to as 'work–family arrangements'. The added value of the analyses has been to highlight different aspects of family life and work arrangements across the EU countries under examination by referring to objective (for example, based on household structures, labour market status, income and time allocation) and subjective measures, both of which are analysed within country-specific conditions for reconciling work and family life. Moreover, the study has focused on two important dimensions of reconciliation processes: common trends and diversity across Europe. These refer not only to family-

related behaviours, reflected in household living arrangements and the allocation of time between work and household duties, but also to labour force participation rates according to gender, as well as employment patterns by family status. These two dimensions have important policy implications: common trends determine main policy goals, while their diversity calls for policy measures to be tailored accordingly.

Facilitating living arrangements across Europe

As expected, family life patterns observed in the EU are different from those in the CC3, especially in terms of household structures, living arrangements of young people and time allocation within the household. Household living arrangements reflect both dimensions of family-related behaviours – the overall trend of household structures is towards smaller households, which are constituted by members of a nuclear family. This, in turn, is controlled by changes when adult children leave the parental home, marriage and fertility behaviour, migration and mortality. Living as a couple with children and other household members is considerably more frequent in the NMS12 and especially in the CC3, for both men and women, than in the EU15.

The most remarkable differences in household living arrangements across countries concern people aged 18–34 years and 65 years and older. Household structures of people aged 50–64 years are also diverse and are strongly influenced by their children's propensity to leave the parental home. The general picture is consistent with relevant findings from both population census data and survey data (Philipov, 2006; Billari, 2005 and 2006; Sobotka and Toulemon, 2008; Saraceno et al, 2005; Saraceno, 2008a).

Household living arrangements of young adults, determined mainly by patterns of leaving the parental home and their propensity to start a union with someone and to have a child, illustrate three patterns: the late exit pattern; the early exit pattern; and a third pattern referred to as 'partnering in a parental household' (Saraceno et al, 2005). These patterns show different forms of exchange and support across families and social networks, as well as different options available for young people. The EQLS 2007 data illustrate some changes in these patterns compared with the 2003 survey (Saraceno et al, 2005). Partnering in a parental household was observed among people in more countries than in 2003 as shifts occurred from both EU Member State groups – the late exit pattern, as in Estonia, Hungary and Poland, and the early exit pattern, as in Austria, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands. In addition, this pattern seems to increasingly cover young adults who live in a couple without children. Overall, young adults in the NMS12 more often live in the parental house than those in the EU15, and mostly young men live with their parents (41% in the EU15 compared with 47% in the NMS12). The situation of young women is less uniform across the countries under examination: in the EU15, they live either with their parents or in a nuclear family with children (together almost 60% of survey participants), while in the NMS12 they more often live in the parental home (37%) than with a partner and children (28%).

These different patterns of transition to adulthood clearly reflect the various options available to young people to start their own household, form a union with a partner and decide about having children. These options are driven at macro level (welfare regimes, institutional settings, labour market, housing and family policies) and at micro level (historically rooted long-term cultural differences in marital behaviour and ideational social changes – that is, how ideas can cause change). In general, it might be considered whether these changes support people in starting their own family life. In countries where the transition to adulthood, especially to enter employment, is difficult, leaving the parental home and starting a partnership is frequently postponed (Saraceno et al, 2005 and 2008a; Billari, 2004 and

2006; Sobotka and Toulemon, 2008). The results of this study show, consistent with the findings of the EQLS 2003, that employment positively contributes to independent living among young adults, either alone or in a couple. Employment seems to be increasingly considered as a precondition for parenthood (Kieffer et al, 2005; Matysiak, 2008). Hence, policies that aim to improve job prospects for young adults could facilitate their transition to adulthood, which could positively affect their decisions about having children.

Living as a couple with children is the dominant living arrangement among men and women aged 35–49 years. Proportions range from 65% in the EU15 to 71% in the NMS12 for both genders, and account for 79% of men and 73% of women in the CC3. The proportion of men and women in this category is below 60% in only a few countries – that is, in Germany, Latvia and the UK for both women and men, Ireland for men and Estonia for women. At that stage of life – termed the 'rush hour of life' (Torres et al, 2007, p. 7) – competing demands of parenting and work make balancing work and family life especially challenging. Indeed, these people, and women in particular, are the most burdened by domestic work.

