

Diverse types of the Earner-Carer model – proposing a new theoretical framework for comparative family policy.

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1. Introduction

The rapid increase in women's employment and the emergence of new social needs and risks has been moving family policy to the centre stage of welfare policy debate. Against this backdrop, Earner-Carer (E-C) societies, where both women and men are encouraged to combine employment and caring activities, have widely been accepted as a normative direction within the European Union (EU) since the idea was put forward in the late 1990s. Among academics, the E-C model has also been popular. However, despite its prevalence as a conceptual term, some weaknesses remain when used as an analytical tool for comparative family policy research.

As will be reviewed below, Sainsbury (1999) and Gornick and Meyers (2008) have developed a blueprint for the E-C model in the light of institutional arrangements across several policy areas. But neither of them presented more than one type of policy package that could realise such a society. This provokes the question, is this an only and universal policy package, which can or should be applied to any countries that seek to move towards becoming an E-C society?

Given this question as a point of departure, this article argues for potentially diverse types of policy packages that would attain E-C model. The next section provides a brief overview of the definition of the E-C model and theoretical developments about it, with particular emphasis on the model as an analytical tool for comparative policy research. In section 3, a new theoretical framework is proposed, along with three ideal types of policy packages: 'continuous career/public care', 'intermittent career/family care' and 'flexible career/mixed care'. Afterwards, in section 4, the framework is applied to an empirical study of comparative family policy in the European context. Six countries – Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK¹ – are the focus of the analysis. Based on the results, section 5 explores the validity of the framework, focusing on the relationship between policy and outcome. Finally, in section 6, some additional values to suggesting the diverse types of E-C model are highlighted, which leads to the conclusion.

2. Theoretical framework

First, the definition of the E-C model needs to be clarified. Drawing largely on the literature, here I define it as institutional arrangements or policy packages that would enable both women and men to combine employment and caregiving activities. In one of the earliest works on the E-C society, Nancy Fraser (1994)² discussed it as a normative model for postindustrial welfare states, although in a purely theoretical and political manner, stating that it was a sort of 'utopia'. Even so,

the distinctive characteristics of the E-C model were articulated: (i) it considers not only women but also men as important agents with a view to gender equality; (ii) it underscores the importance of sharing and reconciling care work between various actors in civil society; and hence (iii) this model could transcend the long-established binary opposition between ‘equality as sameness’ and ‘equality as difference’.

In the subsequent academic research, the E-C model has mainly been discussed in terms of the following three approaches. First, it has been used merely as a conceptual term. In this approach, the E-C model is often used to describe Scandinavian social and family policies (Ellingsæter 2014; Ellingsæter and Leira 2006; Eydal and Rostgaard 2011). Second, it is also used as a theoretical framework for empirical comparative study of single policies, including cross-national comparisons of parental leave or childcare services (Ciccia and Bleijenbergh 2014; Ciccia and Verloo 2012). Third, the E-C model has been discussed in relation to policy package. This is a more holistic approach that draws attention to policy designs across several policy areas, such as tax and social security systems, parental leave, childcare services and labour market policies, and goes on to specify a policy package that would realise the E-C model (Sainsbury 1999; Gornick and Meyers 2003, 2008). This third approach has contributed significantly to the development of the E-C model in two ways. First, these works clarified that the E-C society could not be attained by a single policy. Second, the purely theoretical concept of the E-C model was made more concrete by presenting a blueprint for an E-C policy package. We shall now look at the above two works more closely.

Within the rising tide of feminist critiques of mainstream welfare state research, Sainsbury (1999) developed an analytical framework to unveil gender regimes in social policy. The three ideal types – ‘male breadwinner’, ‘separate gender roles’ and ‘individual earner-carer’ regimes – were specified and applied to compare the policy arrangements of four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) around 1980. As a result, some key features of policy arrangements that would support the individual earner-carer regime were identified: (i) individual based tax and social security systems; (ii) entitlements based on citizenship or residence (both sexes are entitled to work-related and care-related benefits); (iii) state responsibility for caring tasks in a society; and (iv) gender equality in access to paid work.

Gornick and Meyers (2003) also illustrated institutional arrangements that would support the ‘dual-earner/dual-caregiver’ society. Subsequently, a more concrete blueprint for a policy package was presented, drawing on six European countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Belgium and France) as exemplars. The suggested policy package includes: (i) generous paid family leaves with individual entitlements given to each parent; (ii) regulations in the labour market to limit long full-time working hours and to improve availability and fairness of part-time work; and (iii) publicly financed, affordable and high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services with universal entitlements for all children (Gornick and Meyers 2008).

