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CONSTELLATIONS OF FAMILY POLICIES IN WESTERN  
COUNTRIES: INEQUALITY TRADEOFFS RE-EXAMINED**

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# **WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES UNDER DIFFERENT CONSTELLATIONS OF FAMILY POLICIES IN WESTERN COUNTRIES: INEQUALITY TRADEOFFS RE-EXAMINED**

## **Abstract**

Women's rising labor force participation since the 1960's was long seen as heralding decreasing gender inequalities. According to influential social science writings this view has now to be revised; "women friendly" policies bringing women into the workforce are held to create major inequality tradeoffs between quantity and quality in women's jobs. Unintendedly, such policies increase employer statistical discrimination and create glass ceilings impeding women's access to influential positions and high wages. This paper re-examines theoretical and empirical bases in analysis of family policy effects on gender inequalities. Including capabilities as well as earnings in definitions of gender inequality, we improve possibilities for causal analyses by mapping institutional constellations of separate dimensions of family policies in Western countries. Reflecting conflicting political forces as well as religion, contrary to accepted assumptions of uni-dimensionality, family policies are multi-dimensional, with main distinctions favoring traditional families, mother's employment, or market reliance. Using multilevel analyses and broad sets of outcome variables, we show that methodological mistakes largely invalidate earlier causal interpretations of major tradeoffs between quantity and quality in women's labor force participation. Positive policy effects facilitate work-family reconciliation and combine women's increased labor force participation with relatively high fertility. While major negative policy effects for women with tertiary education are difficult to find, family policies clearly differ in the extent to which they improve opportunities for women without university degrees.

Over recent decades, social science views on effects of welfare states on gender inequalities have shown drastic turns and twists. Long seen as fortifying patriarchy, a change came when comparative research indicated that Western welfare states involve complex structures and actors possibly generating “woman friendly” policies reducing gender inequalities.<sup>1</sup> In this perspective, the rise in women’s labor force participation rates since the 1960’s were seen as foretelling decreasing gender inequalities. Influential social science writings now question this interpretation, maintaining that “woman friendly” policies have unintended consequences generating an inequality tradeoff for women; what these policies yield in quantity of women’s jobs is lost by their unintended consequences increasing employer statistical discrimination against women, decreasing their opportunities to attain influential managerial positions, and generating glass ceilings hindering them from achieving high wages.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this paper is to re-examine theoretical and empirical bases for interpretations of family policy effects on gender inequalities. Assuming that sizable gender inequalities remain in all Western countries, we focus on the extent to which countries with differing constellations of family policies have succeeded in decreasing them. In this introduction we discuss conceptualizations of gender inequalities, dimensions of family policies, problems in earlier causal analyses of women’s inequality tradeoffs, and outline the content of the paper.

In Western societies, inequality has typically been conceptualized in terms of individuals’ achievements with respect to material standards of living. With such criteria it is difficult to discuss several gender-relevant differences, such as those between gainfully employed women and homemakers. We therefore define gender inequalities to include not only material aspects but also agency and capabilities, conceiving of inequality in terms of individuals as purposive

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<sup>1</sup> These works include, *inter alia*, Crompton 2006; Hernes 1987; Koven and Michel 1993; Leira 1992; Lewis 1993; O’Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Albrecht, Björklund and Vroman 2003; Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan 2007; Booth 2006; Datta Gupta, Smith and Werner 2008; Mandel and Semyonov 2005, 2006; Mandel and Shalev 2009.

actors differing with respect to resources and capabilities enabling them to make choices over more or less broad ranges of alternative activities.<sup>3</sup> An individual's capabilities represent her freedom to choose between alternative ways of living.<sup>4</sup> Among gender-relevant agency inequalities, one key difference goes between being inside or outside the labor force. It can be argued that in comparison with homemakers, on the average women in paid work tend to be able to choose within wider sets of accomplishments and to have better capabilities to direct their own lives.<sup>5</sup> In this context we must also consider agency inequalities in terms of women's access to managerial and other positions of power as well as earnings inequalities affecting individual's resources for achievement of freedom.

Earlier analyses on inequality tradeoffs frequently take family policies to be uni-dimensional in terms of more or less of "family friendliness," pay insufficient attention to the role of religion and socio-economic class in the making of family policies, and often base causal interpretations on classification of countries into regime typologies. In our view, in analyses of family policy consequences it is necessary to replace uni-dimensional policy conceptualizations by a concern for the multi-dimensionality of family policy institutions. We define family policy institutions as sets of legislated programs likely to affect women's choices between paid work and homemaking along graded dimensions, and can thus examine policy effects in terms of direction as well as intensity. We use family policy institutional dimensions as intervening variables mediating between, on the one hand, driving forces including partisan politics, churches, and women's movements and, on the other hand, outcomes in terms of gender inequalities. In the context of family policies, religion has been of major relevance via cultural scripts interacting with partisan politics in the formation of

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<sup>3</sup> Sen 1992; Nussbaum 2000; Roybeyns 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Gender scholars have illuminated the dark history of gendered agency inequalities in Western countries (Lewis 1992; O'Connor 1993; Pateman 1989; Vogel 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Since women's choice between paid work and homemaking are also influenced by their values, this distinction can serve as a fruitful base for discussions on the equality/difference issue in gender analysis.

multi-dimensional policy constellations affecting relations between men, women and children. While the main left-right partisan dimension runs through all Western countries, in Continental Europe it is partly crosscut by confessional parties, parties which with the Catholic Church have historically pressed for family policies differing from those of secular parties on the left as well as on the right. As long-term outcomes of partisan politics reflecting the relative strength of confessional, left, and secular center-right parties as well as of women's movements, since the 1960's family policies in Western countries have become multi-dimensional in terms of claim rights embedded in their policy institutions, a multi-dimensionality having major consequences for patterns of gender inequalities. In 2000, we can discern three largely separate constellations of family policies, constellations which we refer to as traditional, earner-carer, and market-oriented family policies. In multilevel statistical analyses of family policy effects, country policies are characterized not by country names but their by combinations of values on separate dimensions of family policies. We analyze policy effects on a broad range of outcomes with partially new data; our results question earlier interpretations of adverse inequality tradeoffs.

