

Paper presented at the Wellchi Network Conference 1
**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACED BY EUROPEAN WELFARE
STATES: THE CHANGING CONTEXT FOR CHILD WELFARE**

St. Anne's College, University of Oxford
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Cultures of Childhood and Care in European Welfare States

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Abstract

In a considerable number of European societies in the decades after World War II, the task of childcare was mainly organised as informal care outside the employment system, mainly provided by female caregivers inside family. This was often connected with marginalisation of women in relation to formal employment and the social security system.

This has changed in part until the end of the 20th century. Women have been integrated into European labour markets to a higher degree and in part in more equal positions, even though everywhere more or less a horizontal segregation of labour markets exists in favour of men. At the same time childcare has been to a considerable part formalised by transfers from the family to other institutions like the public sector, the non-profit sector or the markets. These policies have contributed to create new possibilities for caring women to integrate into the labour markets, and new types of social integration of children.

European welfare states had an important impact on these changes. In many European countries in the last decades, the state provision of childcare services has increased, in part even in spite of retrenchment policies in other areas of welfare state policies. Though the public provision of care services is often still a contested policy area.

Informal childcare has however survived everywhere in Europe, until today a substantial proportion of care is provided informally in the family. The forms in which it is provided here have also changed, however. In part new patterns of social care by women have been established by new combinations of waged work with informal care in the family during the life course, like part-time work and periods of parental leave. Moreover, also within the family in part new forms of the gender division of care responsibilities have developed. In part a new type of home-caring parent has emerged, treating home-care as transitional stage of the life course, with new patterns of sequential or actual combinations of formal employment and informal care. These patterns are in part also supported by welfare states. In part, the social rights of parents who care at home were extended.

The degree to which informal work has been formalised, and the social rights and state provision in relation to formal and informal care, differ substantially in

comparison of European societies. My argument is that the explanatory framework of such differences needs further elaboration. Often, a relatively high proportion of informal care in a country is taken as an indicator for a more 'traditional' welfare state which is lagging behind the more advanced 'women-friendly' welfare states which substantially support the integration of women into employment by a high provision of public childcare.

However, this argument does not adequately take into account that welfare state policies are related to cultural models of what is a 'good childhood', and accordingly a "good parenthood", and that such models in part differ in a cross-national perspective.

In this paper, it will be shown how changes in care policies of different welfare states reflect different development paths of informal care and differences in relation to the underlying cultural values about a "good childhood". I argue, that in those countries in which informal care still today plays a substantial role and is supported by welfare state policies, this is not necessarily caused by a traditional and backward oriented welfare state policy which hinders the formalisation of social care. Instead, in a specific development path, the care policies of the welfare states reflect that informal care plays an important role also in the modernised cultural concept of childhood, the family and of gender equality. In these cases the development of new social rights which are connected to informal care, besides social rights connected to public care provision, are of substantial importance for a 'progressive' care policy.

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Birgit Pfau-Effinger, University of Hamburg

**Cultures of Childhood and Care
in European Welfare States**

Contribution to the Conference on:
Challenges and Opportunities faced by European Welfare
States: The Changing Context for Child Welfare
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Slide 2

Main processes of family change in Europe

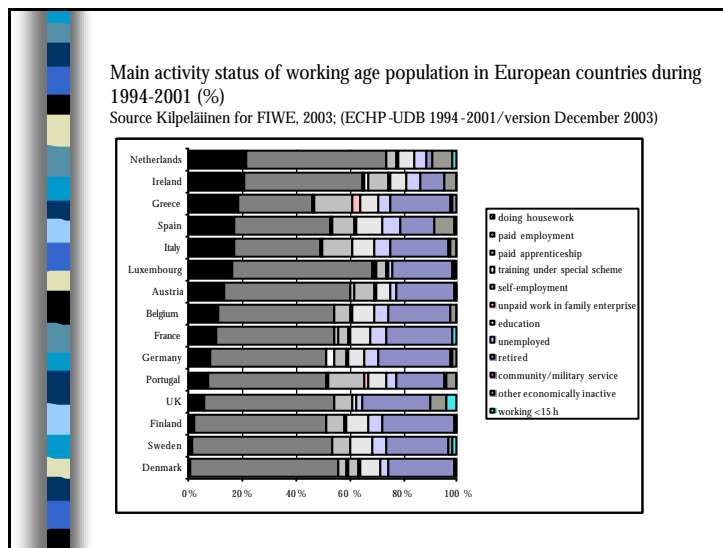
- Increase in the proportion of women in waged work;
- formalisation of childcare by the welfare state;
- new emphasis on public childcare in the framework of the strategy of the „social investment state“.