These works are certainly valuable as comprehensive discussions in terms of the E-C model and concrete policies have been surprisingly limited. However, this article claims that there is a significant drawback common to these works. In both Sainsbury (1999) and Gornick and Meyers (2008), only one ideal type of the E-C model is presented; therefore, potentially diverse ways of approaching the E-C model have not been sufficiently explored. This has twofold disadvantages, especially when applied to empirical research.

Firstly, an empirical comparative study based on one ideal type would result in a 'league table' of countries. In other words, some countries would be seen as 'leaders' and others as 'laggards'. Some East Asian countries, with strong 'familism' traditions, would always be seen as 'laggards' when compared with Nordic countries, for example. This stems largely from viewing the path towards the E-C model as a linear continuum. In consequence, most countries would fall somewhere between the two ends of the spectrum: what Morgan terms a 'partial transformation' (Morgan 2008). These types of analyses may serve the purpose of measuring *the degree* of each country's policy development, but gives little account of *the potential qualitative variations* in policy arrangement as a way of approaching the E-C society.

The same holds for empirical studies based on the concept of 'defamilialisation' (Esping-Andersen 1999), or on more recently proposed frameworks such as 'individualisation – familisation' (Daly 2011) and 'degenderisation – genderisation' (Saxonberg 2012), as these also tend to place policies or countries in a dichotomy.

Secondly, having only one ideal type of E-C model fails to take 'path dependence' (Pierson 1994) into account. The policy designs suggested by Sainsbury (1999) and Gornick and Meyers (2003, 2008) are largely inspired by Nordic experiences (particularly those of Sweden). However, it is highly questionable whether this can or should be received as a universal model, precisely because it may not be feasible in other countries in specific time, socio-political and cultural contexts (Bonoli 2007). And even if it were feasible, whether people in those countries desire it is another question. For example, expanding full-time public childcare facilities may not necessarily raise the enrolment rate of children in some countries since it is more or less affected by circumstances such as socio-cultural norms, historical legacies and labour market conditions.

In order to overcome these drawbacks, this article proposes a new theoretical framework, with a view to comparative family policy analysis. This framework is underpinned by the following speculations: there would be no singular universal route towards the E-C model; policy choices made in each country would be more or less prescribed by its 'path-dependence'; while bound by path dependence to some extent, each country should seek ways in which family policy arrangements help society move closer to the E-C model. The salient feature of this approach is, therefore, constructing an analytical framework to examine cross-national variations in policy arrangements as a way of approaching the E-C society.

3. A new framework – the three ideal types

3-1. Policies to promote earning and caring roles of parents

Against this background, the three ideal types of the E-C model shall be presented here in a new framework [Table 1]. First of all, I chose five policy areas that consist of different policy packages, drawing on insights from literature on feminist social policy research. These are: (i) tax and social security systems; (ii) ECEC services; (iii) cash provisions for childcare; (iv) parental leave (including maternity, paternity, parental and extended leaves); and (v) labour market policies.

Each policy area has certain implications for promoting the earning and caring roles of parents. For example, individualised tax and social security systems are prerequisites for incentivising labour market participation of the second earner in the household (the mother in most cases). Affordable and good-quality ECEC services are also an essential support for parents to go into work. It is crucial that there should be no gap between the end of parental leave and the start of ECEC services (legal entitlements for children). Thus, these policy areas are to promote the earning role of parents (especially the mother).

On the other hand, parental leave gives parents an opportunity to get involved in the first developmental stages of the child and hence help the parent-child intimate relationship grow. Guaranteeing a right to return to the same (or equivalent) job and have adequate compensation are essential, as these enable parents to engage with caring activities without facing severe financial or career hardships. In addition, some labour market policies, such as adjusting working patterns/hours, allow parents to balance work and family by distributing their time from workplace to home. To ensure fairness in the labour market, equal treatment for such diverse working patterns is absolutely necessary. In sum, these policy areas are to promote the caring roles of parents while keeping them attached to the labour market. It is particularly important that these policies are also directed at fathers in order to encourage their caring role.

Finally, cash provisions for childcare are important as a means of sharing the costs of childcare broadly in a society. But this policy instrument has a dual function. Both the earning and caring roles of parents can be promoted, depending on whether the provisions are aimed at purchasing out-of-home-care services or providing home-care by parents themselves.

All of these five policy areas are thus crucial for the achievement of the E-C model. Nevertheless, the weight and instruments that each policy area carries can be diverse, which would distinguish one ideal type from another. In the following, we shall take a closer look at the diverse ways in which these five policy areas contribute to policy packages for the three ideal types.

3-2. Type 1: Continuous career/public care

The first ideal type is what I have named the ‘continuous career/public care’ model. This

model resembles what has been presented by the literature, as reviewed in the previous section. This model, in principle, supports both mother and father in continuing to work full-time after having a child. Therefore, publicly-funded, affordable and good-quality ECEC services, which guarantee a place for all children after parental leave, play a significant role. Both parents are individually entitled to a medium length parental leave (about 6 months each).