Analysts arguing for major gender inequality tradeoffs have not provided sufficient empirical evidence for such tradeoffs. Relying on highly problematic causal analyses, they have instead imputed such tradeoffs to explain what they interpret as negative effects of earner-carer policies. Findings that comparatively low proportions of employed women in earner-carer countries tend to have top wages are interpreted as negative effects of family policies, however without considering that family policies may generate differences among countries in composition of employed women with respect to socio-economic characteristics relevant in wage setting. Our empirical analyses show that different types of family policies have observable consequences not only for proportions of women in employment but also for heterogeneity among employed women with respect to education and other socio-economic

characteristics. Thus earner-carer policies bring into employment higher proportions of women with only low and medium levels of education than do market-oriented policies and especially traditional-family policies. Such differences in heterogeneity among employed women are in turn relevant for differences among countries in chances of employed women to achieve high earnings and managerial positions. In causal interpretations of factors affecting women's opportunities, we must therefore consider policy-related country differences in heterogeneity among women brought into employment. Problems in causal interpretations are also created when analysts define glass ceilings in terms of differences in the size of wage gaps between median and top levels of earnings, and take higher wage gaps at the top than at median wages as evidence of glass ceilings caused by family policies. We show that country differences in gender wage gaps between median and top earnings are likely to be driven primarily by particular forms of wage settings, in some countries decreasing wage gaps at median earnings. An indicator based on the difference between median and top earnings is therefore highly problematic. When we focus on gender wage gaps at top levels, few systematic differences appear among countries differing in family policies. Such methodological problems in causal analyses invalidate earlier conclusions on inequality tradeoffs.

During the past few decades, key issues in debates on policies to decrease gender inequality have concerned the extent to which what Daly and Lewis describe as "social care" related to children and the elderly should be promoted as paid work in the public sector, as paid work in the private sector, or as unpaid work in the home; choices here are likely to be of major significance for women's agency inequalities.<sup>6</sup> In comparative social science research on consequences of these policy choices, we face serious problems with availability of relevant data, a situation necessitating combination of information from many different

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<sup>6</sup> Daly and Lewis 1999.

sources. Problems with data availability become acute in our use of multilevel statistical analyses combining country-level institutional information with individual-level data. Here we need comparable and detailed information on individuals' incomes, earnings, and labor force participation within a single dataset. In this context the main relevant dataset is the well-known Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), which in spite of its great advantages in some respects also has limitations, one of them being incomplete information in some countries on relevant individual level variables.<sup>7</sup> From other sources we therefore complement multilevel analyses with country-based comparisons on outcomes. In analyses of country-level data, close familiarity with countries in terms of historical and other key aspects is necessary for improving the validity of causal interpretations.<sup>8</sup> In comparative analyses focused on a specific set of outcomes, it is fruitful to select countries which differ in terms of causal variables of interest but are relatively homogeneous with respect to many factors which potentially can "confound" causal relationships to be tested. This strategy – sometimes described as "selection of most comparable cases" – can be seen as an attempt to control for effects of potential confounding factors in causal comparative research.<sup>9</sup> Our study is based on 18 countries with uninterrupted political democracy after the Second World War and at least one million inhabitants: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States.

We move causal analysis forward by developing empirical indicators for different dimensions of family policies. This involves identification and quantification of legislated programs in each country granting claim rights likely to affect women's choice between paid work and homemaking in either direction. Identification and measurement of different family

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<sup>7</sup> Atkinson 2000; <http://www.lisproject.org>

<sup>8</sup> For a fine review of methods in comparative causal research cf Mahoney 2010 and a seminal article by Shalev 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Lijphart 1975; Mair 1996.



policy dimensions enables us to characterize countries not by names or by regime labels but in terms of their values on different policy dimensions. Empirical examinations of effects of family policy dimensions begin by multilevel statistical analyses of one basic aspect of women's agency, that is, labor force participation, using information from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS). We explore the extent to which different family policy constellations bring into employment women with tertiary, secondary, and less than secondary formal education. Results indicate significant differences between institutional policy constellations in terms of heterogeneity among employed women with respect to formal education and thereby also socio-economic background. We find marked interactions between family policy dimensions and women's educational levels on employment rates. Using multilevel analyses of LIS-data on incomes, we examine effects of family policy dimensions on women's chances to reach top incomes, finding little systematic differences among policy constellations nor marked interactions between constellations of policy dimensions and women's individual characteristics. As a follow-up on earlier research on gender inequality tradeoffs, we use other data sources to add macro-comparisons on gender differences in opportunities to reach well-paid managerial positions; results indicate relatively small differences among family policy constellations. Continuing a similar follow-up with recently available data on women's opportunities to access directorates of major firms, we find that these opportunities appear to be best in earner-carer countries and smallest in traditional-family ones. In analyzing glass ceilings in wages, we show that differences in forms of wage setting are relevant; involvement by broad-based trade unions and by legal arbitration tends to compress wage dispersion at median and lower levels, results undermining causal interpretations of glass ceilings in earlier studies. When we examine gender wage gaps at top levels of wage distributions, with few exceptions differences among family policy constellations are small. In the concluding

discussion we return to different types of gendered tradeoffs as well as to differences among family policies with respect to positive effects.<sup>10</sup>

