

**Possibilities of and barriers to the
employment of women on child care leave**

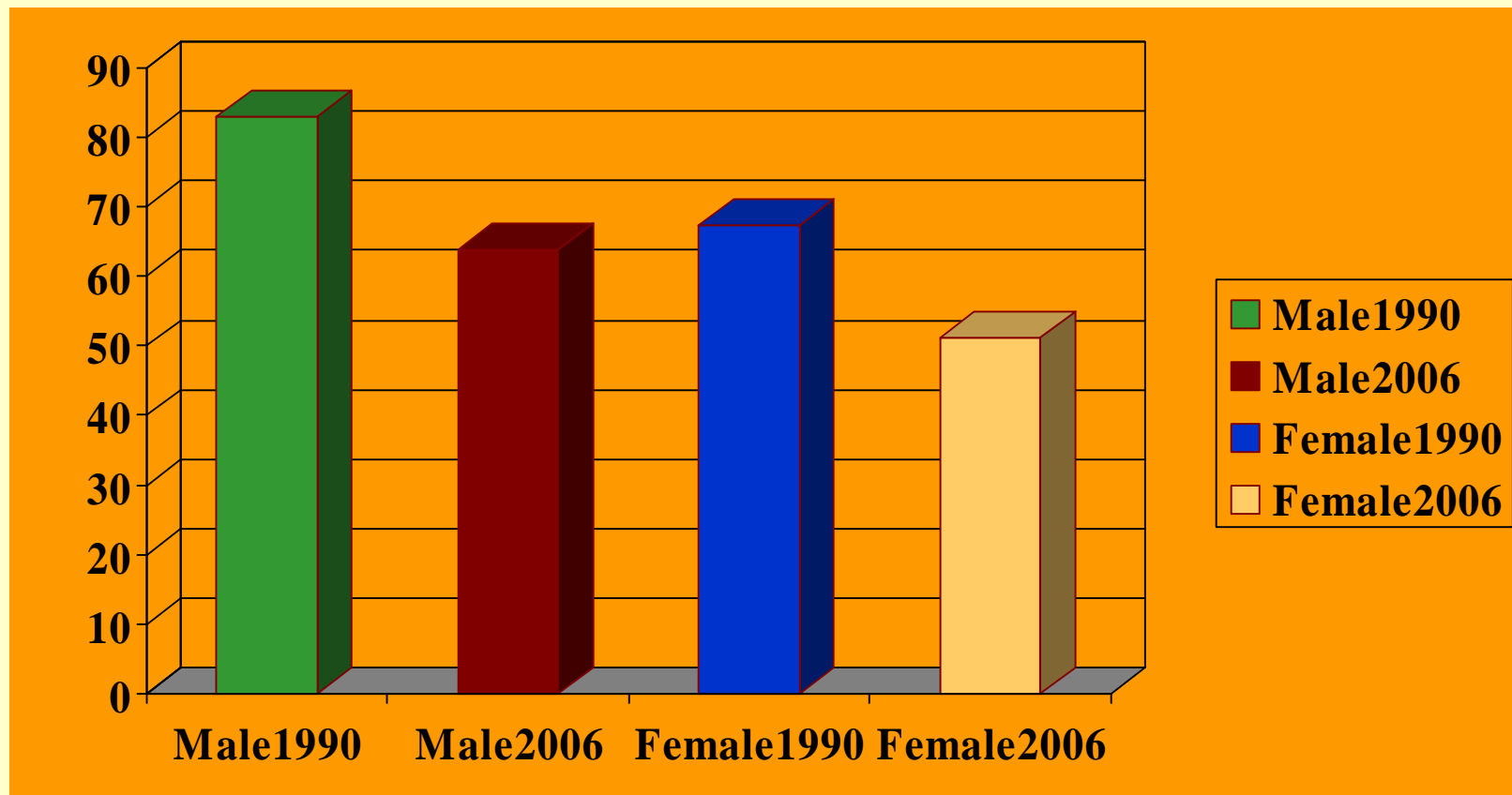
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Women in the Hungarian labour market