In this model, while substantial ECEC services enable parents to return to the labour market, working full-time may not give them enough time to meet the demands of caring tasks at home. In cases where such needs are not met, labour market policies including working time adjustment would help them balance work and family life to some extent, especially while the child is young. Overall, the distinctive characteristic of this ideal type can be described as a state-service-oriented model of the E-C policy package.

3-3. Type 2: Intermittent career/family care

The second ideal type is the ‘intermittent career/family care’ model. In this, parents are allowed a longer respite from the labour market for family caregiving activities, and eventually return to full-time work again. Therefore, extended parental leave is the most distinctive policy of this model. It allows parents to look after the child by themselves (mostly until the child turns three) with some cash allowance. But publicly-funded, affordable and good-quality ECEC services, which guarantee a place for all children from the end of parental leave (and before the start of extended leave) are equally important. Creating no gap between parental leave and ECEC, thus, offers parents a real choice between out-of-home-care and home-care for children.

What needs to be emphasised here is that ‘family care’ means having the choice of a temporal withdrawal from the labour market, ensuring parents a ‘right to care’ and children a ‘right to be cared for’ by parents (Knijn and Kremer 1999), rather than having no alternative but to do so. However, in order for an intermittent career to be a prevailing career pattern, some ingenuity in policy design would be of key importance. This would include guaranteeing that jobs can be returned to and a substantial level of allowance, as will be discussed more in detail in section 6.

In sum, this ideal type can be described as a state-service-plus-cash-provision model of the E-C policy package, which enables the ability to shift one’s centre of life from employment towards caring activities for a certain period of a long working life.

3-4. Type 3: Flexible career/mixed care

I have named the third ideal type the ‘flexible career/mixed care’ model. This model encourages both mother and father to stay in the labour market while being involved in caregiving activities. Substantial labour market policies enable this model. For example, a working hour adjustment that is aimed at all workers and ensures the employee’s right to both decrease and

increase working hours would give parents greater autonomy in the ways in which work and family responsibilities are reconciled. For such a system to function well in the labour market, it would be essential for diverse working patterns to be treated equally and to be included in the social security system.

Parental leave can be short as long as it is flexibly combined with employment and the use of ECEC services. Moreover, in this model, the ECEC services are financed by public-private collective contributions. The market-based provision of ECEC is more prevalent, and the role played by employers in terms of financial support for parents to purchase care services is also more significant, compared with the other two models.

Hence, the characteristic of this ideal type can be described as model of the E-C package where various actors share contributions. This means that meeting the care needs in a society is neither only the state's responsibility nor the family's (individual's); the government, employers and family (individuals) function to supplement one another with the aim of reconciling earning and caring activities.

4. Comparative analysis of six European countries

In this section, the new framework presented above is applied to an empirical study within the European context. Based on this framework, comparative policy analysis of six countries at the present time (around 2012/13) is conducted. Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK were the focus of analysis, which broadly covers the three welfare regime types classified by Esping-Andersen (1999): social democratic, conservative, and liberal countries. The detailed results are shown in Table 2.

4-1. Continuous career/public care: Sweden

Sweden is the only country among the six that is classified as having a 'continuous career/public care' type. In Sweden, the tax and social security system was mostly individualised as early as the 1970s. Medium length parental leave and publicly-funded ECEC services, with no gap between them, support parents' employment. Whereas one part of parental leave is exclusively entitled to the individual (in the form of 'quotas'), the other part of the parental leave is entitled to the family. Even though, a 'gender equality bonus' gives parents an incentive to share the transferable part of the leave equally with an additional cash benefit³. In addition, Swedish parents can reduce their working hours until the child turns eight or completes the first grade of school. In spite of the strong rationale of gender equality behind the Swedish social and family policy, a cash provision for child home-care has been very controversial (Earles 2011; Hiilamo and Kangas 2009). Since 2008, the decision as to whether to implement this scheme or not has been left up to municipalities.

4-2. Intermittent career/family care: Finland, Germany and France

The most typical country classified as having the 'intermittent career/family care' type is Finland. Germany and France also fit this type. In Finland, individualisation of tax and social security systems started somewhat later than in Sweden, but at present they are largely individualised. In contrast to Sweden, Finland has an extended parental leave ('child home-care leave'), which allows a parent to look after the child (and siblings) at home until the child turns three. This scheme was introduced in 1985, but still enjoys a good deal of popularity, despite its low flat-rate allowances⁴. All children are entitled to the publicly-funded ECEC from the end of parental leave. On top of that, there is also a 'private day-care allowance' that provides financial support to parents who use childcare services other than municipal day-care. Finnish parents are also able to reduce their working hours until the child completes the second grade of school. In sum, Finnish parents are offered a variety of options in terms of the way in which the child is taken care of.

