

# **Families, States and Labour Markets**

Institutions, Causes and Consequences of  
Family Policy in Post-War Welfare States



**Tommy Ferrarini**

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Cheltenham, UK • Northampton, MA, USA

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# 1. Introduction: family policy in comparative perspective

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In a not too distant future, if not already at present, most mature welfare democracies will be faced with one of the greatest challenges in the history of the welfare state. Populations are rapidly ageing at the same time as fertility levels have decreased. An increasing number of women in these countries opt for a labour market career before childbearing, in large part reflecting an underlying conflict between work and family. At the same time a general trend towards increasing income inequalities and poverty prevails in many countries, where child poverty recently has been paid closer attention due to the potential adverse consequences for well-being of children as well as for their future labour market prospects. Changing the balance in the family-state-market relationship by increasing gender equality and by increasing the possibilities of women and men to reconcile labour market participation and children through family policy are often pointed out as key ways of influencing such developments, but still little systematic knowledge exists about the long-run causes and consequences of different family policy strategies.

The purpose of this book is to analyse structures, determinants and outcomes of family policy legislation in 18 post-war welfare democracies from a macro-sociological and institutional perspective. A main question is to what extent the motives of different family policy institutions can be linked to childbearing, women's work, child poverty and gender role attitudes. The rationale behind applying this macro-comparative and institutional perspective is to draw the broad contours of family policy legislation, and of its causes and consequences in Western societies rather than to paint a detailed picture of each country's socio-political, demographic and socioeconomic landscape.

Welfare state regimes are often assumed to be important for the shaping of individual well-being. Social policy arrangements are, for example, likely to affect the living conditions, actions, orientations and, in a wider sense, the agency or capabilities of citizens. When legislating social security transfers or services, policymakers modify the bundle of choices available to an individual, and thus to an important extent delineate the range of citizens'

personal agency. Social policy thereby affects agency by changing the 'capabilities' of individuals to choose between different 'achievements', to use the terminology of Sen (1992). As argued by Korpi and Palme (1998) the institutions of the welfare state can here be viewed as 'intervening variables'. The structure of incentives embedded in institutions to a large degree reflects the underlying motives of policymakers and other social actors, actively pursuing particular goals or responding to structural-economic pressures, and these structures of incentives in turn contribute to pattern citizens' choices and actions. Institutions of the welfare state can also be seen as normative orders with the potential to structure preferences, attitudes and world orientations of individuals (see March and Olsen 1989; Sjöberg 2004; Esser 2005). Cross-national differences in social policy legislation may thus be expected to link up with divergent underlying factors driving institutional development as well as with diverse outcomes of different institutions, even if it should be emphasized that social policy institutions can always have both intended and unintended consequences.

The relevance of the welfare state for the relationship between family, state and the labour market has received recognition in comparative welfare state research (see Esping-Andersen 1990). A growing literature has also highlighted the need for a more extensive gender perspective on the state-market-family relationship (for example Hobson 1990; Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1996; O'Connor *et al.* 1999; Palme 1999a). In consequence, the 'searchlight' of welfare state researchers has increasingly been directed towards relatively under-explained domains of welfare states, such as different aspects of family policy transfers and services. The interest in family policy institutions reflects their potential to structure gender inequalities and agency of parents in many ways, a main way being the regulation of female labour force participation and the organization of care work, by structuring poverty risks as well as childbearing decisions, thus affecting the well-being of individual men and women.

For example, the provision of adequate resources to mothers by supporting female employment through public transfers and services has been thought to affect the agency of all mothers. By allowing women to divorce without greater risk of becoming poor, welfare state institutions improve women's bargaining positions within the family and thereby also increase their choice capacities (Hobson 1990; Orloff 1993). Institutions of family policy may also change the agency of fathers in terms of capabilities to participate in care work, or 'fathering' (Bergman and Hobson 2002). However, family policy legislation has frequently worked to sustain more traditional divisions of work by supporting mothers in the role of homemakers (Lewis 1992; Wennemo 1994; Montanari 2000). Cross-national differences in design of such social policy transfers and services have, furthermore, also been related

to the motives and relative strengths of different political actors (Korpi 2000; Ferrarini 2003). This underscores the importance to separate different dimensions of family policy in the analysis of causes and consequences of such policies.

A comparative approach to the study of living conditions, agency and world orientations of individuals can greatly benefit from a focus on institutions. This holds for the sociological classics as well as for most present-day researchers. Even when Weber (1921) applied perspectives emphasizing the purposeful actions of individuals, this approach is more institutionalist than voluntarist. Social institutions affect agency of individuals profoundly, and the main way for agency to change social structures is precisely via such institutions. As Goodin (1996) points out, rational action explanations could greatly benefit from an institutional perspective, in that institutions can be viewed as a link between social structure and agency.

The family policy transfers that are included in the analyses in this book are parental leave benefits directed to mothers, fathers or both parents to facilitate childcare during the early post-natal period, child benefits paid in cash or via the tax system as well as so-called marriage subsidies that are distributed to wage earners with an economically dependent spouse. By disaggregating different aspects of such institutions, we can improve the possibilities to analyse how family policy legislation shapes agency, actions and living conditions of individuals, parents as well as children. For the purpose of these analyses, I have collected new longitudinal data on parental leave institutions that are combined in the analyses with existing data on child benefits and marriage subsidies paid in cash or via the tax system. The book is mainly confined to the period 1950 to 2000, with a particular focus on the latter half of this period, and the following countries are included: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A number of sub-questions are addressed in the book. First, I analyse the development of different family policy strategies during the post-war period and in particular how different welfare states have oriented such institutions towards providing parents with incentives to participate in paid and unpaid work. Family policy transfers are also evaluated against aspects of the broader family policy matrix, including public services such as child and elder care, by the end of the twentieth century. Second, the roles of potential causal factors behind different institutional developments are analysed. Third, I evaluate the links between institutional design of family policy and patterns of parental actions, in the form of female labour force participation and fertility. Fourth, the relationship between family policy and poverty among families with infants is examined. Finally, I study links

between models of family policy and attitudes to women's work as well as perceived problems in reconciling paid and unpaid work. All these questions are explicitly analysed from a comparative perspective.

Several theoretical, methodological and empirical topics of relevance for upcoming analyses are dealt with in this introductory chapter. To start with, the role of different family policy institutions is discussed. Since institutional development is an important theme in the book, theories of institutional change are discussed in the subsequent section. The two following sections examine methodological advantages and problems with the comparative approach as here defined as well as analytical devices to facilitate cross-national comparison by the use of typologies. Thereafter, the models and dimensions of family policy that are to be used throughout the empirical chapters of the study are critically examined. Following this, the enactment of family policy transfers is situated in the broader institutional context of other social insurance programmes. The penultimate section includes a discussion of data and measurement issues of central importance for the empirical studies. Finally, a brief outline of the sub-studies in the upcoming chapters is offered.

## FAMILY POLICY INSTITUTIONS IN WESTERN WELFARE DEMOCRACIES

Without information on the legislative structures of social policies, any attempt to explain why welfare states diverge in structure and outcome is rendered difficult. Early comparative studies of welfare state development mainly analysed aggregate expenditure levels in different social policy areas (see Cutright 1965; Wilensky 1975; Pampel and Williamson 1985). Even if spending levels recently have been disaggregated by programme area (Castles 1998; Huber and Stephens 2000), they still suffer from an institutional deficit since demographic factors and labour market conditions are still likely to influence welfare state expenditure besides social policy legislation in itself. Furthermore, even if we are able to account for such factors, expenditure in itself adds little information on the content and the incentive structures of particular types of legislation. The focus on legislated social rights may therefore be described as a crucial link in the study of causes and consequences of welfare states (Korpi 1989; Esping-Andersen 1990; Palme 1990; Kangas 1991; Carroll 1999).

Extending the analysis to the field of social rights in family policy is motivated for several reasons. First, there is in this area a lack of broad comparative studies oriented towards the integrated and systematic study of both causes and consequences of social policy institutions. Second,

family policy benefits are likely to structure a number of outcomes relevant for gender relations and agency of parents more directly than do other social insurance programmes such as for example sickness insurance and unemployment benefits, also raising questions about different underlying socio-political causes of different institutions' development.

Some aspects of family policy legislation have previously been studied in a systematic comparative, institutional and longitudinal perspective, for example regarding marriage subsidies (Montanari 2000) and child benefits (Wennemo 1994). Paid parental leave has also been the subject of analysis in several comparative studies with a systematic and institutional focus (Kamermaan and Kahn 1991; Sainsbury 1996, 1999; Moss and Deven 1999; Bruning and Plantega 1999; Deven and Moss 2002), and some studies have also extended the analysis of paid parental leave to longer time periods (for example Ruhm 1998). There is, however, a lack of studies that systematically separate different institutional features of paid parental leave and apply a comparative longitudinal perspective simultaneously. If we want to analyse how family policy contributes to shaping the agency of parents, it is, for example, of vital interest to separate earnings-related benefits from flat-rate benefits. Moreover, to analyse institutional change, longitudinal data is necessary. Not only may earnings-related benefits provide larger economic resources to given households, but they are generally also likely to be important in shaping women's incentives to enter the labour market and in encouraging men to participate in unpaid care work when the father is entitled to such benefits. The lack of analyses on parental leave institutions motivates that particular attention is paid to such benefits in the upcoming chapter.

Family policy transfer programmes do naturally not exist in isolation from other parts of social policy systems, but are integrated within a larger social policy context. The relatively generous legislated parental leave benefits in the Nordic countries, for example, coexist with well-developed public childcare services for the youngest, while countries with relatively meagre parental leave provisions also tend to have less developed public services for the youngest individuals. Such overall orientations of social policy have led researchers to label countries as having different gender regimes or family policy models (see Lewis 1992; Sainsbury 1996; Korpi 2000).

The main reason why the development of public services, such as childcare and elder care, have not been studied in a broadly comparative and longitudinal way has to do with a lack of reliable longitudinal information, which may reflect both the complex institutional nature of service provision and a tendency to provide such public services on the local rather than the state level, making comparable statistical information less accessible. This shortage of information means that the longitudinal analyses carried out in

this book have to be mainly confined to the study of family policy transfers. However, analyses of policy interactions between family policy transfers and public services are to be performed for the end of the observation period for which comparable data on such services exist. These analyses may be important for the understanding of how broader family policy models function, and may provide a provisional answer to the question of to what extent family policy transfers may serve as valid indicators for analyses of broader family policy developments. However, this does not mean that an analytical approach to the study of particular family policy transfers is not warranted in itself. Before proceeding to an analysis of policy interactions, more in-depth institutional knowledge about different parts of family policy systems is needed. We have to be more specific about given programme types before generalizing extensively about the wider family policy area.

## INSTITUTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

When attempting to explain potential outcomes of welfare state institutions it is of great interest to know more about their potential underlying causes, since social policy institutions themselves can be seen as a partial reflection of their underlying motives. Goodin (1996) outlines three ways in which social institutions may develop and change over time. First, institutions could evolve by accident without any particular driving force. Second, they may develop through evolution; the types of institutions surviving at the end of a given time period are in some ways supposed to be 'better fitted' to their particular social and economic environment. Third, institutional change may be a product of intentional intervention by purposive agents, individuals as well as organized groups. Goodin (1996: 25) points out that 'any actual instance of social or institutional change is almost certain to involve a combination of all three of these elements'.

Theories on the development of the welfare state, however, rarely state that social policy institutions have come into place by accident, even if they may have unintended consequences. Instead the main explanations are underpinned by evolutionary or rational action ideas. The 'logic of industrialism' perspective sees the institutions of the welfare state as a necessary evolutionary outcome of economic processes of industrialization (Kerr *et al.* 1960; Wilensky 1975, 1976). More recent perspectives on welfare state retrenchment also emphasize the importance of structural economic processes as causes of welfare state change (Castles 2001; Huber and Stephens 2001).

While recognizing the relevance of structural and economic factors, the 'power resources' perspective views welfare state institutions as a product of

distributive conflict between purposeful and goal-oriented social and political actors with different distributions of economic and political power resources (Korpi 1985, 1989; Esping-Andersen 1990). A perspective focused on power relations is not only applicable to analyse class-political conflicts, but has sometimes been applied to analyse female agency and gender dimensions of welfare states, in particular regarding the relationship between organized women's interests and family policy legislation (see Hobson and Lindholm 1997; Huber and Stephens 2000). Such women's interests are, however, also likely to be mediated by other organizations, for example through existing political parties (Sainsbury 1999).

A perspective emphasizing the importance of institutional structures of welfare states may also dynamically complement rational action theories of institutional development. The basic idea is here that the success of implementing new social policy institutions is affected also by prior legacies in welfare state legislation. To different degrees, social policy institutions may embody built-in interests, something which makes certain types of institutions more resistant to change than others (Korpi 2001). Furthermore, the wider institutional setting could structure social policy change. For example, state constitutional structure, by availing constitutional 'veto points' that political opponents of a particular reform can access, is one factor that may raise constraints for the implementation of welfare state institutions (Huber *et al.* 1993, 1997).

## A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

In testing hypotheses derived from theories on welfare state development and outcomes, it is fruitful to use cross-national comparisons, not least since social policy institutions in a particular national context often only undergo limited change, at least over the short to medium term. Most varieties of social scientific inquiry can be said to involve comparisons of some sort, also analyses of individuals in large micro-level data sets. However, the term 'comparative' is typically reserved for studies that include comparisons of macro-units, most often in the form of countries (Ragin 1987). Cross-national comparison often entails use of some kind of a 'quasi-experimental' method when links between institutions and outcomes or between potential causes and institutions are to be explained. A macro-comparative approach to the study of family policy programmes allows for an analysis of different institutional strategies in the provision of economic support to families with children. Combined with a longitudinal perspective, such an approach also enhances the possibilities to study causes and outcomes of programmes of family policy.

Comparative research has a longstanding sociological tradition. Several of sociology's 'founding fathers' employ cross-national and historical comparative analyses to account for social change. Marx (1857) used comparisons of different societies to define different stages in the development of the relations of production and class struggle. Weber (1922) compared the economic ethics of the dominant strata of the five world religions to reach a better understanding of how and why the rational economic ethic of capitalism developed, and he also conducted comparative institutional analyses within law, bureaucracy and politics (Weber 1921). Durkheim defined sociology itself as an intrinsically comparative science. He developed a particular 'comparative method' for the explanation of social phenomena, since traditional experimental scientific method could not be applicable to whole societies. In fact, it is stated in Durkheim's *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895: 157) that this comparative method constitutes sociology in itself if it aspires to account for, and explain, social facts.

Few would agree today with the statement that cross-country comparisons are the only means by which we can explain sociological phenomena and social change. However, it cannot be denied that a comparative approach can give important insights into processes of institutional development and how institutions affect living conditions, actions, attitudes and agency of individuals. The capability to identify and explain institutional diversity and change within different social settings, as well as over time, is perhaps the main strength of a comparative sociological approach, something that holds true as much for the sociological classics as for sociologists studying 'post-industrial' societies (see Esping-Andersen 2000).

There are several reasons why in particular macro-comparative research is potentially valuable when analysing welfare state change and institutional outcomes. Any attempt to explain a national outcome with reference to other societies basically involves comparative inquiry. Ragin (1987: 9) takes an example from a hypothetical investigation that would aim to explain strong class voting in Britain with the fact that it is an industrial society. To state that a particular national outcome is due to a country being 'industrial' presupposes that we can identify other countries that belong to this particular category, and that we can compare them on relevant dimensions with countries that are not industrial.

Even with access to rich quantitative cross-sectional data for a single country, it may be difficult to establish effects of welfare state institutions on behaviour or living conditions of individuals. If we, for example, want to analyse the impact of parental leave or marriage subsidies on female labour force participation, a large random sample of individuals in single countries at a specific point of time may do little to enhance our understanding of the relationships between institutions and outcomes, given that the variation

of particular welfare state's institutions at the time is small or non-existent. A longitudinal approach may be of help, but sometimes welfare state institutions in a given country undergo relatively little change also over rather long time periods. Indeed, it has been pointed out that temporal variation in state-legislated social policy in single-country research often is non-existent (Bäckman 1998; Sjöberg 2000). By conducting analyses spanning over several national institutional settings as well as different time periods we improve our position to test hypotheses about welfare state causes and outcomes.

## TYPOLOGIES OF WELFARE STATES

When comparing countries it is difficult to hold all possible explanatory factors under control, due to the relatively limited number of possible observation units. Approaches by which this problem can be reduced is through a selection of 'most comparable cases' (Lijphart 1975), as well as by the use of typologies (Leibfried 1992; Abrahamsson 1999; Arts and Gelissen 2002). The strategy of most comparable cases implies the selection of countries with variation with respect to independent variables, the effects of which we want to study, but which are relatively similar with respect to 'confounding' variables, thereby strategically reducing the number of potential sources of variation between the cases that are to be compared. The cases included in this study are, for example, all advanced industrial countries with an uninterrupted democratic tradition since the Second World War and a population exceeding one million.

A further method by which the number of different confounding factors can be reduced, and countries can be systematically grouped, is by means of a typology (for a general introduction to typology construction, see Bailey 1994). Typologies in the comparative branch of the social sciences are often constructed on the basis of some kind of more or less explicit 'most comparable cases' assumption, for example by restricting the scope of the typology to highly industrialized democracies. Welfare state typologies order countries into different classes on the basis of more or less explicit criteria, such as the institutional design of political and social policy institutions, labour market outcomes or structures of inequality in the welfare state. The typology thus at the same time ascribes similarities to countries within the same ideal-typical category, as well as positing dissimilarities between groups of countries in different categories. Thereby several sources of variation between cases are reduced. With the increasing interest in cross-national comparison in the past decade, the number of welfare state typologies

has flourished (for a review see for example Abrahamsson 1999; Arts and Gelissen 2002).

Perhaps one of the most influential welfare state typologies is Esping-Andersen's (1990) categorization of three distinct welfare regimes, a typology which modifies and modernizes the original tripartite division introduced by Titmuss (1974). Esping-Andersen uses a set of multidimensional indicators spanning causal factors, welfare state institutions and policy outcomes when arriving at a liberal, a social-democratic and a conservative regime type. This typology has been widely used in comparative welfare state research, but has also been subject to criticism from different theoretical perspectives and has stimulated a large number of innovations in terms of welfare state typologies (Arts and Gelissen 2002).

Castles and Mitchell (1991), for example, criticized Esping-Andersen early on for his handling of means-tested welfare state programmes. When modifying the original indicators to reflect if means-testing was used only to include the poor or to include all but the richest, they found a split in the liberal regime type and thereby arrived at four categories instead of three, including a new 'radical' world of welfare states. This exercise highlights the sensitivity of the typology to the selection of underlying criteria and choices of operationalization. Leibfried (1992) also added a fourth model to Titmuss/Esping-Andersen's tripartite typology, but here the new cluster consists of a 'rudimentary' type of welfare state found in Southern Europe, a part of the world relatively overlooked by previous typology-makers. The scope of the most comparable cases assumption guiding the choice of included countries hereby also may strongly influence the end result.

Korpi and Palme (1998) question the validity of earlier regime-type approaches from a different angle. They argue that by being based on indicators simultaneously reflecting causes, intervening variables as well as outcomes, Esping-Andersen's typology may be useful for descriptive purposes but is less fruitful when the researcher has explanatory ambitions. Instead Korpi and Palme propose the use of purely institutional indicators of central domains of social insurance systems when constructing their typology. Institutional variations thus indexed can then, on one hand, be explained in terms of, for example, political factors, and on the other hand, be causally related to particular outcomes, such as income inequalities. The latter approach thereby seems particularly well suited for the purpose of this book.

From a gender perspective, a number of shortcomings of earlier welfare state typologies have been pointed out. By being based on theoretical criteria that primarily are related to social class and largely leaving out the family, several of the typologies discussed above are claimed to have limited applicability to the explanation of a number of outcomes relevant

for gender relations (Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1996). Attempts to create gender sensitive typologies, however, sometimes seem to share some of the weaknesses of Esping-Andersen's regime types in that causes and effects, policy and potential outcomes, are partly conflated (see Hobson 1994; Sainsbury 1999). This is manifested particularly in that the underlying classification criteria often both include institutions (as causes, or as mediating variables) and the outcomes of interest for study (such as female labour force participation). Thereby, since the explanandum is constitutive of the typology, serious problems can come up in using the typology as an aid for explanations, which can end up being tautological.

For example, in Lewis's (1992) influential concept of male breadwinner regimes, social policies of all existing welfare states are seen as to different degrees approximating a male breadwinner norm, where support is directed to families with a housewife and a full-time male earner. Yet an essential underlying dimension of variation between welfare states in Lewis's typology is also the extent to which women have been recognized as workers. In a similar fashion, Siaroff (1994) mixes up family policy institutions and labour market inequalities in an attempt to modify Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology into more gender sensitive shape.

Sainsbury (1996) points out that the male breadwinner regime concept is one-dimensional and cannot capture the existing patterns of variation between welfare states. She instead proposes a distinction between a male breadwinner model and an individual model of social policy, based on a number of dimensions of social policy, such as whether the dominant familial ideology supports marriage and a strict within-family division of labour, and to what extent units and recipients of benefits are households or individuals. It is held by Sainsbury that the explanatory potential of a typology is increased by a simultaneously institutional and multidimensional approach (see also Bonoli 1997).

An interesting attempt to develop a family policy typology based on the dimension of care has been developed by Linda Haas (2003). This typology to large extent builds on family policy legislation (in particular parental leave and public child care) in European Union countries. In analogy to Leibfried (1992) she finds that Southern European countries fall into the same regime. Even though this typology has an institutional starting point it also seems to merge institutions with outcomes – by, for example, including female labour force participation as criterion for separating different models.

Another relatively recent contribution to the welfare state typology business is Korpi's (2000) gender-sensitive family policy typology.<sup>1</sup> A clear advance for this typology compared to several of its predecessors is that it is explicitly two-dimensional and based only on institutional family policy indicators of direct relevance for the structuring of gender inequalities in

agency. An additional advantage is that Korpi allows countries to score simultaneously on continuous scales on the underlying dimensions. By allowing each country's family policy to vary along different dimensions of policy institutions, diverging causes and consequences of institutional developments can be more easily evaluated within and between countries. Thereby it can more fruitfully be used to explain different socioeconomic and gender relevant outcomes, such as cross-national variation in female labour force participation. The gains of such an approach suggest its usefulness in this study, and therefore a more thorough discussion of the family policy typology and its underlying dimensions is carried out in the upcoming section.

## MODELS OF FAMILY POLICY

In Korpi's family policy typology, as noted characteristics of family policy institutions are arranged along two separate dimensions, depending on whether they support a traditional family (general family support), or whether they support a dual earner family (dual earner support). These types of support are expected to structure the agency of parents in different ways. General family support maintains a family type where the father is the main earner and the mother mainly is expected to see to care work in the family. Dual earner support is more oriented towards extending mothers' capabilities to participate in both labour market careers and in care work at home, and may also provide fathers with incentives to engage in care work. The indicators used include aspects of paid leave, together with the scope of public services to families and other transfers paid in cash or via the tax system.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of these dimensions three different ideal-typical family policy strategies are discerned. Figure 1.1 illustrates the ordering of family policies along the two underlying analytical dimensions.

Welfare states with well-developed support to the traditional family are grouped within a general family support cluster, corresponding to cell A in the figure. Of our countries, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands belonged to this model of family policy by the turn of the twentieth century. Countries with generous dual earner support are grouped as adhering to a dual earner model of family policy, illustrated by cell D in the figure, with Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden having developed such family policies. A market-based family policy model is followed by welfare states with less developed family policies along both dimensions (cell C). Countries with market-oriented family policies include Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

		Dual earner support	
General family support	High	A General family policy model	B Contradictory family policy model
	Low	C Market-oriented family policy model	D Dual earner family policy model
		Low	High

*Figure 1.1 Dimensions and models of family policy. Elaboration from Korpi (2000)*

Korpi's typology builds on the characteristics of family policy in the 1990s, and also to a large extent reflects the underlying goals and strengths of different political tendencies. Welfare states having general family policy models are held to be characterized by strong Christian Democratic incumbency throughout the post-war period. Countries with dual earner models of family policy were dominated by left parties during the same time period, while nations with market-oriented models primarily were governed by secular conservative and/or centrist parties.

As is evident from Figure 1.1, a fourth model of family policy could potentially exist, characterized by the criteria of the top right cell (B). This model is not identified in the original typology, and the cell would correspond to a situation of institutional pluralism, where family policies have high scores on support to both the traditional and the dual earner family. Such a combination of family policy is perhaps best described as contradictory, or pluralistic, since the two dimensions reflect different underlying family ideologies. Highly developed support to the traditional family of course entails a strengthened housewife role, which seems to contradict motives of dual earner family support to enable female labour force participation. Empirically, the broad family policy indicators used by Korpi do not take on values corresponding to clear cases of such a contradictory model. However, three countries did have tendencies in this direction (Korpi 2000).

This neither means that such a model could not come into existence, nor that more specific domains of the current family policy systems could

not inhibit similar conflicting, or mixed, features from arising within them (Ferrarini 2003). It is thus an empirical question whether countries have developed in the direction of such a contradictory family policy model. With the view that the welfare state is an arena for distributive struggle between different social and political actors, both along the lines of class and gender, partly conflicting goals of social policies should perhaps be seen as a residue of changing power balances in such ongoing conflicts. In any case, the empty cell indicates that social policies may not always be homogeneous units where all main policy measures work in the same direction.

The institutional approach is used in two different ways in this study. First, the broad family policy typology is utilized to organize information on separate family policy programmes. Thus the typology may for example be used to analyse how particular aspects of family policy transfers deviate from the broader family policy matrix.<sup>3</sup> Second, the two dimensions underlying the broad typology, general family support and dual earner support, are used as a basis for the construction of agency-relevant indicators of family policy used in empirical analyses.

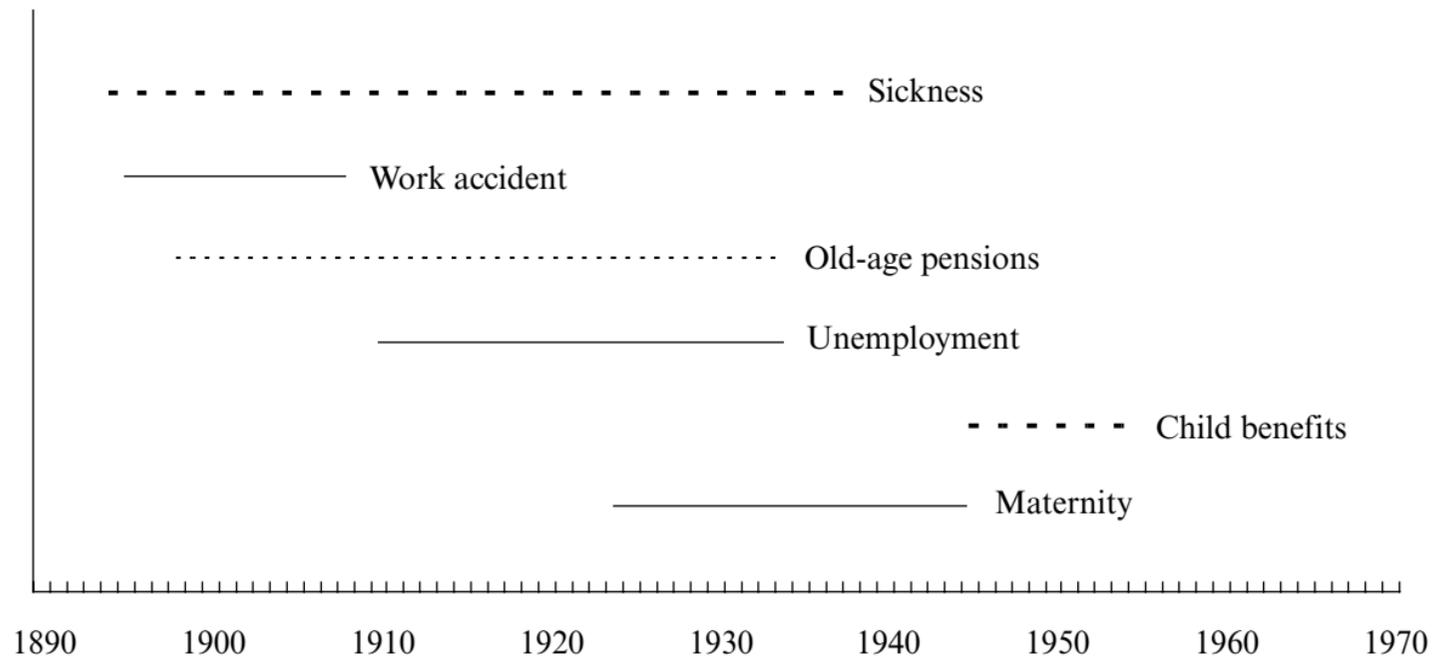
Korpi's institutional typology has not been accepted without criticism (Hobson 2000; Shalev 2000; Shaver 2000; Quadagno 2000; Ferrarini 2003). Shaver (2000), for example, admits that there are advantages to an institutional approach in that analytical clarity is gained, but also states that too narrow an institutional focus may reduce social policy to an overly limited set of policy institutions. Shaver therefore makes a case for not entirely abandoning holistic typologies that capture the broad outlines of institutional and political regularities, within and between welfare state regimes. Of course Shaver has a point in that broad welfare state typologies sometimes may be useful, but to the extent that they are used to explain a particular outcome it is of course necessary that the typology reflect factors that analytically can be related to the outcome. Shalev (2000) has also rightly pointed out that Korpi exclusively uses political parties to explain the development of the family policy models. Even if class-political factors are argued to be important in analyses of welfare state diversity, Shalev (2000) maintains that gender agency ought to be included also as an explanatory factor of family policy institutions. I agree with this argument, even if it should perhaps be underlined that gender-based actors also are likely to operate within and via existing political parties. A working hypothesis in this study is that both gender and class perspectives are needed to explain the expansion of family policy programmes in the advanced welfare democracies.

## ENACTMENT PATTERNS OF SOCIAL POLICY TRANSFERS

How is the development of family policy related to the enactment of other income maintenance programmes? It has in earlier research been shown that universal child benefits developed relatively late in the advanced industrialized countries as compared to other social transfer programmes, such as pensions and social insurance against unemployment, sickness and work accident (Väisänen 1992; Wennemo 1994). Figure 1.2 shows the most typical periods of introduction of six main forms of social transfers for the 18 countries. To exclude extreme values, only the introduction years for benefits between the second and third quartile of the countries are included, implying that the observation period begins when a quarter of the countries have enacted a particular scheme and ends when three-quarters of the countries have enacted the same scheme.

The timing of the enactment of pensions, unemployment, sickness and work accident insurance is sometimes explained by the degree to which major social and political actors contested such institutions. Work accident insurance and sickness insurance both began to develop relatively early. However, while work accident programmes were introduced during a relatively short time span, with the effect that three out of four countries had introduced such programmes by 1913, sickness insurance did not reach the same level of institutionalization in the welfare democracies until almost three decades later. The longer time span of typical sickness insurance enactment has been attributed to a stronger resistance from employers and conservative political parties against reforms directly intervening in labour market relations, while the shorter introduction period of work accident would be due to the less controversial status of these institutions in this respect (Väisänen 1992). The extent of voluntary arrangements in sickness insurance may to some extent also have delayed the introduction of compulsory insurance (Kuhnle 1978). The even later enactment of unemployment insurance could, according to the same line of thought, be due to the potential of such insurance benefits to even more directly affect labour market relations and create economic and political conflicts of interest (Carroll 1999; Wennemo 1994).

While three out of four countries had enacted all four 'core' social insurance programmes before the Second World War, family policy institutions, in terms of maternity insurance and child benefits, were introduced later.<sup>4</sup> Several plausible explanations for the later enactment of these family policy benefits exist. Major political actors may have had less interest in such family policy reforms during this period. Social democratic parties, which after the Second World War showed an interest in expanding universal



Source: Wennemo (1994) and author's calculations

*Figure 1.2 The time period of enactment of the first laws in pensions, unemployment, sickness, work accident, maternity insurance and universal child benefits in 18 countries from the beginning of the second to the end of the third quartile*

child benefits and paid parental leave, in some instances gave higher priority to the development of core social insurance programmes that at the time primarily provided benefits to male workers (Ohlander 1988). Family wage systems had also been implemented in some sectors of early welfare states, providing a subsistence wage to employees with children (Montanari 2000), and possibly decreasing the demand for other types of family benefits.

## DATA AND MEASUREMENT ISSUES

The data used here are based on the Social Citizenship Indicator Programme (SCIP), which is being constructed at the Swedish Institute for Social Research, Stockholm University. The SCIP database comprises institutional information on social rights accruing through old-age pensions, sickness, unemployment, work accident insurance, child benefits as well as marriage subsidies in 18 countries from 1930 to 2000. Existing information in SCIP on child benefits and marriage subsidies are used in this study. To construct measures of different family policy dimensions and analyse how institutions of family policy shape agency and actions of parents, as well as the living conditions of families with young children, I have collected new data on parental leave benefits. Included indicators are estimated net benefit levels, duration and parental eligibility. On the basis of SCIP, net benefit generosity of parental leave benefits has been computed for five main types of parental leave paid to a specified type case family: maternity insurance, dual parental insurance, paternity insurance, maternity grants and childcare leave.

Table 1.1 describes the typical institutional features of the family policy benefits included in the study, as well as their categorization along the two dimensions of family policy discussed above. Maternity insurance programmes are earnings-related and paid to the mother. Dual parental insurance is an earnings-related transfer that can be paid to either parent. Paternity insurance is likewise related to previous earnings, but paid during the immediate post-natal period parallel to maternity insurance.<sup>5</sup> Childcare leave is a flat-rate benefit paid after the termination of parental insurance leave. Child benefits are not confined to parents with newborn children, but are typically paid monthly from the birth of the child and throughout primary school age. Marriage subsidies are benefits paid via the tax system to households with a main wage earner with an economically non-active spouse, while maternity grants are lump-sum payments made in connection with confinement.

The generosity of different benefits is indicated by the use of strategically chosen type case families, whose earnings are based on average production workers' wages in each country, and are estimated net of taxes according to

income tax legislations for each benefit. The chosen households are ideal types and should not be seen as reflecting an average family situation in different countries. Instead the different type cases are chosen primarily to reflect the generosity of the different dimensions of family policy and their tendency to support different family types. For example, when calculating marriage subsidies and child benefits the type case is based on a family with a full-time earner and a non-active spouse to reflect the extent to which such a male breadwinner household is sustained, and the generosity of parental leave benefits is evaluated on the basis of a type case family assumed to have two earners, in order to capture the degree of earnings-relatedness in such systems.

*Table 1.1 Family policy dimension and typical institutional characteristics of different types of family transfers*

Type of benefit	Family support dimension	Typical institutional features
Maternity Insurance	Dual earner support	Earnings-related benefit paid to mother before and after confinement.
Dual parental insurance	Dual earner support	Earnings-related benefit paid to mothers and fathers after confinement, sometimes with partial individual entitlement.
Paternity Insurance	Dual earner support	Earnings-related benefit paid to be used by father in connection with confinement, simultaneously with maternity insurance.
Childcare Leave	General family support	Flat-rate benefit paid after termination of parental insurance benefit.
Child Benefits	General family support	Flat-rate benefit frequently paid throughout primary school-age period
Marriage subsidy	General family support	Tax transfer to wage earner with dependent spouse
Maternity Grant	General family support	Flat-rate and lump-sum payment in connection with confinement.

The combination of existing and new data make possible an institutional analysis of the forms of family policy benefits, together or separately, as well as the construction of indicators of different institutional dimensions of family policy. By being able to measure dual earner support and general family support on continuous scales and allow each country's family policy to vary along both dimensions simultaneously, the possibilities to identify relationships between potential causal factors, institutions and outcomes in statistical analyses are improved. Thereby this approach also allows for family policies to reflect more or less contradictory, or pluralistic, orientations regarding support to given types of family structures.

As discussed above, the development of data over state-legislated social rights in several respects is an advance compared to the use of expenditure levels in important respects. Kangas's (1991) comparison of spending levels and social rights in sickness insurance suggests that different dynamics are at work in the development of expenditure and social rights, and that the variation in political power constellations mainly influence rights development. The level of social rights is not the only determinant of social spending on a particular benefit, but many structural factors such as unemployment levels and the demographic composition of the labour force by age and sex also have an impact on sickness insurance expenditures. Similar problems with expenditure data exist in other parts of social insurance systems (see Palme 1990; Carroll 1999). Regarding, for example, paid parental leave, it can be assumed that factors such as the extent of female employment, unemployment levels and the age structure of the female population probably are likely to have different impacts on spending levels than on the legislation governing such transfers.

The character of the social rights data at disposal here makes it suitable for descriptive analysis over time as well as for quantitative multivariate analysis such as pooled time-series cross-section regressions. The latter sets of methods combine cross-sectional data with time-series data and thereby enhances the potential to simultaneously control for several independent variables in evaluations of causes and outcomes of paid leave development. One drawback with the method is that only one coefficient summarizes the effect of an independent variable in the pooling of observations both over time and space, and that it thereby is assumed that the causal effect is the same across all units of analysis (Shalev 1998). A further potential problem is that data here exists only for every fifth year, which means that changes in legislation occurring between the five years are not precisely accounted for, introducing constraints on available statistical techniques.

On the whole, however, using separate indicators on the development of determinate types of family policy transfers can be expected to improve the possibilities to more extensively uncover structures of welfare states relevant

for living conditions and behaviour of individuals in comparative analyses. Consider the following example. Suppose that a researcher wants to analyse the relationship between family policy and female labour force participation in two types of countries, A and B. In type A countries, family policy transfers have been instituted with the goal to support female paid work, while benefits in countries of type B are paid in support of traditional family patterns. Let us also assume that the different types of transfers actually achieve their original goals, so that country A has high levels and country B has low levels of female labour force participation. Conflating the two types of benefits into a single leave category could lead us to falsely conclude that family policy transfers do not affect female economic activity. A separation of the two types of benefits can help us to uncover this difference.

Several important aspects of family policy transfer systems have been left out of the analysis in this study due to a shortage of reliable longitudinal data. Institutional data have primarily been collected so as to analyse broad strategies of family policy transfers, which means that information on several significant institutional aspects and outcomes of such benefits are lacking. Data on coverage and take-up of family policy benefits in the relevant populations has, for example, not been collected.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the study does not include separate information needed for focusing on family policy legislation and outcomes for particular groups in the population, such as single mothers, ethnic minorities and gay/lesbian couples. Defining such limits of scope does of course not mean that the broader institutional structures of family policy may not have bearings for such population groups, but this is a challenge for future research to accept.

Other types of data are also used in the study. In analyses of family policy transfers and poverty outcomes, for example, income distribution data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) are used. The LIS project provides micro-level income data where income and demographic concepts have been harmonized so as to increase cross-national comparability (Smeeding 2001). The analyses of attitudes use the International Social Survey Programme's (ISSP) comparative attitudinal data from the module 'Family and changing gender roles' collected in 2002 (ISSP 2005). In analyses of the demographic macro-outcomes of family policy transfers, total fertility level data has been collected from the *United Nations Demographic Yearbook* (various years), while data on age-specific levels of female labour force participation is drawn from International Labour Organization's (ILO) *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* (various years). These data have been specifically collected to fit the research questions in this study. The LIS database enables analysis of poverty of families with the youngest children that are most likely to be directly affected by the type of family policy legislation studied here. Female labour force participation has, for example, been collected so as only

women in the prime childbearing ages are included, thus enabling a closer fit between the institutional variables (particular types of family support) and the potential outcome (female economic activity). The following section outlines the main structure of the book.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The following chapters together aim to elucidate the same underlying question: to what extent and in which way do family policy shape agency and well-being of individuals? Chapter 2 consists of an analysis of the institutional development of family policy benefits in the 18 countries from 1950 to 2000, dealing with how such social policy institutions structure incentives and agency of parents with regard to paid and unpaid work. The separate components of benefits are analysed, before I construct two separate dimensions of family policy, reflecting programme extension in favour of general family support or dual earner support. In this chapter these dimensions, that are primarily based on family policy transfers, are also evaluated against aspects of the broader family policy setting – including also public services, for which reliable data mainly exist for the end of the studied period. Chapter 3 evaluates the relationship between economic as well as political determinants on one hand, and the institutional development of family policy dimensions on the other, between 1970 and 2000. Chapter 4 is devoted to simultaneous analyses of the relationship of the different types of family policy on fertility levels and female employment between 1970 and 2000. Chapter 5 examines relationships between the generosity of family policy and poverty among families with young children between 1980 and 2000. Chapter 6 analyses links between models of family policy and attitudes to women's work, as well as perceived problems reconciling work and family life. Each of these chapters thus seeks to bring clarity to specific questions, which separately and taken together aim to generate new answers on central macro-social processes and conditions in advanced welfare states. The seventh and final chapter contains a summary discussion on macro-level links between family policy strategies and different socioeconomic, demographic and attitudinal outcomes, as well as a brief outline of future agendas and challenges for researchers and policymakers.

## NOTES

1. Korpi's typology was originally presented in an article in *Social Politics* where it is combined with Korpi and Palme's (1998) class-based typology to explain patterns of class and gender inequality.

2. The general family support dimension is in the original typology based on indicators reflecting tax benefits to dependent spouses and children, cash child benefits and the extent of childcare facilities for older pre-school children. The dual earner dimension of family support is based on the quality of public childcare available to the youngest children (0–2 years), the extent of social services provided to elderly persons and the generosity of earnings-related parental insurance benefits for mothers as well as the presence of a period of paid leave for fathers (Korpi 2000: 145–6).
3. Even if indicators of family policy benefits are included in the basis of the typology, these are approximate and do not cover more fine-tuned facets of family policy, such as net rates of replacement in parental leave or the presence of childcare leave benefits. It is therefore also of interest to analyse how institutionally refined measures of family policy relate to the broader models of family policy.
4. It would here of course be interesting to analyse the introduction of different family policy transfers and services at a broader scale, such as public childcare and various tax transfers for dependent children and spouse, but information on introduction years does not exist for such programmes. Benefits that entitle fathers to paid parental leave were, furthermore, not introduced until the mid-1970s, and only ten of the 18 countries had introduced some type of parental leave transfer directed to fathers by 2000.
5. The use of the term ‘parental insurance’ in this study does not imply that actuarial or quasi-actuarial principles underlie these benefits, but rather connects to a wider concept of social insurance, with the term connoting contingency-based benefits usually based on a contributions test. For a discussion see, for example, Barr (1993).
6. However, when for example analysing potential impacts of paid parental leave on female labour force participation, the use of coverage of earnings-related components as an explanatory variable would be tautological, as it largely is an outcome of female labour force participation itself.