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON INEQUALITY TRADEOFFS

In examining gender wage gaps in the United States and in Sweden, Albrecht, Björklund, and Vroman define glass ceilings in terms of differences among countries in the increase of gender wage gaps from the 50<sup>th</sup> to the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of the total wage distribution.<sup>11</sup> Finding a larger difference in the size of wage gaps between median and top wage levels in Sweden than in the United States, they conclude that glass ceilings exist in Sweden but not in the United States. Glass ceilings in Sweden are seen as resulting primarily from a policy-induced negative selection of women into employment and increases in employer statistical discrimination against women. Thus Albrecht et al. state:

“Daycare and parental programs give Swedish women a strong incentive to participate in the labor forces. ... At the same time benefits may discourage strong career commitment on part of the parents mostly involved in child rearing. In practice it means that women may have strong incentives to participate in the labor force but not to do so very intensively.”<sup>12</sup>

Using similar indicators based on increases in gender wage gaps from median to top levels, analysts have reported glass ceilings in many European countries.<sup>13</sup> Some analysts claim that in Denmark these policies have generated a “welfare state-based glass ceilings.”<sup>14</sup> As noted above, in this context we must however consider the possibility that separate factors may affect gender wage gaps at median and at top levels of earnings distributions, with broad-based union involvement and legal intervention into wage setting decreasing gaps at median

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<sup>10</sup> A different approach to the study of gender inequality has its roots in microeconomic analyses of division of household labor, bargaining within the family, and differences in demand for skill-specific labor among varieties of capitalism (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010; Estévez-Abe 2006). For space reasons, it can not be discussed here.

<sup>11</sup> Albrecht, Björklund, and Vroman 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Albrecht, Björklund, and Vroman 2003, p.172

<sup>13</sup> Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan 2007; Booth 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Datta Gupta, Smith, and Verner 2008, p. 80.

and lower wage levels. The relevant comparison here is therefore between sizes of gender wage gaps at top levels of wage distributions.

In claiming to have discovered a “Welfare State Paradox,” Mandel and Semyonov state that “in highly developed welfare states the ‘glass ceiling’ has become lower and wider [resulting in] low access for women to positions of power, authority, and high economic rewards.”<sup>15</sup> They explicitly refrain from considering the possibility of multi-dimensional policies, maintaining that in general

“state actions do not enhance women’s occupational and economic achievements, since none of them seriously challenges the traditional distribution of market-family responsibilities of men and women.”<sup>16</sup>

In a parallel paper, Mandel and Semyonov argue that by employing women in large public sectors, earner-carer family policies

“are likely to increase rather than to decrease earnings gaps between men and women [since] the nature of these jobs and convenient work conditions available in the public sector do not appear to enhance the economic opportunities of women in terms of occupational positions and earnings. Rather they appear to reinforce women’s tendency to compromise on convenient working conditions in the female-typed jobs and to deter them from attaining high-paying positions”<sup>17</sup>

Similar views are expressed by Mandel and Shalev, maintaining that the Scandinavian experience of egalitarian family policies teaches us that

“public care ... contributes to the concentration of women in feminized service jobs, lowering their representation in better-paid male-dominated jobs.”<sup>18</sup>

A serious weakness in the causal conclusions by Mandel and Semyonov is that their key independent variable, the “Welfare State Intervention Index,” fails to differentiate between

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<sup>15</sup> Mandel and Semyonov 2006, p.1917.

<sup>16</sup> Mandel and Semyonov 2006, p. 1911.

<sup>17</sup> Mandel and Semyonov 2005, pp. 950, 952.

<sup>18</sup> Mandel and Shalev 2009, pp. 1878-79.

contrary types of family policies.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, in examining probabilities for women to reach top wages, Mandel and Semyonov focus only at country differences among women in employment. Thereby, they disregard potential policy-related differences among countries in terms of heterogeneity among employed women with respect to socio-economic class and education of relevance for women's chances to reach top wages.

Since countries with earner-carer policies also employ major parts of women in the public sector, differences between public and private sectors in wages among men as well as among women are here relevant. Comparing seven countries, Gornick and Jacobs explore earnings differentials between public and private sector employees around 1990, with a focus on the extent to which public sectors provide high-paying jobs for women.<sup>20</sup> In all countries, earnings compression was higher in the public than in the private sector, and public/private earnings ratios tended to be negatively correlated with public sector size. In Sweden with large public sector, private sector employees had higher wages than their equals in the public sector but inter-sector wage differences were greater among men than among women, a finding pointing to the major role of structural factors rather than family policies in this context. Confirming the above observations, le Grand, Szulkin and Thålin found that among comparable individuals, wage differences between public and private sectors were greater for men than for women.<sup>21</sup> Effects of the public/private sector divide for earnings are likely to be consequential not only for women but also for men.

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<sup>19</sup> Mandel and Semyonov 2005, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Gornick and Jacobs, 1998. Countries included were Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States.

<sup>21</sup> le Grand, Szulkin and Thålin 2001.