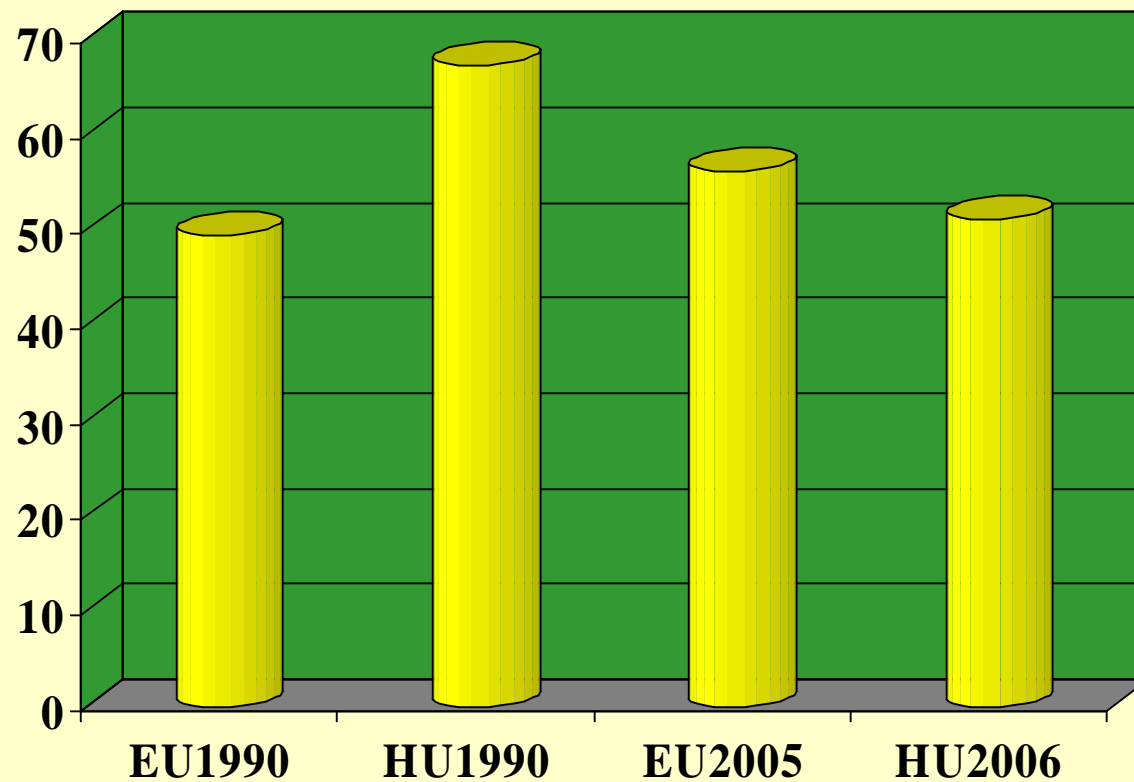
Law female employment as compared

- with the previous labour market position of women,
- with the male employment rates, and
- with the average of the EU Member States

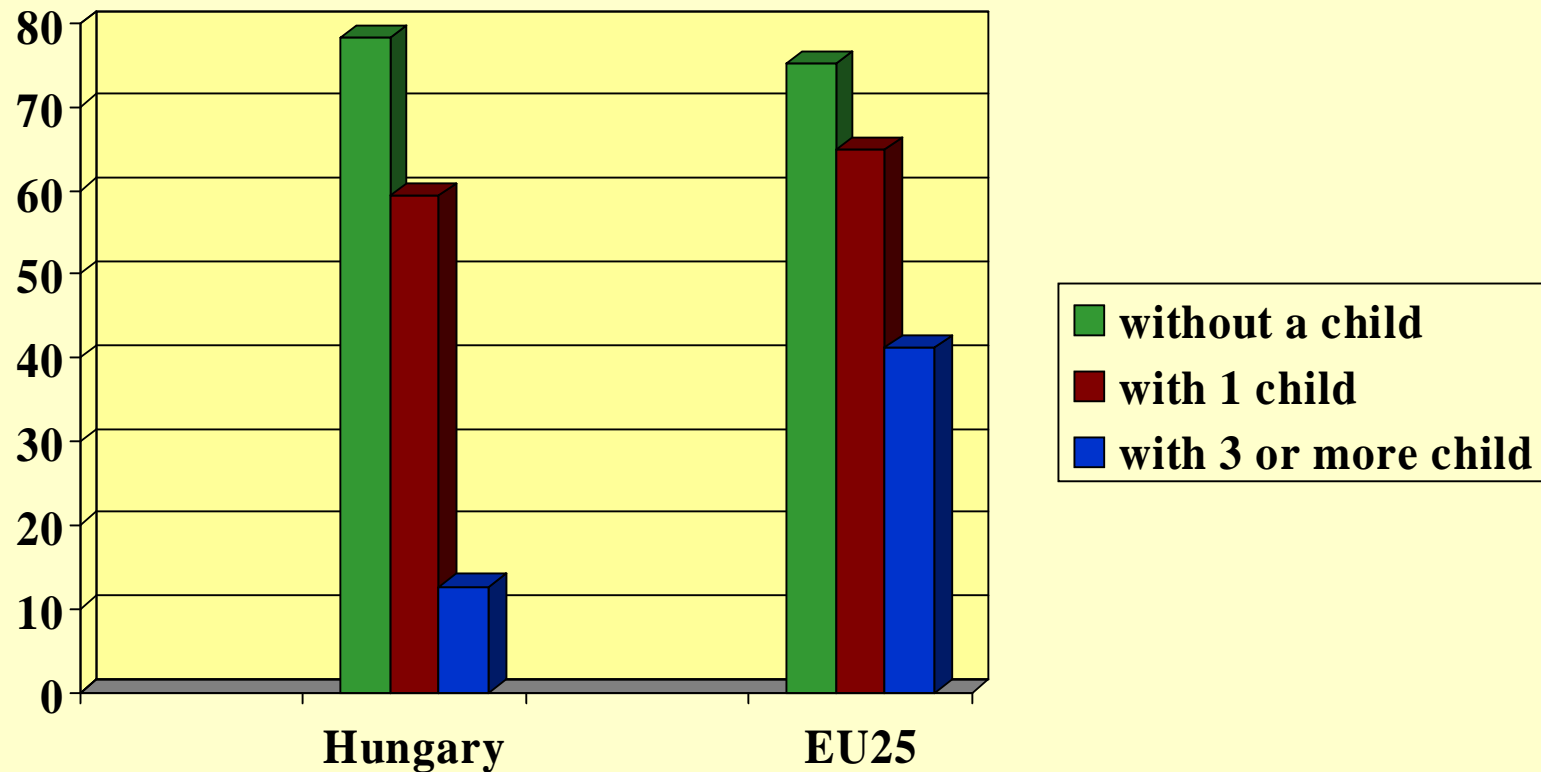
Female and male employment rates, Hungary, 1990-2006