## 2. Maternal, parental, paternal: development of family policy transfers in post-war welfare democracies

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Welfare state institutions work to redistribute material resources between citizens in different socioeconomic positions and over the individual life cycle. As discussed in the foregoing chapter, such institutions also structure individual agency and citizens' capabilities to choose between varieties of alternative achievements. Welfare state institutions influence the life chances of citizens and affect a wide range of social relations, along the lines of social class as well as in terms of gender. Family policy transfers are important means by which policymakers in different countries have sought to shape gender relations and structure the abilities of mothers and fathers to reconcile family life with paid work. The way welfare states organize family policy institutions thereby also reflects different views and norms of how families and family labour are to be constituted, in particular regarding the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work. Thereby it is also likely that different types of welfare state legislation in this particular area are associated with different family-market-state relationships.

Marriage subsidies is an early instance of a set of welfare state legislation, still operating in many countries, that tends to sustain highly gendered divisions of labour in industrialized societies, mainly by providing tax concessions for a husband with an economically non-active wife (Montanari 2000). Paid parental leave is another prominent case of family policy legislation with considerable potential to affect the capabilities of mothers to engage in paid work on the labour market, as well as the possibilities and/or claims upon fathers to participate in the daily care of young children. By being limited to the mother, the first forms of parental leave benefits primarily supported a traditional division of labour in families, with a female homemaker and a male breadwinner. In the first post-war decades such a strategy met relatively little political resistance, and welfare states during this period may best be described as supportive of the traditional family, characterized by a highly gendered division of work (Lewis 1992;

Sainsbury 1996). The official political consensus in welfare democracies over the ideal gendered division of paid and unpaid work was soon to be more visibly and strongly contested. Beginning in the 1970s, paid parental leave was in several countries extended to also include the father, and thereby made institutional provision for dual earner–dual carer families. But the cross-national variation in parental leave arrangements is still substantial in contemporary welfare states (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Ruhm and Teague 1995; Sainsbury 1996; Bruning and Plantega 1999; Deven and Moss 2002). The formal inclusion of the father as potential carer in parental leave legislation in some instances even appears to circumscribe agency of both parents and decrease gender equality, for example when flat-rate childcare leave benefits are provided to fathers instead of earnings-related benefits (Leira 1998; Morgan and Zippel 2003).

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the institutional development of family policy between 1950 and 2000 in a comparative perspective. The main focus is on aspects of the institutional framework of these social rights that have potential to shape gendered patterns of agency within families. Actual outcomes of family policy legislation, such as female labour market behaviour and child poverty, will be analysed in the upcoming chapters. The role of family policy institutions in the configuration of care work is important since gender inequalities here are likely to impede on any ambitions to increase gender equality in paid work (Lewis 2001; Esping-Andersen 2002). Since the institutional structures and development of child benefits and marriage subsidies have been analysed thoroughly in earlier comparative studies (see Montanari 2000; Wennemo 1994), while parental leave has been less analysed in a systematic longitudinal perspective, this chapter is more devoted to describing the development of the latter type of institutions. I suggest that a disaggregated treatment of the different institutional aspects of paid parental leave must be made for a better understanding of how such programmes historically have been designed to structure agency of parents around the division of paid and unpaid work, and the ability of parents to reconcile paid work and family life.

The body of comparative research on the institutional structures of parental leave benefits has often had a relatively limited time frame of only one or a few years (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Bruning and Plantega 1999; Moss and Deven 1999; Deven and Moss 2002), or on a relatively small number of countries (Leira 1998; Morgan and Zippel 2003). Some comparative studies of paid parental leave have, furthermore, primarily been oriented towards analysing the relationship between total leave and female employment, and have not focused all that much on fathers' eligibility to paid leave for the care of a baby (for example Gornick *et al.* 1996; Ruhm and Teague 1995). There is a lack of systematic and institutional

studies over the historical development of paid parental leave in broader institutional context.

Besides being comparative and covering half a century, this chapter aims at a better understanding of gender structures of family policy by improving available data in three major respects. First, measures of benefit duration of parental leave are refined to assess within-family differences in eligibility. For the purpose of this book it is of crucial importance to separate maternal, paternal and dual parental leave entitlements. In this context it is also necessary to analytically separate compulsory pre-natal leave from post-natal entitlements, since these benefits have different potential gendered impacts. It is, for example, less plausible that pre-natal leave can be directed to the father.

Second, analyses must allow for a separation of replacement levels of different parental leave benefits. Earnings-related parental insurance benefits paid during the time after the child's birth are, for example, likely to have different consequences for parents' decisions about the use of parental leave than what childcare leave benefits have, being paid in low flat-rate amounts in continuation of parental insurance. Furthermore, since many countries have implemented lump-sum maternity grants as complementary or optional strategies in providing economic resources to families with newborn children, such benefits ought to be incorporated into the analysis.

Third, substantial divergence in both institutional structure and in tax liability of different social transfers implies that it is important to estimate benefits net of taxes. Comparisons of the gross (pre-tax) levels of different social security transfers may lead to serious misspecifications of relative volumes of taxable and non-taxable benefits, in cross-country as well as within-country analyses (Ferrarini and Nelson 2003; Nelson 2004).<sup>1</sup> Such tax calculations based on type case families also provide useful information on child benefits and marriage subsidies that are provided via the tax system.

Child benefits, marriage subsidies and parental leave benefits, are of course not the sole family policy programmes that may have an impact on the ability of parents to reconcile work and family life; others include different social services, for example publicly subsidized childcare or care of elderly persons. Family policy transfers and services are all aspects of what has been labelled social care. By the use of this concept it has been emphasized that transfers and services to a certain degree may work as 'functional equivalents', providing different paths towards solving similar problems related to the care of dependent individuals, such as young children (Rostgaard and Fridberg 1998; Rostgaard 2002a).<sup>2</sup>

It is sometimes pointed out that the shifting of reproductive work from the family to other social institutions is an initial requirement for a higher

degree of gender equality in market work, and thereby in the long run entails a more equal sharing of the reproductive work remaining within the family. This is mainly achieved through the mechanism of a changing balance in intra-household bargaining (Korpi 2000; Montanari 2002). Nevertheless, I would argue that particular aspects of family policy transfer systems potentially also may intervene more directly in the intra-household distribution of reproductive work since they may create immediate incentives, or disincentives, for fathers to participate in care work, for example through parental leave benefits or marriage subsidies. Parental leave benefits, for example, intervene in a phase of family life when the identities and roles of the father as well as the mother partly are shaped, or at least to some extent may be reshaped as compared to gender roles previously exercised or envisioned.<sup>3</sup>

Child benefits and marriage subsidies include cash as well as tax transfer components. Paid parental leave is here separated into three main types of nationally legislated social policy transfers that provide economic resources for parental care of a baby: parental insurance leave compensation directed to the mother (maternity insurance), father (paternity insurance) or both parents (dual parental insurance); flat-rate childcare leave benefits paid after the termination of parental insurance transfers; and lump-sum maternity grants paid in connection with the child's birth. These transfers are for the purpose of this book combined to measure adherence to the two family policy dimensions, dual earner support and general family support.

Data over family policy transfers is analysed for every fifth year from 1950 until 2000 for 18 OECD countries. The empirical material on child benefits and marriage subsidies is part of the SCIP (Social Citizenship Indicator Programme) at the Swedish Institute for Social Research, while parental leave benefits have been collected for the purpose of this study. When organizing and describing patterns of institutional variation in family policy, Korpi's (2000) broad typology is applied, a typology originally developed to capture cross-national variation in gendered institutional incentive structures. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the implementation of the typology mainly serves the purpose of structuring different aspects of family policy, but separate family policy transfers are also to be evaluated against the broader background of family policy structures.

The chapter is organized in the following way. In the upcoming section a general discussion of agency-structuring elements of, and actors behind, family benefits is carried out. Thereafter the institutional development of paid parental leave schemes is described with respect to institutional characteristics such as parental eligibility, wage replacement and benefit duration of the respective benefits. The following two sections describe the development of child benefits and marriage subsidies. Thereafter an analysis

of the net generosity of all family benefits is carried out and presented along the two dimensions of family policy. The second-to-last section compares these family policy dimensions with the scope of public family policy services by the end of the century. Finally a concluding discussion is carried out.

## FAMILY POLICY TRANSFERS AND AGENCY OF PARENTS

While the class-oriented comparative tradition primarily analyses the relation between state and market (see Titmuss 1974; Korpi 1980; Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi and Palme 1998), gender-oriented social policy research has more firmly brought the family into the analysis and thereby highlighted gender inequalities in social policy and its consequences for the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work (see Pateman 1988; Hobson 1990; Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1996; O'Connor *et al.* 1999; Montanari 2000). Given that family policies have considerable potential to directly structure agency of parents regarding within-family distributions of unpaid care work as well as that of paid work on the labour market, it has become a central object of analysis in such research. The distinction between paid and unpaid work becomes of vital importance in analyses of gender inequalities because dominant processes of socioeconomic stratification can be held to take place outside the family, on the labour market (Korpi 2000). Individuals that cannot fully participate in paid work, of which many are mothers, may thus be deprived of the material resources and social rights that usually depend on labour market participation (Pateman 1988; Hobson 1990; Lewis 1992).

A growing literature in the area of comparative welfare state research focuses on to what extent and how family policies support female employment, and the policies most recurrently studied in this context are child benefits, parental leave transfers and social services, in particular maternity insurance and public childcare (for example Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Ruhm and Teague 1995; Winegarden and Bracy 1995; Gornick *et al.* 1996; Ruhm 1998). Even if such policies potentially support maternal employment, it has also been emphasized that increased labour market participation for mothers in practice results in a 'double burden' of paid and unpaid work, as long as paternal participation in unpaid work only undergoes small changes when mothers begin or increase paid work. This double responsibility of mothers is likely to preclude maternal labour market participation on equal terms with fathers. Furthermore, long periods of parental leave for mothers alone could lead to precarious labour market positions, in terms of wage penalties,

fragmented careers and more temporary work contracts (Moss and Deven 1999). Such realities further underscore the importance of studying how different institutional elements of family policy arrangements are designed to support more equal gendered divisions of unpaid as well as paid work.

Supporting an economically less active spouse through marriage subsidies primarily works to strengthen traditional gender divisions of labour in families. Such legislation has historically provided direct financing for full-time female homemaking and mothering (Fraser 1994; Montanari 2000). Marriage subsidies are thereby perhaps the family benefits that most unambiguously have worked to uphold more traditional gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work.

Whereas marriage subsidies primarily are distributed to male breadwinners through the tax system, child benefits show larger institutional diversity that partly reflect different underlying motives for their introduction. Child benefits can be provided in flat-rate cash amounts, as universal or employment-based benefits, as well as via tax concessions, as tax allowances or tax credits. Only the first type of child benefit entirely represents the principle of universalism, providing a benefit on the sole criterion of parenthood, while the other types of benefits depend on the labour market activities of recipients. Employment-based benefits and tax transfers have thereby often favoured male breadwinners, while universal cash benefits on the other hand more frequently have been directed to mothers.

Generally, however, child benefits are provided in flat-rate amounts, that on average contribute to less than a tenth of an average net wage for a family with two children in the industrial welfare democracies throughout the post-war period (Wennemo 1994). Even though child benefits sometimes have components that increase women's share of family income the institutional structure of this type of support can be said to be generally neutral to the labour force participation of parents (Korpi 2000), and cannot be considered to actively attempt to change the gender distribution of work. Child benefits have in previous research been shown to generate an income effect in households that works to reduce female labour supply (Jaumotte 2003).

Parental leave benefits constitute one of the most multifaceted types of family policy transfers. The potential of such benefits to structure the labour market-family nexus, *inter alia*, depends on benefit levels and duration of such leave programmes in combination with variations in parental leave entitlement. Programmes of paid leave that do not include the father may certainly support female labour market participation, but do not directly address inequalities in unpaid work. Regarding schemes where fathers are entitled to paid leave, it is also of interest whether entitlements are family-based or individual. Family-based eligibility means that benefits are transferable between parents, which makes the gendered division of unpaid

work into an intra-family decision. Individual eligibility in principle means that any leave entitlement given to one parent cannot be transferred to the other (Moss and Deven 1999).

When analysing agency-structuring elements of parental leave benefits it is, furthermore, not sufficient to compare programmes with respect to single institutional aspects, such as the duration of benefits or the amount of replacement alone. The potential effect of benefit duration on the distribution of paid and unpaid work also depends on the size of the wage and the earnings replaced. Two parental leave benefits with dual parental entitlement and similar duration may, for example, have very different consequences for parental decisions depending on the degree of wage replacement. A low replacement level makes it more economically rational for the parent with the lowest earnings to make use of parental leave. Since the mother for the most part is the parent with the lowest earnings in the family, the most rational economic behaviour at the household level is for mothers to stay at home during the early child-rearing period, at least in the short run (Brocas *et al.* 1990; Leira 1998; Andersson 2005).

Parental leave institutions with benefits that are transferable between parents introduce a bargaining situation, wherein intra-family decisions on how to divide leave of course are not only decided by economic rationality. The rational action of parents is also constrained by prevailing norms concerning gender roles in society, not least among employers, who may be more hesitant to grant leave to fathers than to mothers (see for example Haas 1992). Differences in men's leave uptake has also been partly explained by the existence of workplace-specific norms (Haas *et al.* 2002; Bygren and Duvander 2004).

Comparative research on attitudes towards female labour force participation has shown that the model of family policy implemented in a country is likely to partly structure attitudes to female labour force participation in society at large (Sjöberg 2004). The institutional framework of recognized social rights, and rules governing them, can in themselves also be seen as normative orders which define what is considered morally justifiable for men and women. The following sections discuss different agency-structuring aspects of family legislation, as well as potential actors and motives behind the development of recent family policy developments.

### **Early Family Policy Developments**

During the first half of the twentieth century family policy benefits were frequently legislated with the aim of supporting women in the role as housewife. The development of family policy institutions such as marriage subsidies, child benefits and maternity leave was, besides political parties,

promoted by other actors ranging from employers and trade unions (ILO 1924; Land 1980) to pronatalist interests (Pedersen 1993). In many instances family policy development was also supported by early women's organizations with maternalist agendas (Bock and Thane 1991; Koven and Michel 1995).

The family wage systems that emerged in the early twentieth century were often restricted to particular groups of employees (ILO 1924), but some countries also introduced early general systems of tax concessions for dependent spouses and children (Douglas 1925; Land 1980). From the end of the 1920s an increasing number of countries introduced marriage subsidies, in many instances provided via the tax system, and by the end of the Second World War a majority of the welfare democracies had implemented such benefits (Montanari 2000). In the early post-war period, an increasing number of countries also introduced child benefits, sometimes paid via the tax system but more frequently as cash transfers. Typically such benefits were non-taxable and paid in flat-rate amounts on a citizenship basis, but child benefits in some countries also had a regressive distributive character when distributed via a progressive tax system. The introduction of child benefits can be seen as the realization of demands for a family wage that would suffice for a male worker to maintain a dependent family. While child benefits in several welfare states were paid to the main earner, an increasing number of countries directed such benefits to the mother (Wennemo 1994).

Support to traditional family patterns met little opposition in the early post-war decades but since the 1970s opposition increased against the tax legislation guiding the payment of marriage subsidies, while somewhat greater consensus existed around child benefits (Montanari 2000), something that may have to do with the more gender neutral structure of the latter type of benefit. However, the generosity of both marriage subsidies and child benefits underwent an average gradual increase among the Western welfare democracies until the early to mid-1990s (Wennemo 1994; Montanari 2000).

Lump-sum maternity grants were implemented before maternity insurance benefits in many countries, and have been a common feature of welfare states throughout the post-war period, although many countries have replaced such benefits with earnings-related parental leave (Ferrarini 2003). Maternity grants are often paid as lump-sum transfers upon the birth of a child, or after a number of months preceding confinement. Such benefits have also in many instances been used as a means to influence maternal behaviour in a direction considered desirable, and benefits have for example been accorded upon the agreement of the mother to nurse the child or to attend a health check-up for her and the child (Brocas *et al.* 1990).

Even if early maternity benefits often were promoted by a maternalist agenda, maternity insurance benefits with generous replacement rates and benefit duration are today instead often considered to be supportive of female labour market participation (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Ruhm and Teague 1995; Gornick *et al.* 1996; Leira 1998; Ferrarini 2003). In this perspective, earnings-related maternity insurance is seen as having a large potential to achieve a more equal gendered distribution of paid work. Increased female labour market participation may of course also improve the bargaining position of the mother in intra-family decisions over the distribution of unpaid work (Korpi 2000). Clearly, however, the restriction of parental leave to the mother alone does not directly increase paternal participation in the care of the infant.

Maternity insurance benefits differ in important institutional respects, not only in terms of benefit duration, replacement rates and gendered eligibility criteria, but also regarding the relationship between paid pre- and post-natal leave and the extent to which parental leave can be utilized after confinement. Most contemporary welfare states have instituted a compulsory pre-natal leave period that cannot be made use of after the birth of the child (Brocas *et al.* 1990; Dumon 1991). Pre-natal leave of course serves women's well-being to the extent that future mothers, for example, may not be able to carry out their work tasks during pregnancy due to illness or physically demanding work conditions. But it has been pointed out that compulsory pre-natal leave legislation may decrease maternal choice and even weaken mothers' employment positions. In some countries organized women's interests have therefore worked for greater flexibility in parental leave legislation, so that total parental leave could optionally be utilized after confinement in instances where the mother is able to work during pregnancy (Pal 1985).

The introduction and expansion of maternity insurance benefits in several countries seems to have followed the International Labour Organization's (ILO) recommendations for a minimum of paid leave in connection with childbirth (Cook 1989; Brocas *et al.* 1990). The ILO adopted two Maternity Protection Conventions, the first in 1919 (No. 3) and the second in 1952 (No. 103). The first convention applies to all women employed in industrial and commercial sectors, and calls for 12 weeks of maternity leave to be utilized in two stages before and after confinement. It also recognizes a woman's right to free medical care and the right to breastfeeding of the baby. The second convention and its supplementary recommendations suggest leave of 14 weeks in all, with full wage replacement, six weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth. More extensive medical care and increased measures to safeguard the health of mothers are also recommended (ILO 1952).

## **Entitling Fathers to Paid Parental Leave**

It has been proposed that the gendered conflict between paid 'productive' work and unpaid 'reproductive' work is not fully revealed until the role of the father as carer is recognized in parental leave legislation (Ohlander 1988). Swedish dual parental insurance, implemented in 1974, was the first programme of its kind, and one official motive for the reform was to achieve greater gender equality. The inclusion of both parents in the care of the baby was in the Nordic countries thought to redress within-family imbalances in the distribution of unpaid care work, and to increase possibilities for more equal gendered labour market participation (SOU 1972; Carlsen 1998; Bergman and Hobson 2002). In addition to these motives, it has been argued, the main underlying driving force behind the reform was the need for female labour in the economy (Lewis and Åström 1992; Hirdman 2001).

In no country, however, did the introduction of dual parental insurance entail full individualization of benefit rights – instead such payments were provided on the basis of family entitlement, leaving it up to the parents to choose to what extent the father would participate in the care of the baby (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Moss and Deven 1999). Even if such an arrangement most likely enhances the potential for female labour force participation and male care work, it has been proposed that the optional character of dual parental leave only has resulted in modest changes in actual paternal behaviour (Bruning and Plantega 1999).

The establishment of dual parental insurance was in some countries complemented by paternity insurance benefits, in the form of so-called 'daddy days', with the motive of increasing paternal participation in care of babies. Such benefits enable the father to utilize earnings-related leave simultaneously with the mother during the post-natal maternity insurance period. The benefit is provided as an individual right, but the requirement to utilize leave only jointly with the mother in practice makes the father the 'second carer'. A more imperative design of parental insurance in order to increase the participation of fathers in care work was introduced in the Nordic countries in the 1990s. The implementation of the so-called 'daddy quota' in dual parental insurance meant that a certain duration of earnings-related parental leave was reserved for the father alone. By being non-transferable between parents, such benefits entailed a certain individualization of parental leave entitlement. 'Daddy quotas' can therefore be considered as an effective extension of the rights and responsibilities of fathers as compared with benefits based on family eligibility criteria (Leira 1998).

The 1980s saw the initiation of a new type of parental leave institution in many countries – the childcare leave benefit, formally directed to both

parents as a family entitlement for in-home childcare. The benefit is designed as a continuation of parental insurance, but while the latter most often is earnings-related, childcare leave benefits have a flat-rate benefit structure with rates of replacement only covering a small fraction of an average wage (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Moss and Deven 1999). The receipt of childcare leave benefit also often presupposes that publicly subsidized childcare, otherwise obtaining to a large extent, is not used during the period of leave (Mikkola 1991; Rostgaard *et al.* 1999). Such conditions exist primarily in the Nordic countries, with high degrees of public childcare coverage for the very youngest children.

The introduction of childcare leave has in many instances been related to labour market concerns. By supporting mothers' staying at home with children for a prolonged period after maternity insurance leave is exhausted, vacancies were supposed to be created for unemployed men (Fagnani 1998; Rostgaard *et al.* 1999). Such concerns have often been paired with underlying interests of conservative political parties in maintaining the traditional family (Cook 1989). A frequent argument among policymakers when introducing childcare leave benefits has also been that this type of benefit enhances the choice capacity of both parents, who may decide that both share the leave during an additional period after the termination of parental insurance. This parental choice does, however, not seem to be a real option for many families, since due to the low flat-rate benefit levels, total family income in most cases is radically reduced if the father opts to stay at home with the child (Schiersmann 1991; Fagnani 1998; Leira 1998; Bussemaker and Van Kersbergen 1999; Morgan and Zippel 2003). It has also been emphasized that the incentives to utilize the benefit are stronger among women in lower than in higher socioeconomic positions (Gottschall and Bird 2003), pointing to an interaction between class and gender in childcare leave legislation. Regardless of the declared intentions behind the reforms it is evident that institutional structures of childcare leave transfers, in combination with the existing employment patterns and wage structures, upholds a highly gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work.

### **Social Actors Behind Family Policy Reform**

The design of family policy and its implicit norms about the ideal family have frequently been linked to the motives and strengths of different political and social actors. Throughout the post-war period diverse political groupings have come to advocate different family policy strategies in advanced welfare democracies. During the last decades of the twentieth century parties of the left have increasingly become proponents of policies that support a dual-earner, dual-carer family, while conservative and confessional parties

generally endorsed family policies upholding more gendered divisions of labour (Van Kersbergen 1995; Leira 1999; Korpi 2000; Montanari 2000; Huber and Stephens 2000).

The existence of such major political tendencies must not obscure the fact that, for example, many left parties during the post-war period were internally divided on the issue of increasing support to the dual earner family. Furthermore, other socio-political forces have influenced reforms of family policy in the direction of supporting the dual earner family. The reform of parental leave in Sweden was, for example, preceded by a debate where organized women's interests, inside and outside the labour movement, as well as the Liberal Party, proposed dual parental insurance before the Social Democratic Party agreed to support such a reform (Ohlander 1988; Bergman and Hobson 2002). Women's movements have in comparative perspective influenced family policy developments in somewhat different ways, depending on how much they emphasized gender ideologies that either stressed differences between sexes or gender equality and equal rights. In some countries, the foremost women's movements therefore promoted care-related benefits, while other countries were dominated by women's movements stressing women's equal rights (Sainsbury 1999).

Beside the social and political actors active in national context, several trans-national and supra-national organizations have worked to influence national developments of family policy legislation. The above discussion indicates that the ILO's Maternity Protection Conventions may have played an important role when welfare states implemented early maternity leave legislation. The ILO also served as an important forum for discussion and spreading of ideas. Other trans-national regional organizations such as the Nordic Council of Ministers have filled similar functions (Palme 1999b). The Nordic Council of Ministers submits proposals on co-operation between the governments of the five Nordic countries to the Nordic Council and directs the work carried out in different social policy areas.<sup>4</sup> In the 1990s several joint Nordic research projects have, for example, analysed how paternal leave patterns can be altered by means of parental leave policies (Carlsen 1998).

The European Union's (EU) adoption of a Directive on Parental Leave in 1996, with its forerunner in a proposal for a directive put forward by the European Commission in 1983, has also had some influence on national policies. The final directive states the objective to establish minimum requirements in parental leave and to promote equal treatment of men and women. Such requirements include a minimum three months of unpaid parental leave for each parent, a period that in principle should be non-transferable between parents. By the end of 1999 all member states had introduced a statutory right to unpaid parental leave. An increasing number

of EU countries, however, also extended paid parental leave to fathers (Cohen 1999; Haas 2003). The following sections are devoted to an analysis of the development and generosity of parental leave programmes, marriage subsidies and child benefits from 1950 to 2000.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFITS

Until the mid-1970s maternity insurance benefits and lump-sum maternity grants were the only types of parental leave benefits existing in the OECD countries, and parental leave was not designed with the expressed purpose of increasing gender equality. In the 1970s, several new programmes were introduced – earnings-related dual parental and paternity insurance, as well as flat-rate childcare leave benefits.<sup>5</sup> In Figure 2.1 the general incidence trends for different parental leave benefits are shown in terms of programme existence in our 18 countries.

In 1950, both maternity insurance and maternity grants had been implemented in a majority of countries, but while maternity insurance was introduced in four additional countries in the decades following the Second World War, the incidence of maternity grants decreases throughout the same period. Paternity insurance, childcare leave benefits and dual parental insurance have on the other hand been implemented in a growing number of welfare states, for the most part during the 1980s and 1990s.

From the general trends in programme incidence in the 18 countries, it can be concluded that fathers have become gradually more integrated in paid parental leave legislation in the last two decades of the twentieth century. These trends, however, obscure substantial cross-national differences in the existence of parental leave programmes. While some welfare states never introduced legislated paid parental leave, or excluded fathers from paid leave, others combined several different dual parental and paternity leave benefits.

In Table 2.1, the incidence and year of introduction for different types of parental leave benefits and the prevailing model of family policy in 2000 is shown for each of the 18 countries. The combination of parental leave institutions in different countries is likely to reflect different underlying motives of family policy. Korpi's (2000) broad family policy typology is here used to organize the different dimensions of parental leave benefits.<sup>6</sup>

In 2000, the four Nordic countries, with dual earner models of family policy in place by the end of the studied time period, have implemented dual parental leave benefits with entitlements that are transferable between parents. Even if this type of benefit formally divides leave equally among

No. of countries

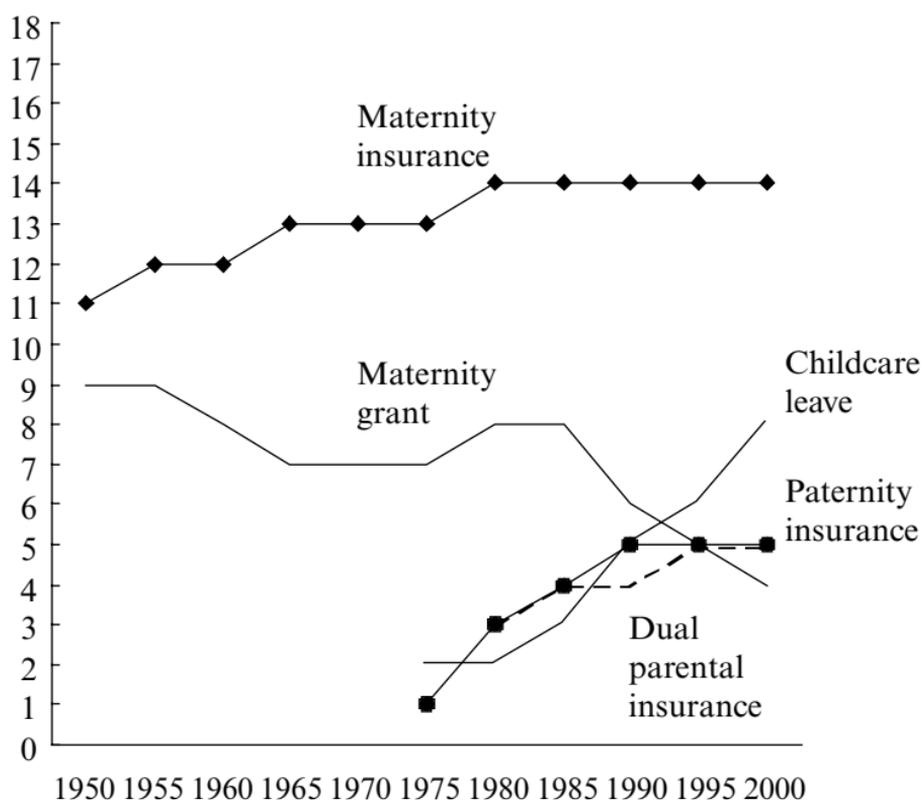


Figure 2.1 Programme existence of paid parental leave in 18 countries 1950–2000

parents, leave rights are in practice to a large extent transferred from the father to the mother. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, dual parental insurance in 2000 also has a stricter individual component in the so-called ‘daddy quota’, which is non-transferable.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the Nordic countries have introduced paid paternity insurance leaves ranging between two and three weeks in duration, to be utilized together with the mother’s post-confinement leave. The existence of dual parental and paternity insurance benefits in the Nordic countries is in line with a political ambition to promote gender equality through increased female labour market participation and male participation in care work. Denmark, Finland and Norway have, however, also developed systems of flat-rate childcare leave transfers beside the earnings-related parental insurance benefits.<sup>8</sup> This probably reflects political conflicts on family policy and indicates potential policy contradictions in these countries’ parental leave policies, since such flat-rate childcare leave in practice often supports traditional family patterns, while the system of

earnings-related family policy transfers and social services supports the dual earner family.

Of the countries with market-oriented models of family policy, the United Kingdom and Switzerland have maternity insurance benefits, while Australia, New Zealand and the United States do not have any non-means tested legislated parental leave benefit by the end of the observation period, instead mainly relying on market provision of paid leave regulated by

*Table 2.1 Incidence and introduction year of parental insurance transfers, maternity grants and childcare leave benefits in 2000 in 18 countries with different family policy models*

Country/ Family Policy Model	Type of Parental Leave Benefit				
	Parental insurance		Childcare leave	Maternity grant	
	Maternity	Dual	Paternity		
<i>Dual Earner</i>					
Denmark	1901	1984	1980	1993	–
Finland	1963	1980	1978	1990	1945
Norway	1909	1979 <sup>1</sup>	–	1998	–
Sweden	–	1974 <sup>1</sup>	1980	–	–
<i>General</i>					
Austria	1888	–	–	1974 <sup>1</sup>	1955
Belgium	1944	–	1998	1998 <sup>1</sup>	*
France	1928	–	1998	1994 <sup>2</sup>	–
Germany	1883	–	–	1986	–
Ireland	1953	–	–	–	–
Italy	1924	–	–	1973	–
The Netherlands	1930	–	–	–	–
<i>Market-oriented</i>					
Australia	–	–	–	–	–
Canada	1971	1990	–	–	–
Japan	1926	–	–	–	*
New Zealand	–	–	–	–	–
Switzerland	1911	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom	1948	–	–	–	–
The United States	–	–	–	–	–

*Notes:*

\* = Existence of benefit in 2000, but missing data for introduction year.

1. Partly individual eligibility of dual parental leave.

2. Benefit for families with at least three children introduced in 1985.

agreements between employers and employees. Canada is the only country, apart from the Nordic ones, which has implemented a parental insurance benefit directed to both parents. Welfare states with general family policy models all have maternity insurance benefits in 2000. Five out of seven of the latter countries have also implemented childcare leave transfers: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy. While such arrangements accord with ambitions to support the traditional family, policy contradictions in the design of parental leave were to some degree strengthened in France and Belgium in the late 1990s when designated 'daddy days', albeit only three in number, were introduced within parental insurance to be utilized simultaneously with the mother's leave.

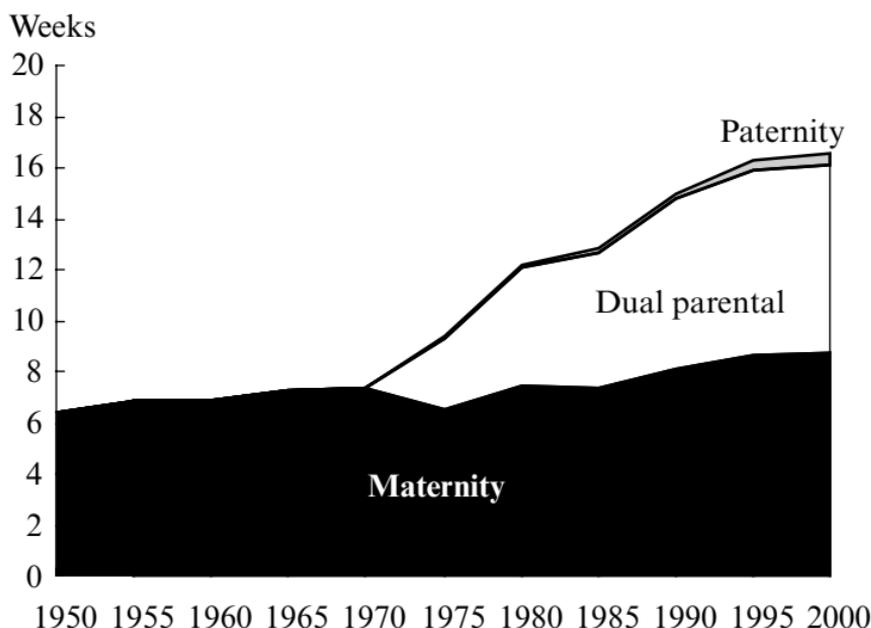
The patterns of coexistence of different parental leave benefits follow the lines of the broader family policy models in several respects. But internally contradictory goals and divergence from broader family policy models are also evident, which should come as no surprise since social policy systems do not come in pure types. The presence of inconsistencies in the goals of parental leave systems underlines the importance of separating different institutional characteristics when analysing such benefits in gender perspective. In the sections which now follow, the development of parental insurance, maternity grants and childcare leave benefits is analysed in greater institutional detail.

## **Parental Insurance**

From the 1950s until the 1970s, the average extent of post-natal parental insurance benefits remained remarkably stable, around seven weeks in duration in the countries under study. In the mid-1970s a dramatic increase of total post-natal parental insurance duration begins – from this time until the latest turn of the century, total duration more than doubles (see Figure 2.2).

The reason for the rise of average duration of parental insurance can primarily be found in the implementation of dual parental insurance benefits and increases in maternity insurance duration. The increase is to some extent also due to the introduction of paternity insurance ('daddy days').<sup>9</sup> Since only a few countries implemented parental insurance including also fathers, relatively large cross-national differences can be expected regarding post-natal parental insurance duration.

The rapid rise in average duration is to a large extent explained by the development of dual parental insurance in the Nordic countries from the mid-1970s and onwards. In Figure 2.3a–c the average duration of post-natal parental insurance is displayed in greater regime-specific detail for countries with different models of family policy at the end of the observation



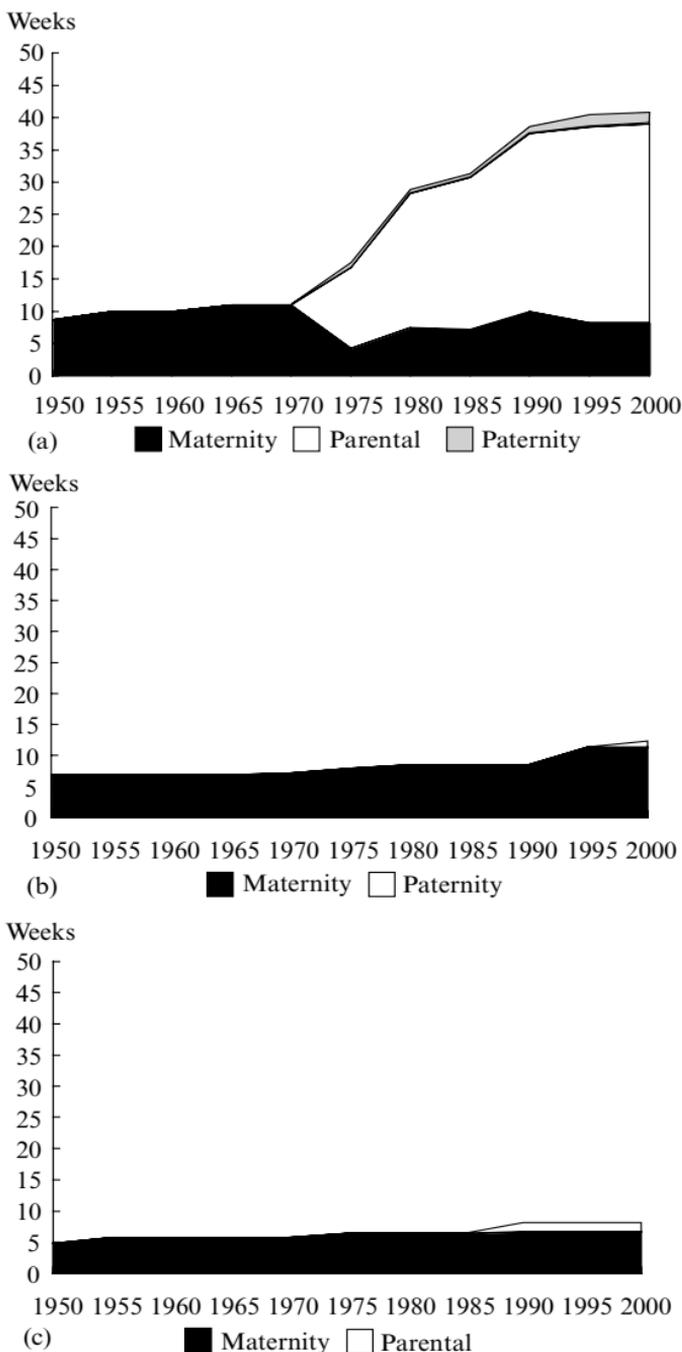
Source: SCIP

Figure 2.2 Average duration of post-natal parental insurance benefits in 18 countries 1950–2000, in two-earner family with two children (0 and 5 years of age)

period.<sup>10</sup> Duration of parental insurance in countries with general as well as market-oriented family policy is distinguished by stability rather than change, and undergoes only small increases throughout the whole period. The introduction and extension of dual parental insurance duration and the initiation of paternity insurance in the Nordic countries reflects a transition of policy from a general model of family policy in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily supporting highly gendered divisions of labour, to a dual earner model, where the father to a larger extent is included in parental leave legislation.

As noted above, Sweden was the first country to launch dual parental insurance benefits in the mid-1970s. The reform entailed an increase of total parental insurance duration from 26 weeks of maternity insurance to a 30-week all-dual parental insurance benefit, with transferable leave rights. A stepwise extension to over a full year's duration occurred during the following decades.

In Finland, dual parental insurance benefits were implemented in 1980, enabling fathers to utilize the last four weeks of earnings-related benefits with the approval of the mother. Five years later, the benefit duration



Source: SCIP

**Figure 2.3** Duration (weeks) of post-natal parental insurance benefits in countries with different family policy models 1950–2000, in a two-earner family with two children (0 and 5 years of age) (a) Dual earner models of family policy; (b) General models of family policy; (c) Market-oriented models of family policy

was further raised to its present 26 weeks. The Norwegian introduction of a six-week dual parental insurance programme in 1979 was added to maternity insurance of six weeks' duration, and in the mid-1990s dual parental insurance was extended to 39 weeks. Denmark was the last of the four Nordic countries to enact dual parental insurance in 1984. The commission that recommended the implementation of such parental leave initially suggested that part of the benefit should be granted to the father on an individual basis (as a 'daddy quota'), but the reform decided upon by the 1984 Parliament entailed only ten weeks of parental leave on a family entitlement basis, to be granted after 14 weeks of post-natal maternity leave (Rostgaard *et al.* 1999).

The implementation of dual parental insurance in the Nordic countries was soon followed by the introduction of so-called 'daddy days', designed to enable the father to spend time with the baby and the mother during the first weeks of the child's life, the purpose both being to relieve the mother and to integrate the father in care work (Haas and Hwang 1999). In 2000, total 'daddy days' in Denmark and Sweden amounted to two weeks of paid leave, while the corresponding benefit in Finland was paid for three weeks. Daddy leave existed also in Norway, but was unpaid.

In the 1990s, Denmark, Norway and Sweden also introduced 'daddy quotas', providing fully individualized paternal rights to be exercised as 'prime carer' of the child. In Norway and Sweden, four-week 'daddy quotas' in parental insurance were introduced in 1993 and 1994 respectively, granting a period of paternal leave earmarked within dual parental insurance entitlements. In 1999 a similar two-week daddy quota was introduced in Denmark. Major aims of the individualization of parental leave were to equalize parental responsibilities for childrearing and to strengthen the father-child relationship (Leira 1998; Bergman and Hobson 2002).

Countries with general models of family policy are shown to have a relatively stable duration of post-natal maternity insurance, between six and eight weeks in length throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century. Duration of maternity insurance benefits increases slightly in the 1970s in countries with general family support models, when parental insurance reforms raise maternity insurance duration in Italy from eight to 13 weeks. Notable changes in average trends also occur in the early 1990s as post-natal duration of maternity insurance in the Netherlands is increased by six weeks, to a total of 12 weeks. As mentioned above, 'daddy days' in parental insurance are also introduced in Belgium and France at the end of the 1990s.