Slide 3

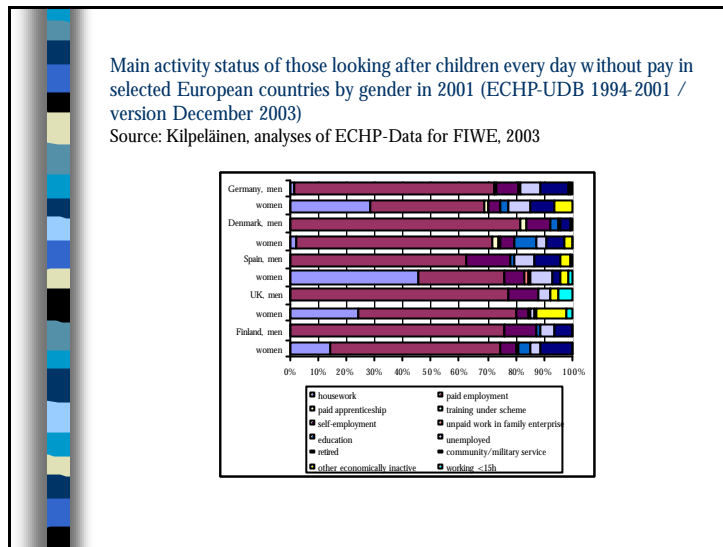
Informal family childcare

- Informal family childcare has in part survived;
- the share of informal family childcare varies substantially between European countries.

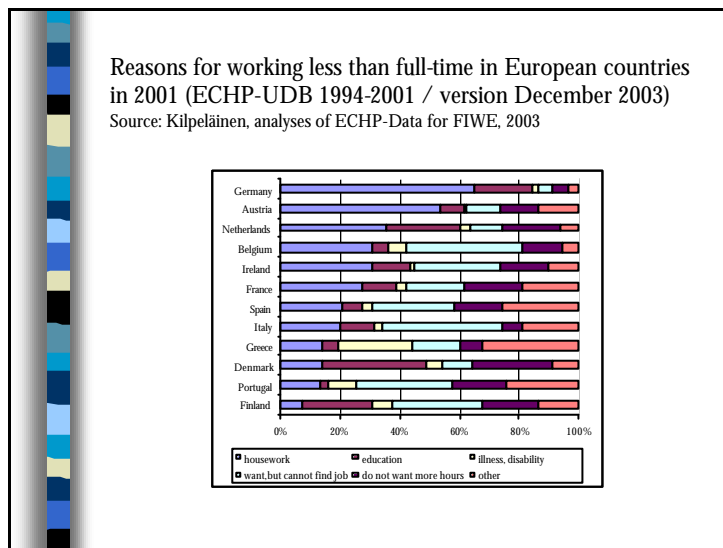
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- **Central Question**
How can cross-national differences in relation to the share of informal family childcare be explained?

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- **Common explanation**
 - deficits in family policies;
 - more traditional versus more modern (womenfriendly) family policies.

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Empirical Basis of this paper

Formal and Informal Work in Europe (FIWE)
- A Comparative Analysis of their Changing Relationship and their Impact on Social Integration
(HPSE-CT-2002-00126)

Research Project in the 5th Framework Programme of the EU
Theme 1: The challenge of socio-economic development models for Europe

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Thesis 1

- **The survival of parts of informal childcare is not only the result of „traditional“ family policies, directed to the housewife marriage.**

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Instead: informal childcare has itself been modernised.

- new combinations of informal childcare and formal employment have developed (part-time work, parental leave);
- new semi-formal forms of care by state support were established (like paid parental leave, childcare allowances);
- new social rights in relation to informal childcare were introduced (Knijn/Kremer 1997; Leira 2002);
- informal family childcare was in part disconnected from the housewife role, it is instead more a temporary stage in a mainly employment-oriented lifestyle.

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Thesis 2

- There are different development paths with respect to the share of formal and informal childcare in different European societies.

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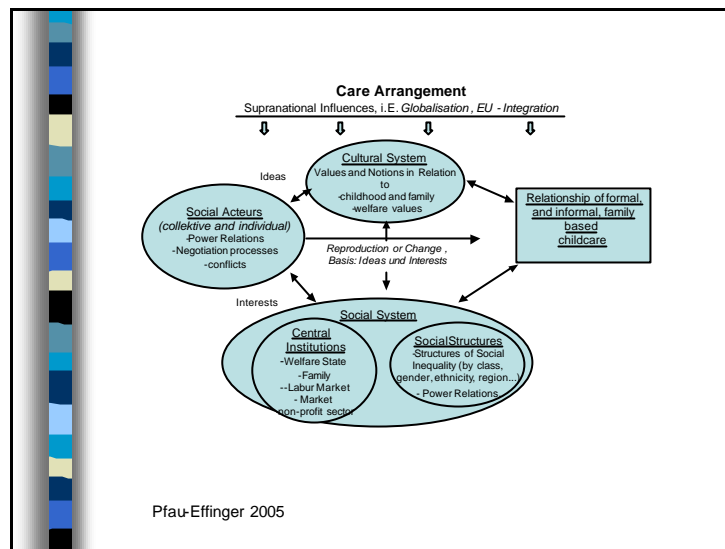
Two development paths in relation to the share of informal family childcare