## DIMENSIONS AND CONSTELLATIONS OF FAMILY POLICIES

Most comparative studies on welfare states and inequalities have related their findings to some form of welfare state typologies.<sup>22</sup> As argued above, in analyses of causal processes driving differences in gender inequalities among countries, it is fruitful to use a multi-dimensional typology based on institutional characteristics of family policies as intervening variables between driving forces and gendered outcomes. Drawing on strengths of previous research, we decompose the welfare state concept by identifying separate dimensions of family policies based on claim rights likely to mediate effects from policy makers in ways resulting in a divergence of gender inequalities between countries. Esping-Andersen's outline of conservative, liberal, and social democratic welfare state regimes has long provided very fruitful landmarks for discussions on welfare states.<sup>23</sup> This regime typology is based on patterns of correlations between driving forces, policy institutions, and policy outcomes, correlations which are seen to form the three types of welfare state regimes. Its major strength is that it reflects key partisan political cleavages in Western countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the left-right dimension in all Western countries but in Continental Europe is partly crosscut by confessional, primarily Catholic, parties. This typology has been very valuable in giving general orientation and in suggesting interpretations of differences among welfare states. For analyses of causal processes behind differences in gendered outcomes among countries and of changes in outcomes over time, the regime typology is however less helpful since it is static and does not differentiate between causes, institutions, or outcomes. The allocation of countries into a regime typology enables us to attach a label to a country; it is of less help in causal analyses of factors leading to differences among countries in outcomes and in analyses of policy changes.

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<sup>22</sup> See Esping-Andersen 1990; Hicks and Kenworthy 2003; Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Pettit and Hook 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Esping-Andersen 1990.

In the sciences, a well-known saying is that if standing on the shoulders of giants, one can see farther. To improve causal analyses, we therefore attempt to climb atop the shoulders of Esping-Andersen by replacing his attention to regimes with a focus on institutional dimensions of family policies seen as intervening variables mediating between driving forces and outcomes. Since our policy dimensions reflect main partisan cleavages shared by Esping-Andersen's regimes, the two will group countries in roughly similar patterns. A regime typology implies that there are important policy differences among countries; it can however not be used in examinations of specific policy effects. We define and specify family policy dimensions in each country in ways amenable to quantitative analyses enabling us to examine interactions between policy dimension and women's individual characteristics. Contrary to one-dimensional measures of family policies, our multi-dimensional policy indicators enable us to specify differences in directions of policy effects. They also give precise descriptions of differences within as well as among constellations of family policies and enables analyses of change over time, something of crucial relevance in periods when gender relations are re-structured.

When considering effects of family policy dimensions, it is fruitful to differentiate between claim rights and liberties, that is, between "freedom to" and "freedom from."<sup>24</sup> Claim rights enable citizens to secure material support from public authorities in terms of cash and services facilitating gender equality; liberties remove discriminatory rules and practices. To an extent varying among countries, liberties and claim rights relevant for gender equality are likely to have developed in tandem. In this paper we focus on claim rights, assuming that they have a more immediate impact than liberties on women's realized choices. Unpacking policies defined in existing legislation in areas of transfers, services, and taxes, we differentiate claim rights broadly seen as woman-friendly into specific policy dimensions likely to differ in their

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<sup>24</sup> For a now classical discussion on the concept of freedom, cf Berlin 1969.

consequences for women's choices between paid and unpaid work. As indicated by Ferrarini, up to mid-1960's our countries show relatively muted differences in family policies.<sup>25</sup>

Beginning in the early 1970's, however, claim-based family policies have developed to form clearly divergent dimensions of claim rights. This divergence started in the Nordic countries with the gradual emergence of what we refer to as a dual-earner dimension including policies strengthening capabilities of women, particularly of mothers, by enabling their extensive labor force participation through transfers of significant parts of social care from the home to the public sector. In recent years, these countries have also introduced policies to redistribute child care within the family by stimulating fathers to take a more active part in the care of their minor children, that is, a dual-carer dimension. Although still are in a nascent stage, this dimension is here identified to open up for discussions of this new tendency. The dual-carer and dual-earner dimensions work in synergy and are relatively closely correlated; in quantitative analyses the two are combined into an earner-carer index. With a somewhat later start, in continental Europe we find a development of policies extending claim rights of relevance for a traditional-family dimension by facilitating women's unpaid work within the home and supporting the nuclear family in various ways while presuming that wives have the major responsibility for social care at home and enter paid work primarily on a temporary basis as secondary earners, the husband remaining the main breadwinner. In the English-speaking countries, during these decades we find major efforts focusing on extending women's liberties by abolishing barriers contributing to gender segregation. In the United States, these efforts have been effectively combined with legislative structures emerging in civil rights struggles to realize equal opportunities for all.

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<sup>25</sup> Ferrarini 2006. However, in countries such as France, for economic and military reasons policies were developed to increase nativity (Pedersen 1993).

## FAMILY POLICY DIMENSIONS AND CONSTELLATIONS

Classifying gender-relevant policy indicators identified in our countries around 2000, we arrive at a policy space which enables us to fruitfully describe policy differences among countries in terms of their goals as well as in terms of their strength. Yet we must recall that gender institutions are always embedded in wider social, cultural and historical contexts of relevance for policy outcomes. Important in this context have been norms promoted by churches, in particular the Catholic Church, as well as factors such as economic and labor market policies, citizen's attitudes, and women's movements. Gender relevant institutions are resultants of often diverging forces; policy configurations are alloys, not elements. As underlined by Ferrarini, in some countries partisan conflicts have introduced contradictory elements into gender policies.<sup>26</sup> As comparativists know only too well, it is often very difficult to find relevant indicators for specific aspects of social policy dimensions. In this context, especially the quality of available information on daycare services for pre-school children is problematic.

The *traditional-family dimension* is based on a weighted average of four policy indicators:

1. Child allowances for minor children paid in cash or via the tax system (expressed as a percentage of a single workers' net wage at the level of industrial workers in the country).<sup>27</sup> (Weight 1.0).
2. Part-time public daycare services for somewhat older children (from three years up to school age), relating numbers of places or children in care to children in the relevant age group. (Weight 1.0).
3. Home care allowance to a parent for care of children below school age. (Weight 0.5).<sup>28</sup>
4. Marriage subsidies via tax benefits to head of household having an economically non-active spouse. (Weight 0.5).