Germany and France have had similar policy arrangements. Tax and social security systems are yet to be individualised completely, particularly the tax system. ECEC services are publicly-funded or subsidised in both countries. Parental leave is three years for both, with a flat-rate benefit for three years in France⁵ and an earning-related benefit for one year in Germany⁶. The attributes of French family policy have a fairly long history, dating back to the 1970s and 1980s. However, in terms of family policy, the recent German transformation is striking.

In 2013, legal entitlement to ECEC was extended to all one-year-old children (previously it started from the age of three). At the same time, a 'child home-care allowance' was introduced for parents who wish to look after their child at home. This is exactly what happened in Finland in 1985. Thus from these changes, Germany can be said to be transforming closer towards the ideal type of intermittent career/family care. Interestingly, however, all workers in Germany (not strictly limited to parents with caring responsibilities) have gained a right to reduce their working hours since 2001. Therefore in Germany, a facet of flexible career/mixed care can be seen as well.

4-3. Flexible career/mixed care: the Netherlands and the UK

The Netherlands is the most typical example of a country classified as having the 'flexible career/mixed care' type. The UK also uses with this model. There are some common characteristics in these countries: tax and social security systems have recently become more and more individualised; ECEC services are provided in the mixed economy with strong emphasis on market-based childcare provisions; cash provisions for childcare purchase; and promotion of flexible work. Although these policy instruments are similar, there is a considerable degree of differences in policy settings in these countries.

For example, though it is mandatory for Dutch employers to share the costs (equally with the

government and parents) for childcare purchase, it is optional for British employers. The Dutch parental leave scheme is fully individualised and gender neutral, whereas the UK offers the longest maternity leave among the EU member states (52 weeks, although only 6 weeks are well-paid), and only short paternity leave for fathers with a flat-rate benefit. In the Netherlands, all workers have gained the right to change full-time jobs to part-time, and vice versa since 2000. However, in the UK workers with caring responsibilities are only entitled to a ‘right to request’ a reduction in their working hours⁷.

5. Validity of the framework – policy and outcome

Now, we shall turn our attention from policies to outcomes, in order to demonstrate the validity of the new framework. By referring to the Gender Equality Index (GEI), I shall attempt to illustrate how close each country has come towards the E-C society in effect. GEI is an index developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for a systematic and consistent measurement of gender equality at the EU member states level (EIGE 2013). GEI has eight domains which make up the multidimensional index for gender equality, but in this article only three of them are taken into consideration, those which are the most relevant in terms of the E-C model: work, money and time⁸.

Figure 1 shows the GEI score of the six countries. The higher the score is, the greater gender equality is achieved in each domain. Thus, the larger and more balanced the triangle is, the closer the country is to the E-C model. Clear differences in the size of the triangles, that is to say ‘the distance to the E-C model’, can be seen even among the countries that were grouped together as the same type in the above empirical analysis. Finland, closest to the ideal type of intermittent career/family care model, shows a much larger triangle than Germany or France, for example. The triangle of the Netherlands, using the flexible career/mixed care model, is also larger than that of the UK. More importantly, however, all of the three representative countries of each ideal type – Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands – show similarly well-balanced triangles, despite the fact that the policy packages for each ideal type have considerable differences, as shown above. This makes a good case for more than one type of E-C model existing.

Moreover, Finland’s score for the domain of work (82.0) is striking, as it is the highest among the EU-27 countries. A large proportion of Finnish women working full-time can partly account for this. Interestingly, on one of the indicators in the domain of work, namely ‘workers having undergone training paid for or provided by their employer’, Finnish women also show the highest proportion (54.8%) in the EU-27. The figure is outstanding compared with Finnish men (47.4%) or women in Sweden and the Netherlands (48.8% and 48% respectively) (EIGE 2013). It indicates that ensuring adequate support for returning to the former career track could mitigate the potential risk attached to the intermittent career pattern.

In addition, the Netherlands scoring best among the EU-27 countries in the domain of time (71.3) does seem to reflect its substantial labour market policies. On top of that, the score for the domain of money (82.5) is the second best, and also higher than Sweden and Finland. It shows that the risk of being exposed to great financial hardship is relatively low in the Netherlands despite the fact that part-time work is predominantly popular among women.

As the GEI illustrates, at present, an E-C society is still an unmet goal for all these countries. Also, the relationship between policy and outcome is not so straightforward, and further in-depth examinations will be required. Nevertheless, these figures are convincing enough to confirm the validity of diverse types of the E-C model. Not only that, these figures are thought-provoking as they implicate potential compatibility between traditionally female career patterns – intermittent career and flexible career – and gender equality in the domains of work, money and time, which form the kernel of the E-C model.