Among welfare states with market-oriented models of family policy, the most remarkable change in parental insurance duration occurs in Canada when a ten-week dual parental insurance was launched. The introduction

of dual parental leave benefits followed a legal challenge raised by a natural father to maternity benefits. Prior to 1990, maternity insurance had been granted to adoptive parents but not natural fathers, thus violating the equality section in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The ruling by the Supreme Court in favour of parental leave benefits removed such discriminatory features in leave legislation (Trzcinski and Alpert 1992). The United Kingdom and Canada have above-average duration levels in post-natal maternity insurance, while Japan and Switzerland have had a six-week duration throughout most of the period. As was evident from the previous section, Australia, New Zealand and the United States did not introduce legislated parental leave for the family type studied here and therefore are excluded from this analysis.<sup>11</sup>

Most countries have pre-natal benefits that are not transferable to the post-natal period. When implementing early maternity insurance benefits many countries followed the ILO's recommendations for a minimum of six weeks' paid pre-confinement leave (Brocas *et al.* 1990). While post-natal leave length has increased in most countries, pre-natal leave is more stable. As is shown in Table 2.2, countries with general models of family policy have the largest levels of parental insurance benefits reserved for pre-confinement leave in 2000, both in absolute terms and in relation to paid pre-natal leave. In the latter countries the duration of such pre-confinement benefits has been relatively stable throughout the post-war period, ranging between four and eight weeks. Three countries, Sweden, Canada and the United Kingdom, had introduced flexible pre-natal parental leave arrangements, which enable mothers to work throughout the whole pregnancy and thereby to save up paid parental leave until after the delivery of the baby.<sup>12</sup>

Eligibility for earnings-related benefits is in most countries achieved after fulfilment of qualification criteria, which usually entail a minimum amount of labour market participation and insurance before confinement, the average qualifying period being around 20 weeks in our countries. Italy, Japan and the Netherlands have no qualifying conditions except being in employment at the time of benefit receipt. The other countries have qualifying periods ranging between 12 weeks (in Germany) and 43 weeks (in France). The limited variation in qualifying conditions of parental insurance along the lines of broader family policy models suggests that such conditions are at least partly determined on other grounds than prescriptively supporting a particular family type.<sup>13</sup>

Can it be expected that welfare states with generous parental insurance benefits in terms of duration also have generous rates of replacement? Data over net weekly replacement rates indicate a somewhat more complex picture. The bivariate correlation between duration and net weekly replacement rates in parental insurance benefits is only weakly and non-significantly

Table 2.2 *Qualification period and duration of parental insurance benefits (in weeks) for family with two children (0 and 5 years of age) in 18 countries in 2000\**

Country/Model of family policy	Qualifying (weeks)	Duration of parental insurance (weeks)				Total post- natal parental insurance <sup>5</sup>
		Pre-natal maternity <sup>1</sup>	Maternity	Dual parental	Paternity	
<i>Dual earner</i>						
Denmark	13	4	14	12 <sup>2</sup>	2	26
Finland	26	5	13	26	3	39
Norway	26	3	6	33 <sup>3</sup>	0	39
Sweden	34	0	0	52 <sup>4</sup>	2	52
<i>General</i>						
Austria	40	8	8	0	0	8
Belgium	26	1	14	0	0.5	14
France	43	6	10	0	0.5	10
Germany	12	6	8	0	0	8
Ireland	39	4	10	0	0	10
Italy	0 <sup>6</sup>	8	13	0	0	13
Netherlands	0 <sup>6</sup>	4	12	0	0	12
<i>Market-oriented</i>						
Canada	20	0	5	10	0	15
Japan	0 <sup>6</sup>	6	8	0	0	8
Switzerland	39	4	6	0	0	6
United Kingdom	26	0	18	0	0	18

Notes:

\* Benefit duration at maximum replacement levels.

1. Includes only parental insurance leave that cannot be utilized after confinement.

2. Includes two weeks earmarked for the father.

3. Includes four weeks earmarked for the father.

4. Includes four weeks earmarked for the father and four weeks for the mother. Sweden also has a further three months of paid leave at flat-rate levels.

5. Paternity insurance benefits are not included in total post-natal duration.

6. Employment at the time of utilization required for benefit qualification.

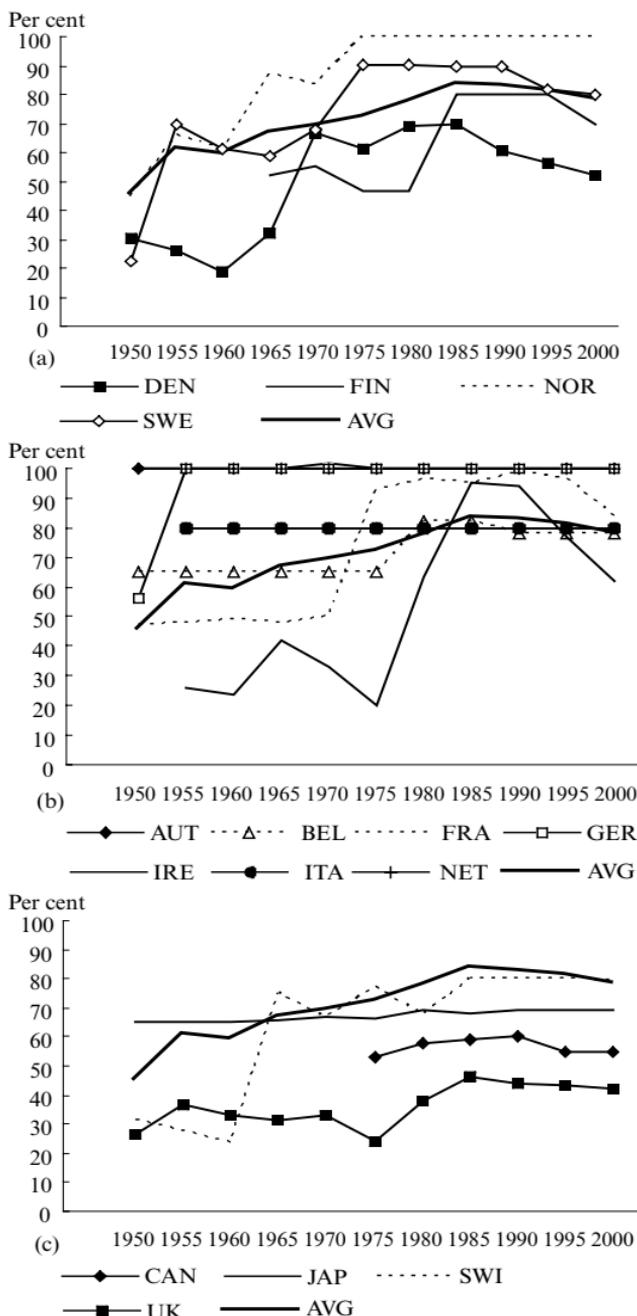
positive for 2000 (Pearson = 0.312), and a similar coefficient obtains for the whole period. Figure 2.4a–c shows the weekly net benefit during parental insurance leave as a share of the weekly net wage for a person earning an average production worker's wage (for more detailed information about calculations, see Appendix).<sup>14</sup>

Generally speaking, net weekly replacement rates of parental insurance benefits in all countries increased steadily throughout the post-war period from around 60 per cent of an average production worker's wage in 1950 to nearly 90 per cent in 1990, while the 1990s saw average net replacement falling back slightly from their prior maximum levels. Countries with general models of family policy commonly have somewhat higher weekly replacement than welfare states with dual earner models, while market-oriented welfare states have the lowest weekly replacement rates.

Among countries with general models of family policy, only Ireland and France report benefit levels radically below the average for all countries during the early post-war period, but in both countries net weekly replacement rates underwent notable increases beginning in the 1970s. Austria, Belgium and Germany have gross replacement rates amounting to 100 per cent of the net wage during most of the studied period.

Countries that have implemented dual earner models of family policy differ somewhat with respect to replacement developments in net weekly parental insurance benefits. Replacement levels in Sweden and Norway clustered around the average for all countries until the 1970s, when benefit rates were raised to 90 and 100 per cent in Sweden and Norway respectively. In Finland, wage replacement of benefits was raised from 50 to 80 per cent during the 1980s, approaching the average for all countries. Denmark has had replacement rates below the cross-national average throughout the entire period, in consequence of the design of general social insurance programmes along the lines of a basic security model (Korpi and Palme 1998).<sup>15</sup> The years of economic crisis in the early 1990s, with the return of mass unemployment and large budget deficits in Finland and Sweden, created pressures for benefit cutbacks in major social insurance programmes, above all in the mid-1990s (Palme and Wennemo 1996; Kautto 2000). This had some consequences also for parental insurance, with replacement levels being lowered to 70 per cent in Finland and to 75 per cent in Sweden (subsequently restored to its present 80 per cent level in the latter country).

Welfare states with market-oriented family policies have, in line with what could be expected, generally had below-average rates of replacement during the second half of the twentieth century. While net replacement rates in Canada, Japan and Switzerland cluster around 60 to 70 per cent of an average production worker's weekly wage, the United Kingdom has had considerably lower replacement rates throughout the whole period.<sup>16</sup>



Source: SCIP

**Figure 2.4** Net weekly replacement rates of post-natal parental insurance in countries with different models of family policy 1950–2000: net replacement for a two-earner family with two children (0 and 5 years of age), per cent of net average production worker's wage (a) Dual earner models of family policy; (b) General family policy models; (c) Market-oriented models of family policy

## **Maternity Grants**

As discussed above, lump-sum maternity grants have gradually become a less common method of transferring economic resources to parents with newborn children during the second half of the twentieth century (see Figure 2.1, page 36). This type of benefit has typically been used to complement earnings-related benefits, but in some countries the former benefits were historically used as an alternative to parental insurance, especially so in the early post-war period. In the early 1950s four countries had implemented maternity grants, but not earnings-related leave benefits: Australia, Finland, Ireland and Italy. The level of maternity grants has, however, generally not made up a major source of income for families with newborn children. On average, such benefits have only constituted between 0.5 and 1 per cent of an average production worker's net yearly wage over the past half century.

The relatively low benefit levels indicate a different rationale of maternity grants as compared to parental insurance, which to a greater extent is oriented towards compensating income losses following childbirth. Maternity grants have rather been introduced with the purpose to help cover the cost of, or to provide for, certain needs connected with childbirth, and have mostly been paid in non-taxable and lump-sum amounts upon the birth of the child. In Finland, however, parents still can choose between a cash lump-sum grant and an in-kind maternity 'start package', including necessities for baby care, upon the birth of the child.

Maternity grants have frequently been used to influence parental behaviour in directions considered desirable. Such benefits have, for example, been conditional upon requirements that the mother attends a health check-up for her and the child, still a receipt requirement for maternity grants in Austria. During the period under study, only in two countries have maternity grants amounted to a more substantial part of a family's income. In Sweden, maternity grants were relatively generous in the 1960s, reaching the high level of 8 per cent of an average wage, before being substituted by raised parental insurance benefits. It should be noted that maternity grants in some countries still make a substantial contribution to the total parental leave benefit package. In Japan, for example, maternity grants have come to play an increasingly prominent role throughout the whole post-war period, and were raised to the level corresponding to 8 per cent of an average production worker's wage in 2000.

## **Childcare Leave**

The design of paid childcare leave with flat-rate benefits entails considerably lower average weekly benefits than do earnings-related parental insurance.

On the other hand, duration of childcare leave benefits generally is longer. It is precisely this aspect of leave benefits' institutional structure that has been held to provide incentives for the parent with the lowest earnings to utilize the childcare leave and to stay away from the labour market for up to three years after the birth of the child. Since women generally have lower market earnings than men, the benefit can be held to reinforce a traditional gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work.<sup>17</sup> During the post-war period, confessional and conservative political parties have in many countries been the main proponents of social policy measures that support highly gendered divisions of work, and childcare leave constitutes no exception in this respect (Badelt 1991; Hinnfors 1998; Fagnani 1998; Morgan and Zippel 2003). In recent years an increasing number of countries have introduced daddy quotas in childcare leaves, which in part may be seen as a response to the European Union Directive on parental leave.

In three countries, Austria, Finland and Norway, childcare leave duration is around two years in length and net weekly benefits constitute 15 to 20 per cent of an average production worker's wage in 2000 (see Table 2.3). The long duration of parental insurance in Norway and Finland makes for childcare leave entitlements up to the child's third birthday, while Austrian childcare leave cuts off after the second birthday due to the shorter parental insurance duration.

Austria was the first country to introduce childcare leave in 1974, but at that time only mothers were eligible for extended leave until the child's first birthday. In 1990, childcare leave was extended also to fathers, as a derived right. This meant that the father could not utilize leave unless the mother had fulfilled her qualifying conditions and worked 12 out of the last 24 months. The use of childcare leave among eligible fathers was almost negligible while almost all eligible mothers utilized such leave in the mid-1990s (Bruning and Plantega 1998). Furthermore, a majority of mothers did not return to the labour market after completed childcare leave (Nebenführ 1995). This outcome initiated a reform in 1996, which was intended to increase paternal utilization of childcare leave and to facilitate the re-entrance of mothers in the labour market. The new legislation permitted use of the last 26 weeks of leave only if the father takes at least 13 weeks of leave. Furthermore, the reform entailed a wage subsidy to employers that provided mothers with at least a year of employment (Thenner 1999).

Even if the reform of childcare leave in Austria indicates an ambition to raise paternal participation in care work through individualization of entitlement, the low flat-rate benefit levels in the scheme will most likely discourage many fathers from utilizing this part of childcare leave at all. The restructuring of childcare leave was carried out under different coalition governments between Social Democrats and the Conservatives, but there

was little agreement about the future development of family policy. While the Conservatives wanted to extend the existing childcare leave, Social Democrats instead proposed a transformation of childcare leave into an earnings-related dual parental insurance benefit (Thenner 1999).

Finnish childcare leave has its roots in a local experiment introduced in the mid-1980s and implemented on a national basis in 1990 (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula 1999). Several arguments have existed in the Finnish debate around childcare leave, where the centre-right parties initially were the most active promoters, but Social Democrats later also came to accept this benefit due to the popular support among voters. Childcare leave was by its proponents among other things argued to be more cost-effective than public childcare, create freedom of choice for women and take pressure off labour markets, since female job supply decreases when mothers are on leave (Hiilamo and Kangas 2003).

Beside the flat-rate benefit related to the number of children under school age in the family, a supplementary means-tested benefit may also be paid, for which the type case family does not qualify. In Germany, replacement levels for leave benefits constitute around 15 per cent of a net weekly average production worker's wage in 2000, and duration is relatively short, half a year for the typical family. The German 'Erziehungsgeld' is a flat-rate benefit of 26-week duration, which, subject to a means test, may be paid until the second birthday of the child. The earnings limit of this benefit, however, disqualifies the type case family from the supplementary period. The benefit was implemented in 1986 against the background of rapidly increasing unemployment, and a central motive of policymakers was to encourage women to retain the role of homemakers and thereby to take some pressure off the labour market (Schiersmann 1991). This benefit and the regulations surrounding leave has led to an institutionalization of a long period or a 'baby break' among younger women and also seems to have promoted labour market exclusion of women (Gottschalk and Bird 2002).

The four remaining countries had somewhat higher net weekly benefits in 2000. The French Allocation Parentale d'Education (APE) programme provides the highest net level of childcare leave benefits in 2000. The APE amounts to about a third of the average production worker's net wage, and is paid until the child reaches the age of three. The benefit was originally introduced in 1985, motivated by 'traditional' pro-natalist concerns. At this point in time the benefit was only directed to families with three or more children. Later the APE was reformed along the lines of more labour-market oriented motives. The extension of the benefit to families with two children in 1994 sparked a controversy, where the Socialist Party and women's organizations opposed the reform and instead advocated measures that would help to reconcile professional and family life (Fagnani 1998). The

APE has relatively rigid qualifying conditions in that a two-year period of employment is required over the five years preceding first utilization.

Childcare leave in Denmark was introduced in 1992 and partly instituted on the basis of labour market concerns, with eligibility only being granted when the employer hired a substitute employee from among the unemployed (Rostgaard *et al.* 1999). But a year later the programme was extended to all parents. At this point in time childcare benefits had a one-year duration, of which six months were granted at the discretion of the employer. In 1994, total childcare leave entitlements were cut to six months. The benefit levels in childcare leave have been lowered several times since their introduction and constituted 60 per cent of unemployment benefits in 2000.<sup>18</sup>

Childcare leave benefits in Italy were introduced as early as the 1970s and were part of a larger reform of paid leave programmes. Mothers and fathers were, in 2000, entitled to a total of 30 weeks, with benefits corresponding to 30 per cent of an average production worker's wage. Recently, Italy has also introduced a quota in childcare leave, which means that an additional month is provided if the father utilizes at least three months of leave (Haas 2003). Belgium introduced childcare leave as late as 1998, which entitled each parent to three months of paid leave as an individual entitlement. The flat-rate benefits amount to around a quarter of a net average weekly wage.<sup>19</sup>

*Table 2.3 Childcare leave benefits: qualification period, net weekly rate of replacement and benefit duration for a two-earner family with two children aged 0 and 5 in 2000*

	Qualifying period (weeks)	Net weekly benefit (%)	Duration (weeks)
Austria	52	17.9	96 <sup>1</sup>
Belgium	52	25.1	26
Denmark	0	31.3	26
Finland	0	17.3	104 <sup>4</sup>
France	104 <sup>2</sup>	32.6	146
Germany	0	15.8	26 <sup>3</sup>
Italy	0	30.0	30
Norway	0	14.4	104 <sup>4</sup>

*Notes:*

The following programmes are included: Austria, Karenzgeld; Belgium, Congé parental; Denmark, Bornepasningsorlov; Finland, Home care allowance; France, APE; Germany, Erziehungsgeld; Italy, additional parental leave; Norway, Kontantstøtte.

1. Last 26 weeks only paid if father utilizes 13 weeks.
2. 104 weeks of work during the preceding five years.
3. Means-tested supplementary period.
4. Reduced or withdrawn if public childcare is utilized.

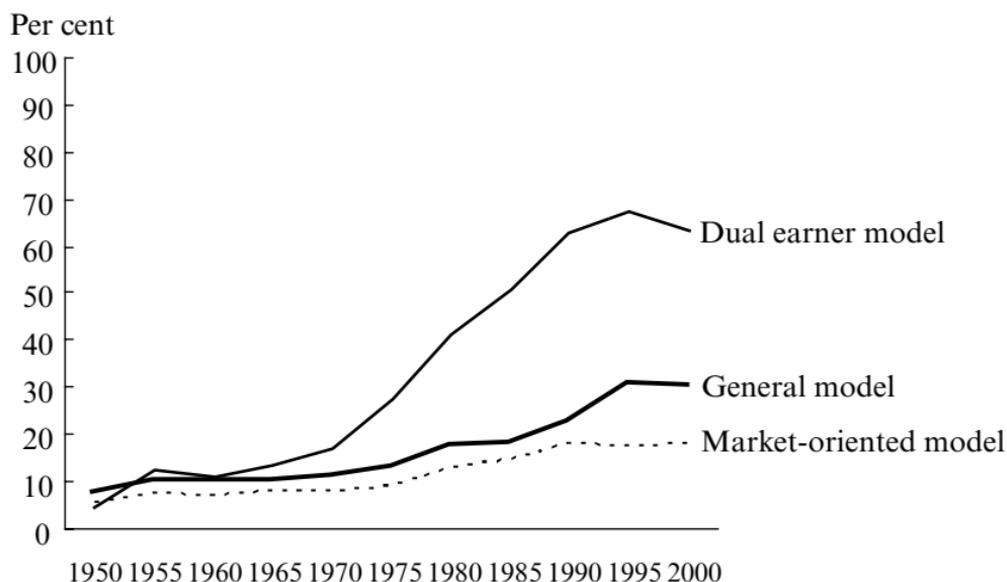
Somewhat unexpectedly, few systematic differences in childcare leave benefits can be found between groups of countries with different overall family policy orientations, except that countries with market-oriented models of family policy did not introduce such benefits up to 2000. It is not surprising to find countries with general models of family policy that have implemented childcare leave, given motives to support more traditional family patterns that have broadly guided family policies in these countries. It is from this perspective, however, somewhat more puzzling to find such benefits in welfare states with dual earner models of family policy. To some extent the existing potential policy contradictions may reflect the underlying motives of different family policy actors within countries. The effect of different political constellations in the configuration of family policies is further studied in the next chapter. The evidence presented here, however, clearly raises questions regarding the underlying social and political forces pushing for the development of different parental leave benefits.

### **Generosity of Parental Leave Benefits**

So far, each parental leave programme has been evaluated separately. Let us now turn to look at the overall combined generosity of net parental benefits. Net generosity is measured as the wage replacement of maximum post-confinement benefits for an average wage earner during the child's first life year, including parental insurance, childcare leave benefits and maternity grants.<sup>20</sup> Net generosity is expressed as a percentage of an average production worker's net wage.<sup>21</sup>

A look at the average trends in generosity of total paid parental leave, including all flat-rate, lump-sum and earnings-related benefits paid during the first year after confinement, reveals different developmental trajectories in countries with different models of family policy by the end of the period. Figure 2.5 shows the average generosity of total paid leave during the first year of leave for every fifth year from 1950 to 2000. While only small divergences in this measure can be found until the early 1970s, the decade is the starting point for rapidly escalating differences. Countries with market-oriented family policy undergo only modest increases in benefit generosity during this period, average benefit generosity being around 10 per cent in the early 1970s and around 15 per cent at the end of the period. Welfare states with general models of family policy on average expand benefit generosity from slightly over 10 per cent to around 30 per cent during the same period, a development explained by an increase of duration of maternity benefits in some countries and by the introduction of childcare benefits at the end of the period. The most rapid rise in benefit generosity occurs in the countries with dual earner models of family policy, where

wage replacement increases from around 15 per cent in 1970 to over 60 per cent by the end of the 1990s. The main explanation for this increase, as for duration, lies in the introduction and extension of dual parental insurance benefits in the Nordic countries.

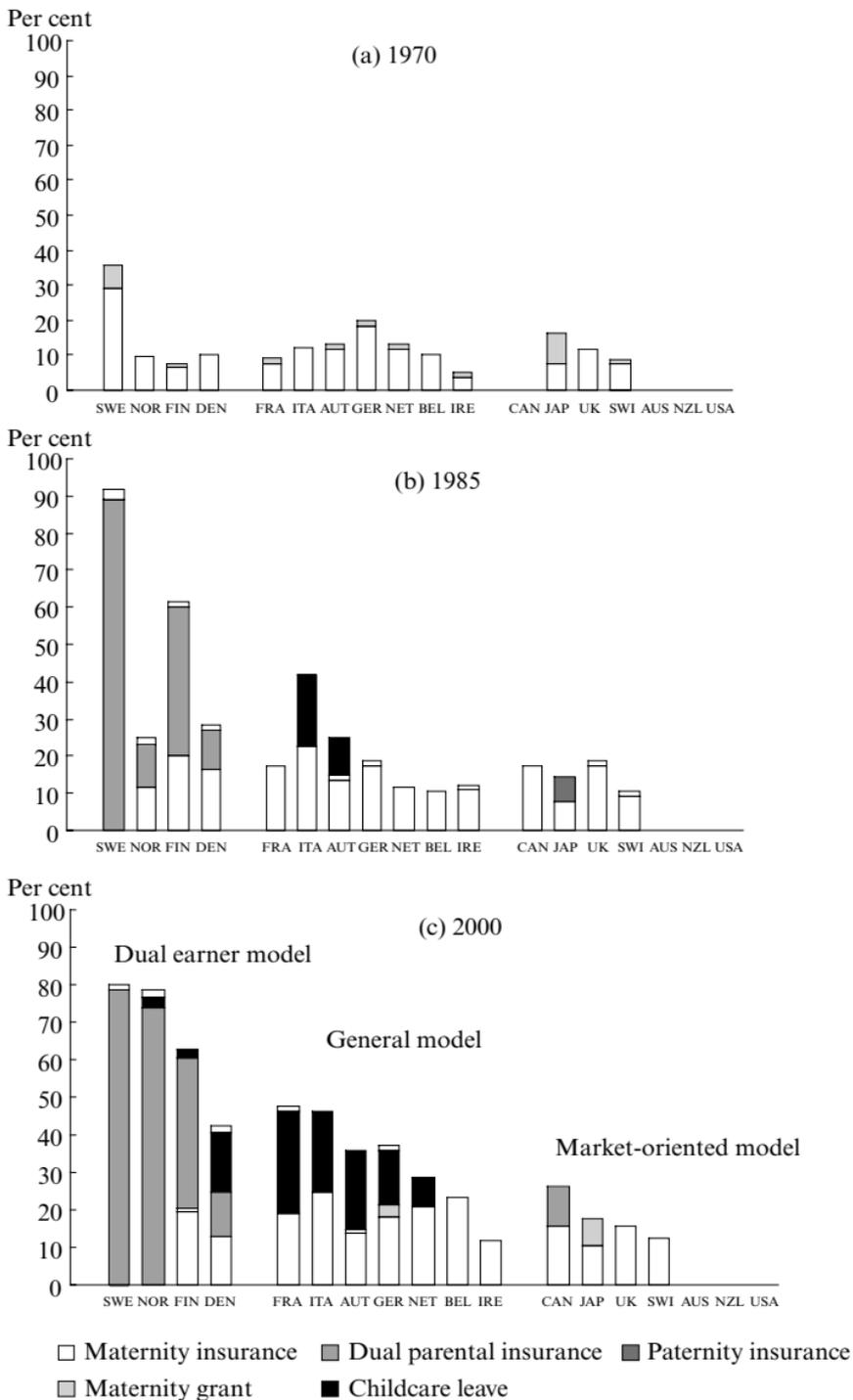


Source: SCIP

*Figure 2.5 Average generosity of total parental leave benefits first year after confinement in countries with different models of family policy 1950–2000. Net replacement for a two-earner family with two children 0 and 5 years, per cent of net average production worker's wage*

The average trends obscure some important differences in generosity between countries with similar family policies and between programmes in the same country. Figure 2.6a–c indicates some important within-cluster and within-country differences and covers three time points (1970, 1985 and 2000), with the welfare states grouped according to their family policy orientation and generosity in 2000. In 1970, cross-national differences in parental leave generosity are small, and few indications of future orientations of family policy can be discerned, perhaps with the exception of Sweden's relatively generous maternity insurance duration.

By the mid-1980s institutional divergences are clearer. The four Nordic countries have introduced dual parental leave, even if benefit generosity in Norway and Denmark still is low, and Italy as well as Austria has implemented childcare leave benefits. The differences in parental leave



Source: SCIP

Figure 2.6 Net parental leave benefits, first year after confinement, as a percentage of a net average production worker's wage in 18 countries and three time periods (1970, 1985 and 2000)

generosity between countries with diverging family policy had crystallized further in 2000, but clearly, important variations exist also within 'clusters'. Perhaps most strikingly, Denmark has much less generous parental leave benefits than the other three Nordic countries. This is primarily due to lower replacement levels in parental insurance following from low benefit-income ceilings in social insurance, but also to somewhat shorter duration of such benefits as compared with the other Nordic countries. As was noted above, Danish dual parental insurance leave has a different institutional structure than parental insurance in the other three Nordic countries. The rise in total benefit generosity in Denmark between 1985 and 2000 primarily stems from the introduction of childcare leave benefits.

The enactment of childcare leave radically increased the total generosity of parental leave in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, to some extent also increasing differences within this cluster. The extension of total parental leave duration through the implementation of dual parental insurance largely accounts for the increase of total generosity in Canada, even if decreasing benefit levels counteracted this reform to some extent.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF MARRIAGE SUBSIDIES

Beside parental leave, benefits for a dependent spouse, or so-called marriage subsidies, is a major means by which the welfare state can affect behaviour and agency of parents. As mentioned above, such transfers were one of the earliest forms of family benefits in Western welfare democracies, often said to reflect the realization of a long expressed claim for a family wage that would be sufficient to sustain a worker and his family. Marriage subsidies have mainly been distributed through the tax system via tax credits, tax allowances as well as different types of joint taxation or tax splitting systems. In effect this means that a married person with an economically inactive (or economically less active) spouse pay lower taxes than a single person and thereby attains a higher net income. Common to the different methods of providing this higher wage is that it is primarily married men that have had access to the benefit (Montanari 2000).

Figure 2.7 describes the development of average marriage subsidy generosity in countries with different family policy models between 1950 and 2000. Marriage subsidies are here measured as the difference in net incomes between a married couple with a male worker with an economically inactive spouse where the male worker earns an average production worker's wage as compared with a single worker earning such a wage. The benefit is expressed as a percentage of an average net production worker's wage. From the 1950s to the mid-1980s the average net benefit increased from 4 to

5 per cent of an average production worker's net wage, before falling back to around 4 per cent by the very end of the twentieth century.

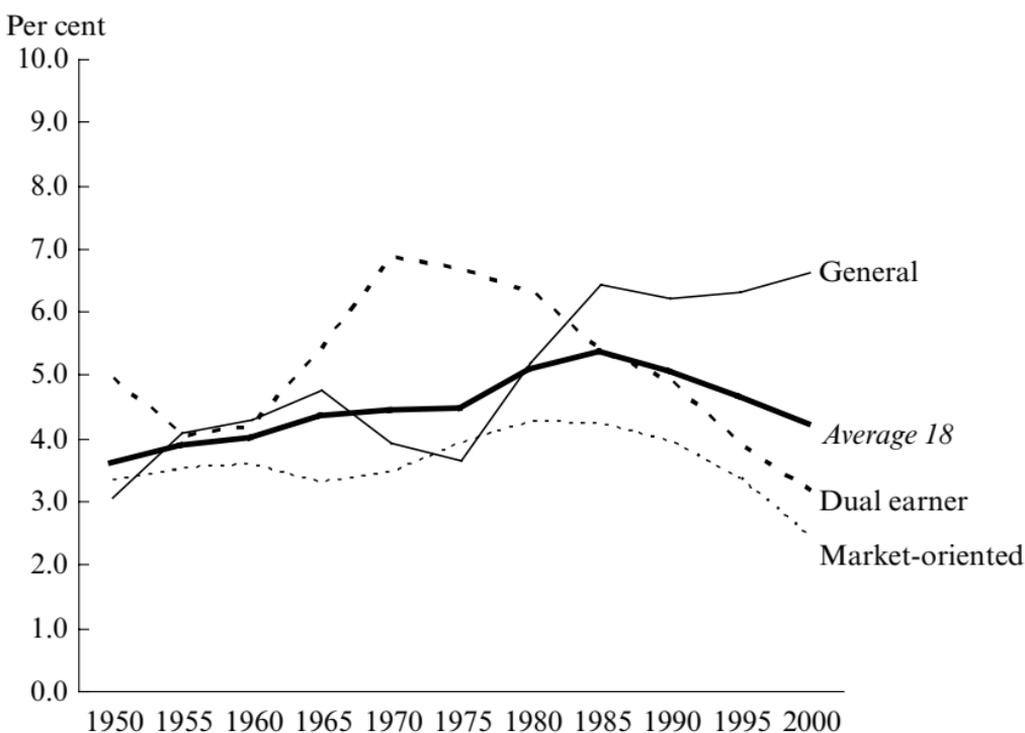
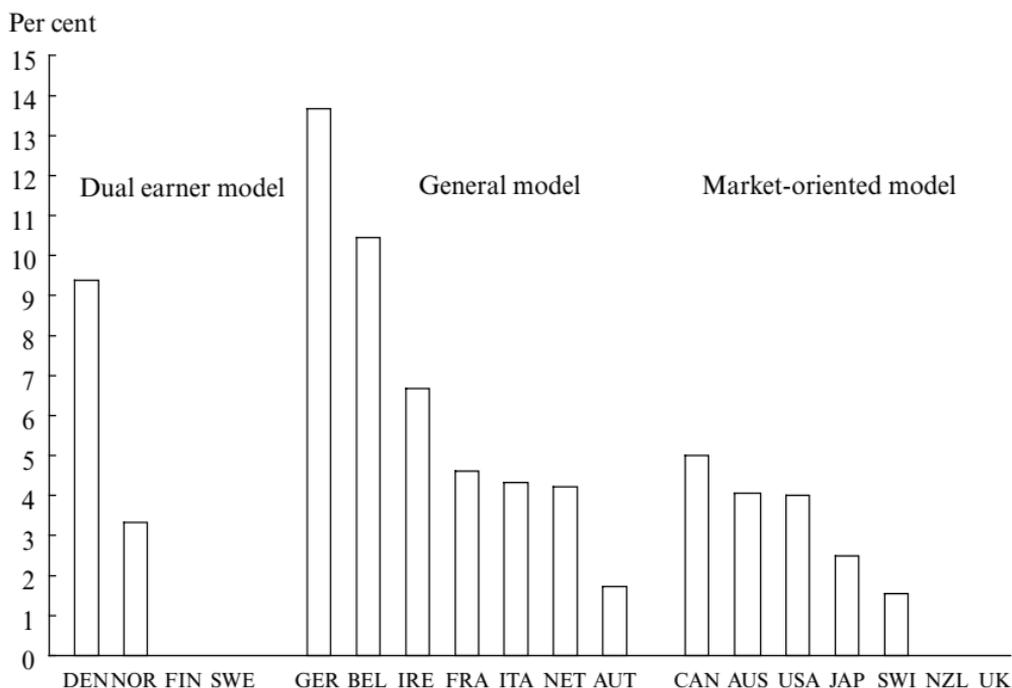


Figure 2.7 *Marriage subsidies in different models of family policy as a percentage of an average production worker's net wage 1950–2000*

Substantial between-cluster differences and change in marriage subsidy generosity during the latter part of the post-war period are revealed in Figure 2.7, which shows benefit generosity in each country by family policy model. Since the 1970s, marriage subsidies in countries with dual earner models of family policy decreased radically from an average around 7 per cent to around 3 per cent in 2000. This development is paralleled by the introduction and extension of dual earner models of family policy in these countries, as has been observed in other parts of family policy legislation, for example regarding parental leave. During the same period, the trend in average marriage subsidies in welfare states with general family policy models was in the reverse direction. Marriage subsidies almost doubled between 1970 and the end of the century, which is in line with ideologies of supporting highly gendered divisions of work in such welfare states. The countries with market-oriented models in principle have had the lowest average levels of marriage subsidies ranging between 3 and 4 per cent, with a percentage point decline in this type of support occurring in the 1990s.



*Figure 2.8 Marriage subsidies in 18 countries with different models of family policy in 2000. Per cent of an average production worker's net wage*

Figure 2.8 plots the generosity of each country in 2000 by the type of family policy model, and it reveals that relatively large within-cluster differences exist by the end of the observation period. The average levels of support in dual earner countries is at this point in time largely explained by the Danish case – where tax reform increased marriage subsidies radically in the 1990s, while the other Nordic countries have shown decreasing levels of such family support, with Finland and Sweden having abolished such tax concessions. In countries with general models of family policy, Germany has the highest levels of marriage subsidies of almost 14 per cent, closely followed by Belgium and Ireland. France, Italy and the Netherlands have marriage subsidies between 4 and 5 per cent, while Austria has the lowest levels of benefits of countries with general family policy models, at approximately 2 per cent. Among the countries with market-oriented models of family policy, Canada has the highest benefit generosity of marriage subsidies in 2000, around 5 per cent; Australia and the United States have benefit levels of around 4 per cent, while Japan and Switzerland have corresponding levels of around 2 per cent. New Zealand and the United Kingdom do not pay marriage subsidies to the type case household analysed here.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD BENEFITS

Child benefits, or child allowances, are benefits targeted to families with dependent children. Relatively large historical cross-national differences in the structure of child benefits have been shown to exist, *inter alia*, depending on whether such benefits are paid in cash or whether they are distributed via the tax system, in the form of tax rebates. Cash benefits are mostly paid in flat-rate amounts, while tax benefits either may be paid as tax credits, which in principle are flat-rate, or tax allowances that tend to distribute larger amounts to families with higher income depending on the degree of progressiveness of the tax system (for a historical-institutional overview of child benefit development, see Wennemo 1994).

Even if child benefits to varying degrees can be said to support traditional family patterns (Wennemo 1994; Montanari 2000), it has been claimed that such transfers belong to the general family support dimension by being neutral to gendered divisions of labour (Korpi 2000). It may be questioned whether a formally gender-neutral benefit should be included as support to the traditional family. However, given the existing gender inequalities in highly industrialized countries, a benefit that is 'neutral' in fact is likely to reproduce existing labour market inequalities. Consequently, I would argue that this type of benefit belongs in the general family support dimension rather than within dual earner support.<sup>22</sup>

In Figure 2.9 the average net level of total child benefits, including both cash and tax benefits, is presented as a percentage of an average production worker's net wage, in different models of family policy.<sup>23</sup> Compared with several of the benefits analysed in the above sections, the levels of child benefits change little in average generosity over time. Child benefits constituted around 9 per cent of an average production worker's wage throughout most of the period; the high point of almost 10 per cent was reached in 2000.

However, differences on average also exist between countries with different family policy models. Market-oriented countries have on average had the lowest generosity of such benefits, ranging around 6 per cent for most of the studied period. Countries with dual earner models of family policy show a steep increase in child benefits from the 1970s to 1990, when the high level of around 13 per cent was reached. The increase in child benefit generosity is paralleled by a decrease in marriage subsidies in these countries (see Figure 2.9), which probably reflects a political ambition to make family support more gender neutral in a time period when the number of dual earner families increased dramatically. In the 1990s a decrease occurred in the Nordic countries with average child benefit generosity reaching 11 per cent in 2000. Welfare states with general family policy models have had

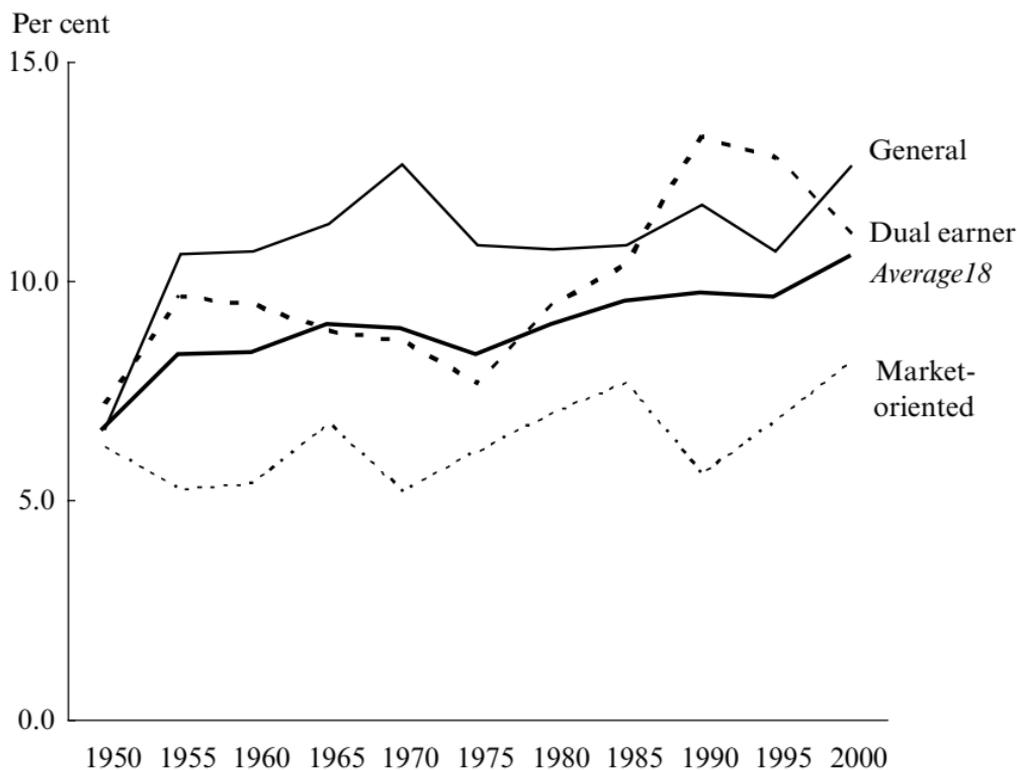
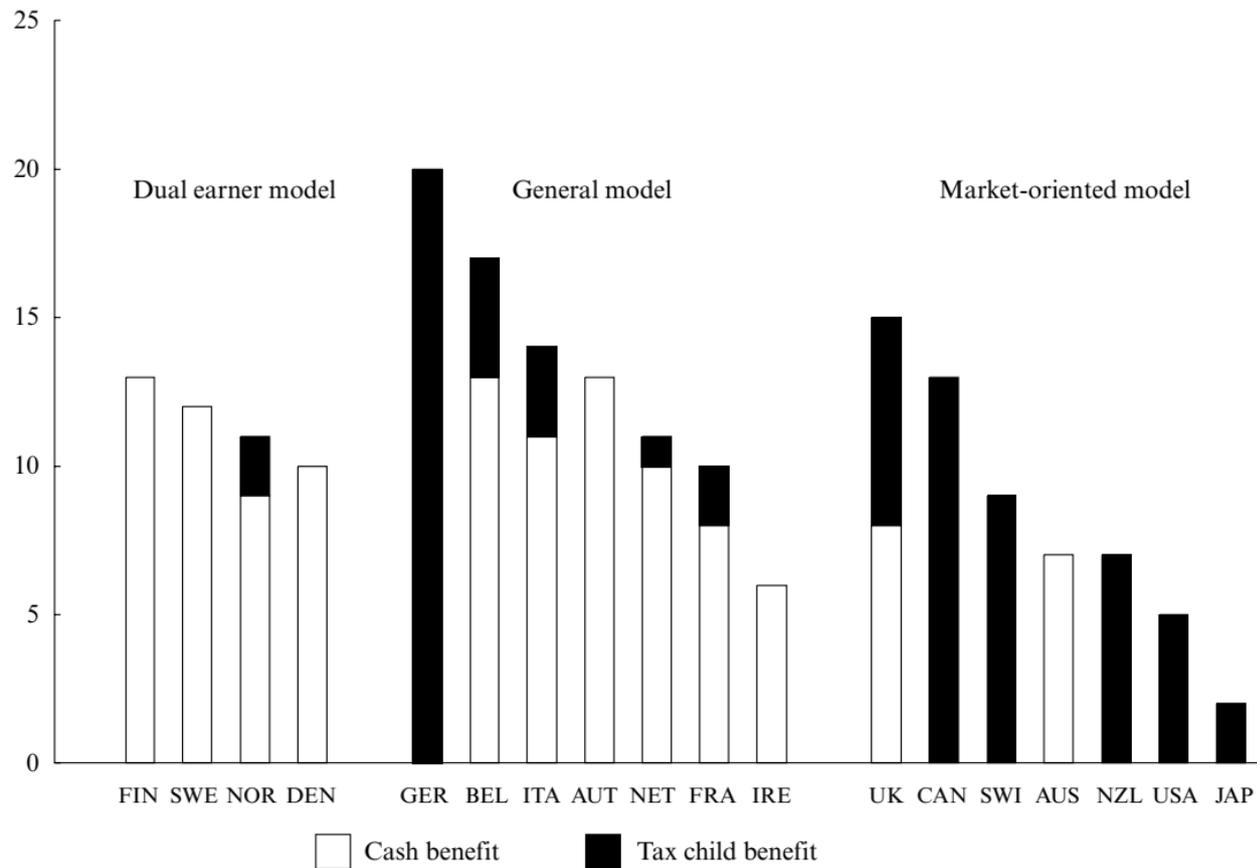


Figure 2.9 Average levels of child benefits in 18 countries 1950–2000, per cent of an average production worker's net wage

benefit levels of around 11 per cent for most of the period with two peaks of around 13 per cent in 1970 and 2000.