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<sup>26</sup> Ferrarini 2006; also Hiilamo and Kangas 2009 as well as Leira 2006.

<sup>27</sup> As a baseline for comparisons between countries and over time, we have here used the average wage of industrial workers, the primary relevant category for which comparable and longitudinal data are available.

<sup>28</sup> These programs are sometimes also referred to as child-care leave benefits.



Child allowances are early forms of family support likely to be neutral with respect to labor force participation of spouses. In some countries, including the United States, benefits come as tax credits or tax allowances. Part-time public daycare presumes that mothers are engaged in homemaking or part-time employment. Because of low earnings replacements, the home care allowance tends to be chosen by the parent with the lowest earnings, typically the mother. The marriage subsidy described by Montanari reflects differences in the net post-tax earnings between, on the one hand, a single person, and, on the other hand, a two-person household where only one spouse is economically active; this difference is expressed as a percentage of the net average wage of a single worker.<sup>29</sup> Weights are introduced to reflect that the two first-named indicators are found in all countries and concern all families, while the latter two indicators are of relevance in fewer countries and for fewer families.<sup>30</sup>

The *dual-earner dimension* is an unweighted average of three policy indicators:

1. Full-time public daycare services for the youngest children (0-2 years of age), relating numbers of places or of children in care to children in the relevant age group.
2. Full-time public daycare services for children over-threes.
3. Earnings-related parental insurance (a multiplicative variable reflecting the percentage of replacement of previous earnings and duration of benefit).<sup>31</sup>

This index reflects the extent to which public policies enable a shift of child care work from the family to the public sector in ways enabling mothers to maintain a major and continuous occupational commitment. Provision of full-time child day care for the under-threes as well as for the somewhat older children is here important.<sup>32</sup> Policies for earnings-related parental leave encourage young women to start and to maintain an occupational career while enabling

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<sup>29</sup> Montanari 2000. The term “marriage subsidy” alludes to the term “marriage premium” used by economists to refer to the positive wage differences between married and single men; here it covers cohabiting as well as married couples. Tax benefits include tax allowances and tax credits and are computed at average industrial worker wage levels. They can also be described as tax penalties for secondary earners.

<sup>30</sup> We have tested different ways of weighting indicators but they do not result in major changes.

<sup>31</sup> Replacement rates refer to a year with one spouse receiving replacement at average production worker net wages while the other is not working.

<sup>32</sup> Korpi 2000; Rostgaard 2002.

parents to have an interlude for the care of infants. To differentiate earnings-related parental leave from homecare allowances with low flat-rate benefits but often long duration, we here use a multiplicative indicator.

The *dual-carer dimension* stimulates fathers to take a more active part in caring for their minor children, thereby redistributing childcare within the family. With earnings-related benefits, such programs cater also to men and are earmarked for fathers or permit sharing between parents. Our index is an unweighted average of two policy indicators based on earnings-related parental and paternity insurance:

1. Number of weeks of paid leave which can be used either by the mother, the father, or by both.
2. Number of weeks of paid leave reserved for fathers.

Figure 1 indicates locations of countries and country constellations within a two-dimensional space formed by the traditional-family and dual-earner dimensions. The horizontal axis reflects degree of dual-earner support and the vertical axis degree of traditional-family support, with country locations on each dimension based on the sum of standardized policy indicators (cf Methodological Appendix A). Country locations on these two dimensions are indicated by circles identified by their internet suffixes.<sup>33</sup> The third dimension, dual-carer support, is reflected in the relative size of the grey country circles. All indicators are standardized with an average equal to zero and a standard deviation of unity.

*(Figure 1 about here)*

Up to 2000, changes in claim rights have generated three relatively clear-cut constellations of country family policies. With high values on traditional-family dimension but relatively

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<sup>33</sup> Of country suffixes that are not self-explanatory, it may help to recall that when French was the accepted international postal language, Austria (AT) was referred to as *Autrice*. Switzerland with three major languages is identified in Latin as *Confoederatio Helvetica* (CH). DE refers to *Deutschland*, the German name of Germany (cf Appendix A).

low values on dual-earner and dual-carer support, in the upper left corner we find Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, a constellation with a highly developed traditional-family dimension. Distinguished by the clearly highest values on the dual-earner dimension as well as on the dual-carer dimension, in the lower right corner Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden form what can be described as an earner-carer constellation.<sup>34</sup> The dual-carer dimension has emerged primarily in countries which pioneered the development of dual-earner dimension support; sprinklings of this dimension are also found in Canada as well as in Belgium and France.<sup>35</sup> As noted above, the dual-earner and dual-carer dimensions are clearly correlated, indicating similar driving forces, yet having partly different effects in terms of gender-relevant outcomes with respect to mother's paid work and child care within the family. Contrary to the uni-dimensional view of Mandel and Semyonov, this scatter plot shows a clearly negative relationship between earner-carer and traditional-family policy dimensions.<sup>36</sup>

In the lower left corner, with relatively low values on all three dimensions of family policies, we find an otherwise very heterogeneous constellation of countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States. While we here describe them as having market-oriented family policies, their heterogeneity in terms of historical and political factors relevant for gender equality must be strongly underlined. Among them it is reasonable to take Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States as something of "prototypical" market-oriented countries in the sense that this outcome is likely to largely reflect active political choices in the context of dominance of secular

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<sup>34</sup> In the earner-carer countries, traditional-family support reflects relatively generous cash child benefits largely neutral with respect to paid and unpaid work. Contradictory gender policies in Denmark, Finland, and Norway include home care allowances and marriage subsidies.