According to various findings (Anderson et al, 2009; Burchell et al, 2007), the country pattern for the working time of women is less uniform than that of men, mostly because women's part-time employment is more widespread. Furthermore, time use at home presents a well-known picture – gender disparities in housework and care responsibilities. Opposite to patterns of paid work by gender, the time spent by women on unpaid work does not differ much across countries contrary to the time spent by men (Aliaga, 2006; Torres et al, 2007; Burchell et al, 2007). Similar findings refer to a frequency of involvement in domestic activities. The smallest gender gap of daily involvement in domestic chores characterises Sweden and the Netherlands – that is, countries with better conditions for work–family balance. The widest gap in this regard is observed in Croatia, Portugal and Greece, where conditions for work–family balance are poor.

The EQLS 2007 results justify the focus on improvements in childcare provision in the policy debates, enhanced by the Lisbon Strategy, moreover because many countries, especially the NMS12, suffer shortages in institutional childcare facilities. Care is a key issue in balancing demands of work and family life. Overall, care consumes a majority of time spent on household activities. Caring for and educating children constitutes a major part of the weekly time spent on domestic activities, while caring for elderly and disabled relatives consumes much less of household time. These results are similar to the findings of the EQLS 2003 (Torres et al, 2007) and the EWCS 2005 (Burchell et al, 2007).

However, in these debates, one cannot ignore increasing imbalances in demand for and supply of care for elderly relatives, which have a strong gender dimension in terms of both care providers and care recipients (Burchell et al, 2007). On the one hand, in most of the EU countries, care of elderly relatives is mainly provided on an informal basis by family members and primarily by women. On the other hand, the majority of men aged 65 years and older live with a partner, while older women more frequently live alone – their proportion ranges from 20% in Turkey to 65% in Norway. In two thirds of the countries surveyed, the proportion of older women living alone exceeds 40%. Care arrangements for elderly relatives are on the policy agenda for two reasons: first, the forecast for the next two decades is that population ageing, along with a rise in the population of the oldest age group aged 75 years and over in particular, will accelerate (European Commission, 2009b and 2008b); and secondly, family resources for care will decrease due to declining fertility rates, migration and increasing employment of women. Therefore, it can be expected that tensions between family and work will increasingly be influenced by elderly care responsibilities. This tension might be especially strong in the central and

eastern European countries due to the estimated acceleration of population ageing in these countries and the higher proportion of women living alone on the one hand, and deeply underdeveloped care services on the other hand.

The recommended improvements in care services for elderly people aim to support family networks in carrying out their care responsibilities. It has been found that despite more complex and fluid interrelations, the family remains the main sphere of sociability and support in Europe. Similar to findings of the EQLS 2003, the majority of people keep direct and indirect contacts at least once a week with family, and more frequently with children than with parents living outside a household. Interactions with children are equally intensive in the EU15 and NMS12, albeit showing a lower level in the former country group than in the latter. The secondary sphere of sociability, such as contacts with friends and neighbours, is slightly more developed in the EU15.

Altogether, redistribution of care in terms of gender, formal or informal arrangements, and diversity of care services constitutes a key issue of reconciliation policies. Besides policy solutions that address imbalances between the demand for care and the resources available to and provided by caregivers, measures to promote care redistribution between women and men within the family structure are also needed. The unequal sharing of care responsibilities by gender is a main driver of gender inequality in unpaid work, which contributes to labour market inequalities experienced by women. The EQLS 2007 shows that there is at least a realistic assessment of contributions to family tasks by gender. Coherently across countries, men report that they do less than their fair share of household duties, while women declare that they do more than their fair share. However, men's opinions vary strongly across countries, while women show a more uniform pattern.

Adjusting work arrangements to family life

Another important issue is work arrangements, considered from the work–family balance perspective. Subjective and objective indicators of employment uncertainty show considerable differences in work arrangements in Europe. These are most negative in the NMS12 and CC3. The strongest concerns about possible job loss are noticed in the former socialist countries, as well as Turkey and France. Permanent employment contracts, which reduce the feeling of employment uncertainty, constitute the highest proportion of jobs in the Nordic countries and in some former socialist countries such as Estonia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. However, in the central and eastern European countries, this type of employment contract is not necessarily seen as a job guarantee since people on permanent contracts are more often concerned about their job perspectives than their counterparts in the EU15. Gender segregation between the public and private sectors is higher in the Nordic countries than in the central and eastern European countries and southern European countries.