6. Added value of the new framework

The new framework proposed in this article overcomes the drawbacks of the E-C model presented in previous research. In particular, this framework with three ideal types of E-C models enables comparative policy analyses to capture qualitative variations in policy arrangement as a way of approaching an E-C society, avoiding a plain league-table result.

However, I acknowledge that there would be some concerned voices regarding certain aspects of the ideal types, particularly of the intermittent career/family care and flexible career/mixed care models. For example, some feminists have adopted a critical stance towards extended parental leave ('child home-care leave'), primarily concerned with its gendered utilisation and potential harm to women's career development (Daly 2011; Earles 2011; Mahon 2002; Morgan 2008; Morgan and Zippel 2003). Other feminists have shown skepticism about the promotion of flexible work, arguing that it would only help women's work-family-balance and hence would lock them into the sphere of care (Bergmann 2008; Morgan 2008). In addition, as far as mixed care is concerned, some misgivings have been expressed about the cost and quality of childcare provided by the private sector (Lloyd and Penn 2009).

Such concerns interpret part of the present situation accurately. Surprisingly, though, most literature only criticises; very few possible measures to improve the situation are discussed. This article therefore will attempt to consider possible solutions addressing such concerns, and then underline the noteworthy added value in claiming diverse types of the E-C model.

Solutions involving intermittent and flexible careers have a twofold direction. The first direction is to minimise the detrimental effect on the role of earner potentially caused by such career patterns. Specifically, with respect to extended parental leave, more attention should be devoted to support of all kinds that can be provided to people returning to work. This includes the strong

legislative measures to ensure a right to return to the same (or equivalent) position after leave and to eliminate all forms of unfavourable treatment and discrimination. Expanding access to training programmes can also be of great consequence, as seen above in the case of Finland.

As far as flexible work is concerned, ensuring ‘decency’ in diverse forms of working patterns would be the key. That is to say, not only should equal treatment in every aspect of work, such as wage, benefits and career opportunities be ensured, but also diverse working patterns should be included in the social security systems, such as pension schemes. Moreover, it is essential for employees (not employers) to have greater autonomy in adjusting working patterns. In this context, entitling employees to a right to adjust working patterns (not a right to ‘request’ it) and a right to increase as well as decrease hours is a crucial measure.

The second direction is to promote transformation of men’s behavior in terms of obtaining such diverse career patterns. As discussed above, minimising the potential risk would support men in choosing such career patterns in some degree, but further ingenuity in policy settings may encourage more active engagement of fathers in caring activities. For example, to grant additional financial incentives for a more gender-equal utilisation of extended parental leave is an option. Changing the allowance level depending on the degree of gender equilibrium in utilisation would meet this aim. With respect to flexible work, on the other hand, a right to choose such working patterns should not be given only to parents with caring responsibilities but to all employees across various industries and occupations. Transforming flexible careers into a normative working pattern for men as well as women can be facilitated by such policy settings.

As far as the potential risk attached to mixed care is concerned, the ways in which the cost and quality of ECEC are managed would be the focal point. For example, the approximate proportion of the costs borne by parents and the quality standard of care should be regulated and monitored by an authoritative body. Demand-side subsidies for parents to cover childcare costs, in the form of cash benefits, vouchers or tax relief, are also necessary in order to ease the burden on the family. Given this perspective, we can see that mixed care does not necessarily eliminate the government’s responsibility towards caring tasks in society. Rather, the role of the government shifts from the provider of care service as such, to that of supervisor and supporter with the cooperation of other actors.

Furthermore, it is equally important to be aware of the inherent ambiguity at the heart of ‘quality of ECEC service provision’. Although basic quality standards such as child-staff ratio and the level of staff qualifications can be regulated, not noticing that there are many more aspects in the quality of care which are mostly unmeasurable would be a significant oversight. As Folbre (2009: 113) argues, care services are ‘often “co-produced” by care providers and care recipients’. In the case of childcare, for example, it is extremely difficult to determine to what extent out-of-home-care services, whether funded or provided by the public or private sector, have affected the child’s

development or well-being.

Against the backdrop of the above argument, three points need to be highlighted as the added value of the new framework. Firstly, approving diverse career patterns as a respectable form of paid work would potentially *de-centre the long-standing norm of the male career pattern*. Having only one ideal type with the continuous career model cannot fully embody the core meaning of the E-C concept, which is not only to encourage and support women to work as men do, but also for men to be able to provide care as women do (Fraser 1994).