<sup>35</sup> In Canada, after a Supreme Court decision, men were accorded the same 10 week leave as mothers had.

<sup>36</sup> Mandel and Semyonov (2006, fn 15) argue that their main independent variable (Welfare State Intervention Index) has a close positive correlation with our dual-earner dimension. Their correlation does however largely reflect that market-oriented countries have similar positions on both indicators. Leaving countries in this category aside, the correlation between dual-earner and traditional-family support is negative and high (-.92).

center-right parties and majoritarian elections. In these countries women's movements have pressed for extension of women's liberties, that is, abolition of gender-discriminatory rules and practices.<sup>37</sup> In the United States, pressures to extend women's liberties have been intensive and have greatly benefited from the presence of a legal machinery once developed for handling anti-discriminatory racial practices.

While sharing market-oriented gender policies, the other five countries in this category – marked by black dots in Figure 1 – differ considerably from the above proto-typical market-oriented countries in here relevant aspects. In Australia and New Zealand, traditions of judiciary wage-setting institutions involving significant public interventions in market processes have been significant.<sup>38</sup> During the period discussed here Australian industrial relations commissions on federal and state levels played important roles in narrowing gender wage gaps according to equity principles.<sup>39</sup> Ireland, Switzerland, and Japan appear as individually separate cases. Although the position of the Catholic Church in Ireland has traditionally been very strong, as a part of the United Kingdom up to 1922 unlike Continental European countries Ireland did not develop a specific Christian Democratic party. In Switzerland national policy making has been highly restricted by federal political structures, independent cantons, and the frequent use of popular referenda contributing to preserve a market-oriented family policies.<sup>40</sup> In a much different context, such a gender policy constellation is also found in Japan, where a secular center-right party has dominated during the post-war period.

As noted above, a central issue in the development of family policies has been if social care should be supported as unpaid work within the home, paid work in the public sector, or paid work in the private sector. Policy making in this area has been strongly influenced by the long-

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<sup>37</sup> O'Connor et al. 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Castles 1985.

<sup>39</sup> O'Connor et al. 1999. In this context women's movements were of significance.

<sup>40</sup> Huber and Stephens 2001.

term strength within countries of political parties and normative roles of churches.<sup>41</sup> In Continental Europe, confessional parties have been of key importance in developing distinctive social policies.<sup>42</sup> The traditional-family dimension has high values in six Continental European countries with influential confessional parties.<sup>43</sup> Among secular parties, views on gender inequalities have differed along the left-right continuum. Parties on the left have long tended to be somewhat more receptive to gender equality than other major secular parties, a penchant indicated by a relatively high proportion of women they have traditionally elected to diets.<sup>44</sup> To varying extents, secular center-right parties have held middle-class ideals of “separate spheres” for men and women.<sup>45</sup> The above country constellations of family policies indicate that confessional parties have been averse to family policies increasing women’s paid work; secular center-right parties have avoided extending claim rights to facilitate women’s advancement, while left parties have supported family policies extending citizen’s claim rights in ways transferring social care as paid work into the public sector.

## FAMILY POLICIES AND WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

Drawing on our multidimensional family policy variables, we here examine to what extent selection processes of women into the labor force have been affected in terms of educational levels and socio-economic class. In multilevel statistical analysis, we combine data on national family policy dimensions and micro-level information on women’s labor force participation in simultaneous analysis while controlling for individual level characteristics relevant for female employment: age, education, presence of young children, and number of adults in the household. Lacking good class indicators in most databases on labor markets, we are here limited to take women’s level of formal education as a proxy for class background.

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<sup>41</sup> Korpi 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Korpi and Palme 1998; Korpi 2006; Morgan 2006.

<sup>43</sup> In France the confessional party disappeared after the re-introduction of majoritarian elections in 1958.

<sup>44</sup> Tingsten 1937, chap. 1; Norris 1987, chap. 6.

<sup>45</sup> Reskin and Padavic 1994.

Individual level data are from LIS, where 15 of our 18 countries have relevant data from around 2000.<sup>46</sup> Among country-specific factors, in this context differences in unemployment levels are of potential relevance. In 2000 unemployment levels among the 15 countries analyzed here are however relatively small.<sup>47</sup>

We use multilevel logistic regression models to explore links between variations in family policies and women's employment.<sup>48</sup> In multilevel regression, correlated error terms are treated not as problems but instead as contributing information enhancing our understanding of the phenomena in focus. We can also calculate the variance partitioning coefficient (VPC), an estimate of the proportion of total variance attributable to the second level, here country level family policies.<sup>49</sup> Analyses cover women 25 to 54 years of age. Estimates from independent variables are reported as odds ratios; for categorical variables, odds ratio indicate deviation from a reference category, here set to 1. An odds ratio of 1.2 thus indicates 20 per cent higher odds as compared to the reference category; 0.8 indicates 20 per cent lower odds than the reference category. The traditional-family dimension is measured as described above. Due to the high correlation between dual-earner and dual-carer indicators, as noted above these two variables are here additively combined into an earner-carer dimension.

Table 1 shows results using random intercept regression models of women's employment on macro- and micro-level variables.<sup>50</sup> The VPC for Model 1, the empty model, is 0.076, indicating that 7.6 per cent of the total variation in female employment appears at the country level. The remaining proportion of variance is consequently found among individuals. In

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<sup>46</sup> LIS-data for Switzerland have educational information only for household heads. Japan and New Zealand are not represented in the LIS.

<sup>47</sup> In 2000, the average percent of unemployment was 5.9 in the earner-carer countries, 5.6 in market-oriented countries, and 6.8 in traditional-family countries (Organization of Cultural and Economic Development 2002, p 303).