Wallace, Pichler and Hayes (2007) presented analyses on work–life balance and life satisfaction based on the EQLS 2003. Their results showed considerable diversity in work–life balance across Europe. Work and time pressures tended to lower life satisfaction levels, even if interrelations were weak. One research recommendation was to account for diverse institutional arrangements. The country typology presented in this report does that and goes even further since it also takes into account other components of the reconciliation context, such as labour market structures, gender norms and living standards. Furthermore, both analytical solutions applied in this study – that is, measures used to enhance work–family life balance and the country typology in terms of reconciliation conditions – allow for differences to be revealed in tensions between work and family life associated with country reconciliation regimes, and in strong interdependencies between work–family life balance and life

satisfaction. The results illustrate that reconciliation policies are influential for work–life balance and life satisfaction.

Similar to what was found in the EQLS 2003, longer working hours, job intensity and a higher perceived job uncertainty in the NMS12 and CC3 compared with the EU15 are not supportive of work–family life balance (Fahey et al, 2004). Composite indicators based on time and strain related to reconciling work and family life give a contrasting picture of work–family life balance within Europe, related clearly to the reconciliation regime in a country.

First, difficulties in balancing work and family life and gender gaps increase, from a geographical perspective, while moving from the Nordic countries to the southern European countries and central and eastern European countries – that is, from countries with higher fertility levels and more women in employment to countries with the lowest fertility and women's employment levels. The time-based conflict and strain-based conflict indicators both reveal how distant the central and eastern European countries and CC3 are from the Nordic countries in terms of supporting work–family balance. They also point to different contexts of reconciling these domains of life. In the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries and France, reconciliation between work and family life is much more a question of time shortages since people consider that time spent in paid work competes with time that should be allocated to family and to private life. In the central and eastern European countries (including Bulgaria and Romania) and the CC3, work–family imbalance is usually related to tiredness due to poor working conditions associated with long working hours: thus, pressure from work interferes with family life. Balancing work and family life seems to be easier in German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon countries. However, this relatively comfortable situation may be a result of a lower frequency of dual earners and single mothers who work in these countries. These differences in female economic activity are not only the result of cultural and societal effects, but they also result from a lower availability of support measures for combining work and private life.

Secondly, dissatisfaction related to the amount of time devoted to family life is stronger than dissatisfaction related to time spent working. Also, the composite indicator of strain-based conflict indicates that family life is more adapted to employment requirements than work arrangements to family life. In other words, family life disturbs work less than the other way around. This asymmetry was also found in the EQLS 2003 (Fahey et al, 2004).

Thirdly, work–family life balance depends greatly on the number and age of children in the household. Time pressure is greater as the number of children increases and is particularly high for women with three or more children. Stress and tiredness are also more prominent among parents of young children, creating an overlap between family and professional spheres. Even if caring for elderly relatives is markedly less frequent than caring for children, it is as demanding for those who are involved in such duties daily.

Fourthly, negative working conditions, such as a lack of interest in the job, low work schedule autonomy and high work intensity, generate work–family life tensions, especially when people face job uncertainty or a poor financial situation. Among the good practices that aim to combine work and family life, flexible working time, telework or job sharing are measures which support reconciling work and family life. However, improving working conditions and job security are also crucial elements.

Finally, when controlling for individual and household characteristics, job description and the country reconciliation regime reveal strong gender differences in work–family tensions. That is to say that, in a comparable work situation, women feel more rushed than men and they experience more strain.

Interrelationships between household living arrangements, workloads and the work–family balance indicators under different reconciliation conditions, defined by country groups, are summarised by the regressions run for life satisfaction. This issue has not often been investigated. In one of the few studies where it has been investigated, it has been stated that 'although individuals with family responsibilities, and particularly with young children, perceive the greatest difficulties in reconciling work and family life, these difficulties do not result in linear differences in satisfaction with one's own family life' (Saraceno et al, 2005, p. 43). The results of the current study further confirm this finding – living in a family and especially in a couple with children leads to higher satisfaction with life despite the increased obligations it imposes. The only exception relates to single parents, who show not only lower life satisfaction than full family units but also display lower satisfaction levels than persons without a partner, living alone or with parents.

Contrary to results of the study by Wallace, Pichler and Hayes (2007), work–life balance is found to be an important factor for determining life satisfaction. An excessive workload as a result of either professional or family duties lowers satisfaction with life. Employed people are more satisfied with life than those who are not employed as long as the work–family tensions that they experience are not too strong. Women and men who have reached a positive work–life balance are more satisfied with life than those who perceive their work to be in a time conflict with their family and social life. Life satisfaction is even higher among those who do not experience strain-based conflict. The strong tensions reported by women make life satisfaction of employed women lower than that of women who decided to stay at home. This conclusion holds true for all country clusters in Europe apart from the German-speaking countries.

