

# Innovative view on leave policies: The conceptualisation of the quality of the parental and care leave system

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# Family and labour market change have created new social risks

- ✓ The second demographic transition: more individualisation and family diversification (Pfau-Effinger defines 6 coexisting family models)
- ✓ Post-industrial economies have eroded previous employment careers and securities
- ✓ New social risks represent new challenges for welfare states
- ✓ Households with a single breadwinner are facing higher poverty risks



How are childrearing and care addressed in post-industrial societies based on a diversity of family models?

# Towards a '*workcarer*' citizen model? (1)

- The answer discussed here revolves around the formulation of a universal breadwinner and care giver citizen
- with an emerging individual-based social right to care supported by the welfare state by means of leave arrangements and care services (public care systems)
- Parental and care leave enable employed individuals to provide 'semi-formal' care

# Towards a '*workcarer*' citizen model? (2)

- One policy mechanisms for a new gender and intergenerational contract at the basis of what could constitute a European welfare model (Esping-Andersen, 2002).
- Providing de-commodification and supporting family formation while lessening conjugal income dependencies and enhancing a pluralistic approach to care.
- Parental and care leave: a regulatory mechanism between individuals in families, the labour market and the state, shaping new forms of motherhood, fatherhood and caring relations

# Leave for parenting and caring is...

Regulated & limited absence from normal work, providing:

1. **Time and context to care**
  2. **Job protection**
  3. **Economic support** (earnings-related, flat rate payments or tax allowances)
  4. **Social protection**
- ⇒ They constitute a *flexicure* mechanism to deal with life transitions (*transitional labour markets*)... challenged by atypical employment

# Comparative categories of care leave schemes are:

1. Maternity leave (14-18 weeks, well paid)
2. Paternity leave (up to 3 weeks, well paid)
3. Adoption leave (integrating family diversity)
4. Parental leave (full or part-time, earnings-related)
5. Child care leave (full or part-time, low flat rate)
6. Leave to care for a sick child (crucial)
7. Leave to care for a sick or dependent adult relative (urgent or long-term, full or part-time)
8. Wider purposed career-break schemes

# Conceptualisation of the quality of the leave system

1. The coherence and coordination of the various leave schemes and services
2. Affordability and the income-maintenance rationale: towards shorter and better paid leaves
3. The balance between individual and family entitlements
4. Complementary services to support the parent or carer on leave
5. The employer's perspective: the reorganisation of the work and service provision while the person is on leave