<sup>48</sup> Goldstein 2003; Snijders and Bosker 1999.

<sup>49</sup> We use the GLLAMM software that runs in STATA (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008).

<sup>50</sup> In regression analyses we use 30 quadrature points for all summations. Decreasing this number does not generate any substantively different results.

multilevel analysis, a VPC of around 8 percent can be considered as large.<sup>51</sup> Model 1 includes only macro-level indicators, that is, traditional-family support and earner-carer dimensions. Congruent with our expectations, the earner-carer dimension is clearly associated with increasing probability for female employment, the traditional-family dimension with somewhat decreasing female employment. Formally, odds ratios here indicate that on average an increase of 10 percentage points in the earner-carer dimension would lead to an increase of female employment with 1.8 percentage points; the same increase in the traditional-family dimension would decrease female employment with 0.6 percentage points.

*(Table 1 about here)*

Model 2 includes only micro-level variables. As could be expected, both lower education and presence of pre-school children are related to lower female employment proportions. Age has a curvilinear relationship with highest employment proportion in the middle age group (35-44 years). Moreover employment proportions increase with the number of adults in the household, pointing to lower employment among single mothers. Models 3-6 combine the two family-policy variables with each one of our four micro-level factors, indicating that effects of family policy variables do not substantially change when including micro-level factors. In Model 7, all factors are included simultaneously, showing roughly similar correlations between macro-level variables and female employment as found in Model 1. In Model 8, cross-level interactions are introduced between family policy dimensions and educational levels. Since interaction effects are often difficult to interpret from parameter estimates, Figure 2 graphically illustrates interaction effects predicted from this regression. We see that an increase in the earner-carer dimension clearly links to higher female employment in all three educational groups; the somewhat weaker gradient for women with tertiary education implies that the earner-carer dimension has less relevance at the tertiary

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<sup>51</sup> As a rule of thumb, a VPC of 1, 4, 8 and 14 per cent corresponds to a standardized effect size viewed as small, medium, large and very large respectively (Duncan and Raudenbusch 2001).

level than at low and medium levels of education. The traditional-family policy dimension has the opposite relationship to female employment, where increases are associated with decreasing female employment, especially for those with medium levels of education.

*(Figure 2 about here)*

Interactions between family policy dimensions as illustrated above capture main tendencies but also obscure important variation within constellations of family policies. One way to illustrate interaction between family policies and individuals' educational levels is to plot separate country residuals, reflecting differences between observed participation rates and rates predicted on the basis of individual level variables. Figure 3 shows country residuals from separate multilevel regressions for each level of education after controls for other individual level characteristics, that is, net odds for female employment in different educational groups.<sup>52</sup> Of interest here is to evaluate where in the context of the three family policy constellations countries with differing values on family policy dimensions are located. Within each family policy constellation, countries are ordered according to residuals for women with low education.

*(Figure 3 about here)*

The location of countries largely follows what can be expected from family policy structures, however with some differences within constellations. Among countries classified as sharing the earner-carer constellation, 10 of 12 educational categories have employment residuals above average. Here Finland shows below average residuals for women with secondary and tertiary education, something possibly reflecting that it has partly contradictory policies with somewhat less of earner-carer support and more of traditional-family support than other countries in the category. In the traditional-family constellation of countries, 15 of 18 educational groups have below average employment rates among women, with especially

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<sup>52</sup> Since separate tests here are interrelated, we use significance tests sparingly and rely more on patterns of outcomes. In Figure 3, country residuals differ from zero at the five-percent level with the following exceptions: Australia (medium and high), Austria and France (low), Ireland (high) and Canada (medium).



low levels appearing in Italy and the Netherlands. As discussed above, in the very heterogeneous category of market-oriented countries we have distinguished Canada, United Kingdom and the United States as having prototypical market-oriented policies. Of them the United States as well as Canada have below average residuals for all educational categories while the opposite is found in United Kingdom. In Figure 3, two countries sharing market-oriented family policies without being proto-typical – Australia and Ireland – are distinguished by shaded columns. Australia has above average residuals especially for women with low education. Ireland deviates in the other direction by lower participation rates, especially for women with low education. Here Ireland thus reminds of Italy and the Netherlands, two other countries where confessional parties have been very strong.

It should here be recalled that family policy institutions may affect some micro-level outcomes in the multi-level regressions, especially the number of children in different countries. Differences among countries in the timing and structure of increase in female employment may affect employment patterns over age cohorts.

## FAMILY POLICIES AND WOMEN'S TOP WAGES

As discussed above, in testing the hypothesis that a macro-characteristic of a country – its family policy constellation – affects the probability of women in the country to achieve top wages we must consider differences among countries in socio-economic selection of women into employment. In multilevel regressions using LIS-data we can simultaneously evaluate relationships between different family policy constellations and women's individual-level probabilities to attain high wage positions. Samples and estimation models as well as institutional and individual variables are the same as in analyses on employment in Table 1. Since information on hours worked are missing for several countries, we follow Mandel and Semyonov and use annual earnings to calculate our dependent variable – female

representation in the top annual earnings quintile (Table 2).<sup>53</sup> Results show that VPC for the empty model is relatively low; only 3.1 percent of the total variation in female top wage representation is explained at the country level, a considerably lower proportion than that found for female labor force participation. Multilevel regressions give scant support for the hypothesis that earner-carer policies reduce women's chances to reach top wage positions. In Model 1, the earner-carer indicator is not statistically significant, while the traditional-family dimension is clearly linked to lower odds of women to reach the highest earnings quintile. When introduced together with institutional variables, micro-level factors have only limited influence on effects of family policy variables (Models 2-7).