Female employment rates in Hungary and in the European Union, 1990-2006



Employment rate of women aged 20-49 in Hungary and in the EU by the number of children below the age of 12 years, 2003



Reasons for the low employment of women are:

- Based on the long tradition of using the three-year child care leave, the majority of mothers are convinced, that to stay at home during this whole period might be the best for their children.
- However: to return into the labour market is difficult because of
 - job shortage,
 - relatively low public provision of child care facilities, especially for children below the age of 3 years,
 - the prevailing working-time rigidities, in particular the low availability of part-time jobs.

They all constitute a barrier to women's labour market integration and encourage a traditional gender division of labour.

Labour market relations of women on child care leave

- Among that women on child care leave who had a job before giving birth (more than 70% of all beneficiaries), the proportion of those has increased, who are able and want to return to their original employers (2002: 45,3%; 2005: 55,3%).
- This percentage is the highest (2/3) among those receiving gyed, compared to 1/3 and 14% of the beneficiaries of gyes and gyet. (Narrow correlation between the chance to return to the original job and the length of the stay outside the labour market.)

Mothers receiving child care provisions with regard to the possibilities of returning to the labour market

Possibility of return	1993	1995	1999	2002	2005
The employer went out of business	8,6	9,2	10,0	12,3	10,4
The employer is in business but does not want to employ her	34,3	29,8	32,4	32,5	26,2
The employer would employ her but she does not want to go back to the same employer	6,7	8,7	11,2	9,9	8,1
The employer would employ her and she also wants to return	50,4	52,3	46,4	45,3	55,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

- Mothers who said they would not want to return to their original employers after the child care leave explained their responses by several unfavourable conditions relating to employment like:
 - work in shifts,
 - long commuting hours or
 - inconvenient working time schedules.

Return to work by the number of children

- In 1999, 64,8% of women receiving child care provisions wanted to return into the labour market after the child care leave, in 2005: 72%.
- The willingness of women to work declines with the number of children. In 2005, more than 80% of mothers with one or two children wanted to be employed, but only 56,7% of them with 3 children and 1/3 with 4 or more children.

The distribution of women on child care leave with regard to their future ideas and number of children, 2005

Alternatives	1 child	2 ch.	3 ch.	4 and more	Total
Returns to previous job	52,8	46,1	25,4	10,0	39,3
Finds a (new) job	31,8	33,7	30,2	21,0	30,9
Starts up business	1,1	3,1	1,1	2,0	1,8
Possibly forced to receive unemployment provision	1,5	3,2	3,8	10,3	3,5
Asks for type of another child care provisions	6,2	4,8	24,9	31,3	13,1
Stays at home as housewife	6,6	9,1	14,6	25,3	11,4
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

- The proportion of women who prefer to become full-time mothers after the child care leave has decreased. In 2005, less than 10% of mothers with one or two children, 15% with 3, and 25% of 4 and more children wanted to stay at home as housewives.

Barriers to employment

- To return to the labour market is easier for those who do paid work parallel to receive gyes or gyet. Thus, it has always been allowed to have an income earning activity during the period of gyes, but for maximum four hours a day as a monthly average. However, only 7-8% of the beneficiaries have used this possibility.

- 55% of mothers receiving child care provisions would find it hard to reconcile work with family life if they were to be (re-) employed. Most of them because of having no one to look after their children, or to her family reasons.
- Women on child care leave consider the main problem to be the lack of bolcsode, especially in rural areas.
- Even if there are child care facilities, they do not really help women to become employed because their opening hours are not compatible with the working hours of possible jobs.
- The lack of flexible working time and part-time.

New schemes to encourage women to return into the labour market

- Full-time working is allowed parallel to receive child care provision.
- START plus