# 1. Coherence and coordination of the various leave schemes and services

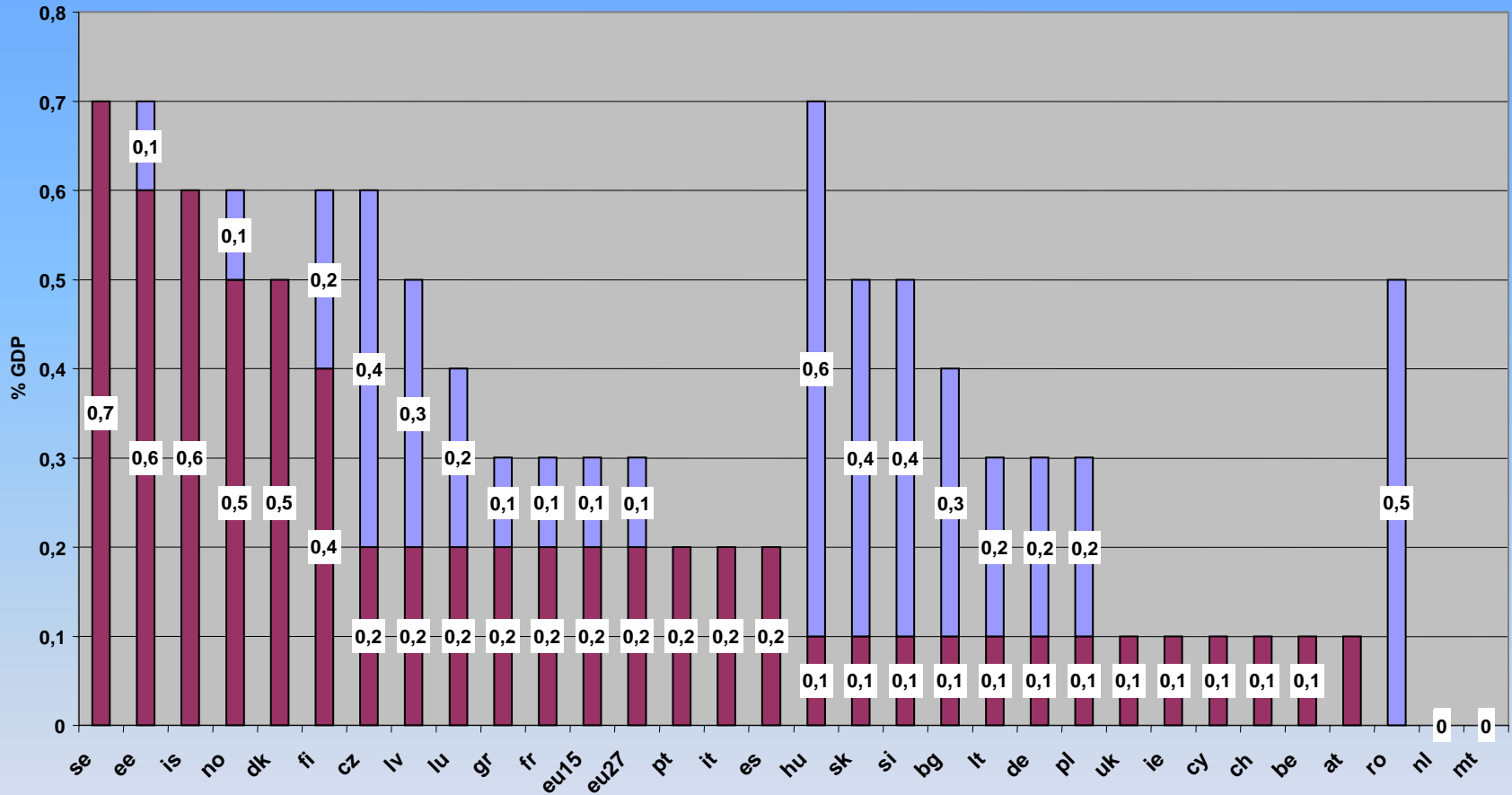
1. To constitute an integrated system that offers a dynamic continuous solution to the very changing situation of families with under 3' or disabled children
2. lessening or avoiding bureaucratic costs
3. articulating the transition from parental home care towards centre-based childcare or early education
4. Measures such as part-time parental leave or a pool of leave days per year (for child illnesses or days of childcare visits) fulfil this purpose
5. As the integration of various leave schemes and allowances into a single and more simply managed scheme



## 2. Affordability and the income-maintenance rationale

1. Leave schemes at the core of the social protection system linked to individual employment careers
2. Flat rate benefits deviating from average wages, often below minimum wages can be considered in periphery grey areas of social protection systems
3. Unpaid and low paid leave schemes are either ineffective, or reinforce social and gender inequalities
4. Social policy trends in the EU favour shorter, more flexible and better paid leave schemes aimed at a more equal use by men and women, complemented by the provision of a publicly supported care service

Chart 3a. Public Expenditure on parental leave schemes in EU27 as % of GDP in 2006



Source: Own production based on ESSPROS data downloaded from the Eurostat website 19/11/2008