Relatively large cross-national differences in child benefit generosity and structure are evident from Figure 2.10, where countries are grouped according to family policy model in 2000. The separation of tax benefits from cash benefits shows that market-oriented countries to large extent provide such support via the tax system. Only Australia apparently relies only on cash benefits, but this reflects that families with children are given an option to choose between tax and cash benefits, and that cash benefits are higher for the type case used here. Tax benefits are also relatively common among general family policy model countries. In fact, Germany, that has reformed child benefits to a system entirely based on tax-transfers, has the highest benefit levels at around 20 per cent. Ireland, relying on cash benefits alone, has the lowest levels among these countries. Child benefits had by the end of the twentieth century also increasingly been subject to means-tests (Fausto 1998; O'Connor 1998; Shaver 1999; Nelson 2003), something that may introduce disincentives for parental labour force participation to the degree that benefits are decreased or lost when market income increases.



Source: SCIP

Figure 2.10 Child benefits in 18 countries in per cent of an average production worker's net wage in 2000

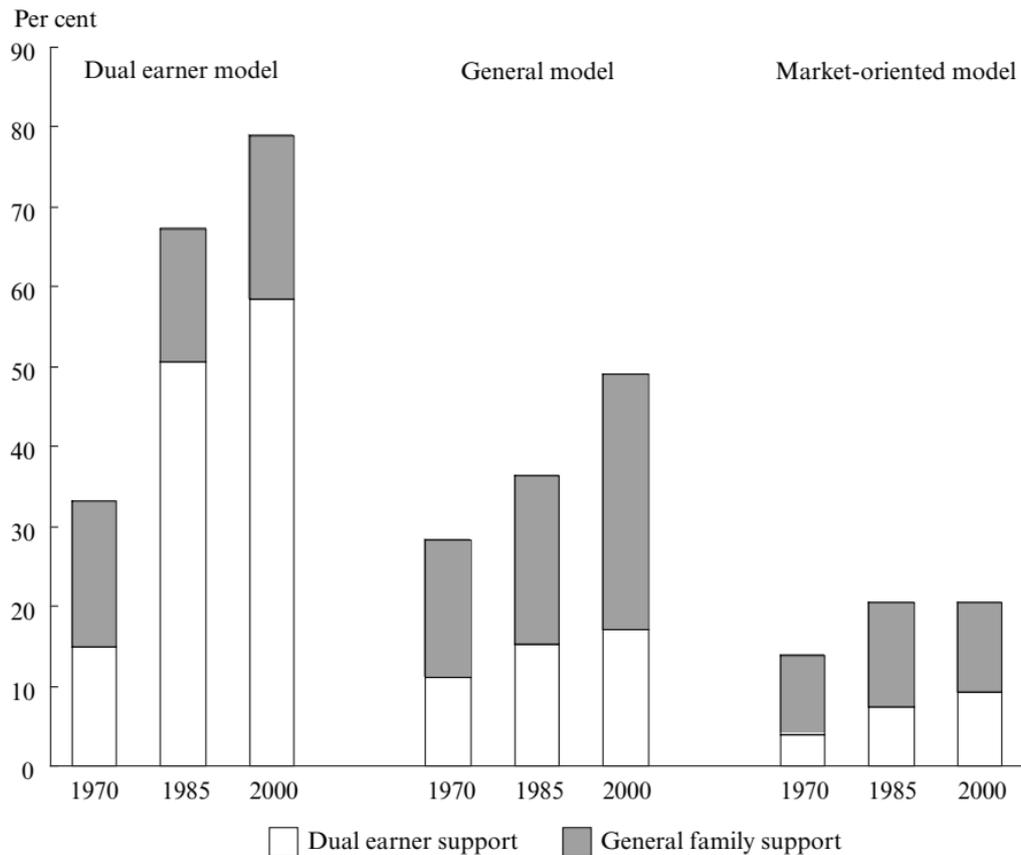
It should be pointed out that different countries may have used different family policy programmes to achieve similar goals. Given the research interests of this book to study how broad family policy settings are related to different determinants and outcomes, the next section orders child benefits, marriage subsidies and different parental leave benefits along the two family policy dimensions.

## TWO DIMENSIONS OF FAMILY POLICY

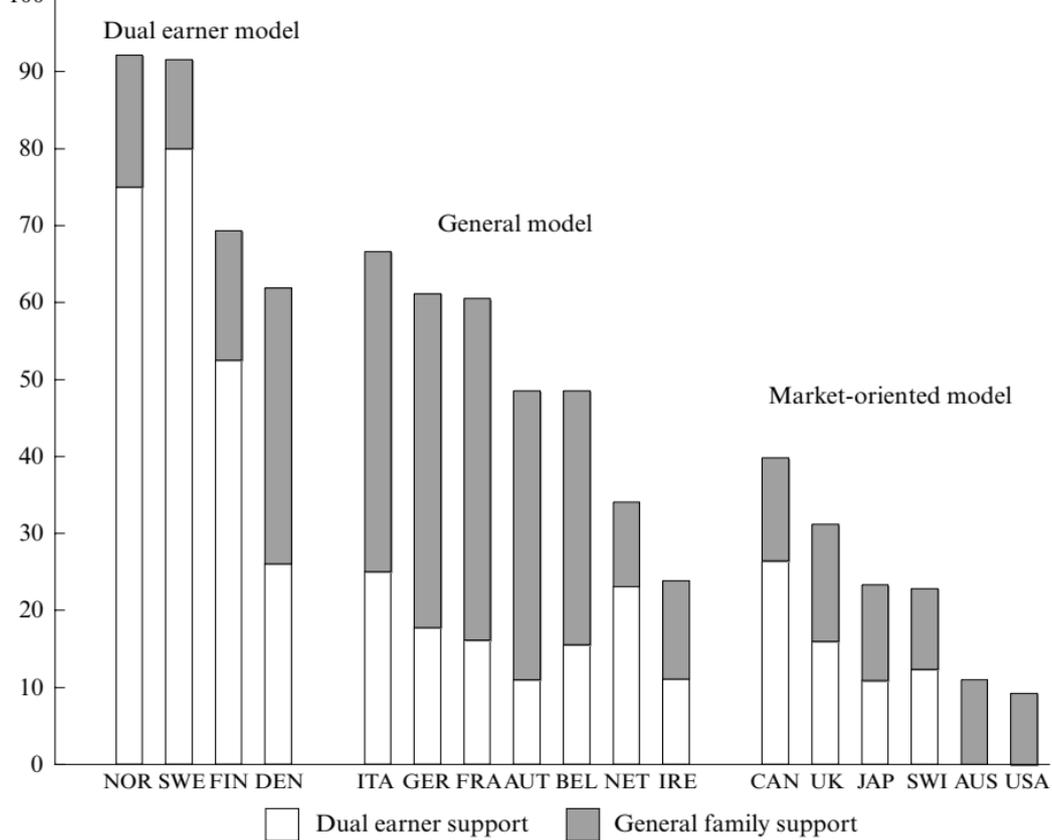
Various benefits may in different time periods have been used as alternative or complementary strategies to support families with dependent children in a particular institutional setting. In this section the total generosity of all family policy benefits is analysed along the two dimensions of family policy as described above. Childcare leave and maternity grants are grouped together with marriage subsidies and child benefits to constitute the general family policy dimension, by being directly supportive, or neutral to, more traditional gendered divisions of work. These benefits are similar in that they mostly are paid in relatively low flat-rate amounts, and thereby sustain traditional gendered distributions of work. Earnings-related parental insurance benefits, paid to the mother, the father, or to both parents, are included in a dual earner dimension of family policy as they actively attempt to change gender distributions of work.

Figure 2.11 shows the average levels of the two dimensions of family support in countries with different models of family policy in 1970, 1985 and 2000 respectively. The generosity is expressed as a percentage of an average net production worker's wage. The figure shows a strengthening of the dimensions underlying the separate family policy models over time. Market-oriented countries exhibit the smallest change and have the lowest average levels of both types of support for all three periods, with total generosity being around 20 per cent for the past decades. Welfare states with dual earner models have since the 1970s on average increased dual earner support to over 50 per cent of an average net production worker's wage. Support to traditional family patterns explains the main increase in countries with general family policy models, with general family support making up around two-thirds of total benefit generosity in 2000. It should, however, be noted that the average levels of dual earner support to different degrees increases in all countries over time.

Figure 2.12 shows the generosity of the two dimensions in different welfare states in 2000. Even if countries' provision systems generally are structured along the lines of overall family policy models, a few notable exceptions also exist. Denmark for example has relatively high levels of



*Figure 2.11 General family support and dual earner support in countries with different models of family policy as a percentage of an average production worker's net wage in 1970, 1985 and 2000*



Source: SCIP

Figure 2.12 General family support and dual earner support in 18 countries as a percentage of an average production worker's net wage in 2000

general family support, something which is partly explained by relatively generous marriage subsidies. Ireland has relatively low levels of general family support, more resembling levels of a market-oriented model in this respect. Canada, on the other hand, with its relatively high levels of parental insurance, does not neatly fit into a market-oriented world of family policy. High levels of both dual earner support and general family support in some instances could perhaps signal that a new model of family policy is coming into existence, a model with generous support to both the traditional family and the dual earner family.

In the following chapters these family policy dimensions are utilized in analyses of both potential causes and outcomes. The possibility to separate different aspects of family policy and letting each country score independently and continuously on both dimensions is expected to improve analyses of divergent underlying causes of institutional developments, as well as of links between institutions and outcomes, between countries as well as within countries and over time. In the upcoming section, the relationship between the family policy dimensions and the extent of services by the end of the observation period is evaluated.

## FAMILY POLICY TRANSFERS AND FAMILY POLICY SERVICES

As discussed above, transfers only constitute one aspect of the broader family policy models, another important characteristic being the structure of family policy services. It has been emphasized that services may work as a 'functional equivalent' to transfers in the area of family policy, and that it therefore is not sufficient to analyse such transfers separately when evaluating effects of family policy (see Rostgaard 2002a). The perhaps foremost situation where services and transfers could operate in this way is in the relationship between parental leave and public childcare for the youngest children. Generous duration of parental leave benefits is for example likely to crowd out the need for public childcare. On the other hand, in line with the multidimensional and institutional perspective that separates family policy in two separate dimensions (see Korpi 2000; Ferrarini 2003), it is probable that dual earner transfers are positively correlated with family policy services, since they often can be expected to be supportive of dual earner family patterns, for example regarding childcare to the youngest children and elder care.

Ideally a longitudinal and multidimensional perspective on gender structures of family policy should include information also on child and elder care since such services among other things are likely to affect the

abilities of parents to participate in paid work. As noted earlier, there prevails a general lack of comparable longitudinal data on family policy services. Comparable data on public family policy services for a larger number of countries exist mainly for the mid-1990s. By conducting straightforward bivariate analyses between family policy dimensions based on transfers and existing measures on family policy services for this point in time, the generalizability of indicators of family policy transfers also for broader family policy models is tested, at least for the time period concerned.

Two separate indicators of family policy services are used, on public childcare for the youngest children (aged 0–2) and public home care for elderly persons. The availability of public childcare for young children is frequently a precondition for female (as well as male) labour force participation, in particular during the child's early years, but also in the longer run. It is here important to separate public efforts from market-produced outcomes. This is not least central when we want to analyse the causal impact of the welfare state arrangements on for example gendered labour force participation. In dual earner models of family policy, highly developed services facilitate female labour force participation after parental leave, while a market-oriented model, by having low (or no) parental leave duration, pushes mothers into the labour market where they typically have to purchase informal or formal private childcare arrangements, that are publicly subsidized only to a smaller degree. In the first instance, female labour force participation to larger extent can be considered as more of an outcome of public childcare arrangements, whereas in the latter case childcare indicators to larger degree are an outcome of female labour force participation itself.

In order to evaluate the relationship between public transfers and public services, the analyses are restricted to indicators on the extent of public childcare coverage. Public home care for elderly persons that facilitate continued living in their homes decreases the demand for care from their children – in particular daughters, something that facilitates full-time labour force participation of women and men. The information used is on home care among persons over 65 years of age.<sup>24</sup>

Table 2.4 presents the patterns of correlations between the dimensions of family policy based on transfers and public services. The bivariate correlations between dual earner support and services are relatively strongly positive and significant, while correlations are weak and insignificant between support to traditional family patterns and family services. The Pearson's coefficient of correlation between dual earner support and childcare coverage for the youngest children is 0.60, while the corresponding figure for elder home care for individuals over 65 years is 0.63. An index of the two types of services has also been constructed, which when correlated with dual earner support

yields a positively significant coefficient of 0.65. Examining the data more closely shows that Denmark is the single influential case that affects the strength of the correlation, with the highest score on childcare and the second highest on elder home care. Removing Denmark strengthens all correlations between dual earner support and services, and the bivariate correlation with the service index is 0.82 with a sample of 17 countries. This result possibly illustrates that Denmark is a case where family policy transfers, in particular parental leave, and family policy services to the largest extent have worked as functional equivalents.

*Table 2.4 Associations between dimensions of family policy transfers and public services to children and elderly persons in 18 countries in the early to mid-1990s*

	Correlations	
	Dual earner support	General family support
<i>Proportion of children aged 0–2 using public childcare</i>		
18 countries	0.596**	0.149
17 countries <sup>a</sup>	0.773**	–0.043
<i>Proportion of elderly 65 years and over receiving home care</i>		
18 countries	0.627**	–0.043
17 countries <sup>a</sup>	0.665**	–0.161
<i>Family policy service index<sup>a</sup></i>		
18 countries	0.651**	0.104
17 countries <sup>a</sup>	0.818**	–0.089

*Notes:*

Correlations are Pearson's R. \* = significant at 0.05 level; \*\* = significant at 0.01 level.

<sup>a</sup> Denmark excluded.

<sup>b</sup> Average of proportion of the children aged 0–2 in public childcare and proportion aged over 65 using home care.

*Sources:* OECD (1996); Gornick *et al.* (1997), SCIP.

Overall results indicate that public family policy services as measured here and type of family support to a large degree are overlapping. The idea that transfers and services work as functional equivalents does not receive strong support in a macro-comparative perspective. This does of course not exclude the possibility that a substitution effect may exist between transfers and services in given national cases, with Denmark perhaps being the clearest

example of precisely such a case. Results thereby point to the fact that family policy transfers may function as an indicator also of broader patterns of family policy, at least regarding the latter part of the covered period. Of course it should be noted that public services is a complex concept that has many more dimensions to it than the ones examined here – other aspects than coverage that may be of interest for analysis are the extent and quality of public subsidies, as well as the number of hours of care per user. Further collection of such indicators is also needed to measure the long-run relationship between different aspects of family policy.

## DISCUSSION

The evidence presented above constitutes a record not of convergence, but in general rather of divergence in the institutional structure and generosity of family policy transfers among the advanced welfare states during the last three decades of the twentieth century. From the 1970s and onwards, a development of different strategies for provision of resources to families with children can be discerned, strategies that constitute the cornerstones of different models of family policy as delineated in the previous chapter. Outlining such general developments must not, however, obscure the fact that relatively large cross-national differences also exist between different programmes of family policy and within broader family policy clusters.

Three different types of transfers have been analysed: paid parental leave, marriage subsidies and child benefits. The development of parental leave benefits has been paid greater attention since this trend has not previously been analysed from a systematic institutional and longitudinal perspective. From the Second World War until the 1970s, parental leave programmes are characterized by a remarkable degree of institutional stability in all countries. A majority of countries had implemented maternity insurance benefits or maternity grants, and sometimes a combination of both. The father was rarely recognized explicitly as a potential carer, unless he was a widower, and parental leave legislation primarily supported the traditional gendered division of paid and unpaid work. Beginning in the 1970s, new parental leave benefits were implemented in many countries. The dual parental insurance programme introduced in Sweden in 1974 was soon to be followed by similar arrangements in the other Nordic countries, with the partial motive to modify the within-household division of paid and unpaid work and increase gender equality. Furthermore, paternity insurance in the form of so-called ‘daddy days’, which entitle fathers to earnings-related paid leave together with the mother and the newborn child, were also instated to change paternal perceptions and practices towards care work.

Another relatively recent institutional feature in paid parental leave is the childcare leave benefit. Whereas parental insurance payments are earnings-related, this benefit is designed as a continuation of parental insurance benefits and paid in low flat-rate amounts. Like dual parental insurance, childcare leave benefits in general entitle both parents to time off work, but the purpose of the latter benefit is not primarily to redress the division of paid and unpaid work. A more or less explicit motive behind the childcare leave benefit has instead often been to restore women to the role of homemakers, with varying degrees of permanency, and thereby to create vacancies on the labour market for unemployed men. Policymakers frequently also framed childcare leave benefits as a reform to increase the choice capacity of parents. Furthermore, in some Nordic countries childcare leave was also used to create an alternative to publicly subsidized childcare and reduce expenditure for such measures. In practice, however, regardless of motives, the institutional design of the benefit largely works to circumscribe individual agency around family-work reconciliation and preserve gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work.

In general, the institutional structures of parental leave benefits substantially correspond with more overall models of family policy. The four larger Nordic countries, with family policies oriented to support the dual earner family, include the father in earnings-related parental leave more extensively and thereby both provide support for female labour market participation and male partaking in care work. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, attempts to increase gender equality were not manifested only through the 'daddy days'. The stricter 'daddy quota' in dual parental insurance also introduced an individualization of paternal leave entitlements.

Countries with general models of family policy (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands), which primarily direct support to highly gendered divisions of labour, did not introduce dual parental insurance benefits at all during the observation period. Instead, policymakers mainly relied on maternity insurance with relatively modest levels of duration but high wage replacement. The introduction of flat-rate childcare leave benefits in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy is also in line with the underlying ambitions of this family policy model to preserve highly gendered divisions of work. In countries with a broad adherence to market solutions in family policy, mainly English-speaking ones, paid parental leave of all kinds is generally much less developed.

Benefits for a working person with a dependent spouse, so-called marriage subsidies, undergo an interesting development since the 1970s. While being relatively common in Nordic countries with dual earner models before this point in time, marriage subsidies were generally decreased during

the last decades of the twentieth century, at the same time as dual earner support was extended. In welfare states with general family policy models the development was the opposite, and many of these countries instead increased marriage subsidies from the 1970s. Countries with market-oriented models of family policy have on average had the lowest levels of this type of support throughout most of the period. Since marriage subsidies are paid via the tax system to the economically active spouse, and thereby work to uphold highly gendered divisions of labour, the development of this type of family support has strengthened cross-national differences along the lines of broader family policy models.

Child benefits paid in cash or via the tax system have on average been increased in the 18 countries throughout the period. It has here been argued that such flat-rate benefits are gender-neutral and do little to affect the division of paid and unpaid work within the family, and thereby belong to a general family support dimension. Even if cross-national variation in child benefits also is somewhat smaller than the other types of transfer, some important cross-national patterns can be discerned. Countries with general family policy models have typically had the highest average levels, while market-oriented welfare states on average have had the lowest levels of child benefits throughout the period. Dual earner countries increased child benefits from the 1970s to the 1990s, a development that is paralleled by a decrease in marriage subsidies – this parallel development may be interpreted as reflecting a shift towards a more gender-neutral form of family support. However, it should be noted that by the end of the observation period a relatively large within-cluster variation also exists in generosity of such benefits.

Even if findings in the study follow along the lines of broader family policy models several inconsistencies regarding the design of family policy legislation exist within countries, as well as between countries characterized by similarities in overall family policies. Such contradictions are among other things evident in the coexistence of different family programmes with opposing aims and potential effects on gender agency and the gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work. A striking example of this is found in the Nordic countries. Here, in addition to dual parental and paternity insurance leave, promoting gender equality in paid and unpaid work, childcare leave benefits have also been implemented, and these latter benefits can be said to potentially counteract the effects of the former institutions by re-cementing more traditional gender roles. Recently, some welfare states with general models of family policy have also implemented measures to increase paternal participation in infant care. For example, France and Belgium enacted three ‘daddy days’, while Austria and Belgium also introduced ‘daddy quotas’ in the childcare leave benefit. Another interesting case is

Canada, which is the only country beside the Nordic ones that has enacted dual parental insurance by the end of the observation period. Furthermore, concerning marriage subsidies Denmark has unexpectedly high levels of such support to highly gendered divisions of work. The existence of such potential policy contradictions point to the need for a closer examination of differing actors and motives behind recent reforms of family policy schemes in different countries.

Since the main research interest of the book is to analyse broad institutional strategies and because diverse benefits may have been used as optional or complementary policies in the provision of support to families with dependent children, family transfers were combined into the two dimensions of family policy. Earnings-related benefits, supportive of female paid work and to some extent also male care work, were categorized as making up the dual earner dimension of family policy, while mainly flat-rate benefits were included in the general family policy dimension, supportive of traditional gendered divisions of labour. With few exceptions these two dimensions follow along the lines of broader family policy models. Market-oriented welfare states typically had the lowest levels of both family policy dimensions during the last three decades of the twentieth century; general family policy model countries mainly increased support to highly gendered divisions of labour; while dual earner model countries increased earnings-related support. When analysing the correlations between these dimensions of family support and the extent of public services, such as childcare for the youngest children and elderly persons, strong positive correlations between the indicator of dual earner support and such services are shown, indicating that such transfers may function as an indicator of broader family policy models, at least as regards the latter part of the observation period.

The general trends of retrenchment that sometimes are thought to exist in modern welfare states have been said to be less visible regarding the wider domain of family policy (Kamerma and Kahn 2001). But large differences here also exist between different family transfer programmes. Child benefits have, for example, become increasingly means-tested among the highly industrialized welfare democracies (e.g. Fausto 1998; O'Connor 1998; Shaver 1999), while the general trends in paid parental leave legislation rather are towards extended benefit generosity, even if the latter trend occurs against the backdrop of large institutional differences.

Future developments in family policy in the advanced welfare democracies are difficult to predict, given multifaceted institutional developments. In light of the institutional diversity of family policy in Western countries and the inherent norms in such legislation about ideal gender divisions of work in a society, it is likely that this policy area continuously will be surrounded by ideological, political and economic conflict. The potential path dependency

of particular systems largely depends on their support among citizens. Korpi and Palme (1998) have shown that earnings-related and universal social insurance benefits are likely to generate greater popular support than flat-rate basic security benefits. It is likely that similar mechanisms operate within family policy transfer systems, even if more gendered logics also pertain to this socio-political field.

Supra-national developments may in some instances also affect family policy legislation to a larger degree than other parts of social insurance systems. The EU Directive on parental leave adopted in 1996 proclaiming that all employees, male or female, should be entitled to at least three months of unpaid leave after childbirth by 1999, has come a long way regarding the recognition of care work, but still leaves large cross-national differences in the valuation of unpaid work. Individual rights to unpaid leave are often not connected to individual rights to paid leave, and if they are, wage replacement in childcare leave systems is generally too low to encourage fathers to use parental leave. Furthermore, such legislation is often introduced against a backdrop of tax concessions for a dependent spouse which reinforces the highly gendered character of such childcare leave. In some countries an increasing individualization of earnings-related parental insurance is on its way. Sweden, for example, added a further 'reserved month' to parental insurance in 2002, and debates about extending such entitlements are ongoing (Duvander *et al.* 2005), and similar debates have also existed in other Nordic countries (International Reform Monitor 2001). Still it should be kept in mind that the welfare states with the largest degree of individualized benefits only target a fraction of total transfers on a truly individualized basis, and that the reconciliation of the conflict between paid and unpaid work in family policy legislation thereby has a long way to go.

## NOTES

1. Take-up rates and coverage are other important aspects of paid parental leave that are not covered in this book. Earlier studies of take-up and coverage do, however, suffer from the problem that different types of benefits are not separated. Bruning and Plantega (1999), for example, characterize leave entitlements directed to both parents as 'parental leave' regardless of whether they are unpaid, earnings-related, flat-rate or lump-sum payments.
2. Other important aspects of welfare state legislation that directly or indirectly may influence family-work conflicts include flexibility of labour market regulations and work life courses that permit family and work reconciliation, the existence of leave for the care of sick children, as well as the structure of laws surrounding gender discrimination.
3. It should, of course, be pointed out that the outcome of two identical leave institutions may be different where large differences in service provision exist.

4. Beside the four Nordic countries included in this study, Iceland is the fifth member of the Nordic Council of Ministers.
5. Paternity insurance here refers to the so-called 'daddy days' to be utilized together with the mother's leave, while 'daddy quotas' are included in dual parental insurance.
6. A more thorough description of the typology is found in the first chapter. It should be noted that important elements of parental leave legislation (for example daddy quotas, maternity grants and childcare leave benefits) are not included as indicators in Korpi's typology and that it therefore is an open question to what extent these aspects vary along the lines of the broader models of family policy discerned. The main usage of the typology here is, however, contextualizing and descriptive.
7. An introduction of a corresponding 'mummy quota' also paralleled the four-week daddy quota in Sweden.
8. Also Sweden had such a benefit during a short period in the mid-1990s.
9. The days of paternity leave are here divided by two since they are utilized simultaneously with maternity insurance leave. The corresponding figure is subsequently subtracted from maternity insurance duration in order to avoid double counting, and an overestimation of total parental insurance leave.
10. This duration refers to parental leave with maximum replacement levels. Some countries, for example Norway and Sweden, permit longer duration of paid leave with lower replacement levels.
11. New Zealand, for example, has a means-tested leave benefit directed to lone parents.
12. Maternity insurance benefits are not the only type of support directed to pregnant working women. In several countries special pre-natal social insurance benefits are granted when the childbearer is employed in work environments that may adventure the health of the mother or the unborn child (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Dumon 1991).
13. It should be pointed out that the qualifying period refers to eligibility for earnings-related parental insurance and that several countries, for example Finland, Germany and Sweden, provide minimum flat-rate benefits for non-eligible parents.
14. The use of a full year's average wage has its advantages and drawbacks. On one hand, a full wage to some extent exaggerates the size of maternity insurance benefits since women are both likely to work part-time and to have lower hourly earnings than men. The use of one half of the average wage would lead to higher earnings-replacement in some countries, either due to the use of purely flat-rate benefits existing in some countries in the early post-war period, or due to earnings-related benefits with relatively low income ceilings (for example Canada and Denmark). On the other hand, the full average wage used reflects an important agency-structuring aspect of parental leave, and more appropriately measures the opportunity costs of paternal utilization of leave in terms of wage replacement adequacy of benefits.
15. Danish parental leave is based on the same regulation as sickness insurance, which is earnings-related, but has a relatively low income ceiling, in practice making benefits flat-rate for most recipients. Korpi and Palme's (1998) typology based on sickness insurance and pensions institutions places Denmark outside a 'Nordic cluster', together with most market-oriented welfare states, in a basic security category of social policy.
16. New Zealand introduced parental leave as a social right in 2002 – the benefit is currently paid during 13 months, with a wage replacement of around 40 per cent of an average net wage.
17. On average, in a family with two earners and two children aged 0 and 5 where one spouse earns a full average production worker's wage and the other earns three-quarters of such a wage, the net weekly family income would be around 20 per cent lower if the spouse with the highest earnings utilizes leave than if the parent with the lower wage would do so. Of course this income loss increases with increasing gendered wage differentials.
18. Net benefit replacement rates in unemployment insurance constitute slightly less than 70 per cent of an average production worker's net wage in 1990 (Carroll 1999). Childcare leave was removed in Denmark in 2001 with the introduction of a further 26 weeks of dual parental insurance leave (Rostgaard 2002).

19. Childcare leave in Belgium can be used flexibly until the child is eight years old. Before this benefit was introduced Belgium had a system of 'career breaks' that were subject to employers' agreement. These benefits were not restricted to families with children, but provided paid leave for three to nine months.
20. Calculating parental leave benefits only during the child's first year of course underestimates the full impact of paid childcare leave when such benefits last longer than a year, in particular in the countries with relatively long parental insurance leave. To comprehensively evaluate the gender-structuring effect of childcare leave benefits after the child's first year it is, however, also necessary to take the availability of publicly subsidized childcare into account.
21. In order to simplify the presentation of net parental leave benefits, it is here assumed that the mother utilizes all parental leave benefits during the first year of the child's life. This assumption is of course more realistic concerning dual parental insurance with family eligibility than for daddy quotas with individual parental entitlement. Given the type case family used here this assumption does not alter conclusions about total generosity of such benefits.
22. Some aspects of child benefits have historically been designed to strengthen women's agency by directing support to the mother instead of the father (Wennemo 1994). In some dual earner countries with such arrangements, for example Sweden, it has recently been discussed whether benefits should not be reformed so that both parents are eligible recipients when they have joint custody of the child.
23. The type case family is a two parent family with a single earner with an average production worker's wage and a full-time homemaker with two children aged two and seven years.
24. For a thorough description of sources used see Appendix.

### 3. Politics of family support: determinants of different types of family policy transfers in 18 countries 1970–2000

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Family policy legislation in the welfare democracies was in the first decades following the Second World War primarily designed to uphold a traditional gendered division of work within families, supporting a male principal breadwinner and a female homemaker, and in this respect relatively little cross-national variation existed in institutional terms. At the time, such a strategy met little political opposition, but the ostensible consensus over the ideal gendered division of work in society was in the 1960s and the 1970s to be challenged more openly and vociferously. In many welfare states, support of the dual earner family was expanded and new programmes emerged to assist the reconciliation of work and family life, including a broad range of transfers and services, such as parental insurance and public childcare. The main response in other countries to the escalating incidence of families with two earners was instead to strengthen support to traditional gendered divisions of labour, for example through the increase of marriage subsidies, or by the introduction of flat-rate childcare leave benefits paid in cash or via the tax system. The rising institutional diversity within the area of family policy raises questions about the different underlying motives and structural factors determining this development. The potential impact of family policy institutions on women's well-being and choice capacity furthermore underscores the importance to also evaluate the impact of women's political agency on these developments.

While determinants of the development of social rights in social insurance programmes have been subject to extensive comparative study (see Korpi 1989; Palme 1990; Kangas 1991; Carroll 1999), family policy has with few exceptions (see Wennemo 1994; Montanari 2000; Huber and Stephens 2001; Ferrarini 2003) attracted less attention in this respect. The purpose of this chapter is to assess the impact of different macro-societal factors on the long-term development and cross-national variation of different types of family policy transfer programmes in 18 countries from 1970 to 2000, when

institutional diversity between countries in such legislation increased. A multidimensional approach is here used where support to more traditional gendered divisions of work and dual earner families is separated into two dimensions, thereby enabling an analysis of the different (or similar) factors that are related to their development. The analyses draw upon the new longitudinal data set on dimensions of family policy transfers, as provided by social welfare legislation, outlined in the previous chapter.

Using pooled time-series cross-section regressions, hypotheses on the role of partisan-political, constitutional and structural-economic factors for the development of different family policy dimensions are assessed, together with hypotheses on the role of female labour force participation and women's political mobilization. Whereas the former factors are well evaluated in quantitative literature on the development of the welfare state, the analysis of women's political power resources as an independent variable is a relatively neglected area of research.<sup>1</sup>

The analysis of separate family policy transfers can here be viewed as a test case, in the sense that statistical results on determinants of their development to some extent also may be valid for broader family policy developments, including other domains of family policy, such as public services and other types of legislation. The 18 included countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In the following section, the different theoretical approaches in explaining general welfare state and family policy development are discussed and the hypotheses to be tested in this study are formulated. Data and methodological issues are dealt with in the subsequent section followed by empirical examinations based on pooled cross-section time-series analysis. The chapter is concluded by a summary discussion.

## DETERMINANTS OF FAMILY POLICY

The development of social policy has in general been related to a broad range of partly contemporaneous factors. Major theoretical approaches include the 'logic of industrialism' perspective, with a structuralist and functionalist view of welfare state expansion; 'the power resources' approach, which sees social policy in a class-theoretical actor perspective; the 'state-centric' approach, *inter alia*, focusing on state organization and on the role of state officials; and the 'new politics' approach, emphasizing that other demographic, economic and institutional factors are responsible for retrenchment than what contributed to the emergence and growth of

welfare state institutions. The upsurge of gender theory in comparative social policy research during the past decade has, furthermore, highlighted the importance of gendered agency, both as a dependent and an independent factor in studies of welfare state development.

The 'logic of industrialism' perspective emphasizes the importance of demographic as well as economic determinants in the general development of social policy (Kerr *et al.* 1960; Cutright 1965; Wilensky and Lebeaux 1965; Wilensky 1975, 1976). Explanations in line with this view are essentially functionalist, and social policies are seen as a necessary means to uphold economic development in highly industrialized welfare states. Economic growth is, however, also seen as a necessary precondition for the expansion of social policy programmes. The beneficiary effect of social policy for society is generally assumed to be driving the development of such measures.

According to this theoretical perspective, the process of industrialization is thought to transform socioeconomic as well as family structures and increases the costs of having children in industrial societies as compared with those incurred in agrarian ones. Demographic factors, such as the age structure of the population, can thus be expected to play an important role in the institutional configuration of family policy transfers, since such policies are necessary for the reproduction of the labour force and for upholding economic growth in industrialized societies (Wennemo 1994). During several decades many welfare states witnessed decreasing fertility rates, at the same time as large population cohorts are reaching pension age (Chesnais 1996). A scenario where too few children are born to maintain the labour force, in combination with an increased proportion of the population outside the labour market due to old age, poses a long-run threat to state budgets and economic growth. A partial solution to this problem has been perceived to be an extension of family policy transfers, entailing a reduction of the costs of having children. Generous family policy transfers provided in cash or via the tax system are distributive measures that potentially can be used to influence individual's decisions over when to become parents or to increase the number of children in the family.

Another structural-economic factor potentially contributing to family policy development is unemployment. By and large it can be expected that increased unemployment levels generate pressures for cutbacks in social expenditures, including spending on paid parental leave programmes. It has, for example, been argued that macro-economic challenges, in particular unemployment, are important for understanding recent welfare state retrenchment (Castles 2001; Huber and Stephens 2001; Korpi and Palme 2003). On the other hand, in the comparative literature there is evidence that high unemployment levels in many instances have served as a motive for the

introduction and extension of family policy in consonance with gendered labour market concerns. The more or less temporary restoration of mothers to the role of housewives by the introduction of childcare leave benefits has here often been thought to relieve pressure on the labour market and create job opportunities for male workers (Schiersmann 1991; Fagnani 1998; Rostgaard *et al.* 1999), and the extension of marriage subsidies in many countries can perhaps be partly explained with a similar perspective.

In contrast to, or as a complement to, the more structuralist explanations of cross-national variations of social policy, class-theoretical and agency-oriented theories have also been advanced. Here an important alternative is the 'power resources approach' (Korpi 1983, 1985; Esping-Andersen 1985; for an overview see O'Connor and Olsen 1998). According to this view, social policy is an arena of distributive conflict between social and political actors with different interests and different political and economic power resources, with the degree and nature of inequality in a society being a central issue of contention.

Parties of the political left are generally thought to be more positive towards extending social rights, including family benefits, and thereby towards intervening in market processes, than are centrist and conservative parties (Kangas 1991; Wennemo 1994; Huber and Stephens 2000; Korpi 2000; Montanari 2000). In recent decades, left parties have also been more positive towards extending family policy measures that support female labour force participation and male participation in care work. It has, for example, been suggested that Social Democratic parties played an important role in the development of a dual earner model of family policy in the Nordic countries, in which generous dual parental insurance benefits and well-developed public childcare are important institutional components. Thus, it has been argued that the ideology of class equality seems to gradually have been extended to gender relations (Korpi 2000).

Among the centrist or conservative political parties, Christian Democratic or confessional ones usually are more positive towards political market intervention than are the secular parties. Confessional parties tend to favour increased public spending on social policy transfers that often are earnings-related but which exclude large groups of individuals with weak labour market attachment (Esping-Andersen 1990; Van Kersbergen 1991; Carroll 1999). Such parties are, however, also likely to structure social policy around ideological commitments to the Catholic social doctrine, favouring a family policy which supports the traditional gendered division of labour within the family. Similar patterns are also found to exist where Protestants form major constituencies for Christian Democratic parties (Van Kersbergen 1991). This need, however, not mean that family policies are poorly developed in countries with strong confessional political tendencies, but instead that these

policies are oriented towards preserving traditional family patterns rather than towards supporting the dual earner family (Korpi 2000). As shown in Chapter 2 of this book, welfare states with general family policy models tend to rely on maternity insurance benefits with high replacement rates but relatively short duration, in many instances coupled with flat-rate childcare leave benefits and marriage subsidies aimed at maintaining the gendered division of paid and unpaid work. Earlier research has shown positive effects of confessional party strength on child benefits and marriage subsidy generosity (Montanari 2000) as well as on parental leave benefits supportive of traditional family patterns (Ferrarini 2003; Morgan and Zippel 2003).

Furthermore, state structure is a factor that has received increasing interest in the comparative study of the development of welfare state institutions (see Skocpol and Amenta 1986). One important aspect of the organization of states that may shape social policy reform (and retrenchment) is state constitutional structure. This is not to say that economic interests and organized groups do not influence social policy expansion, but that state constitutional structures may introduce constraints on pressures from such forces. A constitutional structure that disperses political power and introduces multiple veto points is thus likely to slow down welfare state expansion, as well as, potentially, rapid contraction. The existence of many constitutional veto points may, for example, enable small groups of special interests to block the passage of extensive reform legislation (Huber *et al.* 1993; Huber and Stephens 2000).

The 'new politics perspective' emphasizes that processes of retrenchment are different from those of welfare state growth. Economic, demographic and socio-political developments are thought to create pressures for cutbacks in social policy programmes, cutbacks that are unpopular and largely resisted by interest groups and voters. Politicians therefore have to use periods of budgetary crises as opportunities for cutbacks or curtailing social policy spending in less visible ways (Pierson 1994, 1996). The new politics perspective seems less applicable on programmes of family policy than on other domains of social policy systems, since the generosity of such benefits in general has been increased, or at least preserved (see Kahn and Kamerman 2001; and Chapter 2 in this book), throughout a period when welfare states are supposed to have been subject to general retrenchment pressures.

As discussed in the previous chapters of this book, the extensive potential of family policy to structure gender relations and organize the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work in families has made this policy area a central study object for gender-oriented analyses of the welfare state. However, cross-national studies of family policy with such a perspective commonly focus on the relationship between welfare state institutions and gendered

outcomes, for example on the link between family policy arrangements and female labour force participation (for example Gornick *et al.* 1996; Ruhm and Teague 1995) or the extent of poverty among single mothers (for example Hobson and Takahashi 1997; Solera 1998).

Relatively few quantitative studies have analysed the impact of women's agency on recent developments of family policy institutions in comparative perspective. Comparative inquiries that aim to evaluate the impact of female agency on family policy institutions often centre on the formation of family policy programmes in the early twentieth century (Koven and Michel 1995; Wennemo 1994). At the same time, quantitative studies focusing on determinants behind recent changes in family policy institutions most often restrict the analysis to the impact of class-based interests (Wennemo 1992; Korpi 2000; Montanari 2000). On the other hand it has also been claimed that it is not women's interests but class-based male interests that have been the prime driving force behind family policy development (Pateman 1988; Lewis 1992; Hakim 2003).

Huber and Stephens's (2000) analysis of determinants of welfare state service expansion constitute one of few recent attempts to integrate women's political power as an explanatory factor for recent welfare state development in a broader comparative perspective. This mobilization is measured by the multiplicative interaction between female labour force participation and left party governance. It is maintained by the authors that the success of women's claims on the state not only is likely to depend on the number of women in the labour force, but also on the possibilities to build alliances between gender and class interests, in particular with parties of the left which more often have an interest in welfare state sector expansion. Their indicator of female agency is found to have a significantly positive impact on the expansion of public service employment.

I agree with Huber and Stephens that it is important to analyse the impact of female agency on the development of welfare state institutions, in particular on social policy institutions with potential to extensively structure gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work. Nevertheless, it could be argued that their measure of female agency captures the extent of women's power resources in a very indirect manner, and that a more precise measure of female political agency could be worked out for the explanation of the development of family policy institutions.<sup>2</sup> Gendered access to policymaking bodies is a factor that can be hypothesized to have an impact on several domains of the welfare state, not least regarding policies of relevance for women's possibilities to participate on the labour market (Davis 1997). One way to measure women's potential influence on political decisions is to include in the analyses the extent to which women are represented in direct decision-making positions in governments.<sup>3</sup>

It is frequently pointed out that various explanatory factors are likely to affect different aspects of the welfare state in different ways, in particular variables measuring actor-oriented determinants. In several studies of both welfare state expenditure (Huber *et al.* 1993; Huber and Stephens 2000) and of different state-legislated social rights (Korpi 1989; Palme 1990; Kangas 1991; Wennemo 1994; Carroll 1999) it is shown that, for example, leftist and Christian Democratic incumbency have somewhat diverging effects depending on which aspect of the welfare state is under investigation. It is likely that this also holds when the development of different dimensions of family policy institutions are analysed, given the different political objectives of socio-political actors and the potential of such benefits to structure gender agency. Korpi (2000) shows that the cumulative strength of different political tendencies, such as parties of the left and confessional parties, is highly correlated with the broader model of family policy implemented by the mid-1990s.

I will here elaborate on the two dimensions of family support delineated in the preceding two chapters, along the lines which welfare states can be said to structure family policies and family patterns. The dual earner support dimension includes earnings-related benefits directed to mothers, fathers and both parents, which promote female labour market participation, and to some degree also male participation in care work. The second dimension, general family support, on the other hand includes benefits that mainly are paid in flat-rate amounts and to large extent maintain highly gendered divisions of paid and unpaid work.