The likely explanation for this impact on life satisfaction is that better reconciliation between work and family life reduces pressure and anxiety, both of which deteriorate subjective well-being. An imbalanced work–family situation may raise stress and provide for constant nervous tensions that lower one's subjective quality of life. This finding is in line with the study by Greenhaus et al (2003), which showed a negative effect of work imbalance on quality of life and demonstrated that the detrimental effect is due to heightened levels of work-to-family conflict and stress.

Unemployment has the most negative impact on life satisfaction: even those who perceive a strong conflict between family and work tend to be far more satisfied with life than unemployed people. Altogether, employed Europeans enjoy higher life satisfaction than economically inactive Europeans and particularly more so than unemployed people.

Countries that are more supportive in terms of reconciliation of work and family life have more people in employment and higher birth rates – both of which are desired for the EU; moreover their citizens are more satisfied with their life. Hence, the findings presented in this report suggest that improving conditions for reconciling work and family life would result in a better work–family balance and foster both women's employment and fertility increases. Finally, since people perceive their family life to be more adjusted to paid work than the other way around, and since they show more dissatisfaction with family life when having too little time for their family, measures to adjust more working arrangements to the demands of family life, related also to life-course stages, seem to be highly pertinent.

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Annex

Note on methodology

The report presents results for all 31 countries which participated in the second wave of the EQLS in 2007. Where appropriate, results are displayed for all countries separately, although figures are only presented in the report if based on at least 30 survey observations. To highlight any differences between the recently joined Member States (NMS12), the three candidate countries (CC3) and the longer-standing 15 EU Member States (EU15), the following four cross-country averages are provided:

- the EU15 average refers to the former 15 EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK;
- the NMS12 average refers to the 10 countries that joined the EU in May 2004 – Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – and the two countries that joined the EU in January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania;
- the CC3 average refers to those countries that are currently candidates to join the EU at a later date – Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey;
- the EU27 average refers to the 27 EU Member States following the 2007 enlargement, combining the EU15 and NMS12.

All of the averages are population weighted. This means that the averages for the four country groupings reflect the size of the population of individual countries. Therefore, Poland and Romania dominate the cross-country averages for the NMS12, while Turkey dominates the CC3 average. For this reason, the reader should bear in mind that a specific cross-country average is not necessarily shared by the majority of countries in the respective group, since the average reflects the very different population sizes of the respective countries.

The report presents a second country clustering which accounts for country-specific conditions of reconciling work and family life. These conditions refer to types of structural and institutional settings (such as family policy or labour market structures) and gender norms that are perceived to be more or less supportive for work and family life reconciliation. Eight clusters have been distinguished:

- Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden);
- Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) and France;
- Anglo-Saxon countries (Ireland and the UK);
- German-speaking countries (Austria and Germany);
- southern European countries (Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and Malta);
- central and eastern European countries (except Romania and Bulgaria – thus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia);
- Romania and Bulgaria;
- the candidate countries (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey).

Any averages for these clusters are also population weighted.

Models and measurements

Construction of indicators of housework and care

To summarise the domestic and care workload, two types of indicators have been created:

- indicators of the frequency of tasks performed;
- indicators of the quantity of tasks performed (in hours).

Indicators of the frequency of tasks performed are based on the questions about care (Q36_1 about childcare and Q36_3 about care for elderly relatives) and housework (Q36_2).

The indicator of the care workload includes the following items, giving priority to the most frequent type of care (for children or elderly relatives):

- daily care for children or elderly relatives;
- regular care for children or elderly relatives;
- care once or twice a week for children or elderly relatives;
- care less than once a week for children or elderly relatives;
- never.

The total domestic workload indicator was constructed by taking into account both care and housework (Q36_2). The total domestic workload indicator of frequency includes the following items, giving always the priority to the most frequent type of tasks (care or housework):

- daily involvement in care and housework;
- daily involvement in housework only;
- daily involvement in care only;
- regular involvement in at least one task (care or housework);
- once or twice a week involvement in at least one task;
- less than once a week involvement in at least one task;
- never.

Indicators of the quantity (in hours) of tasks performed in care and housework reflect the time spent on domestic activities.

Data on time devoted to housework were carefully checked. To correct the data for some unreliable and missing answers, the imputation procedure was applied. It is briefly presented below.