**Income maintenance benefit in the event of childbirth**

**Periodic parental leave benefit**

### 3. The balance between individual and family entitlements

1. Individual entitlements to protect motherhood and fatherhood in their own right and to promote equal sharing of parental and care leave (gender equality objective)
2. The carers individualistic approach combined in most countries with family defined entitlements from a child or dependent perspective, in principle encompassing more choice and diversity of family/household situations (lone parenthood, difficult health or employment situations, social cohesion...)
3. This second rationale can justify flat rate benefits based on citizenship

# Complementary services to support the parent or carer on leave

1. To promote positive experiences in the initial phase of acquisition of parental or caring competences
2. The traditional family networks that provided such support are not always available nor effective
3. Spaces to promote socialisation, guidance and mutual learning for mothers and fathers, or carers, on leave (breastfeeding, infant massage or play) under the umbrella of social or health services or voluntary groups, or childcare system, parental participation in boards...)
4. Respite or home help services, and mutual help groups in relation to specific illnesses, providing counselling, help and training

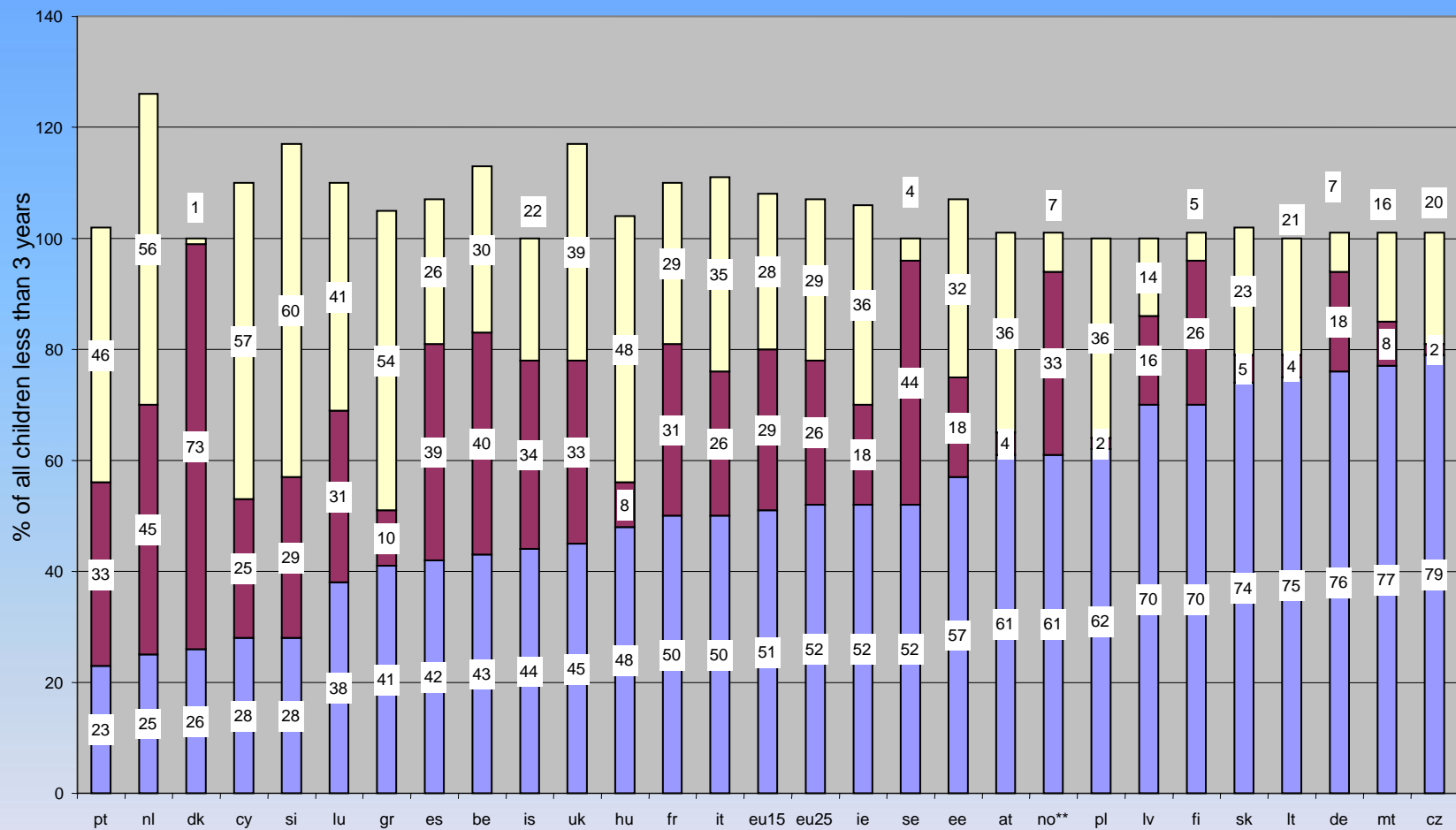
# The employer's perspective

1. Supporting the reorganisation of the work and service provision while the person is on leave
2. Anticipation and planning, when possible (mutual commitment )
3. Reducing extra monetary costs from the employer's perspectives, promoting hiring and training of substitutes (as a positive resource for the company)
4. The substitution however should overlap a bit before and after the leave (training and reintegration mechanisms)
5. No more costs than the energy devoted to the management or the reorganisation of the work and internal flexibility, which becomes a normal and positive aspect of human resources management

# Proposed indicators on parental leave use and users

1. Infants and toddlers percentage cared by parents (per gender) on protected paid leave (income related or flat rate, PT or FT) per year
2. Average time per child used by mothers and by fathers on leave
3. Father's share: % of total paid leave time used by fathers per year (e.g. 33% IC, 20% SE, 9%NO, 6% DK & FI, NOSOSCO,2007)
4. Percentage of leave users (per gender) attending additional support schemes
5. Public and mandatory expenditure on leave as %GDP or as PPP per child
6. Transition between leave and services: time spent between the end of paid leave and beginning of formal childcare; days of leave per year after the child starts in ECEC.
7. Indicators on subjectively experienced well-being (values and opinion comparative surveys) (Casas)