## **Hypotheses**

On the basis of the theoretical considerations discussed above, different hypotheses can be derived. On the grounds of a power resources approach it can be hypothesized that long-run incumbency of left political parties should have a positive relationship to family policy transfer generosity in general, and that the positive influence should be stronger for programmes supporting the dual earner family than for benefits that support the traditional family. Incumbency of Christian Democratic parties is on the other hand expected to be negatively related to dual earner support while having a positive effect on general family support, given the supposed underlying motivations of such actors to encourage traditional family patterns.

According to more functionalist thinking, fertility levels as well as the degree of economic development can be hypothesized to influence family policy. The demographic factor is here expected to have a negative correlation with family policy transfers. Increasing costs of having children and cross-nationally declining levels of fertility are thus expected to increase family

policy transfers to decrease costs of child-raising and uphold childbirths – correspondingly, where fertility levels are higher, less pressure exists for compensating for such pressures by family policy transfers. In a similar perspective, a high and rising level of economic development is seen as a precondition for a general expansion of social policy, and can therefore be hypothesized to have a positive relationship with family policy transfer generosity. According to a structural-economic view, unemployment could be expected to decrease family policy transfers by exerting pressures on cutbacks in state budgets. On the other hand, to the extent that such benefits are used as labour market measures, high unemployment can instead be hypothesized to increase family policy generosity.

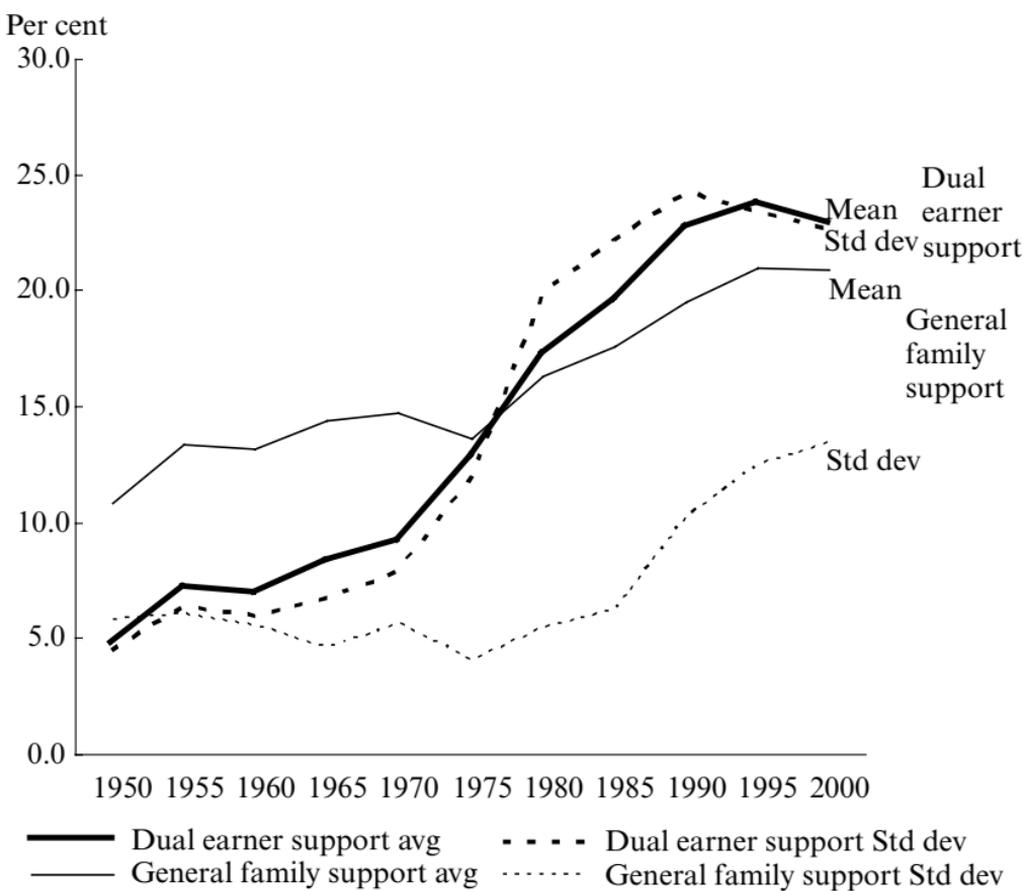
The presence of veto points in state constitutional structure is likely to be negatively related to family policy generosity by constraining expansion of such legislation. High proportions of female members in cabinets are, finally, hypothesized to increase probabilities of the expansion of family policy benefits in support of a dual earner family, while a considerably weaker, if not reversed, correlation could be expected regarding family policy benefits in support of the traditional family.

## DATA AND METHOD

The two separate dependent variables used here are based on SCIP-data, and both capture the net yearly generosity of benefits measured as a percentage of a production worker's average net wage. The first variable, dual earner support, comprises the net generosity of parental leave benefits in support of the two-earner family, including maternity insurance, paternity insurance and dual parental insurance. The second dependent variable, general family support, is constituted by the generosity of provision to traditional gendered divisions of labour, and includes flat-rate childcare leave benefits, lump-sum maternity grants, marriage subsidies and child benefits paid in cash or via the tax system.<sup>4</sup>

In the first two decades after the Second World War, dual earner support consisted of maternity insurance benefits, which at the time underwent only modest increases in average net replacement rates and duration. In the same period benefit generosity of dual earner support also remained relatively stable, below 10 per cent of an average production worker's net wage (Figure 3.1).<sup>5</sup> From the 1970s until the mid-1990s, however, the average generosity of dual earner support almost tripled – largely due to the expansion of dual parental insurance, providing earnings-related benefits to both parents, and the extension of earnings-related maternity insurance duration.

Benefits within the general family support dimension, which mainly uphold traditional family patterns, have relatively stable average levels at around 13 per cent of an average net wage until the mid-1980s, when a marked increase in benefit generosity occurs. The main explanation for this general trend lies in the introduction of childcare leave benefits in an increasing number of countries, entitling parents to flat-rate benefits paid in continuation of parental insurance leave.



*Figure 3.1 Average net generosity of dual earner support and general family support in 18 countries 1950–2000. Per cent of an average production worker's net wage*

The existence of large and rising cross-national differences in benefit generosity of dual earner support is reflected in the standard deviations presented in Figure 3.1. This measure indicates that cross-national variation in family policy generosity undergoes the greatest increase in the 1970s for dual earner support, while the major increase in general family support begins in the mid-1980s.

Table 3.1 presents descriptive statistics for all variables. The political variables, the strength of left (LEFTCAB) or Christian Democratic parties (CONCAB), are measured as the respective parties' cumulative share of cabinet seats from 1950 until the observation year of the dependent variable. This captures the long-term power incumbency of different political tendencies, which may be decisive for the possibilities to implement and extend substantial social insurance transfer programmes. The female labour force participation rate (FEMLAB) is the female labour force participation rate among women aged 20–44 as a proportion of the female population in the same age interval. Female share of cabinet (FEMCAB) is the average proportion of cabinet portfolios held by women during the five years preceding the observation year.

*Table 3.1 Regression variables for 18 countries 1970–2000*

Variable	Definition	Mean	Std. Dev
DUAL	Dual earner support net generosity	0.186	0.205
GENSUP	General family support net generosity	0.175	0.092
CONCAB	Cumulative confessional proportion of cabinet (1950 until observation year)	1.792	2.390
LEFTCAB	Cumulative left proportion of cabinet (1950 until observation year)	2.433	2.021
FEMCAB	Women's proportion of cabinet portfolios	0.124	0.116
FEMLAB	Female labour force participation among women aged 20–44	0.639	0.143
UNEMP	Unemployment rates	0.056	0.035
GDP	GDP in constant US dollars (1000s in PPPs, 1995 prices)	18.409	4.652
FERT	General fertility rate	1.843	0.417
CONSTR	Constitutional structure (constitutional veto points index)	2.111	2.033

*Sources:* see Appendix.

The economic level of development is measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in thousands of dollars (constant) based on Purchasing Power Parities in prices of 1995. Fertility levels (FERT) are expressed as the general fertility rate for women aged 15 to 44. Unemployment (UNEMP) is the total number of unemployed as a share of the labour force. Constitutional structure (CONSTR) measures the presence of 'constitutional veto points'.<sup>6</sup>

The analytical technique used in this chapter is pooled time-series cross-section analysis, which combines cross-sectional data with time-series.<sup>7</sup> This method is useful in comparative research with few countries since it increases the number of available observations and enhances the potential to control for independent variables. The method is, however, not without potential pitfalls. When pooling observations, only one coefficient is produced for the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, since the unit of analysis is the intersection of time and space (in this study a 'nation-year'). It has been emphasized that different causal processes may be responsible for time and space variations. One factor could explain cross-national variation in a dependent variable at a given point in time, whereas another factor accounts for the variation in the same variable over time. Since only one coefficient summarizes the time and space effects of an independent variable in the pooling of observations, it is in fact assumed that the causal effect is the same across the units of analysis (Shalev 1998). Thus the method may fail to test more elaborate hypotheses that specify particular causal effects in time or space.<sup>8</sup>

Another methodological issue constituted by the choice of analytical model. It has been shown that the use of multivariate ordinary least square analysis (OLS) on pooled time-series cross-section data produces errors that among other things are temporally auto-regressive, cross-sectionally correlated and heteroscedastic. A proposed solution to these problems has been the use of the so-called Parks-Kmenta model. It has, however, been argued that this model tends to underestimate standard errors and produce an overestimation of *t*-statistics as the number of countries approaches the number of years (Hicks 1994). Beck and Katz (1995) show that these problems may be severe, with an overestimation of *t*-statistics with over 200 per cent in a case with around 18 countries and a similar amount of time points. The application of such a method in this study could lead to even greater problems since the number of countries is twice as large as the number of time units.

For data sets with few observations and more units than time points, Beck and Katz (1995) propose methodological measures to deal with this problem: panel corrected standard errors and correction for first-order auto-regressiveness, using the same common Rho for all countries.<sup>9</sup> This method is applied in the empirical analyses below and regressions are also run with unit dummy variables for countries where model estimations so permit in other respects.

The choice to restrict the analysis to the time period 1970 to 2000 is motivated by theoretical as well as methodological reasons. Complete data are not available for dependent as well as independent variables outside this time frame. Furthermore, as noted above, most democratic welfare states

mainly directed support to the traditional family in the decades immediately following the Second World War, and only relatively small cross-national differences therefore existed in family policy entitlements during the first two post-war decades.

## REGRESSION ANALYSES

In the following analyses on both dependent variables, two different pooled time-series cross-section regression models are estimated for each dependent variable, dual earner and general family support, with the technique outlined in the previous section. One model includes all explanatory variables except constitutional structure and uses country dummies, while the other model includes the indicator on constitutional structure. Due to the limited inter-temporal variation in the indicator of constitutional structure, the models including this variable are run without country dummies.

The regression analyses show that the development and cross-national variation of the two types of family policy partly have different determinants. First we turn to analysis of the dual earner dimension of family policy. Table 3.2 presents unstandardized coefficients from the regressions of dual earner support and general family support on the independent variables for the period 1970 to 2000.

The results are congruent with the hypotheses derived from actor-oriented explanations of welfare state development, whereas hypotheses derived from structural-economic theories in general seem less successful in systematically explaining the development and cross-national variation of family policy transfers. Confessional as well as left party government has the hypothesized correlations with dual earner support generosity in both models (1 and 2). Left incumbency has a positive and significant relationship to the degree of dual earner support, while Christian Democratic incumbency has a negative correlation with this dimension of family policy. Also in accordance with theoretical expectations, gendered direct access to decision-making bodies is positively correlated with support of the dual earner family in both models.

The introduction of constitutional structure in the second model reveals that this factor is of importance as regards the development of dual earner support. Constitutional structure has the expected negative sign, indicating that the number of constitutional veto points hinders the development of social rights, but the coefficient is insignificant.<sup>10</sup> Running the regression with constitutional structure does not alter the main effects of the main explanatory variables; with the exception that confessional incumbency still is negative but not significant. The overall conclusion is that actor-based

theories and constitutional structure have the largest explanatory mileage regarding family policy development.

*Table 3.2 Unstandardized coefficients from pooled time-series cross-section regression of dual earner support and general family support on independent variables for 18 countries 1970–2000 (standard error within parentheses)*

Independent variables	Dual earner support		General family support	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
CFCAB	–0.017* (0.010)	–0.001 (0.006)	0.031*** (0.010)	0.015** (0.006)
LTCAB	0.026** (0.013)	0.029*** (0.009)	0.011 (0.009)	0.006 (0.007)
GDP	0.004 (0.040)	–0.005 (0.004)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.006 (0.004)
FEMLAB	0.278* (0.159)	0.292* (0.158)	–0.067 (0.085)	0.117 (0.097)
FERT	0.030 (0.032)	0.016 (0.028)	0.069*** (0.020)	–0.001 (0.003)
UNEMP	0.206 (0.406)	–0.135 (0.360)	0.659*** (0.227)	0.168 (0.239)
FEMCAB	0.217* (0.129)	0.370** (0.151)	–0.126 (0.114)	–0.015 (0.098)
CONSTR		–0.017** (0.009)		–0.010 (0.007)
Constant	–0.302** (0.126)	0.046 (0.114)	–0.198*** (0.068)	0.066 (0.071)
Common Rho	0.435	0.644	0.226	0.599

\* $p < 0.10$  \*\* $p < 0.05$  \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

*Note:*

Country dummies in Models 1 and 3 not reported in the table.

The structural-economic variables, GDP, fertility and unemployment fail to attain significant correlations with dual earner support. The direction of the relationships between several of the structural-economic variables and the dependent variable, furthermore, are inconsistent between the two first models. Increased per capita income thus would seem to decrease the generosity of dual earner support when controlling for constitutional structure, while functionalist theory would predict the reversed relationship.

Similarly, fertility levels are positively related to paid parental leave in support of the dual earner family, whereas it was expected that low fertility rates instead should increase such family support. This result could be due to several factors, including demographic make-up of the sub-population of women in childbearing ages as well as reversed causality, as analysed in the next chapter. Female labour force participation is positively correlated with the development of dual earner support. On the one hand this result could be given a structural-functionalist interpretation, meaning that increases in female labour force participation generate pressures on expanding support to the dual earner family. However, it is also likely that this factor reflects aspects of female political and union mobilization not captured by this particular indicator of female elite-level agency (for a discussion see Huber and Stephens 2000).

Turning to the other dimension of family policy, general family support, the results between the two models are somewhat less consistent (see Models 3 and 4 in Table 3.2). The political variables have the expected correlations with generosity of benefits supportive of traditional divisions of labour. Confessional and left shares of cabinet seats are positively correlated with general family support in both models, but only Christian Democratic incumbency is significant in both models. Women's cabinet shares have a negative correlation with support to the traditional family in both models, but are not significant. Christian Democratic governance thus, in line with the hypothesis, seems to increase support to traditional family patterns. The evidence for left parties having the same effect on this dimension of family policy is weaker, but the direction of the correlation possibly indicates that parties of the left favour expanding support to the dual earner family during the studied time period. Similarly, the correlation between the share of women in cabinets and support to traditional family patterns is negative, in agreement with the expectations, but the insignificant result also indicates that further analyses of the impact of female agency are needed regarding this family policy dimension.

The evidence for the structural-economic factors shows substantial inconsistencies between Models 3 and 4. Per capita income, female labour force participation, fertility and unemployment have significant coefficients in Model 3, where country dummies are included. The gross domestic product has the hypothesized positive correlation, indicating that higher national incomes tend to increase general family support. Unemployment levels are also positively related to general family support, as are fertility rates. Female labour force participation is negatively related to support of traditional family patterns. When constitutional structure is introduced and unit dummy variables are dropped in the fourth model, all structural-economic variables fail to pass the significance test. Constitutional structure

has the expected negative correlation with benefit generosity, possibly also here indicating that the presence of constitutional veto points may hinder the introduction of support to traditional family patterns, but as compared with the analysis of dual earner support the result is not significant.

Above it was hypothesized that different agency-oriented determinants should have diverging impacts on different dimensions of family policy. To a large extent the results are congruent with such hypotheses. The diverging correlations of Christian Democratic governance with the different dimensions of family policy is in line with the expectation that Christian Democrats are negative towards the extension of transfers in support of the dual earner family, and more positively oriented towards expanding policies that maintain traditional family patterns. Female political power resources at the elite level, as measured by women's cabinet shares, has a positive and significant association with dual earner support while being negatively correlated, although insignificantly, with support to the traditional family. Left party incumbency is positively related to parental leave generosity in support of the dual earner family as well as that in support of the traditional family – although insignificantly in the latter case, possibly both reflecting such actors' positive view towards interventions in market processes as well as towards female labour force participation.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of determinants behind family policy has been a less developed field of comparative research, which is somewhat surprising given the underlying motives and gender ideologies encoded in such policies. What is even more surprising in this perspective is that gender agency, with few exceptions, has not been paid closer attention in this field of research. The aim of this chapter has been to analyse the relationship between different macro-societal determinants, including gender agency, and the long-term development of divergent family policy strategies in 18 welfare democracies. Different actor-based hypotheses as well as structural-economic hypotheses have been evaluated. The analyses indicate that the different theories have different explanatory potential depending on whether support of the dual earner family or support to more traditional family patterns is evaluated. The results largely sustain actor-based explanations of welfare state development, both regarding class-political factors and gendered access to political decision-making. Actor-based theories seem to have the most extensive explanatory value in accounting for the development of family policy benefits that support the dual earner family.

The results may reflect political struggles around the gendered division of paid and unpaid work in modern societies, where the development of support to the dual earner family perhaps stands out as the most important field of those considered here for class-political and gender conflict. Christian Democratic incumbency has a negative impact on the development of dual earner support, something that is in accordance with the tradition of such parties to structure social policy along ideological commitments to religious doctrines, guided by a negative approach towards female labour force participation as well as male care work. Leftist governance on the other hand, is positively related to the development of family policy benefits supportive of the dual earner family, possibly reflecting that Social Democratic equality ideals have been extended from class to gender relations.

However, not only class-political factors appear important for an expansion of family support; also gender agency appears to have an impact on the development of dual earner support. Gendered access to decision-making bodies, as indicated by the share of women in cabinets, has a positive correlation with the development of this type of family policy, while being negatively, but insignificantly, correlated with family policy transfers in support of highly gendered divisions of work. This indicates that preferences for family friendly policies that assist the reconciliation of work and family to a large extent are gendered. Constitutional structure exercises a negative impact on both dimensions of family policy, but is only significant regarding the analyses of dual earner support, indicating that the effect of political power resources to some extent is mediated by constitutional structure. Structural-economic hypotheses, on the influence of the economic level of development, total fertility levels, and unemployment in general, seem to do little to enhance our understanding of the cross-national development of paid parental leave, as the results are inconclusive.

One major conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that the distribution of power resources between different political actors, sometimes in combination with state constitutional structure, seems to have the best mileage when explaining the development of different programmes of family policy in the last decades of the twentieth century. It has here been shown that not only class-political dimensions seem to matter for the advancement of such benefits, but also the representation of women in governments. This calls for further analyses on the impact of female agency on social policy development, as well as on analyses of the interaction between class and gender agency in the constitution of welfare state institutions. Such analyses could perhaps also extend to other parts of welfare state legislation surrounding social policy, such as social services directed to children and the elderly, as well as to gender-relevant aspects of pension systems and core income maintenance programmes. The results presented so far indicate that

institutions of family policy continuously have been subjects for political and gender conflict in the advanced welfare democracies, and it can be assumed that future developments in this area in large part are likely to depend on the relative strength of different class-political and gender interests.

## NOTES

1. Exceptions can, for example, be found in the work of Skocpol *et al.* (1993), Wennemo (1994: 32–39) and more recently Huber and Stephens (2000) and Ferrarini (2003).
2. Female labour force participation has also been viewed as an outcome of social policy and not only a driving force (Stryker and Eliason 2002).
3. Ideally an indicator of the strength of women's movements would also be included, but the possibilities to find theoretically relevant and quantifiable data on this factor seem small, at least for all countries and years here included.
4. For a more detailed description of data sources and measurement issues, see Chapter 2 and Appendix.
5. Generosity is measured as the total net post-natal parental leave benefits for the child's first year as a share of a net average production worker's wage. The parent on leave is assumed to have earned an average production worker's wage.
6. The index is based on five items and ranges between 0 and 7: the strength of federalism, the existence of presidentialism, the strength of bicameralism, extensive use of popular referenda and the degree to which single member voting districts or proportional representation exists. For a closer specification of this data see Huber *et al.* (1993, 1997).
7. Technically a pooled data set is constituted by cross-sectional data on  $J$  spatial units (for example countries) and  $T$  time periods (for example years) to produce a data set of  $J \times T = N$  observations. If data for 18 countries for every fifth year from 1970 to 2000 are studied, the data set of 18 countries and seven time points yields 126 observations.
8. Freedman (1991) also points out that current social science theory seldom provides us with the requisite level of technical detail for deriving specifications for our regression models.
9. In a later article by Beck and Katz (1996), the use of a lagged dependent variable is proposed instead of a correction for serially correlated error. However, this method has been held to transform the analysis to one of short-term change effects, which is undesirable for both methodological and theoretical reasons. Furthermore, the use of levels makes the study comparable to the main body of studies on welfare state determinants (Korpi 1989; Huber and Stephens 2001).
10. I here follow the convention of not presenting goodness of fit measures (Beck and Katz 1995; Huber and Stephens 2000), instead concentrating on the interpretation of regression coefficients.  $R^2$ s from Ordinary Least Square are 0.743, 0.362, 0.537 and 0.196 in the four respective models.

## 4. Family policy, fertility and women's work: consequences of family support on childbearing and female labour force participation in 18 welfare states 1970–2000

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Two of the most dramatic processes of change in modern welfare democracies are the mounting levels of female labour force participation and the long-term decreasing levels of fertility. A frequently asked question has been whether women in these societies accommodate employment to their fertility or whether they instead adjust fertility to their labour market behaviour. One answer may be that they do both (Brewster and Rindfuss 2000). Still, substantial differences in female labour market behaviour and fertility exist in the advanced welfare states, and it has been suggested that the patterns of such behaviour in different countries are influenced by the structure of national family policy settings (see Chesnais 1996; Korpi 2000). The ways in which welfare states organize family policy transfers and services may have great consequences for mothers' abilities to reconcile paid and unpaid work, and large cross-national differences in these areas of family policy are also well documented (see Chapter 2). It is, however, less clear how institutional differences in family policy are related to divergent behavioural outcomes. The previous body of comparative studies often indicate a positive relationship between the generosity of family policy transfers, childbearing and women's work, but have often neglected that different dimensions of family policy may have diverging outcomes (Ferrarini 2003).

The rationale of studying effects of different dimensions of family policy on fertility as well as on female labour force participation is related to the questions of whether institutions of family policy create a trade-off between career and family life, or whether they enable women to choose both labour force participation and children. This is of interest both with respect to gender equality and with wider economic respect to the changing age structures of populations in mature welfare democracies. The ageing of populations in such countries increases demands for female labour as well

as for fertility levels sufficiently high to reproduce the existing workforce. It has been suggested that the low fertility rates in many advanced industrial societies are reflecting women's relatively low status, and that increased status for women may increase fertility (Chesnais 1996). Along a similar line of thought, McDonald (2000) attributes the low fertility levels to a potential conflict between relatively high levels of gender equality in individually oriented social institutions, such as educational institutions and labour markets, and relatively lower levels of gender equality in family-oriented social institutions. Even if it is likely that family policy may play an important role for the structuring of such inequalities, it is less clear how different types of family policies structure cross-national patterns of fertility as well as female labour force participation.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the relationship of different dimensions of family policy programmes with labour force participation of women in their prime childbearing ages, as well as with general fertility levels in comparative perspective. The interrelatedness of both types of outcomes and their potential links with different dimensions of family policy motivates their simultaneous treatment. The study covers the period 1970 to 2000 and includes 18 welfare states. The included countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The two separate measures of family support outlined in Chapter 2 are used in the analyses. The first policy dimension, general family support, includes modest flat-rate family policy benefits, supportive of traditional within-family divisions of labour, such as marriage subsidies, child benefits and flat-rate childcare leave benefits. The second dimension, dual earner support, is based on earnings-related parental insurance benefits, supportive of female work and frequently entitling the father to paid leave. The impact of these different kinds of family policy benefits on fertility and female labour force participation is estimated with pooled cross-section time-series regressions.

It has been emphasized that the few existing studies on the effect of family policy benefits on fertility and female labour force participation utilize relatively crude indicators of such family policy institutions (Brewster and Rindfuss 2000: 285–6). Sometimes, gross replacement rates or total benefit duration of maternity insurance or the size of child benefits constitute the explanatory variables – in other instances, aggregate indicators cutting across different family policy dimensions are used. Thereby, such analyses do not correctly account for the fact that welfare democracies have developed alternative institutional approaches to the provision of family support. As shown in Chapter 2, some countries have developed modest flat-rated childcare leave benefits and/or marriage subsidies to encourage mothers to

remain home for a longer period after the termination of earnings-related parental insurance, while other welfare states rely almost solely on parental insurance benefits. Furthermore, the analysis of gross replacement rates does not adequately mirror the benefits received, since taxation of different transfer programmes varies substantially in cross-national perspective (Ferrarini and Nelson 2003; Nelson 2003). The theoretically derived data accessed here provides possibilities for a separation of the different aspects of family policy transfers net of taxation.

The following section surveys previous research on the link between different family policy dimensions and female economic activity as well as fertility. Thereafter, the development of family policies and the dependent variables are dealt with, including a discussion of independent variables and methodological issues. The penultimate section consists of empirical analyses and is followed by a concluding discussion.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND THEORY

The empirical quantitative evidence on the relationship between family policy, fertility and female labour force participation has so far been relatively limited in the comparative literature. This is somewhat surprising given that important objectives for the introduction of particular family policy benefits often have been to influence the extent of female labour force participation and/or the rate of childbirths. The introduction of dual parental insurance in Sweden was, for example, instituted with a major objective to promote female labour force participation and overcome a general shortage of labour (Ohlander 1988; Lewis and Åström 1992).<sup>1</sup> In several countries new programmes of paid parental leave instead worked to reinstall mothers more or less permanently in the role of housewife. By supporting mothers staying at home for periods of up to two years after terminated earnings-related leave, the flat-rate childcare leave benefits introduced in several countries in the 1980s and 1990s often were supposed to create vacancies for unemployed men (Schiersmann 1991; Rostgaard *et al.* 1999). Marriage subsidies in tax systems have moreover often been explicitly instituted to support a male worker and a female homemaker (Montanari 2000), and as was described in Chapter 2 in this book, countries that extended dual earner support generally decreased marriage subsidies, while the development was the opposite in welfare states supportive of more traditional family patterns. Moreover, pro-natalistic ideas have frequently been involved in the introduction of family policy benefits during the early post-war period (Wennemo 1994) as well as recently, for example, in the reforms of family policy in Japan in the 1990s (Boling 1998; International

Reform Monitor 2000). Recent examples of such motives can also be found behind parental leave reform, for example regarding the expansion of childcare leave in France in the 1990s (Fagnani 1998).

The link between family policies at large and outcomes such as fertility and female employment has been paid increasing interest in the comparative welfare state literature. Earlier studies have, however, often arrived at somewhat mixed results on the relationship between policies and outcome, partly depending on what parts of the family policy systems are under analysis. In a study of total child benefit packages in 15 welfare states, Bradshaw *et al.* (1993) did not detect a strongly linear relationship between total benefit generosity and either female labour force participation or fertility – however, while a large number of cash benefits to families with children are included in their composite indices, parental leave benefits are excluded from the analyses. Hantrais's (1997) mapping of institutional differences of family policies, including paid parental leave and childcare, on to demographic trends in the European Union countries, on the other hand, indicate that such family benefits potentially can regulate fertility and female economic activity. In a cross-sectional analysis of relationships between aspects of childcare, parental leave and fertility, Castles (2003) finds that only childcare is positively related to childbearing.

The existing body of multivariate longitudinal and macro-comparative analyses on institutional developments of family policy and fertility reaches rather mixed results. In a study covering 22 countries between 1970 and 1990, Gauthier and Hatzius (1997) report a positive relationship between cash child benefits and fertility, while the separate effects of duration and gross replacement rates of maternity leave benefits show no impact on childbearing. Winegarden and Bracy (1995), on the other hand, find positive direct correlations between paid maternity leave duration and general fertility rates in analysing 17 OECD countries from 1959 to 1989. When controlling for the indirect influence of maternity leave via female labour force participation, these pro-natal effects are, however, offset.

Turning to the relationship between family policy institutions and female economic activity, the few macro-level studies utilizing multivariate techniques typically provide support for a positive relationship between these factors. In a study of 17 countries from 1960 to 1989 Ruhm and Teague (1995) find a positive correlation between parental leave duration and total female employment. Subsequent studies have aimed to utilize more fine-tuned measures of female economic activity, restricting the analyses to a population of women in their childbearing ages. Ruhm's (1998) study of 16 European welfare states 1969–1988 analyses the relationship between total parental leave duration and women's employment in their prime childbearing ages. A positive correlation is found between this aspect of such family policy

institutions and employment among this group of women, while a more modest correlation is established between paid leave and weekly working hours. Winegarden and Bracy (1995) use female economic activity among women aged 20 to 34 as dependent variable when discerning a positive correlation between such labour force participation and total maternity leave duration in 17 OECD countries.

In neither of the studies referred to above have different dimensions of family policies been separated regarding whether policies aim to reconcile paid and unpaid work or support more traditional gendered divisions of labour. In a multivariate analysis of parental leave benefit generosity, fertility and female labour force participation in 18 OECD countries from 1970 to 1995, Ferrarini (2003) finds that earnings-related parental leave generosity is positively correlated to both fertility and female work, while flat-rate parental leave generosity has a negative relationship with female labour force participation and a positive correlation with childbearing. A recent study of family policy and childbearing applying multi-level regressions based on micro-level data from the Luxembourg Income Study for 12 welfare states in the mid-1990s, have found similar macro-level correlations between generosity of earnings-related parental leave and fertility patterns (Hobson *et al.* 2005).

Comparative studies that employ micro-level data, but are confined to two or three countries, have also indicated positive relationships between different types of paid parental leave, fertility and female economic activity. Rösen's (1999) study of the relationship between paid parental leave and fertility in Finland and Norway shows modest positive correlations between such benefits and childbearing. In a study of Norway and Sweden, Rösen and Sundström (1996) find that first-time mothers entitled to paid parental leave (re-)enter employment considerably faster than non-eligible mothers. Similar results are found in two studies on Finland, Norway and Sweden by Rösen (1999) and Rösen and Sundström (2002). An interesting finding in the two latter studies is that different parts of the systems of paid parental leave seem to exert different effects. Earnings-related parental insurance benefits are positively correlated with female employment, while flat-rate childcare leave benefits appear to prolong women's career breaks, indicating that it may be vital to separate different family policy dimensions when studying demographic and socioeconomic outcomes. It is, however, difficult to tell from such few-country studies how links between policy and outcome can be generalized in a broader cross-national perspective, beyond the Nordic context.

The differences in results in macro-comparative analyses, in particular regarding fertility, may in some instances be due to the use of composite family policy indicators that conflate different policy dimensions, or the use

of crude indicators of singular dimensions of, for example, paid parental leave, such as benefit duration only. It has been argued that refined measures of different dimensions of family policy legislation are needed to identify possible causal outcomes of such social policy legislation (Ruhm 1998; Rindfuss 2000; Ferrarini 2003; Rindfuss *et al.* 2003). The use of two separate measures of benefit generosity that reflect different dimensions of family policy transfers in the upcoming sections aims to improve the ability to specify relationships between institutional structures and macro-level outcomes. Since dual earner support and general family support maintain different normatively favoured family types, it is likely that these dimensions have diverging impacts on for example labour market outcomes associated with gender.

Earnings-related benefits directed to the mother, the father or both parents make up the dual earner dimension of family policy. Previous studies often point out that such parental insurance transfers reduce the conflict between maternity and employment and that they increase labour market entrance and retention among women (Kamerling and Kahn 1991; Sundström and Stafford 1991; Korpi 2000; Andersson 2005). Generous parental insurance benefits in terms of earnings-replacement and duration are often thought to reduce the opportunity costs of childbearing and thus to have a positive effect on the same (for example Winegarden and Bracy 1995; Rønsen 2004).

It has been pointed out that very long leave durations solely for mothers only may lead to a large loss in terms of skill degradation, as well as missed training and promotion opportunities (Gauthier and Hatzius 1997). To some extent such potential negative effects may be compensated for by the existence of individual leave entitlements for both parents. A high degree of earnings replacement in such dual parental insurance programmes, furthermore, decreases opportunity costs for fathers' utilization of parental leave (Leira 1998; Moss and Deven 1999). As shown in Table 2.2 (page 43, Chapter 2), parental insurance also generally have periods of qualification over several months, something which has been argued to create an additional incentive for female labour market participation (Sundström and Stafford 1992; Rønsen and Sundström 2002).

Being provided in low flat-rate amounts, general family support, on the other hand, works to uphold family patterns with a male earner and a female homemaker. The benefit structure of childcare leave, for example, creates high opportunity costs for families if the parent with the highest earnings (usually the father) utilizes such leave entitlements, and childcare leave benefits on the whole also have longer duration than parental insurance benefits and more often lack qualifying periods, something that is an important factor affecting female labour force participation.<sup>2</sup> Marriage subsidies paid via

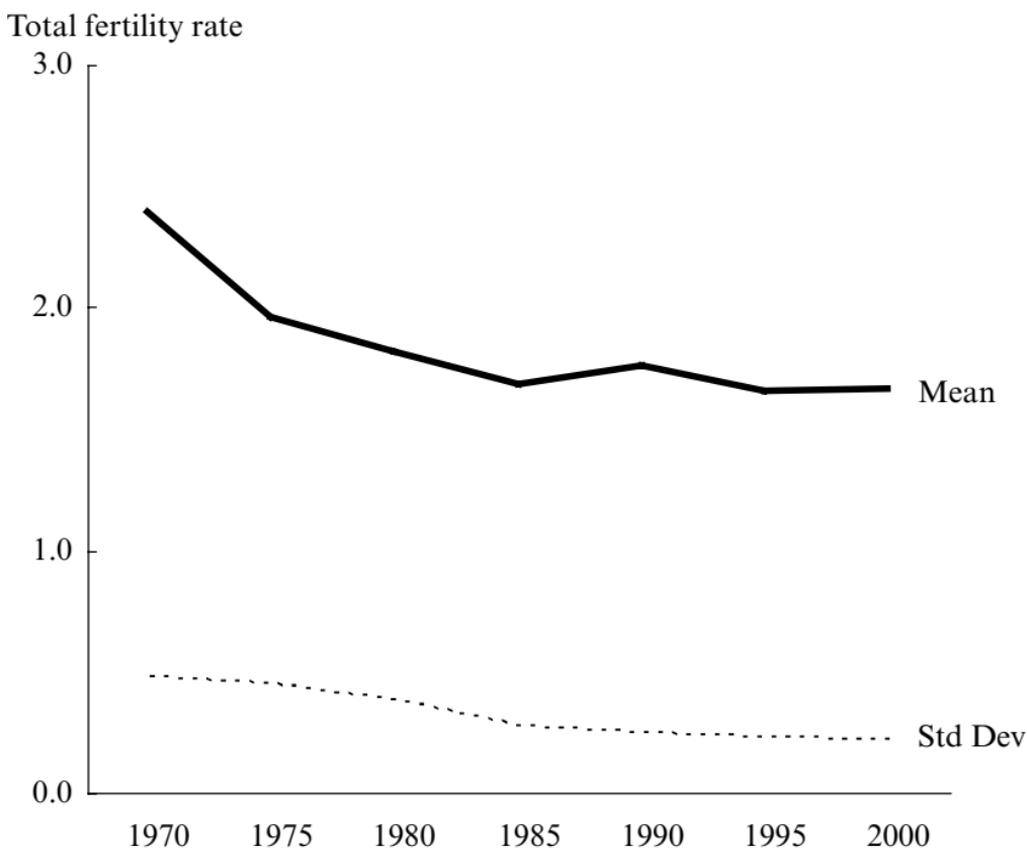
the tax system directly work to uphold traditional divisions of labour in the family by supporting a wage earner with an economically non-active spouse. In the following section the development of the main dependent and independent variables is described for the 18 countries studied here, together with measurement and estimation issues.

## DATA AND ESTIMATION METHODS

The two dimensions of family policy considered in this study are measured as net yearly benefits. Benefits are calculated on the basis of an average production worker's entitlements, estimated net of taxes and expressed as a percentage of a net average production worker's wage.<sup>3</sup> The dual earner support dimension includes the net generosity of earnings-related parental leave benefits frequently considered supportive of the two-earner family, including maternity insurance, paternity insurance and dual parental insurance. The general family support dimension is constituted by the extent of provision to more traditional gendered divisions of labour, comprising marriage subsidies, childcare leave benefits, maternity grants as well as child benefits paid in cash or administered through the tax system.

The average generosity of family support changed little from the Second World War until the 1970s. From the middle of this decade, an increase in the average levels of dual earner support commenced, raising the benefit generosity of this type of benefits from less than 10 to over 23 per cent of an average production worker's net wage in two decades (see Figure 3.1 in the previous chapter). This change is mainly due to the introduction of dual parental insurance and increases in maternity insurance benefit levels and duration. General family support, on the other hand, remained stable, at around 10 per cent of an average production worker's wage until the 1980s when a rise in benefit generosity began, approaching 20 per cent by the end of the observation period. As discussed in the institutional analyses in Chapter 2, one main reason for this increase in benefit generosity can be found in the introduction of flat-rate childcare leave benefits in the advanced welfare democracies, but marriage subsidies and child benefits were also expanded in many countries.

In most welfare states, fertility levels have decreased during the past three decades and are currently below replacement level, with population growth rates being close to zero. If the current levels persist many welfare democracies face the risk of rapid population decline (Chesnais 1996). Figure 4.1 shows the development of average fertility levels in the 18 countries for every fifth year from 1970 to 2000. Fertility is here expressed as the total fertility rate, which is the sum of age-specific fertility rates for a given year.



Source: UN Demographic Yearbook

Figure 4.1 Average total fertility rate in 18 countries 1970–2000

This index measures the number of live births a woman would have if she throughout her reproductive period would experience the age-specific fertility rates of the observation year.<sup>4</sup> Replacement level fertility is the level of births needed to replace the extant population in the next generation, without relying on immigration. The fertility level where the population is reproduced is just above two, to offset the smaller amount of children that do not survive to reproductive age in highly industrialized societies.

While average fertility decreased throughout the observation period, labour force participation among women of prime childbearing age follows the opposite trajectory. Female labour force participation is defined as the percentage of women aged 20 to 44 that are economically active. Limiting the study to this population enhances the possibilities to specify links between institutional structures and outcomes, since women are most likely to have a stronger labour market attachment while being in the most reproductive ages in this interval. The average level of fertility dropped from

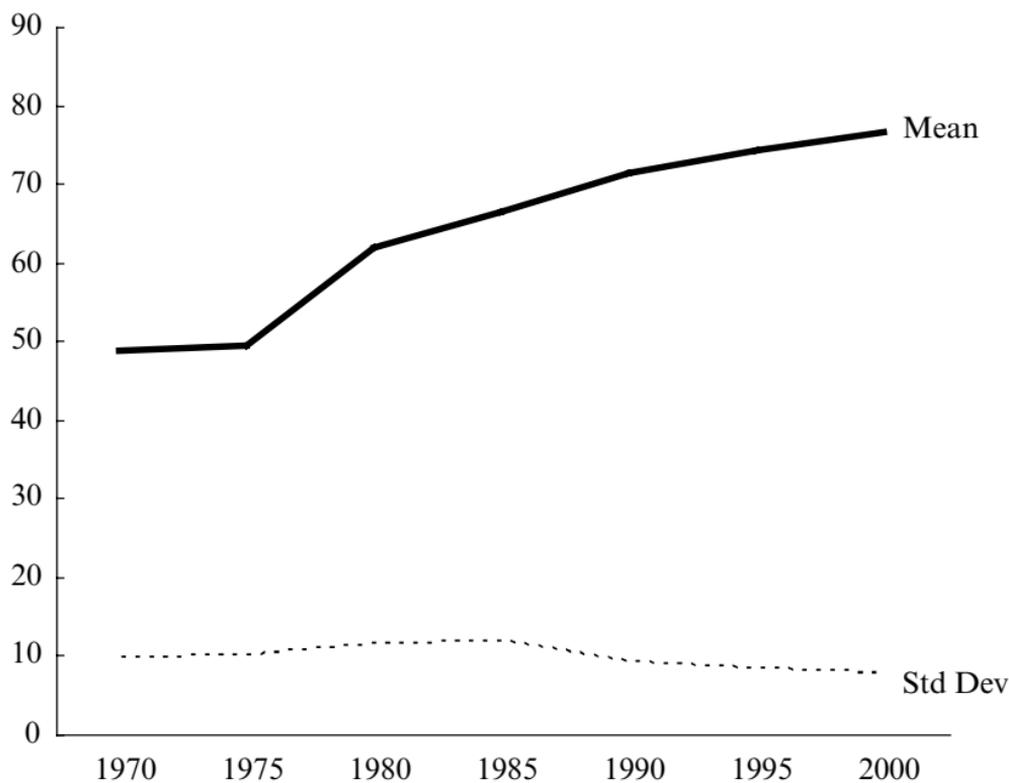
well above replacement level to around 1.6 in the 18 countries throughout the observation period, while female labour force participation of women aged 20 to 44 rose from below 50 to over 75 per cent (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2). It should here be pointed out that despite these general trends relatively large cross-national differences still exist regarding both fertility and female economic activity.