Secondly, the framework puts more recognition and value on *caring as an indispensable activity in our society*. If we regard care as a ‘universal human need’ (Nussbaum 1999), the efforts to ‘defamilialise’ care to the utmost extent, as seen in recent trends, should be called into question. It would be more relevant to seek ways in which more actors get involved in supporting caring activities in society. By clarifying the rationale for cooperative contributions to caring tasks, the issue of high public expenditures can be overcome as well. Revenue shortages are a particularly urgent and crucial issue in this ‘age of austerity’ (Pierson 2011). Also, in some countries where public expenditure for families with children has historically been low, the dramatic expansion of public spending is difficult to justify.

Thirdly, this framework takes path dependence more seriously, which attaches a significant added value to it. The ultimate goal of constructing a new framework is not to classify countries according to typologies, but to establish a platform for further research on more dynamic paths chosen by each country. This addresses questions of how each country has been or is transforming or persisting; and what creates such variations in policy arrangements. Typology as a methodological approach is not equipped as such to answer these questions directly, but this framework can be a cornerstone for comparative policy analyses that shed light on the dynamism behind the diverse types of the E-C model. Even when focusing on case studies of individual countries, a common framework is necessary for more refined comparative family policy research.

7. Conclusion

This article has argued for a new theoretical framework of the E-C model, proposing three ideal types: continuous career/public care, intermittent career/family care, and flexible career/mixed care. In conclusion, I will refer to the two main tasks ahead. First, as mentioned above, more in-depth case studies are required to unravel dynamic paths towards the E-C model. Obtaining a better understanding of the motivations and processes in each country would make an important contribution towards making the E-C model even more concrete and attainable. Second, the relationship between policy and outcome needs to be elaborated on further. How do we measure the progress of the E-C model? This article referred to the Gender Equality Index, as I think this is the most relevant outcome index as it now stands. However, whether it gains a broad consensus and is

applicable to other geographical contexts is open to debate.

Although a great majority of discussion in this article focused on families with childcare responsibilities, the linchpin of my argument could easily be applied to broader ‘caring activities’. The need for care in a society will only increase from now on, with the rapid growth of an aging population. Such circumstances will increasingly call for a more prevailing norm of the E-C model in our society, where caring is valued as an indispensable human activity and not a burden to gainful employment. Pursuing diverse and attainable ways of working towards an E-C society, therefore, will continue to be an overarching mission for comparative family policy research.

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Notes

¹ In this article, the UK mainly refers to England.

² Although Fraser (1994) calls it 'universal caregiver model', it is synonymous with 'earner-carer model'.

³ Parents get a 50 SEK (€6) daily bonus. It is worth a maximum of SEK 13,500 (€1,573) when parents share the leave equally (Duvander and Haas 2013).

⁴ The basic allowance is €336.67 a month, with supplements for siblings (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula 2013).

⁵ This is only paid for six month for parents with only one child (Fagnani, Boyer and Théveron 2013).

⁶ The benefit may be spread over two years with a halved level of the monthly benefit (Blum and Erler 2013). In addition, some periods (while the child is 15 – 36 months old) can be covered by the CHCA introduced in 2013 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat 2014).

⁷ This has expanded to all workers since 2014.

⁸ The each domain has some sub-domains. 'Work' consists of participation, plus segregation and quality of work. 'Money' consists of financial resources and economic situation. 'Time' consists of care activities and social activities (see EIGE 2013, for the details).

		Continuous career /public care	Intermittent career /family care	Flexible career /mixed care
Promoting earning role	Tax and social security			
	Base of obligations and rights	Individual	Individual	Individual
	ECEC services			
	Starting age of legal entitlement	When parental leave ends	When parental leave ends	When parental leave ends
	Finance	Public	Public	Public and Private
	Time coverage	Full-time	Full-time	Full/Part-time
	Formal childcare cost (on parents)	Low	Low	Low/Moderate
	Quality management	○	○	○
	Cash provision for childcare			
	For purchase out-of-home-care	×	○	○
For parental home-care	×	○	×	
Promoting caring role	Parental leave			
	Job protection	○	○	○
	Duration	Medium	Long	Short
	Entitlement	Individual	Individual	Individual
	Compensation	High	High/Moderate	High
	Labour market policy			
	Working hour regulation	○	○	○
	Protection of part-time workers	○	○	○
Working hour adjustment	Moderate	Moderate	High	

[Table 1: The three ideal types]

*The shaded are the most distinctive policy areas in each ideal type.