## Main childcare arrangements for children under 3 years in the EU-27 (plus Iceland & Norway) in 2006



Source: Own production based on Eurostat data from EU-SILC 2006

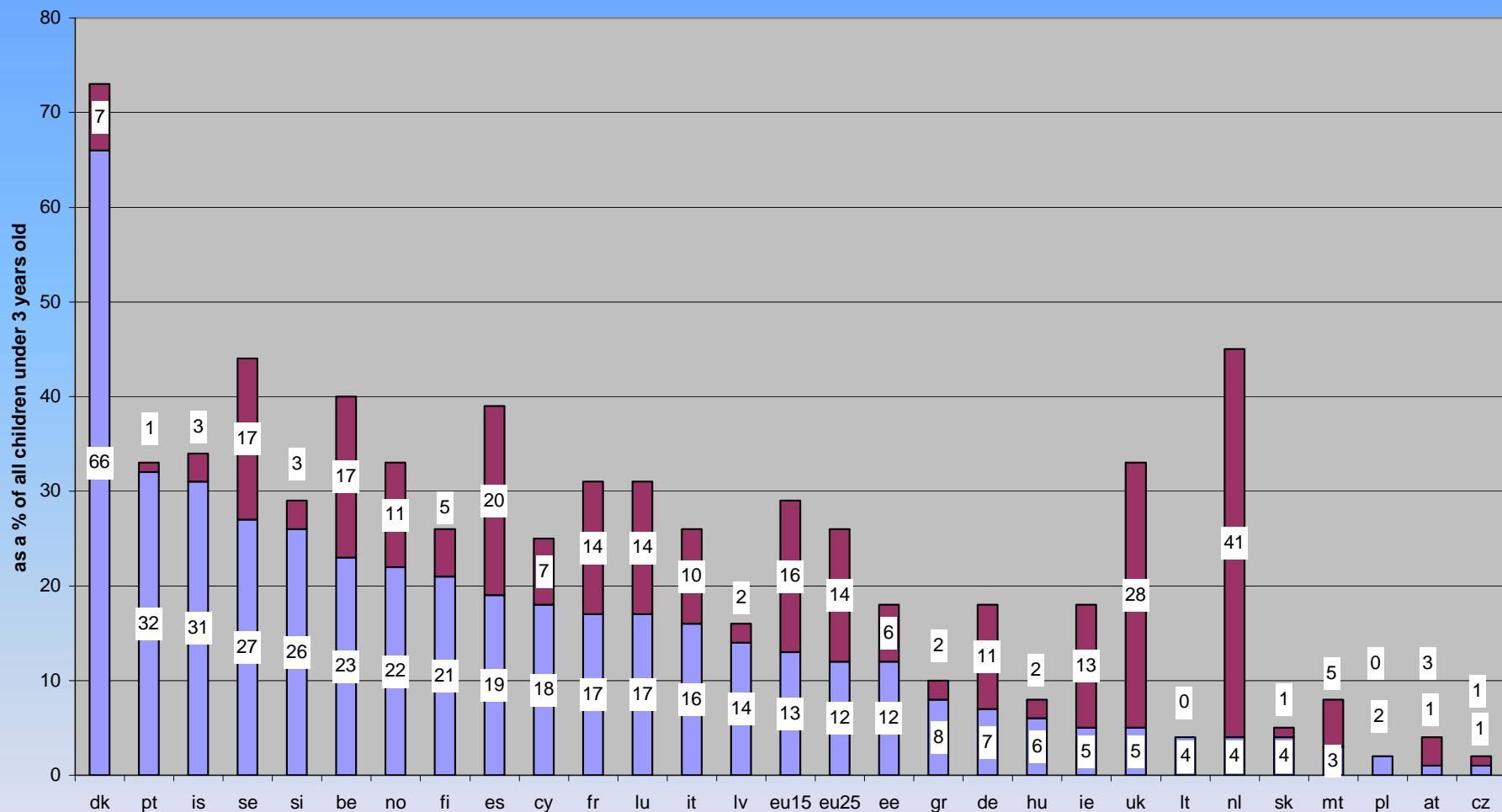
■ % Exclusive parental care 
 ■ % Formal care\* 
 ■ % Other types of childcare

# The potential of the EU-SILC would improve if differentiating...

- Which proportion of exclusive parental care corresponds to maternal or to paternal care?
- Which part corresponds to protected paid leave schemes, to part-time shifting parental arrangements, to female inactivity or to parental unemployment?
- Which proportion of formal care is publicly supported or purely private?
- Which part of informal care is family-based care provided by relatives, which part is provided by formal or informally paid household assistants or individual childminders?



**Chart 4b. Formal early education and care arrangements for children under 3 years old in 2006 in the European Union (EU27 plus Iceland and Norway)**