	Conservative Welfare regime	Social Democratic Welfare regime	Liberal Welfare regime
Path 1: Relatively high share of informal family childcare	West Germany	Norway	U.K.
Path 2: Relatively low degree of informal family childcare	East Germany France	Sweden Denmark Finland	

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- ### Thesis 3
- The differences between these types can to a substantial degree be explained by differences in the cultural values and models in relation to childhood and the family;
 - these interact in specific ways with the welfare state policies and welfare values.

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- ### Cultural basis of care arrangements
- Family values
- values about a „good childhood“ and the main sphere for the upbringing of children
 - values in relation to the adequate gender division of labour
 - values in relation to gender hierarchies/gender equality
 - ...
- Welfare values
- cultural concepts about citizenship in relation to children/workers/carers (see also Lister, Lewis, Siim)
 - notions about the role of the welfare state compared with other institutions like the family, the market and the non-profit sector
 - ...

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Differing family models

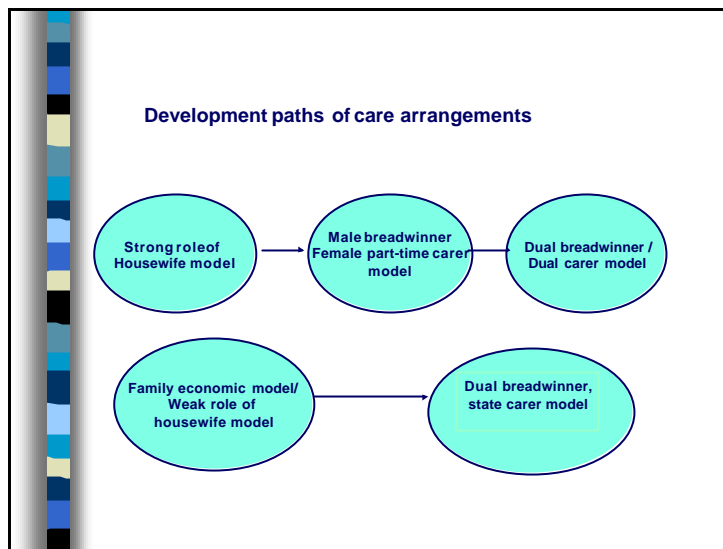
- the family economic model
- the housewife model of the male breadwinner family
- the male breadwinner/female part-time carer model
- the dual breadwinner/outside care model
- the dual breadwinner/dual carer model

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Family models with differing childhood and family values

Family models	Values on Childhood	Values on gender division of labour	Values on gender hierarchy/equality
Family economic model	Working childhood	Both parents in agrarian/crafts production	diverse
Housewife model	Private childhood	Male breadw./ Female carer	Gender hierarchy
Male breadw /female p.t. carer	Private/ Public childhood	Male breadw ./female p.t. carer	Gender hierarchy or equality with difference
Dual breadw./ Outside care	Mainly public childhood	Both parents employed	Gender equality
Dual breadw./ Dual carer	Private/public childhood	Both parents employed and carers	Gender equality

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Thesis 4

- In relation to the generosity of public provision of childcare services, benefits, and related social rights, the care arrangements vary also with the welfare regime types and the underlying welfare values.


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The interaction of family values and welfare values

	Conservative Welfare regime	Social Democratic Welfare regime	Liberal Welfare regime
Type 1: Relatively high valuation of „private“ childhood	West Germany	Norway Netherlands	U.K.
Type 2: Relatively low valuation of „private“ childhood	East Germany France	Sweden Denmark Finland	

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- ### Thesis 5
- There is some **trend to convergence** towards the welfare values of the social democratic model;
 - however, the development is not unilinear (see The Netherlands)
 - the policy approach of the „**Social Investment State**“ can support this trend.



Concept of the „Social Investment State“

- The main focus of this strategy is on public childcare provision.
- This might come into conflict with attitudes towards childhood in some countries/social groups.
- It should be combined with a strategy of ‚real‘ ‚parental choice‘ on the basis of of high quality public childcare and children’s rights to receive care“, together with an extension of benefits and parental (incl. father’s) rights to „give care“.