Some respondents gave extremely high estimates for time spent on childcare or adult care – close to 24 hours for both; for housework, estimates were lower. These types of answers suggest that the understanding of the question was different among respondents. Some people may take into account only active care and some people may also take into account passive care (when the person is sleeping, for instance). In this case (that is, when the number of weekly hours exceeds 98 hours), it has been decided to impute values (this concerns 2% of respondents to question Q37a, only some cases for Q37b and 1% for Q37c). Among their declared class of frequency and according to the distribution of 'normal'

hours by those who declared the same item of frequency, a new random value was assigned to such aberrant answers. This imputation was also applied to non-responses to these questions since their frequency is quite high (14% of 'Don't know' (99) answers for Q37a, 7% for Q37b and 13% for Q37c).

Furthermore, the three items included in Q37 about hours spent on care and housework were not asked to people answering 'less often than once a week' or 'never' to question Q36. However, since a value was required for such answers, it was decided to attribute an amount of zero hours when a respondent answered 'never' and – somewhat arbitrarily – an amount of 0.5 hours to those who answered 'less often than once a week'.

Linear regression models of time spent on unpaid work at home

Linear regression models were run separately for women and men on the sample of all countries included in the EQLS 2007. The dependent variables were: time spent weekly on caring for and educating children (Model 1); time spent weekly on caring for elderly or disabled relatives (Model 2) and total time spent on domestic work (Model 3). The analyses were performed on the revised data about time on unpaid work (after use of the imputation procedure described above).

Independent variables and their corresponding modalities were:

- age (18–24, 25–34, 35–49, 50–64 and 65+ years) – Household grid (B);
- education (at most lower-secondary education; upper-secondary and post-secondary but not third-level education; third-level or higher education; in education) – Q49;
- employment status (employed, unemployed, inactive or housewife) – Household grid (D);
- household living arrangements (living alone; living with parent(s); a couple without children (with and without other family members); a couple with children (with and without other family members); single-parent family (with and without other family members); others) – Household grid (C);
- presence of children aged under 13 years in the household – Household grid (B);
- presence of elderly relatives (aged 70 years or more) among household members – Household grid (B and C);
- family support in housework, with the presence of persons aged 18–69 years among household members – Household grid (B and C);
- family contacts (no or rare family contacts; frequent family contacts) – Q32a–Q32c (frequent family contacts were identified if the respondent had face-to-face contact at least once a week with any relatives);
- perception of financial situation (bad, medium or good) – Q57;
- material transfers (only giving; only receiving; giving and receiving; neither giving nor receiving) – Q62 and Q63;
- country reconciliation regime (Nordic countries, Benelux countries and France, Anglo-Saxon countries, German-speaking countries, southern European countries, central and eastern European countries excluding Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Romania, and CC3).

Table 1A: Estimates of regression models for time spent on unpaid work

	Model 1 Caring for and educating children		Model 2 Caring for elderly and disabled relatives		Model 3 Total time of domestic work	
Explanatory variables	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**
Age group (reference category: 18–24 years)						
25–34 years	2.38***	1.31***	0.57**	-0.01	0.54	1.55***
35–49 years	2.97***	2.13***	1.6***	0.6***	1.3***	2.03***
50–64 years	-4.12***	0.55	1.65***	0.89***	-4.34***	-0.06
65 years and over	-9.74***	-1.58***	0.29	0.49**	-10.97***	-3.05***
Education (reference category: at most lower secondary)						
In education	-7.52***	-0.33	-0.75**	0.02	-15.99***	-2.71***
Upper and post secondary	-0.17	0.2	-0.23*	0.04	-0.95**	0.99***
Third level or higher	-0.16	0.44*	-0.4**	-0.06	-3.11***	1.36***
Employment status (reference category: employed)						
Unemployed	2.18***	0.53	0.26	0.21	7.63***	3.98***
Inactive	3.45***	-0.51	0.69***	0.57***	9.46***	3.9***
Housewife			1.03***			
Living arrangements (reference category: living alone)						
Living with parent(s)					-0.14	-2.05*
Couple without children					7.75***	-0.48
Couple with children					16.95***	3.44*
Single parent family					12.66***	8.02*
Presence of children (reference category: no children)						
Yes	19.59***	11.45*			16.56***	10.06***
Presence of elderly people (reference category: no)						
Yes			8.69***	4***	10.19***	3.98*
Family support (reference category: no support)						
Yes	-5.66***	-3.26*			-7.37***	-3.9***
Family contacts (reference category: no or rare)						
Frequent			0.68***	0.38***		
Financial situation (reference category: good)						
Medium	0.21	-0.55***	-0.23*	-0.26***	0.34	-0.71***
Bad	1.09***	-0.02	0.35**	-0.18	2.51***	0.69*
Material transfers (reference category: only giving)						
Only receiving			-0.34	0.22		
Giving and receiving			0.52*	0.49**		
Neither giving nor receiving			-0.54***	0.03		
Country reconciliation regime (reference category: southern European countries)						
Nordic countries	-0.04	0.55	-1.17***	-0.22	-3.38***	3.05***
Benelux countries and France	-1.17***	-0.45	-1.35***	0.13	-4.75***	0.76*
German-speaking countries	0.82**	0	-0.99***	-0.22*	0.32	1.91***
Anglo-Saxon countries	-1.01**	-0.73**	-0.07	1.25***	-1.83***	4.34***
Central and eastern European countries	0.98**	1.34***	0.73***	0.26*	-0.16	3.6***
Bulgaria and Romania	-0.77	0.14	-1.47***	0.12	-4.1***	2.78***
Candidate countries	-3.7***	-4.3***	-1.56***	0.02	-5.86***	-4.95***
N	18,137	16,991	18,123	16,909	18,020	16,840
R-squared adjusted	0.3554	0.247	0.0844	0.0417	0.3357	0.1871