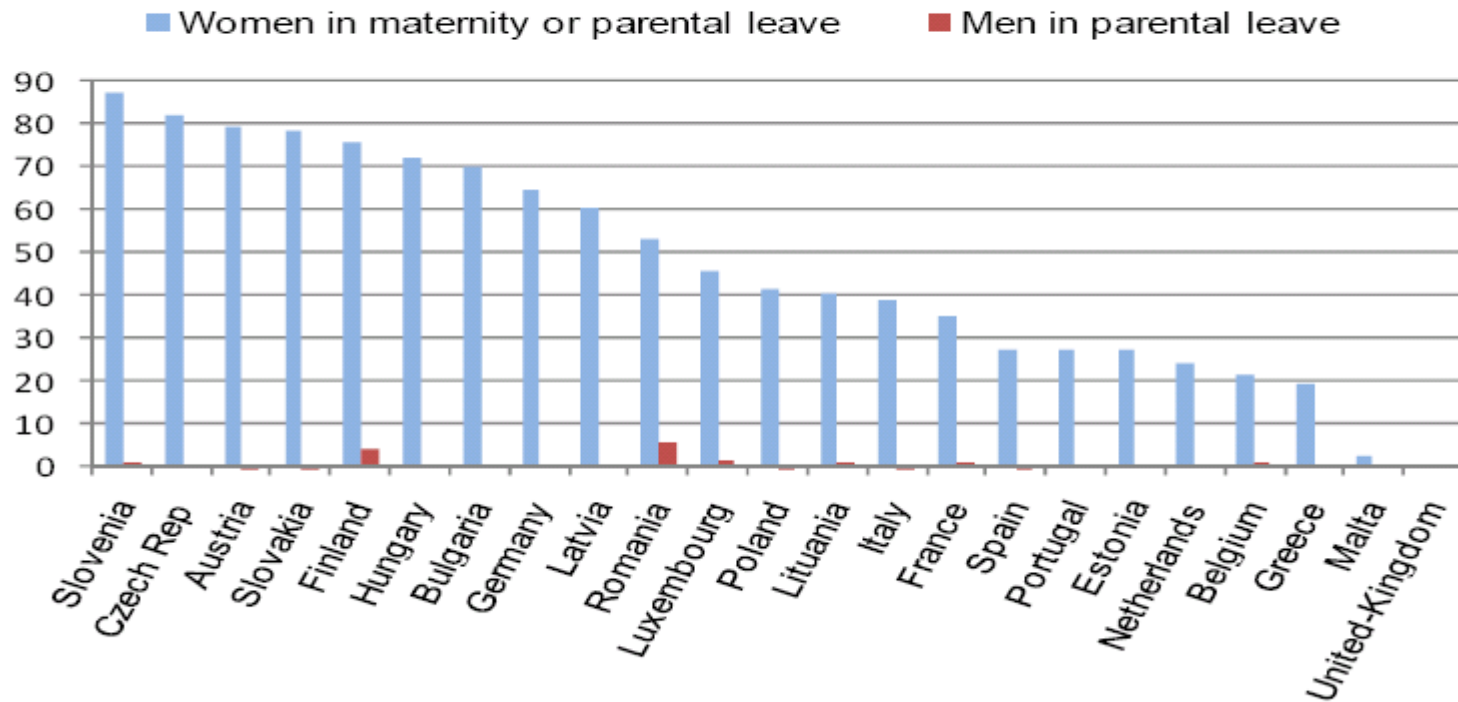


Source: own production based on EU-SILC 2006 data downloaded from the Eurostat website

■ 30 hours or more ■ Between 1 and 29 hours

The potential of the ELFS would improve including childrearing leave users now considered as inactive...

Chart PF8.1: Proportion of employed parents with a child under age 1 on leave.