	Sweden	Finland	Germany	France	The Netherlands	The UK
Tax and social security						
Base of obligations and rights	Individual	Individual	Family + Individual	Family + Individual	Individual	Individual
ECEC services						
Starting age of legal entitlement	From the age of 1	From the end of parental leave (9-10 months old)	From the age of 1	From the age of 3	From the age of 4	From the age of 3
Finance	Public	Public	Public	< 3 years old 3 - primary education Public	< 4 years old 4 - primary education Private Public	< 3 years old 3 - primary education Private Public
Time coverage	40 hours/week	40 hours/week	40 hours/week	Full/Part-time 24 hours/week	Part-time n.a.	Part-time 15 hours/week
Formal childcare cost (on parents)	Low	Low	Low/Moderate	Low/Moderate Free of charge	Low/Moderate Free of charge	High Free of charge
Quality management	○	○	○	○	○	○ ○
Cash provision for childcare						
For purchase out-of-home-care	×	○	○	○	○	○
For parental home-care	△	○	○	△	×	×
Parental leave						
Job protection	○	○	○	○	○	○
Duration	1.5 years	3 years	3 years	3 years	26 × the number of working hours per week	1 year
Entitlement	Individual + Family	Individual + Family	Family	Individual	Individual	Individual
Compensation	High	High/Moderate	High/Moderate	Moderate/Low	Moderate/Low	Low
Labour market policy						
Working hour regulation	○	○	○	○	○	○
Protection of part-time workers	○	○	△	○	○	△
Working hour adjustment	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate

[Table 2: Policy packages of six European countries in 2012/13]

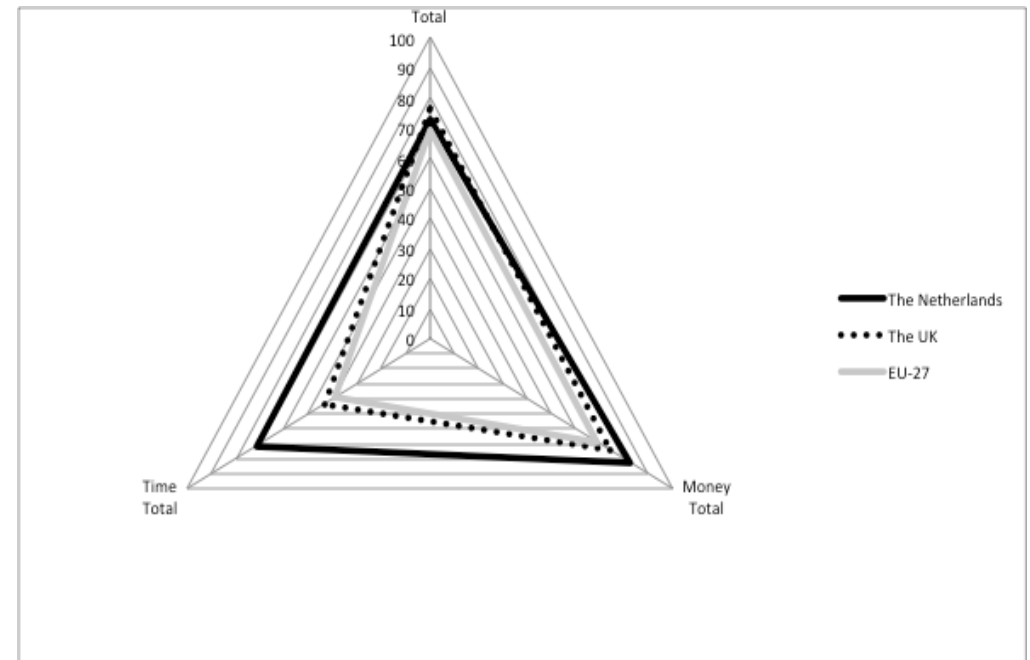
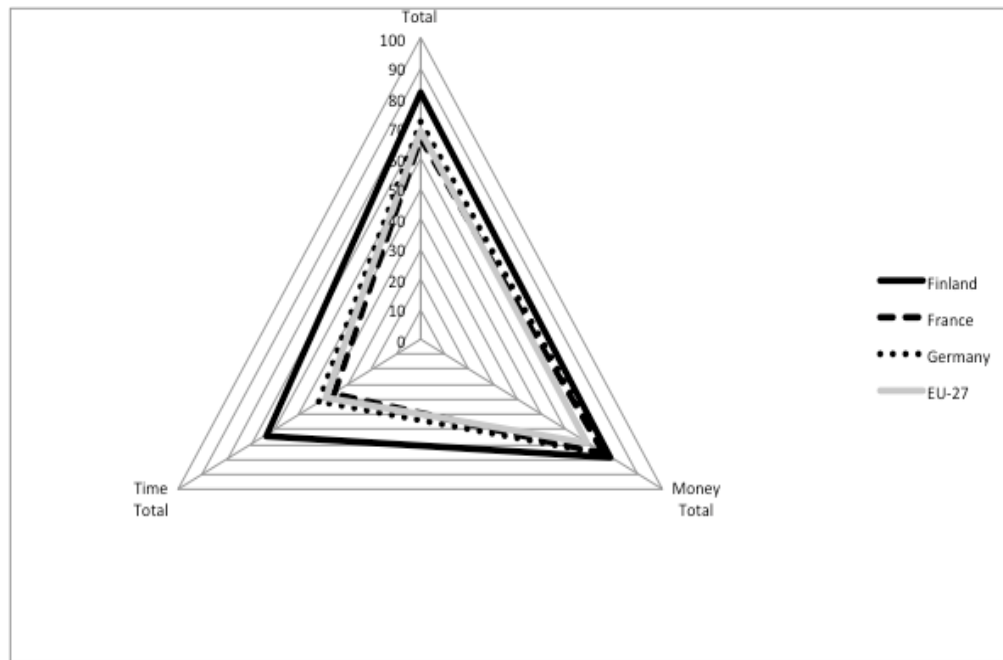
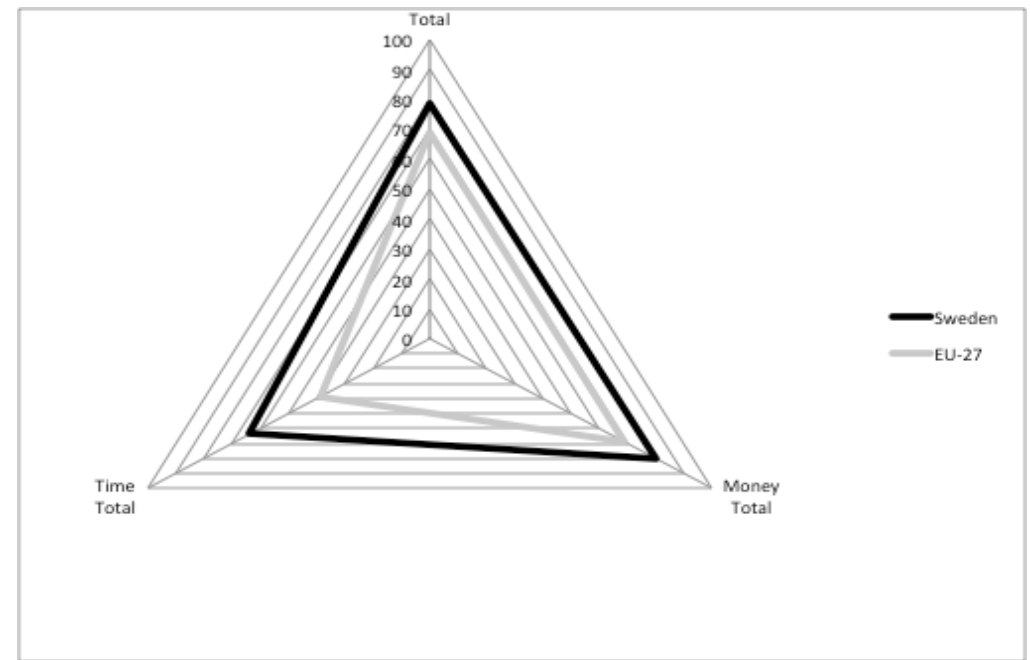
*Formal childcare costs (on parents): Low: less than 30%, Moderate: 30~40%, High: more than 40%.