Notes: * Significant at 0.1 level. ** Significant at 0.05 level. *** Significant at 0.01 level.
Source: EQLS 2007

Multinomial logit models of time-based conflict and strain-based conflict

The multinomial logit model was performed on a sample of working people. The first model estimates the relative risk of experiencing time conflict, being unsatisfied regarding family time and not feeling time pressure relative to that of being unsatisfied regarding working time. The second model estimates the relative risk of experiencing pressure at work and at home, pressure at work or at home, and no pressure relative to that of facing weak pressure.

The analysis was conducted for the EU27 Member States, Norway and the CC3.

In both regression models, the variables introduced to control for the structural effects were:

- age (18–24, 25–34, 35–49, 50–64 and 65+ years) – Household grid (B);
- gender;
- household living arrangements (living alone; living with parents; couple without children; couple with children; single parent family; others) – Household grid (C);
- educational level (at most lower-secondary education; upper-secondary and post-secondary but not third-level education; third-level or higher education; in education) – Q49;
- socio-occupational category (self-employed; manager, professional or supervisor; employed position; manual worker) – Q2;
- ownership status of employer (public; private; other) – Q5;
- type of employment contract (permanent; not permanent or no contract) – Q4;
- perception of work uncertainty (uncertain job situation or not) – Q9;
- working conditions (bad work condition, work intensity and job interest) – Q10d, Q10f and Q10g;
- number of hours of paid work – Q6;
- number of hours of unpaid work – Q37;
- perception of financial situation (bad, medium or good) – Q57;
- country reconciliation regime (Nordic countries, Benelux countries and France, Anglo-Saxon countries, German-speaking countries, southern European countries, central and eastern European countries excluding Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Romania, CC3).

Additional models were estimated on a sample of men and women respectively: on a sample of parents (independent variables related to the age of the youngest child, the number of children and the partner's employment status are added) and on a sample of single parents (independent variables related to the age of the youngest child and the number of children are added).

Table 2A: Effect of household living arrangements on work–family tension: time-based conflict and strain-based conflict indices

	Time-based conflict (reference category: dissatisfaction time at work)						Strain-based conflict (reference category: weak pressure)					
	Time conflict		Dissatisfaction time for family and other social fulfilment		Time balance		Pressure work and home		Pressure work or home		No pressure	
	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat
Household living arrangement												
Living alone (reference category)	1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000	
Living with parent(s)	0.797*	-1.67	0.889	-0.95	0.919	-0.66	0.757**	-2.08	0.860*	-1.77	1.201	1.33
Couple without children	1.161	1.44	1.150	1.45	1.022	0.21	0.949	-0.51	0.934	-1.1	0.802**	-2.14
Couple with children	1.383***	3.22	1.358***	3.26	1.001	0.01	0.911	-0.96	0.944	-0.94	0.738***	-2.95
Single parent family	1.344*	1.93	1.217	1.38	1.043	0.28	1.193	1.30	1.122	1.27	1.021	0.13
Others	1.038	0.2	1.027	0.15	0.915	-0.49	1.087	0.47	1.010	0.08	0.595**	-2.35