Correlations between fertility and women's labour force activity in the advanced welfare democracies somewhat paradoxically indicate a positive relationship in the mid-1980s, while the reversed association existed before this decade (Castles 1998; Mira and Ahn 2002; Rindfuss *et al.* 2003; Apps and Rees 2004). It has been suggested that the changed relationship between female work and fertility reflects that women have found ways to combine paid work and childbearing in some countries, while in others they have not, and that family policy institutions may here have played an important role (Brewster and Rindfuss 2000; Rindfuss *et al.* 2003). In a recent study Kögel (2004) has demonstrated that time-series associations between fertility and female employment did not change sign, even if the negative correlation has weakened over time, and that the results in cross-country correlations is likely to depend on unmeasured country-specific factors, among which family policy legislation is likely to be an important factor.

Table 4.1 depicts the variables included in the analyses, their respective mean values and standard deviations. Beside the main explanatory variables, a number of control variables are included.<sup>5</sup> Unemployment (UNEMP) is the total number of unemployed as a share of the labour force. Higher unemployment levels in a country are thought to decrease the prospects to find work, and women are under such circumstances more likely to choose (or be forced into) a more traditional role. The relationship between unemployment and fertility is somewhat more difficult to predict. On the one hand, unemployment threatens economic living standards of families and may make women more afraid of not being re-employed after, for example, parental leave, which could lead to the discouragement or postponement of childbearing (Gauthier and Hatzius 1997; Rønsen 2004). Micro-level studies do, however, often indicate a positive relationship between unemployment and childbearing, implying that women may perceive unemployment spells as an opportunity to have children (Ström 2002).

Per capita income is the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) weighted by Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) and expressed in constant dollars of 1995. Rising per capita incomes were positively related to fertility in the early phases of the demographic transition, while the reversed relationship is found during later stages, when income gains tended to accelerate the downward trends in birth rates (Winegarden and Wheeler 1992).

Per cent



Source: ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics

Figure 4.2 Average female labour force participation among women aged 20–44 in 18 countries 1970–2000

The analytical technique used here is the same as in the previous chapter: pooled time cross-section analysis, combining cross-sectional data with time-series.<sup>6</sup> The method basically increases the number of available observations and enhances the potential to control for independent variables, which of course is useful in comparative research with few countries. As was discussed in the prior chapter, several earlier methods have been shown to be problematic in analyses of pooled cross-section data sets. The most common regression technique, Ordinary Least Square analysis (OLS), in many instances produces errors that are temporally auto-regressive, cross-sectionally correlated and heteroscedastic. The attempts by the so-called Parks-Kmenta model to correct for such problems has, however, been shown to underestimate standard errors in cases where the number of countries is larger than the number of years. Thereby significance levels may turn out overly optimistic (Hicks 1994). The method proposed by Beck and Katz (1995) attempts to correct for such problems by employing panel-

*Table 4.1 Regression variables, mean and standard deviations for 18 countries 1970–2000*

Variable	Definition	Mean	Std Dev
DUAL	Dual earner support net generosity	0.186	0.205
GENSUP	General family support net generosity	0.175	0.092
FEMLAB	Labour force participation among women age 20–44	0.639	0.143
FERT	Total fertility rate	1.843	0.417
UNEMP	Unemployment rate	0.056	0.035
GDP	GDP in constant US dollars (1000s in PPPs, 1995 prices)	18.409	4.652

*Sources:* See Appendix

corrected standard errors and correction for first-order auto-regressiveness, by the use of a common Rho for all cross-sections. This method is used in the regressions, which furthermore are run with dummy variables for countries, controlling for the influence of unobserved country-specific factors. Before conducting the analyses the next section presents hypotheses on the relationships between independent and dependent variables.

## HYPOTHESES

In line with the above discussion, a positive relationship can be expected between dual earner support and female labour force participation, since such benefits are believed to reduce the conflict between motherhood (parenthood) and employment by the valuation of care work through earnings-related payments and by creating incentives for pre-confinement paid work. General family support, on the other hand, can be hypothesized to exert a reversed influence on female labour force participation, by focusing on appreciation of the housewife's role through the payment of flat-rate benefits. Both fertility and unemployment levels are, in line with the above discussion, expected to generally have a negative relationship to female economic activity.

Family support of both types is predicted to generally increase fertility, since it reduces the short- to medium-term costs of childbearing by providing payments to families with young children. The mechanisms by which general family support and dual earner support have an effect on fertility are, however, likely to be somewhat different. The first institutional strategy to

a large extent holds up fertility through supporting full-time motherhood, while the latter mainly eases the reconciliation of work and family life. The levels of per capita income as well as of female economic activity in the prime childbearing ages are both hypothesized to exert negative impacts on fertility. A positive effect of the degree of dual earner support on both female paid work and on fertility may, in line with Chesnais's (1996) arguments, indicate that such support assists the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work.

## REGRESSION RESULTS

The results from the pooled cross-section time-series regressions largely sustain the hypotheses on the relationships between different types of family policy institutions and potential macro-level outcomes, regarding both female labour force participation among women in their prime childbearing years and fertility rates. Notable is the divergence of correlations between the two different family policy dimensions and female economic activity. While support to the dual earner family, in terms of earnings-related benefits, is positively correlated with labour force participation among women aged 20 to 44, general family support, provided in flat-rate amounts, has a correlation in the reverse direction. Concerning fertility it is found that the level of family support (regardless of type) is positively related to childbirths.

Table 4.2 depicts the unstandardized coefficients from pooled time-series cross-section regressions of labour force participation among women aged 20 to 44 on independent variables. In the first two models the extent of general family support and of dual earner support are included respectively and separately with the other independent variables, while the third model comprises all main independent variables.<sup>7</sup> Dual earner support is significant in both models, and has the predicted positive correlation with age-specific female labour force participation. General family support has a negative, but insignificant, correlation with female labour force participation both when analysed separately and when paid leave generosity in support of the dual earner support is included.<sup>8</sup> An interesting result is that the strength of the correlation between general family support and female labour force participation is weakened in the third model when also dual earner support is included. This could indicate that the introduction of support to female labour force participation may counteract the ambitions of general family support transfers to strengthen more traditional gender roles.

*Table 4.2 Unstandardized coefficients from pooled time-series cross-section regression of labour force participation of women aged 20–44 on independent variables (standard error within parentheses) for 18 countries 1970–2000*

Independent variables	Labour force participation of women aged 20–44		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
GENSUP	–0.070 (0.069)		–0.014 (0.066)
DUAL		0.191** (0.080)	0.189** (0.084)
FERT	–0.005 (0.037)	–0.022 (0.035)	–0.021 (0.036)
RGDP	0.021*** (0.003)	0.018*** (0.003)	0.018*** (0.003)
UNEMP	1.112*** (0.316)	0.894*** (0.262)	0.906*** (0.273)
Constant	0.121 (0.151)	0.236* (0.137)	0.232* (0.138)
Common Rho	0.169	0.167	0.162

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$  \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The most significant effects in all three models are exercised by real GDP and unemployment, which both are positively correlated with female economic activity. While the direction of the national income effect is in line with the hypothesis, the unemployment effect runs in contradiction to the expectations. Notably, fertility levels do not seem to be related to female labour force participation, as they are far from being significant in any of the three models. Splitting the data set into two periods depending on the supposed changed relationship between female work and childbearing in the mid-1980s (see Castles 1998; Mira and Ahn 2002; Apps and Rees 2004), does not render significant results between the two behavioural outcomes for either period and leaves dual earner support with a significant positive correlation with female work for both periods.<sup>9</sup>

Next we turn to the analysis of fertility as dependent variable. From Table 4.3 it is evident that general family policy transfers, in support of highly gendered divisions of labour, as well as dual earner support, equally have positive and significant relationships with fertility levels. Both institutional coefficients are positively significant at the 1 per cent level.<sup>10</sup> The positive correlations between the two dimensions of family policy and fertility do not

necessarily suggest that the paths through which such benefits potentially influence parental actions are the same. As discussed above, general family support is likely to maintain high fertility levels through a high degree of division of labour between mothers and fathers, generating high opportunity costs for female employment, while dual earner support rather works to lower such opportunity costs for female employment, at the same time as male care work is supported to larger extent.

*Table 4.3 Unstandardized coefficients from pooled time-series cross-section regression of total fertility rate on independent variables (standard error within parentheses) for 18 countries 1970–2000*

Independent variables	Total Fertility Rate		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
GENSUP	0.549*** (0.206)		0.653*** (0.233)
DUAL		0.492** (0.222)	0.653*** (0.209)
FEMLAB	-0.302 (0.573)	-0.064 (0.569)	-0.311 (0.548)
RGDP	-0.039*** (0.012)	-0.041*** (0.012)	-.048*** (0.012)
UNEMP	-4.482*** (1.348)	-4.605*** (1.386)	-4.786*** (1.323)
Constant	3.434*** (0.346)	3.271*** (0.307)	3.489*** (0.325)
Common Rho	0.239	0.235	0.194

\* $p < 0.10$  \*\* $p < 0.05$  \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

Concerning the other independent variables, the extent of female labour force participation does not seem to be connected to the levels of fertility in the 18 welfare states. Unemployment on the other hand has a negative coefficient in all models, and is significant at the 1 per cent level, which is congruent with the idea that joblessness may decrease childbirths. The national per capita income level also has negative and significant coefficients, which is in line with the hypothesis that increasing income levels decreases fertility.<sup>11</sup>

Taken together, the analyses of the two dependent variables seem to indicate that dual earner support may have furthered the reconciliation of unpaid and paid work, and increased both female labour force participation and

childbearing. Generous earnings-related benefits are likely to have created incentives for women to participate in paid work and provide resources for post-natal leave in the most care-intensive period of the child's life, affecting agency of parents regarding childbearing decisions. Running the risk of low income during the post-natal period is also likely to affect decisions on becoming parents or on further increasing the number of children.

Unobserved factors, including other domains of national institutional settings, as well as labour market structures, may have influenced the above results. An example of such a factor is the availability of publicly subsidized childcare, for which reliable data have not been obtainable for all observation points in this study. It is probable that dual earner support as measured here to a substantial degree may reflect the presence of a dual earner model in a wider sense (for a discussion see Chapter 2), comprising both generous earnings-related transfers and access to affordable public services, such as childcare and care of elderly persons. Other aspects of policy settings that may have influenced the observed patterns of variation, and to some extent also may vary along the lines of broader family policy models include national utilization rates of different parental leave entitlements, not least among fathers. Unfortunately, reliable indicators on the quality of public services and benefit take-up are not available throughout the studied period. The impact of such omitted-variable problems may to some extent have been decreased by the use of country dummies, at least regarding cross-sectional effects.

## DISCUSSION

The way welfare states provide parents with possibilities to combine paid work and children is sometimes held to be a crucial factor for the future social, economic and demographic development of the advanced welfare democracies (Esping-Andersen 2002). Rising rates of female labour force participation and the falling birth-rates have created one of the greatest challenges for policymakers in the history of the welfare state. One reaction to the increasing rates of female economic activity has in several countries been to enhance economic support to women's roles as homemakers. Childcare leave benefits provide low flat-rate benefits that are formally 'gender neutral' but in practice offer incentives for women to stay at home for up to three years after childbirth, and thereby act to undermine labour market positions of women (Gottschall and Bird 2003; Morgan and Zippel 2003). Even though such benefits do not constitute more than a fraction of a normal wage, they often interact with other benefits that are more or less supportive of traditional divisions of labour, for example flat-rate

marriage subsidies for a dependent spouse and child benefits, paid in cash or via the tax system. A different family policy strategy has instead been to actively support the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work through generous earnings-related parental leave benefits, most often combined with extensive public services (Sainsbury 1996; Korpi 2000). By supporting female economic activity, and to some extent also male care work, the aim of such dual earner support has increasingly been to offset the potential trade-off between women's work and childbearing.

The purpose of this chapter has been to analyse the long-term relationship between different dimensions of family policy, female labour force participation among women in their prime childbearing years and fertility in 18 countries between 1970 and 2000. The analyses indicate not only that different programmes of family policy may have bearings on potential outcomes such as fertility and female labour force participation, but also, and perhaps more importantly, that different types of family policy transfers have diverging impacts on these particular potential outcomes. The two dimensions of family support analysed here largely appear to exercise the hypothesized effects. Dual earner support has the predicted positive correlation with female labour force participation. General family support, on the other hand, has the expected negative, albeit insignificant, correlation with female labour force participation. This is in line with the idea that the expansion of dual earner support seems to have contributed to increased levels of female economic activity among women in their prime childbearing years, while the relatively modest flat-rate benefits provided through general family support, seems to have held back female labour force participation by the strengthening of more traditional family patterns. Both kinds of family support, furthermore, have the hypothesized positive correlations with total fertility levels.

The mechanisms through which the two dimensions of family support sustain fertility are most likely dissimilar. General family support is more likely to uphold fertility by way of favouring full-time motherhood, in particular during the early childrearing period, while the dual earner support strategy probably acts to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. Taken together, the results presented here indicate that earnings-related benefits in support of the dual earner family may reduce the role incompatibilities surrounding productive and reproductive work, whereas a general family support strategy seems to maintain highly gendered divisions of labour, with the potential negative effect on female labour force participation, and a positive effect on childbearing.

Multivariate analyses failed to show any significant correlations between female labour force participation and fertility throughout the analysed period – even when analysing the data for the 1990s and 2000, when

previous cross-country analyses have detected positive correlations between the two factors (see Castles 1998; Mira and Ahn 2002; Apps and Rees 2004), the coefficients are consistently negative. Family policy institutions, however, still exercise their expected impact. The results are in line with proposals about the importance of other factors than female labour force participation when explaining cross-national developments of fertility (Kögel 2004), and also indicate that family policy legislation if measured multidimensionally indeed may prove to be an important determinant of such macro-level outcomes.

This study clearly points to the fruitfulness of a decomposition of different aspects of family policy for a better understanding of the relationships between social policy structures and macro-level outcomes. Theoretically derived indicators may here be of great help. Earlier studies' application of highly aggregate measures consisting of singular aspects such as benefit duration of family policy benefits, or a highly aggregated array of different indicators of family policy transfers into single measures, may lead to a blurred picture of how welfare state outcomes are produced. The use of more precise institutional data could prove to be helpful not only in macro-comparative analyses, but may also increase the explanatory potential of analyses on comparative micro-data, such as the Luxembourg Income Study (see for example Hobson *et al.* 2005).

It must again here be emphasized that the benefits under study here are likely to co-vary with broader models of family policy, in particular in the latter part of the studied period, when, for example, countries with generous dual earner support also have highly developed public childcare and social care services for elderly persons. To improve the understanding of the links between family policy change and the types of outcomes here focused upon, it is desirable for future research to integrate both transfers and public services, such as childcare arrangements, in longitudinal analyses of different family policy dimensions. However, as indicated in Chapter 2 in this book family policy transfers as operationalized here could serve as a proxy also for broader family policy models.

The relationship between family policy and other aspects of female labour force participation and fertility may also be interesting to analyse. Such benefits could, for example, affect the number of hours worked by women. Part-time work in itself may indicate low pay and weak labour market positions of women, which in turn may affect childbearing decisions (Bussemaker and Kersbergen 1999). Improving comparative data over the gender allocation of unpaid work would also open up for analyses on the relationship between different types of family support and the distribution of care work.

## NOTES

1. Equality goals concerning the division of unpaid care work have of course also been important for the extension and individualization of parental insurance benefits in the Nordic countries (Leira 1998; Carlsen 1998; Sainsbury 1999).
2. It should here be pointed out that the behaviour of parents is likely to be shaped not only by narrow economic rationality but also by wider societal norms and attitudes surrounding gender roles, which may raise expectations on women or men to behave according to traditional patterns (Moss and Deven 1999). Earlier research on the relationship between social policy and attitudes indicate that institutions of family policy also may structure norms towards female labour force participation. Such attitudes are more positive in welfare states with generous benefits in support of the dual earner family than in countries with well-developed support to traditional family formations (Korpi 2000; Sjöberg 2000, 2004).
3. For more detailed information about coding of dependent and independent variables and data sources, see Chapter 2 and Appendix.
4. The total fertility rate is similar to completed cohort fertility, but may differ substantially from the latter index due to cohort changes in the timing of births.
5. As the purpose of this study is not to test for all potential factors that may influence paid work or childbearing decisions, but mainly to evaluate the policy-oriented variables, relatively parsimonious regression models are estimated.
6. See preceding chapter for more detailed information about methodological issues.
7. Coefficients for the country dummies are not reported in the tables.
8. Also here I follow the convention of not presenting goodness-of-fit measures in the tables (Beck and Katz 1995; Huber and Stephens 2000), instead mainly interpreting regression coefficients.  $R^2$ s from Ordinary Least Square are 0.772, 0.787 and 0.792 in the three respective models. These measures should, however, be interpreted with great care, given the sensitivity of this measure dependent on its underlying assumptions.
9. The separate regressions are not reported in the table. A variable that captures the altered macro-level relationship between female labour force participation and fertility in the advanced welfare democracies in the mid-1990s has also been tested in the regressions without significantly changing the main results. The fertility rate was multiplied with a negative factor for points in time when the cross-national correlation with female labour force participation is negative, and a positive factor when a positive correlation existed.
10. The  $R^2$ s from Ordinary Least Square analysis are 0.799, 0.806 and 0.809.
11. When carrying out separate analyses on the two periods for which a reversed relationship between female work and childbearing is assumed to exist, in analogy with the regressions on female work, no significant results between female work and childbearing for either period are reported. The correlations between both types of family support and childbearing are, however, somewhat stronger for the later observation period.

## 5. Family support and child poverty: generosity of family policy transfers and poverty among families with young children in 16 countries 1980–2000

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The way the welfare state arranges policies directed to the families with the youngest children is of course not only likely to affect the behavioural patterns of parents but also the living conditions and agency of individuals living in such households. The requirement of intensive parental childcare is perhaps greatest during the early years of the child's life, which means that the parents, in practice most often the mother, must decrease their time in paid work and that market income in that way is lost. From this follows that parents and children during this period in the life cycle face an enhanced risk of poverty, and that the payment of family policy benefits may be of central importance for mitigating such latent risks of low income. Different family policy institutions are also likely to have indirect effects on poverty risks by the structuring of parents' labour force participation.

Economic means do not constitute the only type of resource that impact upon the well-being of an individual; others include social, educational and health resources. However, it is unarguably a central facet in this respect (Johansson 1973; Sen 1992). Living in poverty deprives family members of potential choices and may restrict opportunities to pursue their objectives. But the poverty risks for households with young children also have consequences for parents-to-be, as well as for the future life chances of children growing up under poor circumstances. Running the risk of becoming poor due to childbirth may constrain parents' choice to have children without suffering from potentially severe economic difficulties. Agency is thus affected not only for existing parents and children but also for potential parents. Early childhood poverty may also have substantial long-run life-course effects. It has been argued that the risk of poverty and social exclusion of an adult in large part originates in early childhood, when crucial cognitive resources are acquired (see Esping-Andersen 2002). A lack of such resources among other

things increases the risk of a precarious labour market position, which in turn is closely related to experienced poverty risks (for a review of previous research see Haveman and Wolfe 1995). Duncan *et al.* (1998) show that economic living conditions during the first five years of a child's life are strong determinants of school completion, in particular among children growing up in families with the lowest household incomes.

If the above arguments are to be taken seriously, a closer examination of the relationship between family policy institutions and poverty among families with young children is warranted, since such welfare state institutions may structure poverty risks, agency and well-being of parents and children alike. Substantial cross-national differences in poverty and income inequalities among households with children are well documented (see Ritakallio 1994, 2002; Rainwater and Smeeding 1995; Hobson and Takahashi 1997; Bradbury and Jäntti 2001; Micklewright and Stewart 2001; Rainwater *et al.* 2001; Sainsbury and Morissens 2002; Smeeding 2002). These differences are furthermore often related to the redistributive capacity of total tax-transfer systems, but it is less clear exactly how particular types of benefits are connected to the incidence of child poverty in different countries. Analyses of the macro-level links between family policies and the extent of poverty among families with children presuppose a relatively close relationship between institutional structure and outcome (see Forssén 1998; Palme and Kangas 2000; Solera 2001). Several analyses have also linked family policy benefits to micro-level poverty outcomes (see Immervoll *et al.* 2001; Kunz *et al.* 2001; Jeandidier and Albisier 2001). Previous studies have generally either comprised relatively few countries or had a less systematic institutional perspective, and even when this is achieved (see Ferrarini 2003; Ferrarini and Forssén 2005), such studies have a less developed longitudinal perspective on policy-outcome links.

The purpose of this study is to analyse how social rights of family support are related to poverty rates among households with the youngest children in 16 countries from 1980 to 2000. The included countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.<sup>1</sup> By combining comparative micro-level income-data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) with institutional data based on the Social Citizenship Indicators Programme (SCIP) the potential link between family policy interventions and outcomes may be specified. The analyses compare welfare states that are characterized by large differences in the institutional structure of family policy as well as in the extent of poverty among the youngest children.

The analysis of institutional effects of particular parts of social transfer programmes may use two principal lines of inquiry, which have been labelled

the external approach and the internal approach (Pedersen 1999). External analyses of the kind conducted in this study are macro-comparative and the variation in country scores on dependent variables, for example poverty levels, are related to potential explanatory variables, such as measures of social expenditure, or the institutional structure of social policy institutions. The ability of external analyses to identify potential relationships depends strongly on the extent to which redistributive mechanisms can be specified, and on the measurement of institutional structures and outcomes. Compared with earlier studies on broad family policy programmes and poverty among all children, the design of this inquiry is likely to improve the ability to establish such macro-level relationships, since institutional structure and the target population are relatively 'symmetrical'.<sup>2</sup>

Internal analyses, on the other hand, employ micro-level data to specify the distributive logic operating within each country's social transfer system. Such analyses aim to untangle the effects of particular social policy transfers that produce certain outcomes. This does, however, require both an ability to separate the income components under study within the micro-level data and an ability to estimate the impact of taxation to render taxable and non-taxable transfers comparable (Ferrarini and Nelson 2003).<sup>3</sup> Since only a few of the countries included here have data that permit separate micro-analyses on all family policy programmes and years of interest, the study is confined to external macro-analyses, which are based on longitudinal data.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, the institutional structures of family policy programmes and poverty are described in a cross-national perspective for the 16 countries here included. The subsequent section analyses family policy generosity and relative poverty levels among young children 1980 to 2000 using cross-section time-series regressions with unbalanced panels. Finally a summary discussion takes place.

## **FAMILY POLICY GENEROSITY AND CHILD POVERTY**

As described in the previous chapters of this book, substantial institutional differences exist in family policy legislation. Figure 5.1 depicts the average net generosity of the two separate dimensions of family policy transfers in different models of family policy for the years 1980, 1990 and 2000. The benefit generosity is assessed with the help of a quotient reflecting the situation of a type case family with two earners and two children. The numerator is constituted by benefits paid to such a family, and the denominator is an average production worker's net wage.<sup>4</sup> The dual earner support dimension includes post-natal maternity, dual parental and

paternity insurance benefits, which in principle are earnings-related. The general family support dimension, measuring support to traditional family patterns, comprises flat-rate childcare leave benefits, marriage subsidies and child benefits paid in cash or via the tax system, as well as lump-sum maternity grants.

Welfare states with dual earner models of family policy (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) on average increased benefit generosity from around 60 per cent in 1980 to 80 per cent in 2000, and in all three periods dual earner support increased in absolute terms and constituted more than two-thirds of total family policy benefits. Countries with general family policy models (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands) showed average increases in family policy benefits from just above 30 per cent in 1980 to almost 50 per cent in 2000, with the main change being in the general family support dimension, supportive of more traditional gendered divisions of work. Countries with market-oriented family policies (Australia, Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States) report average levels of family support of around 20 per cent for all three points in time.

Next, the development of child poverty among the youngest individuals in the different family policy models is described. The analyses have been restricted to households with children aged five and under, hereafter also referred to as poverty among young children, or simply child poverty. What is calculated is the so-called child poverty rate for this particular group.<sup>5</sup> These children are in the most care-intensive ages, something that increases the need for family policy programmes that increase the resources of such families and facilitates the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work. As discussed above, poverty within this particular age group of children is likely to be of great interest, not only due to the enhanced poverty risks, but also with reference to the potential long-run effects of poverty on cognitive development and children's future life chances.

The most commonly used procedure to evaluate relative poverty is the so-called 'head-count approach', which measures the number of individuals that fall below a defined poverty line, often established in relation to median disposable income in a country. A common standard in comparative analyses is to use 50 per cent of the median disposable income of the population to define this limit. However, it should be noted that any choice of cut-off value for the poverty line has an arbitrary side to it (Saunders 1994), and it is sometimes held that the major limitation of the head-count approach is its insensitivity to the 'depth' of poverty (see Mitchell 1991; Saunders 1994). Two main ways exist to make up for the insensitivity of the head-count measure. One is to calculate different poverty lines and analyse how the extent of poverty changes using different cut-offs. Another approach is



*Figure 5.1 Generosity of family support in different models of family policy 1980, 1990 and 2000 as a percentage of an average production worker's wage*

to calculate the poverty gap, which measures the poor individuals' 'distance' from the poverty line (Mitchell 1991; Förster 1993).<sup>6</sup> The analyses in this study are primarily based on a head-count approach, but sensitivity tests using different poverty lines are carried out to evaluate the robustness of the findings.

Equivalence scales are used to adjust family incomes to reflect the needs of families of different size and composition. The income of each household is divided by the number of family members, which are being given different weights in order to simulate the economies of scale in a family. The equivalence scale applied in the upcoming analyses is the square root of the number of persons in the household, which assumes relatively large economies of scale resulting from an increasing number of household members. Since the choice of equivalence scale makes a difference in poverty analyses (Buhmann *et al.* 1988; Förster 1993), sensitivity tests with an alternative equivalence scale assuming smaller economies of scale are also carried out. The analyses are based on micro-level data from the LIS-database for 16 countries, which consists of income surveys or tax files that have been harmonized regarding income and demographic concepts in order to increase comparability.<sup>7</sup>

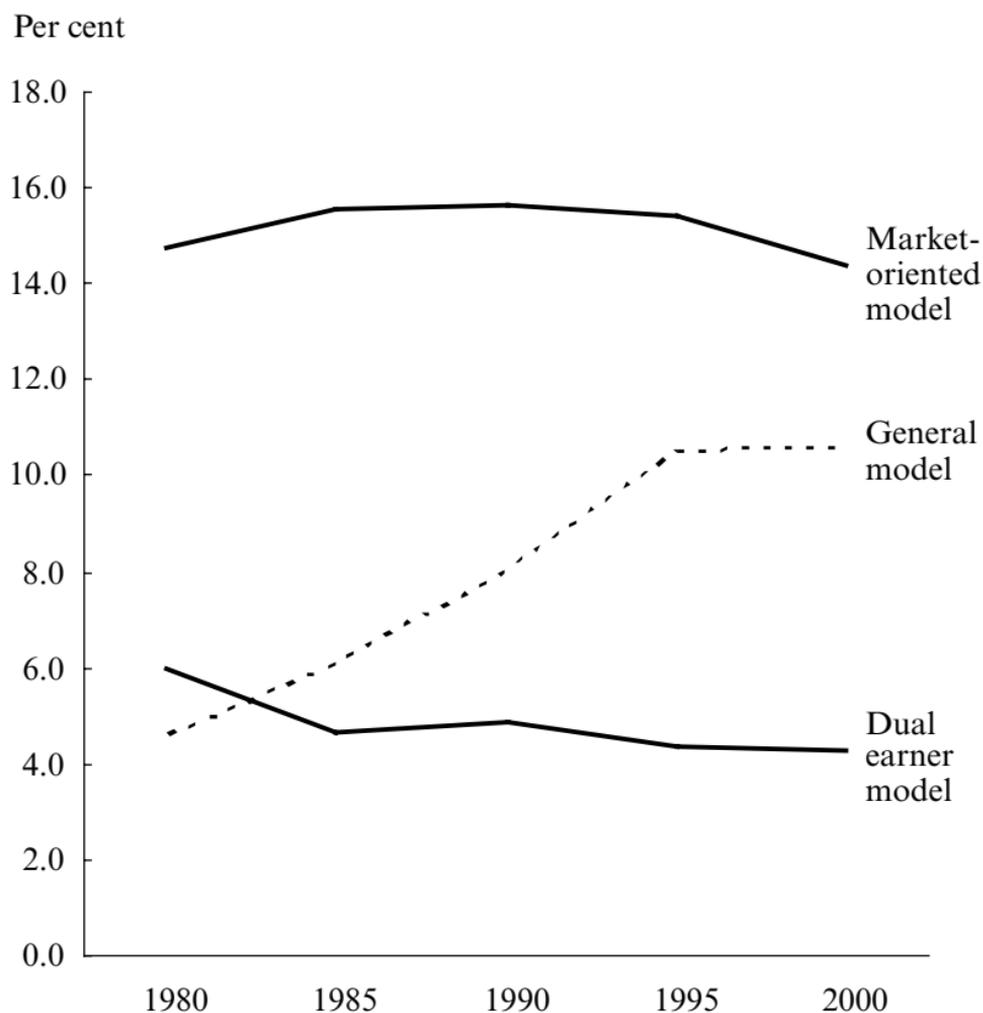
Figure 5.2 depicts the development of average disposable income poverty levels in countries with different models of family policy between 1980 and 2000, using a poverty line of 50 per cent of median disposable income. Clear differences between countries with different family policy models emerge. Countries with market-oriented models, with the lowest levels of family support on average, have had the highest levels of poverty in households with young children. The development of child poverty undergoes an increase from around 15 per cent to over 18 per cent in the 1990s and a decrease to around the initial levels in 2000. Average poverty levels among families with children in welfare states with general models of family policy shows a steady increase from 5 per cent in 1980 to around 11 per cent by the end of the observation period. Welfare states with dual earner models on average had the lowest poverty levels throughout the studied decades, ranging around 4 per cent for most of the period. It should be noted that the data set is unbalanced and that in particular average figures for 1980, as well as for 2000, therefore should be interpreted with care since data for only around half of the countries exist for these observation years. Excluding these observation points and constructing a balanced data set for countries that do have observations for all points in time does, however, not alter the main picture of poverty in the different family policy clusters (results are not reported here).

A frequently applied method to estimate the redistributive impact of the welfare state in comparative studies is by calculating poverty reduction

coefficients (Beckerman 1979). This measure indicates to what extent the total tax-transfer system reduces market-income poverty.<sup>8</sup> Notably, these coefficients are boosted not only by family policy benefits but also by income from other social insurance transfers, as well as different means-tested benefits, while taxation and social security contributions work in the other direction to reduce final disposable income. Such coefficients show strong correlations with poverty levels. However, negative reduction coefficients are sometimes reported when analysing particular population groups such as households with children, indicating that some welfare states throw more individuals into poverty than they lift out of poverty. In reality this could happen when individuals pay larger amounts in taxes and social security contributions than they receive in transfers (Mitchell 1991; Jäntti and Danziger 1993).

Regarding households with young children such results could be partly due to the aggregation of family policy benefits such as parental leave benefits with market income in the original income data. When the transfer components are included in market income, the only measured impact specifically attributable to the welfare state is tax clawback of transfer income, and in such instances welfare states falsely appear as regressively redistributive. This throws the widely used method of using poverty reduction coefficients to evaluate the effect of the welfare state into new light when analysing particular population groups, such as households with young children (see Ferrarini 2003). In the analysis which follows, investigations are therefore confined to disposable income poverty, a measure that includes the family policy benefits that are conflated with the market income variable.

Poverty rates to large degree seem to be correlated with broader models of family policy, even if a number of other contemporaneous socioeconomic factors of course may explain poverty levels. In the following, total family support generosity, including both dimensions of family policy, is plotted against poverty among the youngest children in the 16 countries for each year from 1985 to 2000 where such data exists. As is shown in Figure 5.3a–d a negative correlation is reported between policy and potential outcome for each of these years. The Pearson correlation coefficient is significantly negative, albeit somewhat stronger for the latter half of the period: the correlation is  $-0.607$  in 1985;  $-0.662$  in 1990;  $-0.803$  in 1995; and  $-0.761$  in 2000. In line with what could be expected from the above analyses, countries (with few exceptions) cluster along the lines of broader family policy models. Welfare states with stronger earnings-related components in family policy have lowest poverty levels, while market-oriented model countries, with the lowest benefit generosity of such benefits report the highest poverty rates. Australia and the United States lack major paid parental leave programmes, and many families there have to rely on relatively modest child benefits



Source: Luxembourg Income Study

Figure 5.2 Poverty among households with young children in different models of family policy 1980–2000 (poverty level: 50 per cent of median equivalized income)

paid via the tax system.<sup>9</sup> Only Canada has an unexpectedly high level of total benefit generosity beginning in the 1990s in this family policy cluster – primarily due to the introduction of dual parental insurance benefits in 1990, a type of benefit previously only found in the four Nordic countries.

Taking a closer look at Figure 5.3a–d also reveals some interesting within-cluster differences. The Continental European countries, with general family policy models, show a positive within-cluster correlation for all observation points, a result that to some extent may depend on the structure of family policy legislation. The design of general family support preserves highly

gendered divisions of work, and the low flat-rate benefits that distinguish this type of support are likely to be insufficient to compensate for decreases in market income that occurs when women's role as homemakers are supported. With the results from the preceding chapter in mind, one plausible explanation for the divergent within-cluster relationships could perhaps therefore be sought in the way in which the impact of benefits are mediated through parental (maternal) labour market behaviour. The relationship between the different dimensions of family policy and poverty among households with young children is in the upcoming section evaluated by the use of multivariate analyses that enable control for other potential explanatory factors, including female economic activity.

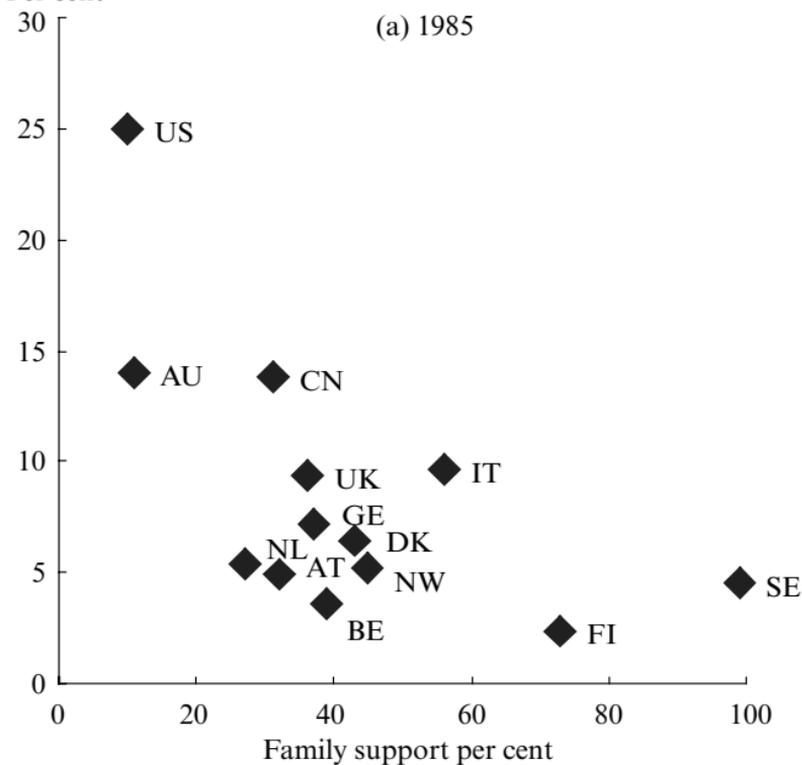
## FAMILY SUPPORT AND POVERTY – A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The macro-level relationship between policy and poverty illustrated in the above section may of course be influenced by a great number of factors beside family policy design – including socioeconomic factors, such as the extent of female labour force participation and unemployment levels as well as the incidence of single parent households. In the following, multivariate panel regressions are used to analyse the relationships between a number of socio-political, socioeconomic and demographic factors between 1980 and 2000.

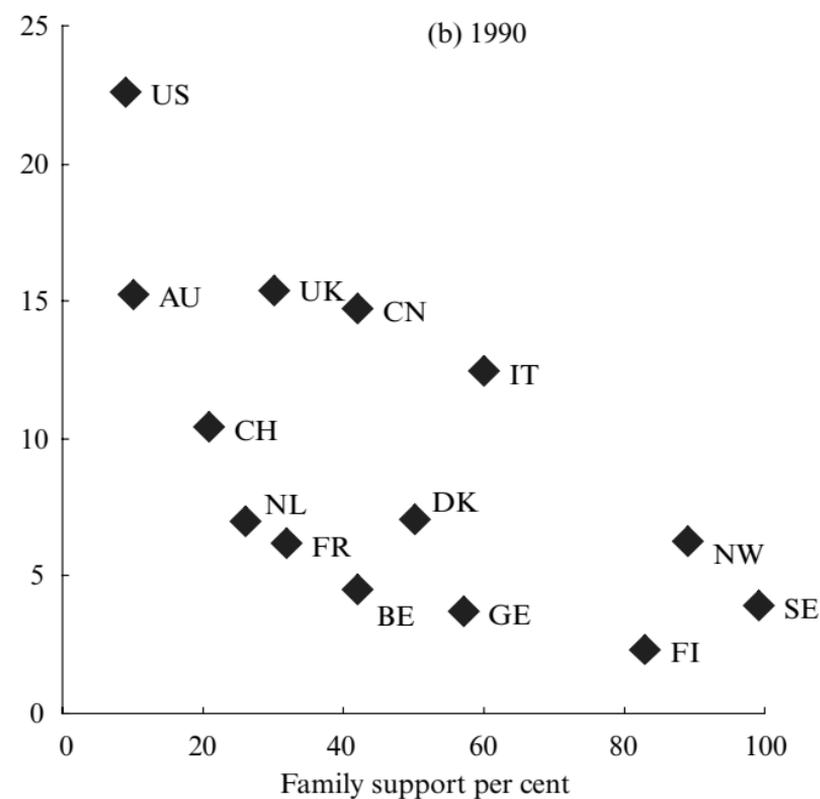
Obviously, cross-national correlations between total family support generosity raises the question of to what extent the different dimensions of family policy contribute to the observed outcome. From the simple cross-sectional bivariate analyses conducted above it can be expected that family support is negatively related to poverty, that is, that it decreases poverty, but that dual earner support perhaps can be expected to have a stronger effect than general family support due to the observed within-cluster differences in general family policy countries.

As shown in Chapter 4, the type of family support developed in modern welfare democracies can be linked to female economic activity. Female labour force participation levels may, however, have an independent effect on poverty levels, particularly insofar as the relationship between total family policy generosity and female economic activity is non-linear (where dual earner support has a positive and general family support a negative correlation with female economic activity). Female labour force participation can thus also be expected to be negatively correlated to poverty levels by having the effect of raising disposable household income.

Per cent



Per cent



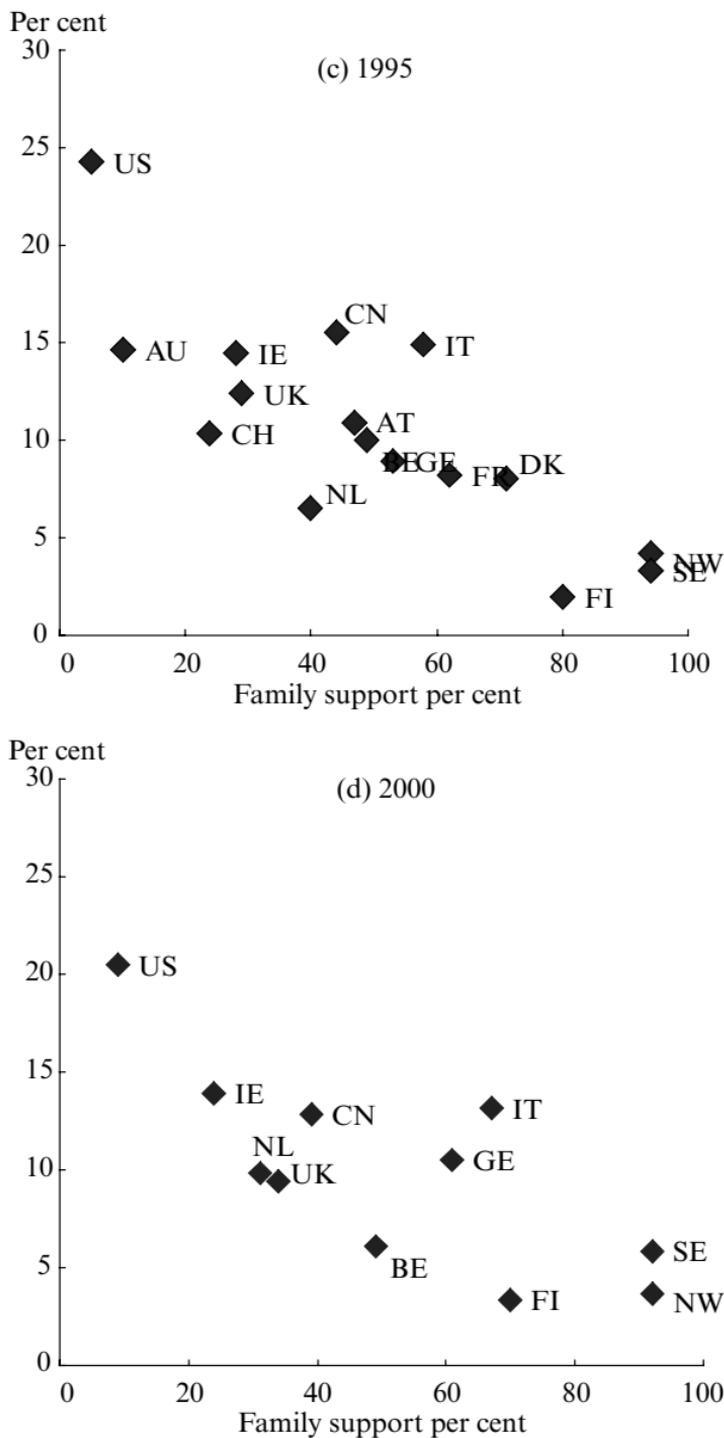


Figure 5.3 Net generosity of family support as a share of an average production worker's net wage and poverty among households with young children in 16 countries, 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000 (poverty level: 50 per cent of median equivalized income)

In earlier studies, mixed results have been obtained regarding the impact of unemployment on poverty. Weak or no relationships between unemployment and poverty are often found in analyses of the working population, and an explanation for this association is often sought in welfare state effort (Haataja 1999; Cantillon *et al.* 2002; Brady 2004; Bäckman 2005). However, Bäckman's study (2005) shows that unemployment may be a more important factor when explaining the development of poverty over time rather than between countries. Furthermore, it is not evident that unemployment is linked to poverty in the same way in different population groups, for example among households with children and in the total population. In any case the effect of unemployment on poverty in households with children is here expected to be positive.