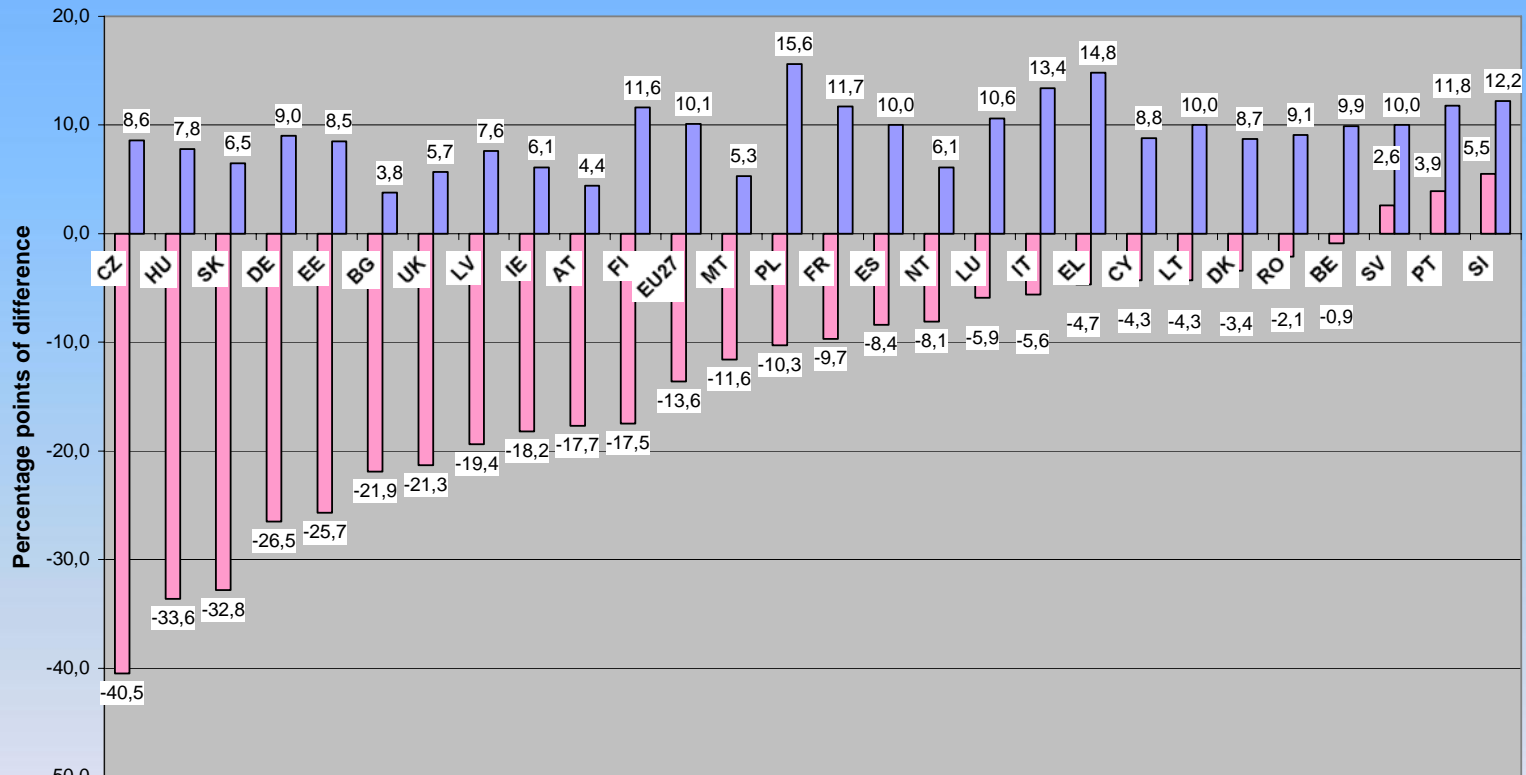


Source: The European Labour Force Survey, 2006.