*Compensation: Low: more than 66% of previous earnings for less than 4 months + flat-rate benefit or unpaid, Moderate: more than 66% of previous earnings for 4-5 months, High: more than 66% for over 6 months.

*Working hour adjustment: Low: a right to 'request' adjust working hours, Moderate: Restricted to parents with caring responsibilities only, High: Available to all employees + a right to 'decrease' and 'increase' working hours.

Sources: Burri and Aune (2013); European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat (2014); Lindeboom and Buiskool (2013); Moss (ed.) (2013); OECD (2013); Social Security Programs Throughout the World (2012), Europe; Asia and the Pacific.

	Work			Money			Time		
	Total	Participation	Segregation and quality of work	Total	Financial resources	Economic situation	Total	Care	Social
Finland	82.0	88.3	76.1	78.4	66.3	92.7	63.8	54.4	74.8
France	67.0	76.1	59.1	75.9	67.0	86.1	35.8	43.6	29.3
Germany	72.5	76.7	68.6	76.3	70.6	82.6	41.6	40.1	43.3
The Netherlands	73.1	77.6	68.8	82.5	71.8	94.8	71.3	70.7	71.9
Sweden	78.6	91.2	67.7	80.2	67.7	95.1	63.9	69.7	58.7
The UK	76.6	79.7	73.7	74.3	72.7	76.0	43.2	56.6	32.9
EU-27	69.0	76.6	62.2	68.9	59.5	79.6	38.8	45.5	33.0



[Figure 1: Gender Equality Index of the six countries]

Source: EIGE (2013)