Notes: Other covariates: gender, education level, age, occupation, ownership status of business, type of employment contract, perception of job uncertainty, working conditions (work intensity and interest), number of hours of paid work, number of hours of domestic work, perception of financial situation and area of residence.
* Significant at 0.1 level. ** Significant at 0.05 level. *** Significant at 0.01 level.
N = 16,231.
Source: EQLS 2007

Table 3A: Effect of reconciliation classification on work–family tension: time-based conflict and strain-based conflict indices

	Time-based conflict						Strain-based conflict					
	Time conflict		Dissatisfaction time for family and other social fulfilment		Time balance		Pressure at work and at home		Pressure at work or at home		No pressure	
	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat	Odds-ratio	T-stat
Reconciliation regime												
Nordic countries	1.329*	1.84	1.582***	3.18	0.773*	-1.70	0.374***	-6.50	0.846*	-1.91	0.348***	-7.5
Benelux countries and France	0.869	-0.93	1.252	1.63	0.836	-1.25	0.571***	-3.97	0.929	-0.83	0.914	-0.73
German-speaking countries	0.649***	-2.79	0,728**	-2.23	0.775*	-1.75	0.746**	-2.04	0.831**	-1.97	0.625***	-3.37
Anglo-Saxon countries (reference category)	1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000		1.000	
Southern European countries	0.845	-1.19	1.124	0.89	0.913	-0.67	0.845	-1.31	1.057	0.64	0.454***	-5.95
Central and eastern European countries	0.864	-1.05	1.183	1.3	1.123	0.87	0.905	-0.8	1.036	0.42	0.627***	-3.7
Bulgaria and Romania	0.461***	-4.46	0.678***	-2.45***	0.472***	-4.37	1.918***	4.05	1.595***	4.08	0.747	-1.47
Candidate countries	0.561***	-3.58	0.693**	-2.43***	0.527***	-3.99	3.185***	7.78	1.751***	5.00	0.904	-0.57

Notes: Other covariates: gender, education level, age, occupation, ownership status of business, type of employment contract, perception of job uncertainty, working conditions (work intensity and interest), number of hours of paid work, number of hours of domestic work, perception of financial situation and area of residence.
* Significant at 0.1 level. ** Significant at 0.05 level. *** Significant at 0.01 level.
N = 16,231.
Source: EQLS 2007

Ordinal logit model of life satisfaction

The ordinal logit model was performed on a sample of women and men separately. Students, disabled people and pensioners were excluded from the sample. The analysis was conducted for the EU27 Member States, Norway and the CC3. The dependent variable was life satisfaction measured on a 10-point scale (range 1–10) (see Q29). Six specifications of the model were analysed, of which the main one included the following covariates:

- age (18–24, 25–34, 35–49, 50–64 and 65+ years) – Household grid (B);
- education (at most lower-secondary education; upper-secondary and post-secondary but not third-level education; third-level or higher education) – Q49;
- country reconciliation regime (Nordic countries, Benelux countries and France, Anglo-Saxon countries, German-speaking countries, southern European countries, central and eastern European countries excluding Bulgaria and Romania, Bulgaria and Romania, candidate countries),
- perception of financial situation (bad, medium or good) – Q57;
- housing status (homeowner without mortgage, homeowner with mortgage, tenant, rent free) – Q16;
- perception of health condition (good, fair or poor) – Q43;
- frequency of attending religious ceremonies (often, sometimes, rarely or never) – Q22;
- place of residence (countryside, village or small town, town or city) – Q52;
- immigration status (not immigrant, immigrant from EU, North America or Oceania; immigrant from Europe outside EU or from Asia, Latin America or Africa) – Q70;
- index of trust in people and institutions (obtained in the procedure of principal component analysis and later grouped according to a quartile distribution) – Q23 and Q27;
- perception of work uncertainty (certain job situation, uncertain job situation, neither certain nor uncertain job situation) – Q9;
- living arrangement (living alone, living with parents, couple without children, couple with children, single parent, others) – Household grid (C);
- health support (family, others, nobody) – Q35a;
- financial support (family, others, nobody) – Q35e;
- moral support (family, family or others, others, nobody) – Q35b and Q35d;
- work–family conflict, measured interchangeably with the use of two variables:
    - time-based conflict (housewife, unemployed, work–family time conflict, work–family time balance, dissatisfaction with time devoted to work or family (for other reasons than family or work duties) – Q39a–d and Household grid (D),
    - strain-based conflict (housewife, unemployed, pressure at home and at work, pressure at home or at work, weak pressure, no pressure) – Q11a–c and Household grid (D).