Source: OECD Family Database, downloaded 30 december 2008

# Chart 8. Employment impact of motherhood and fatherhood in the EU27 in 2006

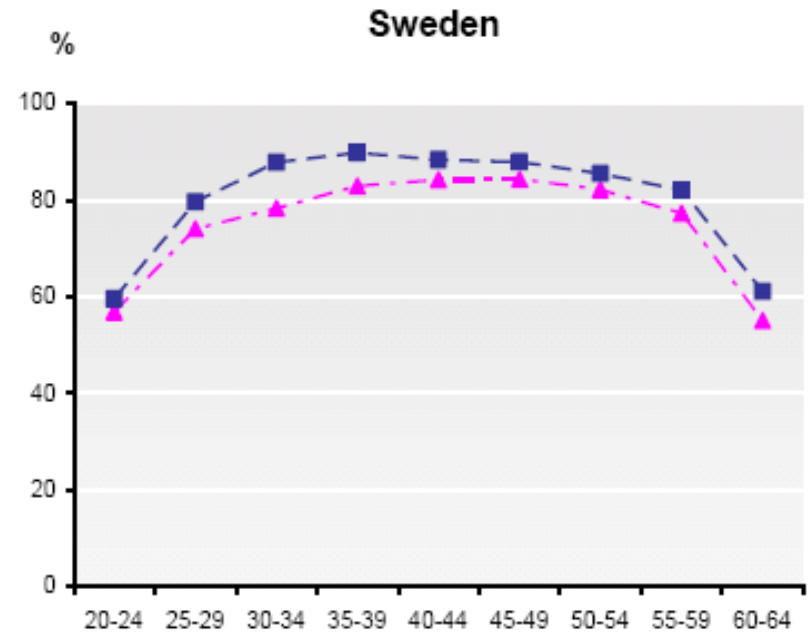
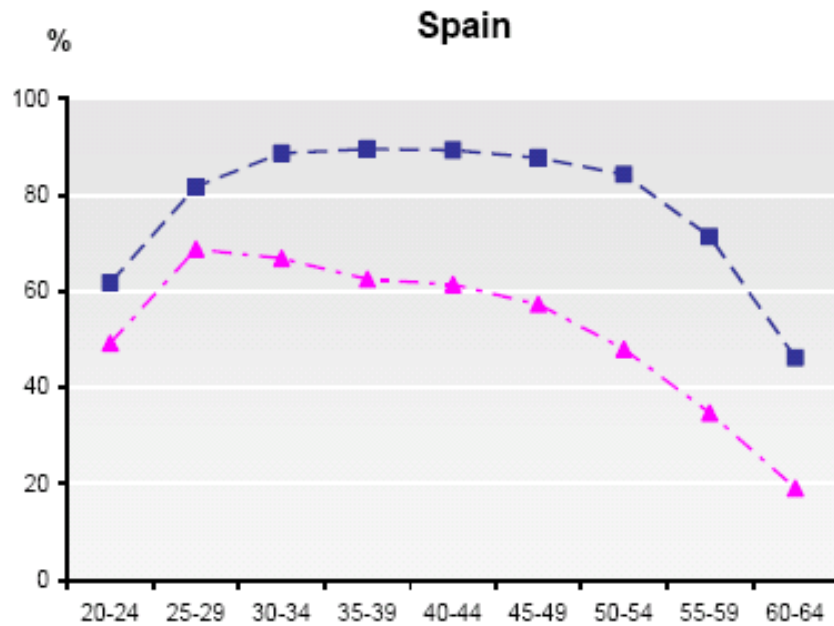
Difference between the employment rate of employees with at least one child under six at home and with no children at home, by gender in EU27 member states



Source: Own production based on EC (2008: 18.A5). The data for Sweden refers to 2005 from a former 2007 edition of the EC Indicators compendium.

Women Men

# Evaluating outcomes and effects: age employment profiles by gender in Spain and Sweden, 2005



Source: OECD Family Database 2007 Chart LMF4.1, based on 2005 Labour Force Survey Statistics data

# General conclusions

1. From the 70's more gender neutral family-related leaves developed in Europe as a key piece of the emerging work and family and welfare arrangement in society
2. Earnings-related and individualised leave arrangements represent a societal option towards constructing a right to care and a universal adult breadwinner-and-caregiver citizen model
3. They may favour a societal work-life balance, where paid and unpaid work are more equally shared amongst women and men, social classes and ethnic groups.
4. Precursor to wider-purposed leaves or other working time policies allowing the management and redistribution of work over the life course.

## General conclusions (2)

5. Connected to temporary life phases, the leave system constitutes a transitional labour market, providing flexicurity to individuals and work organisations.
6. The balance between leaves and services varies across countries: present trends favour shorter, more individualised, better paid leaves, and more services, which fits well into the European Employment Strategy and Social Policy Agenda.