The number of single-parent households is another factor that has been shown to explain cross-national poverty patterns. Single parents face the most problematic situation when trying to reconcile family life and work, mainly impacting on market income of such households, in particular when children are young. Cross-national multivariate studies have shown that the percentage of single-mother households is positively related to poverty levels (see Brady 2004). The incidence of single-parent households can therefore be expected to have a positive relationship with child poverty incidence.

### **Data and Methodological Considerations**

As evident from the above discussion, the structure of comparative income data sets in the LIS database provides us with an unbalanced panel where the different welfare states contribute with different numbers of observations (ranging from two to five) that consequently also vary in time span. In total, 61 observations exist for the 16 countries. This introduces constraints on the choice of methodology. Using a pooled cross-section time-series approach requires a symmetrical data set, with each included country being represented in each cross-section, this would here mean that several countries have to be dropped and that the studied time span would have to be decreased to little more than a decade.

In order to avoid such losses of information, an unbalanced panel is used in the upcoming analyses. By using Ordinary Least Squares regressions with the Huber and White robust estimator of standard errors, each observation in the unbalanced panel is allowed to contribute differently to the overall variance. This feature is necessary since the assumption that error terms are independent across observations is unlikely to be satisfied in regression analyses on panel data (for further reading see White 1982; Schrader and Hettmansperger 1980; Bradley *et al.* 2003). A weighting procedure is furthermore used, which implies that each country is given equal weight in

order not to give larger importance to countries with a greater number of observations in the unbalanced panel (see Bäckman 2005). Data on poverty and family policy generosity is the same as that described in the above section. The indicator of female economic activity, measuring female labour force participation in the prime childbearing years (20–44), as well as of unemployment, are the same as used in previous chapters (for a description of this data see Chapter 3). The prevalence of single-parent households is the percentage of households with a single parent from LIS for each observation year.

## Results from Regression Analysis

Table 5.1 shows the results from OLS regression models using robust standard errors, with relative disposable income poverty in households with young children as the dependent variable. All reported models include time as the control variable and use the country weights described above. Model 1 includes total family support as the independent variable. The reported coefficient for the policy variable is negative and significant at the 1 per cent level, indicating that family support decreases poverty in our 16 countries. In the second model, family support generosity (as displayed in Figures 5.3a–d above) is separated into the two family policy dimensions. Both dimensions are here negatively and significantly correlated with poverty among households with young children. The effect of support to traditional family patterns is somewhat stronger than that of dual earner support but is significant only at the 10 per cent level, while the latter type of family support is significant at the 1 per cent level. The time variable is positive and significant at the 10 per cent level in both models, reflecting an increasing underlying average poverty trend over time in several countries.

Introducing the other independent variables, the prevalence of single-parent households, unemployment and female labour force participation, together with total family support in Model 3 does not significantly alter the conclusions about policy-outcome links. The family policy variable is still negative and significant at the 1 per cent level, only slightly weaker in strength as compared to Model 1. The other independent variables all have the expected correlations. Unemployment levels and the incidence of single-parent households are positively correlated with poverty among households with children, while female labour force participation is negatively associated with this particular outcome. However, of the three variables included only the incidence of single parents in a country has a significant correlation with poverty, at the 5 per cent level.

Replacing total family support with the two separate dimensions of family policy in Model 4 yields negative coefficients for both types of support,

however, only the effect of dual earner support is significant (at the 1 per cent level). Including information on socioeconomic and demographic structures thus mainly affects the correlation between support to highly gendered divisions of labour and poverty among households with young children. The time factor is positive also in the two last models, but non-significant.<sup>10</sup>

*Table 5.1 Unstandardized coefficients from unbalanced pooled time-series cross-section regression of child poverty rates in households with young children on independent variables (standard error within parentheses) for 16 countries 1980–2000*

Independent variables	Poverty in households with youngest child 0–5 years			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Total	–13.679*** (4.074)		–10.665*** (3.310)	
GENSUP		–16.038* (9.134)		–6.002 (6.218)
DUAL		–13.311*** (3.799)		–11.494*** (3.372)
SINGLE			0.541** (0.223)	0.596** (0.221)
UNEMP			14.346 (19.522)	10.105 (20.636)
FEMLAB			–12.249 (10.208)	–11.641 (10.152)
TIME	0.828* (0.429)	0.870* (0.410)	0.639 (0.472)	0.527 (0.441)
Constant	8.140* (4.487)	8.127* (4.602)	10.066 (6.585)	9.747 (6.445)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.434	0.437	0.561	0.568

\* $p < 0.10$  \*\* $p < 0.05$  \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

Regressions have also been run with alternative poverty limits, 40 and 60 per cent of median disposable income, and another equivalence scale assuming a lower economy of scale.<sup>11</sup> Running regressions with the same independent variables and the alternative poverty limits and equivalence scales does not alter any main effects, the only noteworthy change is that the effect of dual earner support is somewhat weaker when using the 60 per cent poverty limit, but still significant at the 1 per cent level.

The analyses conducted here indicate that dual earner support, in the form of earnings-related parental insurance, seems to explain more of the overall cross-national variation in poverty among the youngest children than does general family support provided in flat-rate amounts. The analyses do not seem to back up the idea put forth by proponents of selective redistributive strategies, since countries with the lowest universal and earnings-related benefits also have the highest child poverty levels. Rather it is countries with the most generous earnings-related family policy benefits that also have the lowest poverty rates among the youngest children. Even if the variables of family policy used here seem to offer a plausible explanation of the extent of poverty among households with young children, they are also likely to reflect aspects of the broader social policy matrix, including unmeasured aspects of family policy services largely affecting also this group. To sum up the results, it seems as if poverty levels among the youngest children are directly related to the institutional structures of family policy, and that earnings-related components explain most of the variation of such poverty.

## DISCUSSION

If the purpose of this chapter is reformulated into the question 'is the structure of family policy benefits related to cross-national patterns of poverty for households with young children?', a tentative answer would here be 'yes'. The analyses carried out here suggest a fairly strong link between such social policy institutions and distributive outcomes during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Family policy transfers generally seem to decrease child poverty, and total generosity of family policy is strongly negatively related to poverty among the youngest individuals. Also when separating total benefit generosity into dual earner support, based on earnings related benefits, and general family support, based on flat-rate benefits, both types of support have negative and significant relationships to such poverty, without controlling for other variables.

Other factors than family policy may of course have had an influence on the level of poverty in this population group, including patterns of labour market participation of mothers, unemployment levels and the number of single earners. When evaluating the explanatory potential of other demographic and structural-economic factors by use of multivariate regressions, the relationship between the two types of support and poverty is specified, since only dual earner support has a significantly negative effect, while support to more traditional divisions of labour has negative but insignificant effects. Female labour force participation and unemployment have the expected negative correlations, but only the share of single-parent

households has a significant and positive relationship to the levels of child poverty.

The provision of family support is, through its redistributive effects, likely to affect the agency of individuals in different ways. First, the provision of economic resources increases the choice capacity of parents and also provides compensated time for care of children during the most care intensive period in the human life cycle, and regarding dual earner support also offering possibilities to combine paid work and children. Such benefits thereby directly increase the possibilities to achieve well-being for individuals living in households with young children, whether those concerned are parents, children or other household members. Second, legislated family policy benefits may enhance choice capacities for all parents yet-to-be. In particular the existence of generous earnings-related parental leave benefits enables families to have children without severely heightened poverty risks. Third, the reduction of poverty is likely to affect children's future life chances. Previous research has shown that early childhood poverty seems to spark off chains of continued poverty, whereby children growing up in economically poor circumstances experience increased risks for developing a shortage of cognitive resources, in turn affecting educational attainment, future labour market prospects and poverty risks in adulthood (Haveman and Wolfe 1995; Duncan *et al.* 1998).

The way in which a welfare state provides economic resources may thus have both direct and indirect effects on the capability sets of parents and children, with the latter set of effects often emerging over the long run. Against this background, the findings presented here are interesting. Without pushing any causal claims too far, it seems as if family policy transfers in general, and earnings-related benefits in particular, could be an effective way of reducing early childhood poverty risks. In all likelihood, earnings-related transfers directed to both parents increase the time spent on leave by the father by a higher increment than do modest flat-rate benefits, even when the latter form of transfers also are designed to formally entitle fathers as recipients. In further consequence, as was shown in Chapter 4, earnings-related benefits are also likely to create incentives and agency for mothers to work to a greater degree. A precondition for receipt of earnings-related benefits is of course also a certain amount of labour market participation before confinement. It is often argued that the first step of a successful anti-poverty policy is support of mothers' employment and the provision of an adequate family benefit package (see Hobson and Takahashi 1997; Bradbury and Jäntti 2001; Esping-Andersen 2002). Generous parental insurance benefits provided on an individual basis to both parents is a keystone in such a strategy, together with affordable

childcare and the creation of working life courses with room both for paid labour and children.

On the whole, there is great need for a sharper institutional focus in analyses of redistributive effects of transfer programmes in welfare democracies. Cross-national patterns of poverty and income inequalities have been mapped by an impressive number of studies; it is now time to move from description towards more systematic explanation in analyses of welfare state outcomes. The combination of comparative micro-level data such as that of the Luxembourg Income Study, with increased knowledge about social policy institutions, is fundamental to the success of such an undertaking. In view of the results presented so far in this book and in the perspective of agency of parents yet-to-be, further analyses on relationships between poverty risks and childbearing patterns are warranted. Furthermore, since poverty is only one facet of individual well-being, analyses on associations between family policy, child poverty and other aspects of child welfare are needed, for example regarding psychological well-being, health outcomes and school completion of children. This is not least important since the provision of economic resources and services that structure work-family relationships also may affect a large number of outcomes besides poverty.

## NOTES

1. Of the 18 countries included in previous analyses, data for Japan and New Zealand are not available in the Luxembourg Income Study database.
2. Almost all households with young children are likely to be eligible to some type of family policy transfer. A macro-analysis of the relationship between family policy and poverty in the total population would be 'asymmetrical' in the sense that many individuals in the total population do not receive such benefits.
3. Examples of such analyses are primarily available for pension systems, where comparative data often admit a decomposition of particular income components (see Korpi and Palme 1998; Pedersen 1999). Attempts to analyse distributive impacts of family policy institutions by means of internal analysis have previously been confined to non-taxable benefits (see Jeandidier *et al.* 1999; Immervoll *et al.* 2001; Jeandidier and Albisier 2001; Hiilamo 2002). In an analysis of mean-tested benefits and social insurance transfers, Nelson (2003, 2004), develops a method for decomposition of separate effects of different income components in micro-level analyses of poverty.
4. For further information, see Chapter 2.
5. The selection of this household type is based on the age of the youngest child, which means that other children aged five and under as well as older dependent children, if any, are included in the analyses.
6. Different aspects of poverty may also be integrated into combined indices (for an overview, see Förster 1993). Sen (1976), for example, combines the head-count measure, the poverty gap and the Gini-coefficient for incomes among the poor, which measures the extent of inequality also within the poor population. An advantage with such a combined approach is that several important dimensions of poverty are included: the incidence, the depth, and the distribution of the poor. However, such indices are in general more difficult to interpret in a straightforward manner than more basic measures of poverty.

7. The included LIS data sets are for the following countries and years (within parentheses): Australia (1981, 1985, 1989, 1994), Austria (1987, 1995), Belgium (1985, 1992, 1997, 2000), Canada (1981, 1987, 1991, 1994, 2000), Denmark (1987, 1992, 1995), Finland (1987, 1991, 1995, 2000), France (1981, 1989, 1994), Germany (1981, 1984, 1989, 1994, 2000), Ireland (1987, 1995, 2000), Italy (1986, 1991, 1995, 2000), the Netherlands (1987, 1991, 1994, 1999), Norway (1986, 1991, 1995, 1999), Sweden (1981, 1987, 1992, 1995, 2000), Switzerland (1982, 1992), the United Kingdom (1979, 1986, 1991, 1995, 1999) and the United States (1979, 1986, 1991, 1994, 2000).
8. The formula for computing the proportional poverty reduction coefficient is:  $(PMI - PDPI)/PMI$ , where PMI is the market income poverty level and PDPI is the disposable income poverty level (resulting from the subtraction of taxes and transfers from market income).
9. The United States consistently combines the highest poverty levels with the lowest scores on family policy generosity. Removing this potentially influential observation from the analysis slightly weakens the correlation but does not alter the main conclusions about the relationship between the two factors.
10. Excluding the time variable does not strongly change any of the main results of Models 1–4 in Table 5.1. Restricting the analysis only to the 1990s and 2000 only changes the results in one major respect, in that female labour force participation becomes significantly negative.
11. Results are not reported. The alternative equivalence scale used is the one suggested in the OECD's Social Indicators (1982), where the first adult in the family is given the weight 1, every other adult 0.7 and each child 0.5.

## 6. Family policy models, gender role attitudes and family-work reconciliation in 15 welfare states

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The results in this book have so far shown that different types of family policy legislation are associated with different underlying motives and divergent socioeconomic and demographic outcomes of importance for individual agency and well-being. What has been paid less attention is how policies in different welfare states are of importance also for individuals' beliefs, preferences, and orientations regarding family and work. Individuals' perceptions of everyday life in different policy settings are interesting in several respects. It is for example of course relevant to evaluate whether support to a dual earner family corresponds to attitudes in the population that are in agreement with the ambitions of policy. Cross-national differences in such orientations of individuals can at least partly be considered as a more or less direct outcome of different family policies (Sjöberg 2004). Furthermore, if such policies are associated with a more stressful situation at home and at work, this may indicate problems with underlying motives to facilitate the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work. The attitudes of individuals may thus serve as an important indicator of both individual well-being within different policy regimes and provide information on the basis of legitimacy of policy itself.

Even if a generally increasing acceptance of non-domestic roles for women can be discerned in Western welfare states, large differences have also been shown to exist between countries regarding, for example, attitudes towards female labour force participation as well as to other aspects of parental gender roles (see for example Scott *et al.* 1998; Knudsen and Waerness 1999, 2001). Most often, however, cross-national differences in such attitudes have not explicitly been linked to the structure of family policy, even if the need for analysing the relationship between institutions and attitudes has been emphasized (Alwin *et al.* 1992). Recent research has shown that cross-country variations in attitudes on gender roles in Western welfare states to a large extent are related to the very structure of family policy legislation (Sjöberg 2000, 2004).

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse cross-national differences in attitudes among working-age individuals towards non-familial roles of women, and towards individuals' problems with fulfilling both familial and professional roles in countries with different family policy models. Thereby this chapter aims to create a bridge between research on welfare regimes and the study of gender role attitudes. Since the data used here are cross-sectional, the ambition is not to arrive at a full causal explanation but rather to explore broader patterns of variation. The analyses in this chapter draw upon data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) from 2002, which has information on 15 of the countries of relevance for this study, the countries being Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.<sup>1</sup> Next follows a theoretical discussion about the potential of family policy institutions to structure gender role attitudes, preferences and beliefs of individuals. The subsequent section presents hypotheses and data, whereafter empirical findings are presented. The chapter finishes with a concluding discussion.

## FAMILY POLICY INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL NORMS

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the family policy models that emerged in different Western welfare states have been shaped by different social actors with divergent views of the ideal division of paid and unpaid work. Countries with strong confessional parties have developed models that more actively support traditional family patterns; welfare states with strong traditions of leftist incumbency have introduced family policy models that support dual earner families; while countries with market-oriented family policies (less developed in both these respects) more often have lacked confessional or left parties in government (see Korpi 2000). Other factors, such as the representation of women in governments, also seem to have had a generally positive impact on the development of dual earner support (see Chapter 3 in this book). Family policy institutions and models can thus be seen as at least partly reflecting different underlying gender ideologies.

As shown in Chapter 2 of this book, the development of different family policy models has been a gradual process over the last three decades of the twentieth century, and it is therefore plausible that a complex, and in all likelihood recursive, causal relationship exists over time between gender role attitudes, family policy institutions and other concomitant factors such as female labour force participation. To what extent and in what ways family policy institutions are related to attitudes, preferences and beliefs of

individuals is unclear. In this respect, theoretical perspectives on the role of family policy and the formation of gender role beliefs and attitudes evidence large differences in the extent to which individual preferences are viewed as being exogenous or endogenous to such institutions (Sjöberg 2004).

Perspectives that view preferences as exogenous to family policy institutions often see individuals as instrumentally oriented towards their realization. A family policy that promotes female labour force participation, for example through parental leave policies and public childcare, by this view helps goal-oriented individuals to combine paid work and children. The degree to which parents are provided with 'family-friendly' policies is in this perception a means for mothers and fathers to combine work with family life. It has consequently been held that such policies remove constraints for mothers, and fathers, to make autonomous choices around work and family (Gornick *et al.* 1996; Sainsbury 1999; Ferrarini 2003), choices that historically have been surrounded by strong gender role norms.

Others have emphasized that a strong dual earner norm in society may force women to work and restrict women's choices to be homemakers (Lewis 1992; Hakim 2000). The latter view is endorsed by Hakim's (2003, 2004) 'preference theory', which sees women's different preferences as the starting point for analysis. Family policy institutions in this perspective are mainly seen as an exogenous factor, and women's divergent preferences are considered as being relatively stable over time. Hakim opens up for an endogenous interpretation of family policy institutions, in that such legislation may change women's behaviour and beliefs, however, whenever family policy is introduced in a country, the 'real' preferences of individuals are then to be viewed as having become distorted. Consequently, the societies where women can make choices in accordance with their 'real' preferences have market-oriented family policies (Hakim 2003). It has, however, been pointed out that preference theory rests on doubtful ground by considering individual preferences as being much too fixed over time and by paying too little attention to the role of social constraints, including institutions of family policy, in the actual shaping of individual preferences (see Procter and Padfield 1999; McRae 2003; Doorewaard *et al.* 2004).

With a more sociological perspective on social institutions, the attitudes, beliefs and preferences of individuals should perhaps best be viewed as not being fixed over time and partly endogenous to, for example, family policy legislation. With such a view, institutions of social policy may not only affect the strategic behaviour of individuals but also their very preferences, world orientations and beliefs. It should be noted that this need not imply that individual action may not be rationally goal-oriented, but rather that what an individual may see as rational in itself to large extent is socially constructed and involves orientations towards material

gains as well as towards normative orders (Korpi and Palme 1998; Sjöberg 2004; Esser 2005).

From an institutionalist perspective, individuals are always surrounded by a landscape of institutions that provide a framework of constraints and opportunities for individual action, profoundly affecting their identities, self-perceptions and social orientations (March and Olsen 1989; Thelen and Steinmo 1992; Rothstein 1998). An assumption in this chapter is that individual preferences, beliefs and orientations towards gender roles are partly endogenous to the institutional structure of family policy. With an institutional perspective it can thus be expected that family policies, with different underlying motives and different approaches towards supporting female (and male) labour force participation and care work, are differently associated to individuals' attitudes towards women's non-familial as well as familial roles.

A question that often arises in the comparative welfare state literature is in what way family policies introduce a stressful situation for parents, in particular mothers – that is, to what extent the behaviour supported by different family policy models affects parental sense of stress in the home and at work. Dual earner policies are sometimes said to be 'women-friendly' assisting the reconciliation of family and work through extensive transfers and services (Gornick *et al.* 1996; Korpi 2000). However, a counter-argument sometimes put forward is that such policies, by forcing women to work without sufficiently integrating men in unpaid work, introduce a role conflict whereby women end up with 'double duties', of long work hours as well as reproductive work, leading to 'time poverty' (see Lewis 1992). It is therefore of great interest to study how different familial ideologies, as represented in family policy models, are associated with a perceived stressful situation at home and at work in different countries.

## DATA AND HYPOTHESES

On the basis of knowledge about the divergent family policy models that have been developed in different countries, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this book, and the theoretical discussion in the above section, different hypotheses about links between family policy structure and attitudes to women's non-familial roles can be formulated. To measure attitudinal outcomes, two different sub-dimensions on orientations towards female labour force participation are used. The items making up these dimensions are derived from the ISSP module 'Family and Changing Gender Roles III' that includes a battery of items on orientations towards female labour force participation and reproductive work. These dimensions have previously

been used by, for example, Sundström (1999, 2001) and Sjöberg (2004) on analyses of policy-outcome links based on earlier ISSP modules.

The ISSP is an effort to generate a comparative data set on attitudes in industrialized countries by co-ordinating research goals and questionnaires of national surveys. Annual modules are collected on different topics, ranging from national identities and social inequality to gender roles, with the 2002 module used here pertaining to gender roles. The response rates of the countries included in this survey typically range between 50 and 60 per cent, and a weighting factor has been used to make results more representative for populations in countries with low response rates in particular respects.<sup>2</sup>

The first dimension that is to be analysed, labelled 'consequences of women working', includes the following two items where respondents have been asked to state their degree of disagreement or agreement:<sup>3</sup>

1. 'All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.'
2. 'A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.'

It is here hypothesized that countries with dual earner models of family policy on average should have the lowest levels of agreement to both these questions, due to the ambitions of policymakers to facilitate a reconciliation of paid and unpaid work. Welfare states with general family policy models, supporting more traditional family patterns, are hypothesized to have the highest average levels of accordance to these questions on consequences of women working, since policies to a larger extent support women's familial roles. Countries with market-oriented models of family policy are expected to take a middling position since such policies are more 'neutral' to female economic activity.

The second analysed dimension indicates agreement of individuals on a dimension that Sjöberg (2004) labels 'norms on gender roles', and consists of the following three items from the ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles module:<sup>4</sup>

1. 'Being a housewife is as fulfilling as working for pay.'
2. 'A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and the family.'
3. 'Both men and women should contribute to household income.'

The two first items are, in line with the hypotheses on consequences of women working, expected to generate the lowest levels of agreement for countries with dual earner models, the highest levels for countries with general family policy models and medium levels for countries with market-oriented models

of family policy. The third item, which indicates orientations towards dual earner family patterns, is expected to yield the reversed pattern, with dual earner model countries having the highest levels of agreement and general family policy models having the lowest scores on this question.

In addition a third dimension is also analysed, to a large extent indicating perceived problems reconciling paid work and family life. For this purpose three further items have been derived from the ISSP dataset:<sup>5</sup>

1. 'My life at home is stressful.'
2. 'Difficulties to fulfil family responsibility.'
3. 'I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of family responsibilities.'

In line with the opposing views on the role of family policy legislation outlined above, two hypotheses are formulated. In accordance with ideas that dual earner support, such as public childcare to the youngest children and generous parental insurance, may help individuals to reconcile paid and unpaid work, it could be hypothesized that countries with dual earner models should report a relatively low degree of agreement to the above questions. With a similar institutional perspective on 'women-friendliness' of family policies, market-oriented welfare states, where women also are engaged in paid work to a relatively large extent, and with less developed reconciliatory policies, should report the highest levels of agreement to these questions.

A different hypothesis can be formulated on the basis of the perspective that dual earner policies create a 'double burden' of both paid and unpaid work – expectations are here that countries with high levels of such support should show the highest levels of agreement on the questions on family-work reconciliation. With the assumption that market-oriented countries are seen as providing women with real choices between paid and unpaid work, these countries could be expected to have the lowest level of agreement to these questions, while countries with general family policy models, providing support to a female homemaker, can be hypothesized to take a middling position in this respect.

## EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Analyses in this section are restricted to the age group 20 to 54, since individuals in this interval are most likely to be economically active and have dependent children. Separate analyses are also carried out for men and women. The first question that is dealt with concerns conflicts between

women's work and family. Table 6.1 shows the frequency of individuals in the specified age group that agree with the statements that pre-school children and family life suffers when women are engaged in paid work, as well as on women and men in the same age interval separately. Countries are grouped according to family policy model and average rank on the included items. The results are in accordance with hypotheses on links between family policy institutions and outcomes. In the Nordic countries, with dual earner models of family policy, approximately a fifth of all individuals agree with the statements that a pre-school child as well as family life suffers when the mother works. Welfare states with general family policy models have the highest average levels of positive answers to the two questions, around 40 per cent, whereas countries with market-oriented family policy models on average report medium levels of support, around 35 per cent on both questions. However, large within-cluster differences exist, in particular between countries with general family policy models, where Austria has the high level of around 60 per cent on both items. Taking such influential observations into account decreases the average differences between countries with general and market-oriented family policy models.

When carrying out separate analyses on men and women, cross-cluster differences remain – indicating that family policy institutions structure attitudes of both men and women, although an interesting gender difference is found between the two items. In all countries, men have higher levels of agreement than women with the statement that a pre-school child suffers when the mother works. The cross-national differences between men and women are not as pronounced concerning the question on whether family life suffers, and no clear between-cluster patterns are found in this instance. The reasons for such differences are difficult to explain, but should perhaps be sought in gender conflicts around the distribution of work in the early child-raising years.

Turning to the second dimension, on gender role norms, somewhat different cross-national differences are exposed as compared to the above analysis. In Table 6.2, the three items making up this dimension are shown with countries grouped according to model of family policy and the average value on the included dimensions. The Nordic welfare states, with dual earner models of family policy, again have the lowest average levels of agreement to the items indicating the incidence of traditional gender role norms – around 30 per cent on the question whether being a housewife is as satisfying as working for pay, and approximately 6 per cent on the question whether men's job is to earn money and women's role is to be a housewife. The countries with dual earner models also have the highest average positive answers to the question measuring the presence of a dual

earner norm, regarding whether both men and women should contribute to the household income.

*Table 6.1 Attitudes towards conflict between women's work and family in 15 countries with different models of family policy in 2002, individuals aged 20 to 55 years*

	Conflict between women's work and family					
	Family life suffers when mother works			Pre-school child suffers when mother works		
	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men
<i>Market-oriented</i>						
Australia	40.9	38.7	44.1	37.0	31.9	44.1
New Zealand	36.9	38.8	33.9	39.3	35.6	44.5
USA	35.9	35.7	36.3	35.2	31.2	40.5
United Kingdom	32.7	32.1	34.6	32.0	27.9	39.2
Japan	30.8	27.2	34.7	27.5	25.5	29.7
Mean	35.4	34.3	36.7	34.2	30.4	39.6
<i>Dual earner</i>						
Finland	17.1	17.8	16.3	27.5	23.1	32.1
Denmark	20.7	19.7	22.1	23.2	18.1	29.9
Norway	22.5	24.3	20.4	18.8	13.3	25.3
Sweden	20.3	19.1	21.8	18.3	13.2	24.5
Mean	20.2	20.2	20.2	22.0	16.9	28.0
<i>General</i>						
Austria	59.4	56.9	62.0	62.4	55.2	69.7
Germany	41.1	40.3	41.9	50.0	44.8	55.4
France	39.7	41.8	36.7	37.9	33.2	42.5
Netherlands	41.5	43.6	39.2	35.4	31.5	39.5
Belgium	35.8	37.5	34.1	32.0	29.1	35.1
Ireland	32.6	33.9	31.4	31.2	26.6	36.1
Mean	41.6	42.1	40.9	41.5	36.3	43.0

Source: ISSP.

Welfare states with general and market-oriented models have higher levels of agreement on the two questions on traditional gender norms, and also higher levels of accord on the question on women's and

Table 6.2 Attitudes towards gender role norms in 15 countries with different models of family policy in 2002, individuals aged 20 to 55 years

	Being a housewife is as satisfying as working for pay			Norms regarding gender roles Men's job is to earn money, women's job is the home and family			Both men and women should contribute to household income		
	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men
<i>Market-oriented</i>									
USA	59.5	62.4	55.5	18.9	15.9	23.1	59.4	59.0	59.9
Japan	72.2	74.3	69.9	20.9	16.6	25.6	41.6	44.1	38.8
United Kingdom	43.0	44.2	41.6	10.0	8.5	12.4	56.1	55.1	57.0
Australia	45.7	48.6	41.7	13.8	10.6	18.1	44.9	45.4	44.3
New Zealand	40.7	42.5	37.2	11.7	10.9	12.5	43.8	44.0	43.7
Mean	52.3	54.5	49.1	15.1	12.4	18.3	49.3	49.9	48.7
<i>Dual earner</i>									
Denmark	35.4	36.4	34.1	6.7	6.2	7.4	75.4	76.5	74.1
Finland	40.2	39.4	41.1	8.1	4.7	11.7	67.0	67.8	66.0
Norway	21.9	22.3	21.4	5.9	3.8	8.4	72.8	68.5	77.7
Sweden	27.6	27.4	27.7	4.4	2.2	7.1	82.7	82.0	83.5
Mean	31.3	31.4	31.1	6.3	4.2	8.7	74.5	73.7	75.3
<i>General</i>									
Austria	34.2	31.7	37.0	23.9	19.5	28.5	82.3	84.7	75.7
Germany	31.8	26.7	37.3	14.1	13.2	15.1	66.5	68.1	64.9
Ireland	44.3	44.3	44.4	10.4	8.5	12.4	67.0	64.3	69.6
France	32.0	29.9	32.9	11.6	9.7	12.6	74.5	74.9	73.1
Belgium	45.5	37.7	54.2	12.1	8.6	15.8	56.7	60.6	52.4
Netherlands	22.3	22.9	21.6	8.6	7.4	9.8	40.1	38.2	42.0
Mean	35.0	33.1	37.9	13.5	11.0	15.7	64.5	65.1	63.0

Source: ISSP.

men's contribution to household income than what is the case in the Nordic countries. Somewhat unexpectedly, however, countries with market-oriented models here have the highest average levels of agreement on the two items measuring traditional gender role norms, as well as the lowest level of agreement on the question on whether both men and women should contribute to household income.

Taking a closer look at within-cluster variations reveals some interesting deviating cases. In Japan, for example, over two-thirds of individuals agree with the statement that being a housewife is as satisfying as working for pay, which may have to do with a high incidence of female homemakers. Finland also has relatively high levels of agreement on this question, of around 40 per cent. To what extent this finding can be explained by the components of general family support or the structure of female labour force participation in Finland is debatable since several other Nordic countries have relatively similar socio-political and labour market structures. In a comparison between Finland and Sweden, Hiilamo and Kangas (2003) point out that Finland has a different historical agrarian and labour market structure, and that discursive differences in the formulation of family policy and gender roles have existed between the two countries, with the debate in Finland being less guided by gender equality goals.

Separating men's and women's attitudes in the analysis also yields some interesting results. Concerning the question on whether being a housewife is as satisfying as working for pay, women in market-oriented countries have higher levels of agreement than men, whereas such differences are negligible or reversed in all other countries. An explanation for this finding could perhaps be sought in a relatively high female labour force participation in such countries, in combination with less developed family support to both dual earner and more traditional divisions of labour, generating high levels of conflict between paid and unpaid work. Regarding the item on whether men's job is to earn money and women's role is in the home, men in all countries have a higher degree of agreement with this statement – something that may reflect existence of gendered labour market inequalities (at different levels) in all welfare democracies, regardless of the structure of family policy. Concerning the third item, no large systematic differences exist between men and women.

The broad differences between the two dimensions analysed above are partly in agreement with the hypothesis that countries with strong dual earner support have the lowest levels of agreement on conflict between women's work as well as family and traditional norms on gender roles. The differences between countries with market-oriented and general family policy models regarding the two attitudinal dimensions are in this respect somewhat more puzzling. One explanation for the findings could perhaps

ought in the combined effects of female labour force participation and family policy structure. Countries with general family policy models do not combine high levels of support to traditional family patterns with high levels of support to the dual earner family, which may generate policy contradictions partially explaining the observed differences between attitudes to women's work and dominant gender role norms.

The strong support for more traditional gender norms in market-oriented countries, as well as the differences between men and women regarding men's role as homemaker, may be due to the low levels of family support in both family policy dimensions and relatively high levels of female labour force participation fuelling the conflict between paid and unpaid work, in particular for women. In line with ideas about reconciliatory effects of family policy it could also be expected that individuals in countries with market-oriented family policies on average should perceive a higher degree of stress around the reconciliation of paid work and family life. Such cross-national patterns of perceived difficulties with combining paid and unpaid work are paid closer attention next.

Results from the analysis on perceived difficulties with combining family and paid work on all three sub-items are presented in Table 6.3. A quick glance at this table shows that cross-national differences are generally somewhat smaller than when attitudes to women's work and gender role norms were analysed. Regarding the first item, on a perceived stressful situation at home, results are in line with hypotheses on reconciliatory effects of family policy that assists the combination of paid and unpaid work. Countries with market-oriented models of family policy report the highest levels of a home situation reported as stressful, with approximately 37 per cent of respondents agreeing that they live in such a situation. Welfare states with general family policy models have medium levels of perceived stress at home, of around 32 per cent, while countries with dual earner models of family policy have the lowest such levels, around 26 per cent. Notably, men in all countries report higher levels of stress at home.

Shifting focus to the second item of this dimension, concerning difficulties in fulfil family responsibilities, considerably smaller (not to say negligible) cross-cluster differences are reported. The average levels of agreement in countries with different family policy models are in line with the institutional hypothesis on reconciliatory effects of family policy, but overall differences are small. Instead an interesting gendered pattern is found, on average (with the exception of Sweden), men report larger difficulties than do women in fulfilling family responsibilities. This may indicate the presence of an underlying male breadwinner norm in most countries, regardless of family policy model. It may thus not be a coincidence that it is Sweden, with a very strong dual earner norm in family policy, that reports the only case with an

Table 6.3 Perceived difficulties with reconciling paid and unpaid work in 15 countries with different models of family policy in 2002, individuals aged 20 to 55 years

	Reconciliation of paid and unpaid work								
	All	Life at home stressful Women	Men	All	Difficult to fulfil family responsibility Women	Men	All	Difficulties to concentrate on job due to family responsibilities Women	Men
<i>Market-oriented</i>									
USA	40.5	48.5	29.7	29.7	29.2	30.4	12.2	14.5	9.6
United Kingdom	38.5	41.5	33.9	28.4	24.2	32.4	7.9	9.4	6.6
Australia	35.3	40.3	28.6	27.3	25.9	29.0	8.8	9.2	8.4
New Zealand	36.5	39.5	32.0	23.7	20.5	27.4	9.8	10.3	9.3
Japan	34.6	44.1	24.1	31.1	28.7	33.1	3.6	4.1	3.2
Mean	37.1	42.9	29.7	27.9	25.6	30.5	8.5	9.5	7.4
<i>Dual earner</i>									
Denmark	30.8	38.5	20.6	27.9	26.8	29.2	5.0	5.7	4.2
Norway	28.9	33.6	23.6	24.7	18.7	30.9	5.1	5.5	4.7
Sweden	24.4	29.8	18.1	30.1	30.9	29.2	6.5	7.5	5.4
Finland	20.2	24.1	16.0	23.9	20.6	27.2	6.4	6.3	6.4
Mean	26.1	31.5	19.6	26.7	24.3	29.1	5.7	6.1	5.2
<i>General</i>									
Germany	39.0	47.7	30.0	31.9	23.3	39.6	7.5	6.2	8.5
Belgium	29.9	35.3	23.8	39.3	37.4	41.0	4.9	6.1	3.8
France	25.3	30.9	17.4	30.0	28.5	36.2	7.4	8.6	4.2
The Netherlands	30.8	34.0	27.4	21.3	20.0	22.4	6.7	8.1	5.5
Austria	33.4	41.8	21.9	20.5	17.0	23.3	4.4	4.5	4.3
Ireland	27.4	37.6	18.8	18.8	14.2	21.4	3.8	7.1	1.3
Mean	31.0	37.9	23.2	27.0	23.4	30.7	5.8	6.8	4.6

opposite pattern, even if the observed gender difference in this particular instance is small.

The third and last item on the dimension measuring problems with reconciling paid and unpaid work is the question on whether individuals have difficulties in concentrating on job due to family responsibilities. It is again shown that average levels of agreement between clusters is in line with the institutional hypothesis on reconciliatory effects of family policy, with welfare states with dual earner family policy models having the lowest levels and countries with market-oriented family policy models having the highest levels of accordance. Between-cluster differences are, however, also here relatively small – moreover, substantial within-cluster differences exist among countries with general and market-oriented models. The difference between the United States and Japan is the most striking example, with around 12 and four per cent agreement on this question respectively. Taking a look at gender differences shows that women on average perceive higher levels of role conflicts than do men on this item.

The hypothesis that dual earner family policies reinforce role conflicts around paid and unpaid work is not supported by the above analysis. Rather it is the perspectives stressing the reconciliatory function of family policy that receives at least partial support, most clearly so regarding a perceived stressful situation at home. Concerning the two items measuring difficulties with fulfilling family responsibilities and experienced difficulties to concentrate on job because of such responsibilities, cross-country differences are small, which at least indicates that such reconciliatory policies on average do not seem to increase difficulties to perform family responsibilities and paid work due to household duties. The hypothesis that market-oriented countries should have the lowest levels of perceived stress (in line with ideas that these countries, by not distorting preferences through family policy, provide women with fundamental choices around work and family) does not receive support. Men and women in the United States, with the least developed family policy transfers, on the contrary indicate that reconciliation is hard (by all three sub-items) to a greater extent than their counterparts anywhere else.

Since the extent of female labour force participation differs between countries with different models of family policy, and to some extent also is an outcome of such policies, sensitivity analyses have been carried out separating women with different degrees of work and homemakers. The results of these analyses (not reported), show that gender role attitudes of women with different degrees of economic activity to a large extent are structured along the models of family policy implemented in their countries. This pattern does not significantly deviate from the above analyses for women working full-time and for women working part-time, but is somewhat less

consistent regarding full-time homemakers, which on the whole report higher levels of agreement on the questions on traditional gender roles and consequences of women working. For example, regarding the question about whether family life and a pre-school child suffer from women's work, non-working women in the Nordic countries report the lowest level of agreement, while corresponding respondents in countries with general family policy models have the highest such levels. As regards the questions on gender role norms, such differences are much less pronounced. It should, however, be noted that the sample of economically non-active persons in the Nordic countries is relatively small, something which may affect the reliability of the results. The low propensity of housewives can in itself to large extent be seen as an outcome of family policy structure (Axelsson 1992; Korpi and Stern 2005). To properly evaluate how preferences and beliefs are formed among women (and men) with different degrees of paid and unpaid work would require attitudinal panel data.

To sum up the results from this section, it seems as if family policy to substantial degree can be linked to patterns of attitudes to female work and family, as well as to norms on gender roles. Regarding the reconciliatory function of family policy for paid and unpaid work, it seems as if family policy in some instances may function to decrease the reported incidence of a stressful home and work situation. This does not mean that the combination of work and family may not create a potentially stressful life situation or create role conflicts, but rather indicates that 'family-friendly' policies may decrease the extent of perceived stress during such life situations.

## CONCLUSIONS

The starting point of this chapter has been to explore how family policy institutions in different welfare democracies are associated with attitudinal differences among working age individuals on the subject of women's work, gender norms as well as perceived problems with reconciling paid work and family life. Using the ISSP module 'Family and Changing Gender Roles' from 2002, 15 countries with different models of family policy have been studied along three different dimensions, concerning attitudes to women's work and family, norms on gender roles as well as on perceived conflicts between paid work and family life.

From an institutionalist perspective it has been argued that preferences, beliefs and world orientations at least partly are endogenous to family policy institutions. This does not rule out that family policy affects constraints for individual goal-oriented action, but rather implies that attitudes and preferences of individuals may be viewed as being both endogenous and

exogenous to such institutions. From this follows that family policy may both shape the opportunity structure of individuals, by removing or introducing constraints to perform non-domestic as well as domestic roles, and that individuals' attitudes are likely to be affected directly by such institutions, or by way of the behaviour that they promote. In light of this reasoning it also seems realistic to assume that beliefs, attitudes and preferences of individuals may function both as a factor determining socio-political change as well as an outcome of social institutions such as family policy legislation.

The analyses indicate that gender role attitudes to a not considerable extent are structured along the lines of the family policy implemented in a country. Countries with dual earner models of family policy have the lowest degree of agreement on questions regarding attitudes to women's work, as indicated by whether family life and pre-school children are held to suffer when mothers work, as well as on gender role norms, largely reflecting attitudes on women's role as housewives. This result is in line with institutionalist suppositions that family policy legislation both may affect opportunity structures and orientations of individuals, since such countries have highly developed earnings-related benefits and public services in support of female labour force participation and male care work.

Countries with general family policy models, actively supporting more traditional gender roles, as well as market-oriented welfare states, have considerably higher levels of agreement on both these attitudinal dimensions, with individuals in the former type of countries agreeing to a larger extent that family life and pre-school children suffer when mothers work, and respondents in countries with market-oriented models having somewhat higher levels of agreement on gender role norms stipulating that women be housewives. A possible explanation for this difference between the two different attitudinal dimensions could perhaps be sought in the way female labour force participation and different parts of family policy legislation interact. General family policy models combine high levels of support to traditional family patterns with medium levels of support to the dual earner family, which could be a partial explanation for the observed differences between attitudes to women's work and gender role norms. It should also be noted that women in market-oriented welfare states, to a larger extent than men, agree with the statement that being a housewife is as satisfying as working for pay, whereas such differences are negligible or in the opposite direction in all other countries. This result may have been produced by the combination of relatively high female economic activity in such countries with relatively low levels of support both concerning work-family reconciliation and more traditional gender roles.

Even if the levels of men's and women's responses to a large extent follow along the lines of broader family policy structures, interesting differences

and similarities between men and women are also found. In some instances gender differences are structured along the lines of family policy models, but several interesting patterns that cut across clusters are also found. Men, in all countries, believe to a larger extent than women that pre-school children suffer when women work. Men also agree, more so than women, that the men's job is to earn money while the women's job is the family. These results may indicate the presence of an underlying male breadwinner norm that has been modified to different degrees by different national contexts.