Table 4A: Control variable in the models of life satisfaction, odds ratios for the ordered logit regression, EU27 and CC3 (only covariates that were not shown in Chapter 4)

Control variable	Women		Men	
		Standard error		Standard error
Age group				
18–24 years	1		1	
25–34 years	0.88*	(0.06)	0.82**	(0.06)
35–49 years	0.74***	(0.05)	0.73***	(0.06)
50–64 years	0.77***	(0.06)	0.72***	(0.06)
65 years and over	1.08	(0.12)	1.05	(0.19)
Education				
At most lower secondary	1		1	
Upper and post secondary	1.24***	(0.05)	1.15***	(0.06)
Third level	1.31***	(0.07)	1.12*	(0.07)
Perception of financial situation				
Bad	1.81***	(0.07)	2.06***	(0.09)
Medium	1		1	
Good	0.41***	(0.02)	0.32***	(0.02)
Perception of health condition				
Bad	1.77***	(0.07)	1.68***	(0.08)
Medium	1		1	
Good	0.59***	(0.04)	0.64***	(0.07)
Frequency of attending religious ceremonies				
Often	1.40***	(0.07)	1.48***	(0.09)
Sometimes	1.08**	(0.04)	1.04	(0.05)
Rarely	0.87***	(0.04)	1.03	(0.05)
Never	1		1	
Place of residence				
Countryside	0.92	(0.05)	0.95	(0.06)
Village or small town	1		1	
Town	1	(0.04)	0.98	(0.05)
City	0.92**	(0.04)	0.87***	(0.04)
Immigration status				
Not immigrant	1		1	
Immigrant from EU, North America or Oceania	1.03	(0.09)	0.97	(0.1)
Immigrant from Europe outside EU or from Asia, Latin America or Africa	0.92	(0.07)	1.1	(0.11)
Housing status				
Own, without mortgage	1		1	
Own, with mortgage	1.01	(0.05)	1.02	(0.05)
Tenant	0.76***	(0.04)	0.77***	(0.04)
Index of trust in people and institutions				
1st quartile	1		1	
2nd quartile	1.34***	(0.06)	1.36***	(0.07)
3rd quartile	1.77***	(0.09)	1.79***	(0.1)
4th quartile	2.71***	(0.14)	2.61***	(0.16)
N	12,990		9,318	

Note: * Significant at 0.1 level. ** Significant at 0.05 level. *** Significant at 0.01 level.

Source: EQLS 2007

Apart from these specifications, the following were also created:

- a model in which the work–family conflict variable was replaced by a simple variable describing the employment status of the respondent – Household grid (D);
- a model in which the work–family conflict variable was interacted with the country reconciliation regime;
- models in which the living arrangement variable was replaced by three variables describing:
  - number of children (0, 1, 2, 3+) – Q31,
  - age of the youngest child (0–2, 3–5, 6–12 or 13+ years, no children) – Q31 and Household grid (B),
  - partner's employment status (no partner, unemployed partner, inactive partner or employed partner) – Household grid.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Second European Quality of Life Survey: Family life and work

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2010 – VIII, 83 p. – 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-897-0865-4

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4 5 TJ-32-10-243-EN-C

Demographic change and labour market developments impact significantly on the family life and work of Europeans, with far-reaching consequences for the future. The policy approach in this area has in recent years focused on increasing the employment rates of women, finding ways for both men and women to achieve a better work–life balance and, more recently, promoting a rise in birth rates. This report explores the subject of work and family life across Europe, looking at ways to find a better balance between the demands of work and family responsibilities. Based on data from the second European Quality of Life Survey *(EQLS), conducted by Eurofound in 2007, the report analyses tensions between work demands and household and care tasks, against a background of different institutional settings, labour market structures and cultural factors. The findings point to the need for the introduction of measures to adjust working arrangements to the demands of family life, more equal sharing of care responsibilities between men and women, and the improvement of care services for elderly people in order to support family networks in carrying out their care responsibilities.*

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite EU body, whose role is to provide key actors in social policymaking with findings, knowledge and advice drawn from comparative research. Eurofound was established in 1975 by Council Regulation EEC No 1365/75 of 26 May 1975.

Publications Office
Publications.europa.eu

ISBN 978-92-897-0865-4