The third dimension concerns perceived stress around the reconciliation of paid work and family, where two different working hypotheses have been evaluated. The first hypothesis suggests a negative relationship between dual earner family policies and perceived stress in family and at work. Dual earner policies are in this perspective 'family-friendly' and remove constraints against the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work. The second hypothesis focuses on the double burden of work and family that is introduced in countries with extensive dual earner policies, and rather predicts that welfare states where women have choices unbiased by family policy, that is countries with market-oriented models, should encourage women to choose their own mix of work and family, and thereby could be expected to be less likely to perceive stressful family-work situations. The results in part support the first hypothesis, since individuals in dual earner policy countries report lower, or at least similar, levels of stress in the home and at work as compared to individuals in other welfare states, while respondents in countries with market-oriented models on the whole report relatively high levels of such perceived stress. Also concerning this dimension, however, important gender differences exist that cut across broader cross-national patterns. Women in all countries have higher reported levels of stress in the home than men, while men generally report larger difficulties to fulfil family responsibilities than do women. These results could reflect the different degrees of unequal gendered divisions of labour that prevail in all welfare democracies.

It should be pointed out that these differences in attitudes are likely to be affected by a great number of factors besides family policy legislation and gender, for example labour market structure, female labour force participation, religious affiliation and educational attainment of individuals. However, some of these factors, in particular concerning different aspects of female labour force participation, can partly be seen as intervening variables between family policy and potential attitudinal outcomes. The relatively straightforward analyses indicate a potentially fruitful path for future analysis on links between gender role attitudes and family policy structure, but to fully disentangle the complex relationships between family policy and formation of preferences, attitudes and beliefs, this field of research would ideally require comparative attitudinal panel data.

Bringing together welfare regime and attitudinal analyses may prove to be fruitful in several ways. The degree to which attitudes are compatible with the particular policy developed in a country may not only be seen as a product of the constraints on choice capacity that policies introduce or remove, or the gender role norms that institutions inhibit and structure, but may also be viewed as an indicator of the basis of legitimacy and support for policy itself. The fact that substantial differences exist between countries should not necessarily be interpreted as if underlying gender role norms are easily modified by family policy reform.

The changing norms with respect to gender roles are most likely part of an intergenerational process involving complex processes of socialization. Cohort differences in attitudes supporting this idea have been observed in several countries, where the existence of traditional gender role attitudes is positively related to age of the respondent (see Sjöberg 2004). Preferences, beliefs and world orientations of individuals are in daily life shaped by intricate interactions between institutional constraints, behaviour and preferences. Thirty years ago, when comparatively small differences in family policy existed between welfare states, Sweden introduced dual parental insurance benefits that entitled men to half of earnings-related leave. A few years after the reform, only 1 per cent of leave days were used by fathers, while in 2005 this figure had gradually risen to roughly 20 per cent – far from being gender-equal, but at the same time unparalleled among the welfare democracies. This change in behaviour is in all likelihood not only attributable to policy reform, such as extensions of leave duration and introduction of daddy quotas, but also to gradually changing attitudes among new cohorts of fathers, mothers and employers alike. Even if institutions may change opportunity structures and beliefs of individuals this does not mean that policymakers can disregard the existing patterns of gender role attitudes and norms in society. On the contrary, the structure of such orientations may well determine the success of any family policy reform aiming to support a particular type of behaviour.

## NOTES

1. Two countries are not represented in their entirety. In the case of Germany, only West Germany has been included since gender role attitudes in the eastern part of the country are likely to have been partly produced in a different historical institutional setting. For Belgium only attitudinal data for Flanders was available in ISSP, which decreases generalizability of findings somewhat in this particular instance.
2. See International Social Survey Programme (2005) for a description of weighting procedures and response rates.
3. The questions have here been measured on a five point Likert scale with the following alternative answers: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree or disagree', 'disagree' and

'strongly disagree'. The answers have been recoded so that the two first response alternatives indicate agreement to the statement.

4. Variables are recoded in the same way as for the previous two items.
5. The questions here also have five options for the respondent: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree or disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The original question about a stressful home situation was 'my life at home is rarely stressful', here this question has been reversed to instead indicate a stressful home situation and the two last categories (disagreement) have been grouped together. The answers on questions 2 and 3 have been recoded so that the two first values indicate agreement to the statement.

## 7. Conclusion

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The aim of this book has been to analyse the role of family policy legislation in post-war welfare democracies for structuring the family-state-market relationship and the agency, well-being and orientations of individuals in a macro-comparative perspective. The focus has been on the structure, causes and consequences of institutional diversity and change in this area. Thereby two crucial questions in comparative welfare state research have been addressed, namely ‘does politics matter?’ and ‘does institutional design matter?’. The results show that family policy institutions have been shaped by distributive conflict involving confessional and class-political actors as well as by women’s agency, and that the design of such institutions has had further implications for agency, actions, orientations and living conditions of individuals in terms of childbearing, female labour force participation, poverty among households with young children as well as gender role attitudes. Thus, the answer to the often-posed questions of politics’ and institutions’ significance is here affirmative, as both politics and institutions do seem to matter.

An institutional perspective, which views social policy institutions as ‘intervening’ variables between underlying motives and outcomes, has improved our understanding of how welfare states, through family policies, shape potential choices and orientations of parents regarding paid work and children. Here, this approach has entailed the disaggregation of different family policy transfers into two separate dimensions of family policy effort, reflecting whether such policies maintain highly gendered divisions of work (general family support) or whether they support the dual earner family (dual earner support). High levels of dual earner support are linked to high female labour force participation and childbearing as well as to low levels of child poverty and traditional gender role attitudes, while more generous general family support holds back female labour force participation and upholds childbearing through strengthening more traditional gender roles.

The study has addressed a number of to a large extent interrelated questions. In Chapter 2 the development of different family policy institutions was analysed in 18 countries with respect to how different benefits shape incentives and agency of parents. The systematic cross-national comparison has provided new information on institutional developments of particular

transfers in this area of social policy. Three main types of family policy programmes have been analysed, paid parental leave, marriage subsidies and child benefits. The analyses of family policy institutions show that cross-national differences by the end of the twentieth century were substantial, and that institutional structures of family policy benefits entail different choice capacities of parents both regarding mothers' participation in paid work and fathers' involvement in care work. Furthermore, few signs of broad policy retrenchment can be detected in this particular social policy domain. Instead, programmes of family policy leave have generally been expanded in most countries since the 1970s, although along different institutional trajectories.

In the early post-war period, differences in paid parental leave, both regarding the types of existing institutions and benefit generosity, diverged only little cross-nationally. Most countries had a combination of maternity insurance and lump-sum maternity grants, beside tax marriage subsidies and the universal flat-rate child benefits typically introduced in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1970s, increased divergence in paid parental leave strategies emerged and from this point in time the father also became recognized as a potential carer in parental leave legislation in a number of countries.

The ways to include fathers, however, differed. One strategy entailed paternal entitlement to dual parental insurance, generous both in terms of earnings-relatedness and in benefit duration. This also often entitled the father to earnings-related paternity insurance, so-called 'daddy days', to be utilized together with the mother during the immediate post-natal period. Another strategy was to introduce childcare leave benefits offering paid leave formally also to the father by way of relatively modest flat-rate benefits paid in continuation of any extant parental insurance payments. While dual parental insurance programmes and paternity insurance can be seen as encouraging the dual earner family, it is difficult to view childcare leave benefits in this perspective. Even if policymakers frequently framed the introduction of childcare leave in terms of increased 'parental choice', its institutional structure with low flat-rate benefits, in combination with gender-segregated labour markets and large gender gaps in earnings, tends to support an unequal gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work within families.

Parental leave benefits comprising fathers are most often paid as family entitlements, implying that leave not utilized by the father can be (and in practice most often is) transferred to the mother. Recently, individual components have increasingly been introduced both in earnings-related dual parental insurance transfers and in flat-rate childcare leave benefits. This means that a part of paid parental leave is provided as a 'daddy quota', which is not transferable within the family. The behavioural outcomes of

earnings-related and flat-rate benefits are, however, likely to be different. The average net weekly childcare leave benefit is around 23 per cent of an average production worker's wage, while the corresponding figure for parental insurance leave benefit generosity is around 75 per cent. The purely financial incentive for most fathers to use the former benefit must therefore be considered very weak, at the same time as the low flat-rate benefit levels signal 'low status position'.

By the end of the twentieth century the cross-national patterns of paid parental leave largely follow along the lines of broader family policy strategies. The Nordic countries, with dual earner models of family policy, have earnings-related parental insurance benefits, of which a large part is directed to both parents. Countries with general models of family support, mainly Continental European ones, have developed strong support of traditional gendered divisions of labour. None of the latter type of welfare states has introduced dual parental insurance by the end of the observation period, but five out of seven have childcare leave benefits. Welfare states with market-oriented models of family policy, primarily English-speaking countries, are typically characterized by the lowest levels of support to both the dual earner family and to the traditional family.

Also the development of flat-rate benefits for a working person with a dependent spouse, so-called marriage subsidies, as well as child benefits, are to a considerable degree patterned along the lines of the broader family policy structure. These types of family support are supportive, or at least neutral, to a traditional gendered division of labour, and thereby belong to the general family policy dimension. Marriage subsidies, which are most supportive of a highly gendered division of labour, have in Continental European countries been expanded since the 1970s, and thereby strengthened the general family policy models in these societies. Child benefits have in the latter countries remained at comparatively high levels throughout most of the period. In welfare states with dual earner models, marriage subsidies were radically decreased from around 1970, when these welfare states had the highest average levels of marriage subsidies. At the same time as marriage subsidies were decreased, earnings-related dual earner benefits were extended, but a shift towards increased generosity can also be discerned in these countries' child benefits, which are somewhat more neutral to traditional gendered divisions of labour than are marriage subsidies. Countries with market-oriented models have typically had the lowest levels of both marriage subsidies and child benefits throughout the post-war period.

This study has, however, also found several important deviations from broader family policy strategies, of which some may indicate the development of a new model of family policy – with contradictory features, given the underlying motives behind the two major categories of family

policy programmes (as is illustrated by cell B in Figure 1.1, Chapter 1). The new potential family policy model provides generous support to both the traditional family and the dual earner family. Three out of four of the Nordic countries have, for example, introduced flat-rate childcare leave benefits alongside earnings-related dual parental insurance leave by 2000 – thus moving these countries along the continuous scale of the general family support dimension, even if it should be noted that Denmark has made substantial opposed changes in family policy legislation since 2000, when childcare leave benefits were removed and dual earner support extended. The introduction of paternity insurance in for example France and Belgium, although at a very modest level, may also be described as a gradual movement along the dual earner dimension of family policy. Also Canada has clearly weakened its market-oriented characteristics by the introduction and extension of dual parental insurance in the 1990s, and several market-oriented countries, among them New Zealand and the United Kingdom, have since the end of the observation period also introduced parental leave entitlements to fathers. So far it can be said that several countries have changed their family policy transfer programmes in relation to the broader ideal-typical family policy strategies, sometimes in the direction of strengthening contradictory features of such policies.

Institutional analyses of the kind presented here are a first step towards understanding how models of family policy may change over time by the introduction of new institutional features, and changing structures of existing programmes. Since the different types of benefits in different time periods may have been used as alternative or complementary strategies to support families with dependent children in a particular institutional setting, the generosity of all family policy benefits has been combined along the two dimensions of family policy as described above, enabling an analysis of potentially contradictory features of family policy in a country. Earnings-related parental leave benefits were grouped as belonging to the dual earner support dimension, due to their supportiveness of female labour force participation and to some degree also of male care work. Flat-rate childcare leave and child benefits as well as marriage subsidies were grouped as belonging to the general family policy dimension since they are supportive, or at least neutral, to highly gendered divisions of work.

An important question is to what extent dual earner transfers link up with aspects of broader family policy settings, including social services, that promote female (and male) labour force participation. This question is not least important since it sometimes has been pointed out that such transfers and services may work as ‘functional equivalents’ in the provision of care in many countries (Rostgaard 2002a). When analysing the relationship between these indicators on family policy transfers and the extent of public services

supportive of the dual earner family, relatively strong positive associations of the public service extension with the dual earner support dimension are reported by the end of the twentieth century, when reliable data on such services exist. This finding suggests that the information on dual earner transfers may serve as an indicator for the broader family policy matrix in this respect, in any case for the latter part of the studied period. The multidimensional and institutional view of family policy that is outlined in the two first chapters of this book represents considerable progress when evaluating welfare state effort. By being able to assess the generosity of welfare state legislation along different dimensions simultaneously and over time, causes and consequences of different family policies as well as their potentially inherent contradictory features can be analysed.

Chapter 3 deals with the potential driving forces behind legislated family policy benefits. Here, new information on women's agency has complemented traditional confessional and class-political explanations of welfare state development (see Korpi 1989; Palme 1990; Kangas 1991; Huber *et al.* 1993; Wennemo 1994; Carroll 1999; Hicks 1999), in this evaluation, together with more structural-economic hypotheses. Family policy generosity, separated along the two analytical dimensions, was used as a set of dependent variables in separate pooled cross-section time-series regressions. The analyses show that different factors underlie the development of the two types of family benefits, but overall, actor-oriented hypotheses of welfare state development are most robustly corroborated.

Important explanatory factors (in different ways) behind the development of family benefits in support of the dual earner family are leftist party and Christian Democratic incumbency and women's shares of cabinet portfolios. Female as well as left cabinet shares are positively correlated to dual earner support, while confessional party strength has a negative correlation with such family support. The development of general family support is mainly explained by Christian Democratic incumbency, positively and significantly related to benefits supportive of highly gendered divisions of work. Female and left cabinet shares have the expected correlations with general family support, but these are not significant. These results are nevertheless in line with hypotheses about the capacity of female agency and left governance to affect policies in a direction towards supporting the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work, as well as the potential of Christian Democratic ideals to support traditional gendered divisions of work. Structural-economic determinants have limited overall explanatory bearing on cross-national patterns of family policy. When introducing state constitutional structure into analyses, measured as the number of constitutional veto points, a negative correlation emerges with both dimensions of family support, though this does not alter the main effects of actor-oriented variables.

However, this factor is only significant pertaining to dual earner support, indicating that power resource theory and state-structural explanations complement each other in this particular respect.

Hypotheses derived from a power resources perspective, emphasizing the relative power of different political actors as regards dual earner support, complemented by propositions about state constitutional structure, thus seem most congruent with the development of different types of family policy programmes. The results perhaps qualify proposals sometimes put forward in gender-oriented research (Pateman 1988; Lewis 1992) that women's agency largely has not influenced major family policy development, even if such suggestions sometimes depart from the strength of women's movements rather than female elite-level agency. The idea put forward by Hakim (2003), that male-dominated governments do not accord with family policies supportive of reproductive work, receives some support. When women are in government they seem to favour dual earner policies supportive of a reconciliation of work and family rather than policies that sustain female homemaking.

Chapter 4 focuses on the relationships between family policy strategies, fertility and women's labour force participation. This study has contributed new knowledge on how different institutions of family policy seem to have divergent effects on the two mentioned demographic behavioural outcomes. Earlier macro-comparative studies have hypothesized that different types of family benefits may have diverging outcomes, but has not tested this empirically (Ruhm 1998; Brewster and Rindfuss 2000). Comparative micro-level studies using fewer countries have, however, found divergent effects of different types of parental leave benefits in Nordic countries (Rönsen 1999; Rönsen and Sundström 2002), but the generalizability of these findings to a broader cross-national context has not been evaluated.

In the analyses carried out in Chapter 4, the dual earner support dimension of family policy has a positive correlation with both total fertility rates and female economic activity – general family support is negatively correlated with the latter variable, while being positively related to fertility. Thus, it appears as if the different family policy institutions in large part have their intended consequences, something that becomes comprehensible in light of the results of analyses on motives and potential causal factors underlying family policy development.

The ways in which earnings-related benefits and flat-rate benefits are connected to fertility are, however, most likely dissimilar. General family support mainly sustains fertility by favouring full-time motherhood during the early childrearing years, while earnings-related dual earner support acts to facilitate the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work. This interpretation is supported by the separate analyses carried out in Chapter 4. It should be

noted that the (unmeasured) structure of the broader family policy context also here might have affected the results. Countries with generous earnings-related dual earner support have been shown to also have more developed public services in support of the dual earner family, for example concerning childcare (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; Sainsbury 1996; Korpi 2000). The data on dual earner transfers may function as an indirect indicator also of the broader social policy setting, including public transfers and services; additionally, as shown in Chapter 2, the dual earner dimension is highly correlated with the extent of services in support of a dual earner family by the end of the observation period. It must, however, be noted that whether such an interplay between transfers and services exists over a longer time perspective and within broader cross-national context remains an empirical question.

To the extent that family policy institutions can be viewed as intervening variables between motives and outcomes, reflecting underlying causal factors, a result that left parties or female cabinet shares seem to extend benefits in support of the dual earner family, while confessional incumbency is negatively correlated to this type of family policy transfers, and that such benefits achieve their potential underlying goal, becomes comprehensible. It would have been difficult to detect this link in macro-comparative analysis without disaggregating the two dimensions of family policy.

Chapter 5 analyses the relationship between family policy and poverty among households with pre-school children. The poverty risks and the need for additional economic resources are probably greatest during these early years. This is largely due to the great need for intensive parental care, which means that parents (mostly the mother) must decrease their time in paid work, and that income thereby is lost. Experienced poverty risks during the early years of children's lives have also been shown to be negatively related to their cognitive resource formation, something that may have life-cycle effects on future labour market positions of individuals growing up under poor circumstances. This study contributes to the understanding of the making of agency and living conditions in different countries. Earlier studies on the poverty of families with children have frequently acknowledged the potential impact of social policy programmes on such poverty patterns, but often have a relatively weak institutional perspective (Ritakallio 1994; Hobson and Takahashi 1997; Forssén 1998; Palme and Kangas 2000; Solera 2001), when such an approach is used it is often based on cross-sectional analyses (Ferrarini 2003; Ferrarini and Forssén 2005).

Pooled time-series regressions indicate a strong negative relationship between family policy transfer generosity and poverty among households with young children using comparative income data from the Luxembourg Income Study. When separating family policy transfers along the lines of

dual earner support and general family support, both factors are negatively related to such poverty. Since several factors besides family policy transfers may affect cross-national patterns of poverty, multivariate regressions are also carried out controlling for other demographic and structural-economic factors. The included factors comprise the percentage of single-mother households, unemployment levels and labour force participation among women in the prime childbearing ages. The multivariate tests do not change the negative correlation between total family policy generosity and poverty among families with young children. However, when the two dimensions of family support are separated while controlling for other factors, only earnings-related leave in support of a dual earner family has a consistently significant and negative statistical relationship with such cross-national poverty patterns, while general family support has a correspondingly negative, but insignificant correlation.

The ways in which family policies structure potential poverty risks have implications not only for the present choice capacity of members in families with young children. They also have implications for the future agency of children growing up in poor families and for the agency of parents-to-be, whose childbearing decisions may be prospectively affected by potential poverty risks. It may seem surprising that social policy institutions with potentially large gender implications are so intimately related to redistributive outcomes associated with socioeconomic structures. Again, viewing institutions as 'intervening' variables (Korpi and Palme 1998), reflecting underlying causal factors, and with the results from Chapter 3 in mind, the existence of earnings-related benefits to a large extent seems to be the product of class-based action, including parties of the left, in combination with women's political power. This clearly highlights the need to study class-gender interactions in the shaping of social policy institutions as well as their consequences in this respect.

Chapter 6 explores the relationship between family policy institutions and attitudinal differences regarding women's work, gender norms as well as perceived problems with reconciling paid work and family life. Using comparative attitudinal data from the International Social Survey Programme from 2002, 15 countries with different family policy models were studied along three different dimensions: attitudes to women's work and family; norms regarding gender roles; and perceived conflicts between paid work and family life. From an institutionalist perspective, preferences, beliefs and world orientations can be viewed as in part being endogenous to such institutions, shaping constraints for individuals to perform non-domestic as well as domestic roles, as well as functioning as normative orders that affect the very preferences and beliefs of the same individuals.

The results are to a not inconsiderable extent in line with institutionalist hypotheses claiming that family policy legislation both may shape opportunity structures and orientations of individuals. Gender role attitudes are to some extent patterned along the lines of the family policy implemented in a country. Countries with dual earner models of family policy have the lowest degree of agreement on questions regarding whether family life and pre-school children suffer when mothers work, as well as on women's role as housewife. Countries with general family policy models, supportive of more traditional gender roles, as well as market-oriented welfare states, have a higher level of agreement on both these dimensions, with individuals in the former type of countries agreeing to a larger extent that family life and pre-school children suffer from maternal labour force participation, and respondents in countries with market-oriented models having higher levels of agreement on gender norms around housewife roles.

Even though dissimilarities between men and women in several instances follow along the lines of broader family policy models, some interesting results that cut across clusters have also been found. In all countries, men believe, to larger extent than women, that pre-school children suffer when mothers work – moreover, men also report higher levels of agreement with the statement that the men's job is to participate in paid work while the women's job is to care for the family. Such gender differences may indicate the existence of, to different degrees, an essential male breadwinner norm in all welfare democracies.

Concerning individuals' perceived problems with reconciling labour market participation and family, two contradictory hypotheses were evaluated. The first hypothesis suggests a negative relationship between family policy generosity and perceived stress in the family and at work. Dual earner policies are in this perspective viewed as 'family-friendly' and act to remove constraints against the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work, while market-oriented countries are expected to have the highest levels of stress due to a relative lack of family support. The second hypothesis departs from the double burden of work and family that is supposed to be introduced for women in countries with extensive dual earner policies, possibly increasing role conflicts and stress, and instead predicts that welfare states with market-oriented models, where women can make choices that are unbiased by family policy, should lead women to choose their own mix of work and family and thereby perceive a less stressful life situation.

The empirical evidence supports the first hypothesis to the largest degree, since respondents in dual earner policy countries more often report lower or similar levels of stress in the home and at work, while individuals in countries with market-oriented models on the whole have relatively high levels of such perceived stress. Significant gender differences that cut across broader cross-

national patterns exist also in this respect. Women in all welfare states report higher levels of perceived domestic stress than men, while men typically report larger difficulties with fulfilling family responsibilities. Also here, this finding could reflect both the actual gendered divisions of labour as well as the persistence of similar cross-national gender norms at different levels.

The cross-national differences in attitudes found here are of course likely to be influenced by a large number of factors besides family policy legislation. Some of these factors, in particular concerning different aspects of female labour force participation, are in large part probably intervening variables between family policy and potential attitudinal outcomes. In any case, the explorative analyses on links between gender role attitudes and family policy structure point to a potentially fruitful field of future analysis.

The chapters in this book have separately contributed new information on important and interconnected areas in welfare regime research. When taken together, the broad contours emerge of the making and consequences of welfare state legislation and the structuring of family-state-market relationships. Family policy institutions have been shaped by class and gender agency, and depending on the relative strength of such interests, different family policies have developed. Long-term governance by confessional parties has furthered general family policies, supportive of traditional gendered divisions of labour, while stronger left incumbency and high representation of women in governments have increased support to dual earner families. Different family policy legislations, reflecting the motives and ideologies of major political and social actors, have thereby structured the agency of individuals in different ways. Such institutions may thus not only be viewed as incentive structures that modify the bundle of choices available to individuals, but also as normative orders with the potential to shape the very preferences and world orientations of citizens.

Dual earner support has furthered female labour force participation, whereas general family support, by upholding traditional gendered divisions of labour, has not. Both types of financial support furthermore seem to have facilitated childbearing, either by supporting female homemaking or by enabling women (and men) to reconcile work and family. The provision of economic resources through family policy transfers has also decreased poverty risks of families with dependent children, mainly so through earnings-related dual earner support, which is likely to affect the economic situation of families with children in two ways: directly, by the family policy transfer components themselves, and indirectly by way of supporting women's work and increasing market income. Dual earner support has here in most likelihood served as a proxy also for the wider setting of family policy, including the extent of public childcare that facilitates work-family reconciliation. Potential poverty risks of families

with young children may also link back to fertility levels by the structuring of individuals' childbearing decisions.

The earnings-related benefit structure and highly subsidized public childcare that characterizes dual earner models of family policy has probably not only been promoted by gender equality concerns, but has also in all likelihood, in analogy with other social insurance transfers, been furthered by motives of left parties to modify income distributions and create cross-class alliances (see Korpi and Palme 1998). The flat-rate benefit structure, and the relative lack of public services for the youngest children in general family policy model countries, is also likely to partly depend on class and gender politics of strong confessional parties. Whereas confessional parties have supported earnings-related and corporative benefits in other parts of social insurance, the adherence to principles of subsidiarity among such parties has structured family policies to support female homemaking.

The ways in which family policies structure cross-class alliances and gender relations are likely to generate different types of popular support for different policies and affect the bases of political mobilization, not only for political parties but also for other social and political actors – for example, organized women's interests and religious organizations. The relatively large differences in gender role attitudes that have been observed in the advanced welfare states indicate that preferences and beliefs at least partly may be viewed as endogenous to family policy institutions, and that they are formed both by the way social policy affects behaviour and the inherent symbolic values that are encoded in such legislation. The degree of agreement with traditional gender roles in a particular institutional setting is thereby likely to, at the same time, partly be a product of family policy institutions and partly constitutive of agency for future change or stability of such legislation.

Even if I would like to argue that the multidimensional approach used in this book constitutes a promising path of research to analyse how family policy institutions structure agency, behaviour, attitudes and well-being of individuals, this study should primarily be viewed as one in a series of steps towards explaining why such welfare state institutions have developed, and how they are related to different outcomes. What is essential for future research venturing into the same area is helpful theory about institutional causes and consequences and high-quality institutional data. Next I will suggest a few requirements with which future research positions can be strengthened.

Although the data used here constitute an advance as compared to the previous situation, several improvements can still be made. The use of other type case families when calculating benefit generosity could enhance the possibilities of studying more specific population groups. For example,

collecting longitudinal data over family policy benefits to single-mother families could improve the understanding of employment or poverty patterns of such households. Using several different earnings-level assumptions when calculating net benefits could, for example, be useful when evaluating opportunity costs for fathers' use of parental leave entitlements.

Integrating such indicators of more detailed social policy settings may also provide possibilities to isolate impacts of particular family policy institutions and study the interaction between different social policy instruments in the structuring of outcomes such as female labour force participation. Other institutional facets of family policy benefits that could be useful in the analysis of various macro-level outcomes are coverage, flexibility and take-up rates of family benefits. These aspects may be interesting not only when explaining gender distributions of paid work, but also for explaining gender differentials in the allocation of unpaid care work. It is, however, important to separate different family policy dimensions also regarding, for example, take-up and coverage, and not just confine the analysis to 'family policy' in broad terms, since different types of benefits are likely to have divergent patterns of take-up. Analyses of the relationship between family policy benefits and gender differences in unpaid care work could also benefit from the use of micro-level data in the form of comparative time-budget surveys (see, for example, Gershuny 2000).

The different outcomes studied here are of course likely to be influenced by a large number of factors that to various degrees co-vary with the dimensions of family policy. To some extent the indicators of family policy transfers may serve as a proxy not only for structures of public services, but also of other factors that influence family-work relationships – for example, concerning labour market law, antidiscriminatory policies as well as regulations regarding reproductive rights and abortion. Substantial interconnectedness has for example been found in Western countries between institutional aspects of welfare regimes and the production regimes that regulate co-ordination of economies through institutions that increase employee skill and firm competitiveness (Huber and Stephens 2001; Hall and Gingerich 2004; Esser 2005).

Concerning poverty and income inequalities among different risk groups in the population, there is great need for a sharper institutional focus, as well as enhanced explanatory ambitions. Comparable institutional information on transfer systems may be of great help when interpreting cross-national patterns of poverty through databases such as the Luxembourg Income Study (see Korpi and Palme 1998; Pedersen 1999). The ability to separate components of family policy transfers in comparative micro-income data would furthermore enable micro-data analyses of distributive impacts of, for example, paid parental leave or marriage subsidies, but also in such

instances improved institutional knowledge is needed (Ferrarini and Nelson 2003). Nelson (2004) has developed a method for decomposition of different income components in poverty analyses that seems particularly useful for such micro-analyses of particular types of transfers.

Regarding analyses of potential causal factors underlying the institutional development of family policy, it has here been indicated that gender agency, in the form of representation in cabinets, seems to matter for the expansion and structure of paid parental leave programmes. Yet, the lack of quantitative macro-comparative studies of welfare state institutions bringing in women's agency points to a promising field of continued analysis. Another factor of interest to analyse would be women's representation in parliament, as well as more comparative analysis of the strength of organized women's interests within and outside existing political parties. This also highlights the need to analyse how class and gender agency has interacted in the development of family policy programmes. Not only may women's agency be of interest for explaining the development of leave rights also for fathers, but also particular men's interests could here be used as an explanatory factor (Bergman and Hobson 2002).

Further work is also needed to analyse reverse causality between alleged determinants, institutions and potential consequences, since 'feedback loops' are often theorized to exist between outcomes, institutions and potential driving forces (Korpi 1985; Esping-Andersen 1990; Stryker and Eliason 2002). Such analyses probably demand longitudinal data with relatively long time-series and tighter spacing of time units than what has been available here.

Even if attempts have been made here to address parents' perceived problems with reconciling paid and unpaid work, as well as the perceived negative consequences of women's work for child and family well-being, further analyses are needed also in this area. One aspect of interest is how school attainment and children's psychological well-being is affected by different family policy settings. For example, are children more vulnerable in settings where both parents work, as compared with welfare states where women become homemakers during the child's early years? It is in this perspective of course necessary not only to consider family policy benefits but also to evaluate the potential effects of public childcare, not merely in terms of the number of children enrolled, but also regarding the quality of such services. Comparative analyses have also shown that the extent of legislated paid parental leave improves child health outcomes (Winegarden and Bracy 1995; Ruhm 2000). Analysing 18 OECD welfare states, Tanaka (2005) shows strong negative links between duration of paid leave and a number of child health outcomes, including infant mortality, post-neo-natal mortality and immunization rates of children. Such analyses would also

benefit from separating different aspects of benefit generosity in terms of earnings-replacement and parental eligibility.

The way paid and unpaid work is organized in a gender perspective is likely to be an issue of central and increasing importance on the agenda of policymakers in most advanced welfare states. The rapidly changing demographic structures in these countries pose one of the greatest challenges to policymakers in the history of the welfare state. The changing age structures of 'post-industrial' societies, with a growing proportion of elderly non-working individuals combined with decreasing fertility levels, create pressures on existing welfare states, since costs for elderly persons increase at the same time as tax revenue declines due to decreases in the economically active population. The 'ageing of societies' thus generates a demand for female labour force participation at the same time as children are needed to reproduce the extant population size.

This problem may partially be solvable by social policy intervention, where programmes of family policy are likely to be important components. Increased female labour force participation without provision of possibilities to reconcile paid and unpaid work is likely to further decrease birth-rates, since large numbers of women (and perhaps also men) may then opt for a career before having children, with those ending up childless becoming more numerous. Providing support to traditional gender roles could increase childbirths, but may well also decrease both female involvement in paid work as well as male involvement in care work. Dual earner benefits which are generous in terms of earnings-replacement and duration, and are directed to both parents in combination with high-quality childcare, may be one solution to assist the reconciliation of paid and unpaid work. Lowering the risks for poverty upon childbirth through generous family benefits and services is furthermore likely to influence parental agency regarding childbearing decisions.

It has, however, been pointed out that welfare states with generous support to the dual earner family may deprive women of the capacity to choose care work, and that benefits enabling women to stay at home and care for their children instead improve female well-being (Lewis 1992; Hiilamo 2002; Hakim 2004). Even in Sweden, which has the longest tradition of generous earnings-related benefits directed to both parents, the utilization of parental leave is highly unequally distributed between men and women (Sundström and Duvander 2002). One proposed solution has been to strengthen the dual earner dimension of family policy by increased individualization of parental leave benefits, in order to further increase fathers' capabilities and responsibilities to participate in care work of young children, and thereby open up for more equal opportunities for female labour force participation (Duvander *et al.* 2005; OECD 2005).

Several of the advanced welfare states have reformed family policy during the first five years of the twenty-first century (Deven and Moss 2002; Drew 2005) or are currently considering reforms of family policies, by the extension of publicly subsidized childcare for the youngest children as well as through the reforming of parental leave programmes. The evidence is not in line with any clear-cut convergence of such policies – reforms have in some instances been in line with strengthening dual earner support, while in other cases going in the direction of reinforcing general family support through the introduction or reforms of flat-rate childcare leave benefits.

Some of the Nordic countries seem to have reinforced dual earner support in the early years of the twentieth century. Sweden introduced a further individualized month in parental leave to increase paternal participation in the care of children, and also implemented maximum user fees in public childcare to encourage parents' labour force participation. Denmark reinforced the dual earner dimension of family policy by abolishing their childcare leave programme and replacing it with extended parental insurance benefits, but at the same time fathers' individual rights were weakened by removing the existing daddy quota in parental leave (Rostgaard 2002b). Also countries with market-oriented models of family policy have carried out major family policy reforms, seemingly by increasing general family support. New Zealand introduced earnings-related paid parental leave of 12 weeks in 2002 (Callister 2002), increased with a month a year later, but with the extremely low benefit-ceiling, the benefits only replace around 40 per cent of an average production worker's wage. Also the United Kingdom has reformed parental leave by the introduction of two weeks of paternity leave in 2003, paid in low flat-rate amounts.

The developments among the Continental European countries are somewhat more ambiguous. Belgium and France increased dual earner support generosity by extending paternity leave, at 100 per cent of earnings, to two and three weeks respectively (Deven and Moss 2002). In Germany and Italy incentives were introduced in flat-rate childcare leave to stimulate fathers' leave take-up. In Austria benefits and flexibility of flat-rate childcare leave were increased in 2002. The goal to increase female labour participation and facilitate work-family reconciliation through the new legislation does not seem to have been achieved, however, since labour market retention of women with young children experienced a drop due to the reform (International Reform Monitor 2004). Similar effects of childcare leave have recently been observed also in Germany (Gottschall and Bird 2002; Merz 2004).

To what extent family policy reform will succeed in addressing gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work, and facilitating the reconciliation of family and work, to large extent depends on the existence of public childcare

for the youngest children and the structure of family policy transfers. The success of the undertaking to integrate fathers in care of young children by increasing their parental leave take-up is, among other things, dependent on whether individual rights exist and a high degree of earnings-relatedness is granted, but the length of such leave is of course also crucial for the structuring of care-work relationships, as short leave periods may discourage fathers from the use of leave. Low flat-rate amounts, even when quotas or other incentives have been implemented, do not seem to be an effective way to increase paternal leave take-up. The question is whether the motive behind such legislation always is to achieve greater gender equality. Even if benefits are meagre there is of course also a symbolic value attached to the extension of leave rights to fathers – the crucial question is here, however, to what extent low benefits signal to fathers that caring for children is something important.

Family policy is also likely to be a policy domain subject to extensive change, also in the decades to come in the welfare democracies. In Sweden, where men currently use around a fifth of the leave days in dual parental insurance, several reforms are being discussed to increase fathers' utilization of such leave. Two main changes have, in 2005, been proposed by a government commission on parental leave: first, an increase of 'daddy quotas' from two to five months; second, raised benefit ceilings, to decrease the negative effect on the family economy when the parent with the highest earnings (most often the father) is on parental leave (SOU 2005). If implemented, the proposed reforms will most likely increase fathers' care of infants and reinforce the dual earner dimension of family policy.

The strengthening of the dual earner dimension of family policy, following from an increased individualization of parental leave, would alone of course not suffice to create gender equality in the division of work, but would also require a number of auxiliary reforms to facilitate successful work-family reconciliation – including the creation of more family-friendly working conditions, improved flexibility of services for families with children as well as improved anti-discriminatory policies for parents. It should be pointed out that the individualization of parental leave by no means is uncontroversial, but rather is subject to intense debate and a gender-political conflict that cuts across political parties and class-political alliances, where the main argument against individualization of benefits somewhat paradoxically is that such reforms decrease individual choice. Fears have also been raised that men's attitudes and behaviour surrounding the care of young children have not changed sufficiently and that many men will refrain from the use of leave.

In the election campaign of 2005 in the United Kingdom, the Labour Party proposed a gradual extension of public childcare services for three-

year-olds and formulated a goal of extending maternity leave to a full year, with an extension of fathers' entitlements. Considering the current design of paid parental leave in the United Kingdom, with relatively low benefit levels, it is questionable whether the purpose of the proposed reforms is to address fundamental gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work. Even if individual entitlements are introduced for fathers, it is likely that the low wage replacement will make many fathers abstain from leave use. Universal publicly subsidized childcare from three years of age would in this scenario mean that women still would carry out the lion's share of care work during the early childhood years. If these reforms are implemented, family policies of the United Kingdom would approach the Continental European countries' support of traditional family patterns, rather than moving towards a dual earner model of family policy.

Germany is an example of a country that during the most recent years has been grappling with low birth-rates and problems of women to combine paid work and family life. Attempts to increase men's participation in care of infants through reforms of flat-rate childcare leave seem to have failed, despite pronounced ambitions to increase gender equality in work and care. German policymakers in the red-green coalition considered an increase of dual earner support through the extension of public childcare for the youngest children and the introduction of earnings-related parental leave benefits before the 2005 election. The potential success of such possible reforms of course is constrained by existing societal gender norms that at least partly have been structured by earlier family policies, as well as the continued strong prevalence of support to highly gendered divisions of labour in other parts of welfare state legislation. It remains an open question whether the return of Christian Democrats to national political power in a grand coalition with the Social Democrats after the 2005 election can be expected to slow down developments towards increasing dual earner support given the traditional reluctance of confessional parties to expand such social policies.

When deciding upon the design of social policy institutions it is necessary for policymakers to weigh important consequences of different institutions against each other, consequences involving actions, agency and well-being of individuals, as well as macro-societal and economic outcomes. Political statements to 'increase gender equality' may matter, but what makes the difference is how family policy institutions actually influence the capabilities of individual men and women to combine work and children. In the end, political decisions always have to be guided by values, but a crucial basis for such decisions is information on the potential consequences of different social policy solutions. Institutions that organize paid and unpaid work constitute no exception. Increasing the choice capacity of mothers to be homemakers may decrease the capabilities of fathers to care for their

children on equal terms with mothers as well as women's capabilities to participate in paid work on equal terms with men, and vice versa, an increased emphasis on paid work may likewise have consequences for the organization of unpaid work. Policymakers are thus confronted with likely trade-offs, where priorities have to be established between different goals as well as values. The phrase 'choice' that often is used in political rhetoric is empty unless we ask 'the choice for whom and regarding what?'

# Data and methodological appendix

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The institutional data is from the SCIP-database (Social Citizenship Indicator Programme), which includes institutional information on legislated social rights in 18 countries from 1930 until 2000. The countries included are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The original data among other things include information on replacement rates and coverage in five central social insurance programmes: old-age pensions, unemployment, sickness and work-accident insurance as well as child allowances. Information also exists on child benefits and marriage subsidies paid via the tax system.

These data have here been complemented with information on the quality of post-natal parental leave benefits. Included are earnings-related parental insurance programmes, lump-sum maternity grants paid after childbirth, and flat-rate childcare leave benefits paid after the termination of parental insurance. Information on the duration and replacement rates of maternity, parental and paternal benefits is collected for eleven points of time (1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000) for the 18 countries.

Parental leave benefits are calculated for a standardized household where a mother gives birth to her second child on the first of January in each of the respective years. The first child is assumed to be five years old at the time of the second child's birth and the mother has been engaged in paid work throughout the two years preceding birth of the second child. During this period the mother has earned a yearly average production worker's wage (APWW). The husband is at the time of confinement also full-time employed earning an APWW. It is assumed that the mother in the type case family does not work during the first year of the newborn child, utilizing full parental leave benefits during this period. For the sake of interpretive simplicity it is assumed that the mother utilizes the whole leave, which of course is a somewhat unrealistic assumption in countries with individualized dual parental leave benefits, for example Norway and Sweden. In order to make the replacement rates of parental benefits comparable, within and between countries, they are estimated net of taxes for an APWW.

In the SCIP data set over pensions, unemployment, sickness insurance and work accident, taxes are computed for each type case and observation point in accordance with the tax legislation of each country (for more information, see Palme 1990). Here, such exact computations have not been carried out on a yearly basis for each observation. Taxable benefits are instead related to a weekly gross average wage, while non-taxable benefits are calculated as a share of a net average wage. Taxable benefits in countries with separate taxation are thereby somewhat underestimated in particular as compared to non-taxable benefits or taxable benefits in systems with joint taxation. Sensitivity analyses have, however, shown that such estimation errors are small as compared to the errors that would occur if taxes were not to be estimated. Multiplying these net weekly estimates with first year's benefit duration produces the net yearly generosity estimates.

The different independent variables used in regression analyses in Chapters 3 and 4 are collected from various sources. The total fertility rate is from the United Nations' *Demographic Yearbook* (various years). The Gross Domestic Product in PPP corrected prices of 1995 is collected from the OECD National Accounts (2002). ILO's *Labor Statistics* (various years) provides the source for female labour force participation in the prime childbearing years. Unemployment rates and service employment ratios are calculated from the OECD *Labor Force Statistics* (2002). The Comparative Welfare States Data Set provided the information on constitutional structure (Huber *et al.* 1997). Female share of cabinet was collected from the *European Journal of Political Research* (various years) and complemented by information on the United States from the Center for American Women and Politics (2001).

The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) database consists of national income surveys or tax files that have been harmonized regarding income and demographic concepts in order to increase comparability. The concept of net disposable income used (DPI) includes gross income less income tax, employee and self-employee contributions. The income components include wages and salary, self-employment income, cash property income, various social insurance benefits (such as unemployment, parental leave, sickness and pension benefits), child and family allowances, means-tested benefits, in kind benefits and food benefits as well as private and public occupational pensions (see LIS 2005).

The data on gender role attitudes are based on the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) module 'Family and Changing Gender Roles III' including a battery of items on orientations towards female labour force participation and reproductive work. Data for this survey were for most observations collected in 2002, although interviews for some of the included countries were also partly carried out in 2003. The collection of

ISSP data is administered by national organizations and merged into a cross-national data set. The different topics for the ISSP's yearly surveys are developed by a sub-committee and are pre-tested in different countries. Efforts are being made so that ISSP questions are expressed in an equivalent manner in all languages. The questionnaire is originally drafted in British English and then translated into other languages (for more information see ISSP 2005).

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