*(Table 2 about here)*

Model 8 in Table 2 includes country-level policy dimensions and individual characteristics as well as interaction effects and shows both our policy dimensions to have negative coefficients. Figure 4 illustrates predicted interaction effects between family policies and education on women's access to top quintiles in annual earnings. There is a tendency of earner-carer support to increase probabilities of low educated women to reach top earnings positions, while a similar effect cannot be found for traditional-family support. Both earner-carer and traditional-family policy variables tend to be related to somewhat lower probabilities of women with tertiary education to reach the highest wage quintile. Their simultaneous decline implies that the market-oriented family policy constellation, characterized by low values on both these variables, may tend to increase representation of women with tertiary education in top quintiles, a possibility examined below.

*(Figure 4 about here)*

Figure 5 shows country residuals for women's net odds at three educational levels to reach top earnings, that is, after controls for other micro-level factors. Within family policy

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<sup>53</sup> Mandel and Semyonov 2005.

constellations, countries appear in the same order as in Figure 3. The distribution of residuals among family policy constellations is rather diffuse; however women with low education appear to fare best in earner-carer countries. Focusing on women with tertiary education in what we above have designated as the three prototypical market-oriented countries, patterns of residuals are rather mixed: in the United States somewhat below average, in Canada somewhat above average, in the United Kingdom clearly above average. On the whole, these three prototypical market-oriented countries would however not appear to provide strikingly better opportunities than other types of family policies for women with tertiary education to reach top quintiles in annual earnings. Yet they do not have negative residuals of the size found in the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Belgium and Germany.

Among atypical countries in the market-oriented constellation of family policies, large positive residuals for women with tertiary education appear in Ireland and Australia (shown with shaded columns Figure 5). As noted above, in Australia legislated wage arbitration boards focusing on “equal worth” were long important in wage setting. Although either of these two countries have prototypical market-oriented policies, the presence of Ireland and Australia in the market-oriented category largely accounts for the relatively high proportions of women with tertiary education in this category to have top earnings, something reflected in the simultaneous negative interaction effects of traditional-family and earner-carer policies on top incomes noted above.

*(Figure 5 about here)*

## GLASS CEILINGS, WAGE GAPS, AND POWERFUL POSITIONS

Let us now more closely re-examine the type of empirical evidence originally used to support the now widely accepted hypothesis that to a much higher extent than other types of family policies, earner-carer policies have generated glass ceilings counteracting women’s access to high wages and powerful jobs. In Western countries, on the average women have

lower gross earnings than men.<sup>54</sup> Gender wage gaps are measured in terms of differences between men and women in gross earnings per time unit.<sup>55</sup> Following established practice, we examine gender wage gaps in terms of percentage point differences between men and women in logged hourly earnings, focusing on wages in the period 1998-2000 at the 20<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup> and at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles (cf Methodological Appendix E). We estimate both “raw” gaps and “adjusted” gaps when taking into account characteristics of individuals on a number of control variables (Table 3).<sup>56</sup>

(Table 3 about here)

As Blau and Kahn have documented, gender differences in earnings are affected by forms of wage setting, where especially broad-based union-related collective bargaining and legal arbitration have been found to decrease wage gaps at medium and lower levels of earnings.<sup>57</sup> Examining profiles of raw and adjusted wage gaps over the whole earnings distribution, in the four earner-carer countries with a major participation of unions in wage setting we find a continuous increase from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Similar patterns also appear in Belgium with considerable union participation in wage setting as well as in Australia and New Zealand with traditions of legislated arbitration.<sup>58</sup> Besides the Netherlands (as well as France and Italy where information limited to post-tax wages make comparisons difficult), other countries with traditional-family or market-oriented family policies have higher raw and adjusted wage gaps at the 20<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentiles than have earner-carer countries. These findings invalidate earlier interpretations of glass ceilings based on differences between median and top wages.

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<sup>54</sup> Blau and Kahn 2003; England 2005; England, Budig, and Folbre 2002; Huber, Stephens, Bradley, Moller, and Nielsen 2009.

<sup>55</sup> Wage gaps are conventionally measured by ranking individuals into earnings distributions including men as well as women to determine the position of the percentile of interest in a country, observing proportions of men and women, respectively, above this percentile, and computing absolute or relative differences between men and women between these proportions. Here we determine wage gaps by quantile regression, using sex as a dummy and adding control variables.

<sup>56</sup> Control variables are age, age-squared, education, marital status and presence of children below 6 years.

<sup>57</sup> Blau and Kahn 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Castles 1985; Hicks and Kenworthy 2003; O'Connor et al. 1999, p. 89; Visser and Checchi 2009.

To examine potential glass ceilings among countries, we instead focus on raw as well as adjusted wage gaps at the 80<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Results indicate that in earner-carer countries top gender wage gaps are roughly similar to those of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, countries which we above have described as prototypical market-oriented countries, however with Canada appearing to have lower gaps at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. When focusing on the two top earnings deciles, earner-carer countries thus have gender wage gaps roughly similar to those in prototypical market-oriented countries. Together with countries where wage setting institutions involve broad-based unions or legal arbitration, earner-carer countries do however tend to have lower gender wage gaps at low and median wage levels than most other countries.

As has been shown in earlier studies, countries differ in terms of proportions of occupations classified as managers, with the United States and Ireland having larger proportions than most other countries.<sup>59</sup> We examine gender managerial gaps among employees within a country. Because of possible country differences in “looseness” of classification of managerial positions, we follow Mandel and Semyonov by also determining gender gaps in “lucrative” managerial jobs: top-half, top-third, and top-fifth of the earnings distribution among all employees (cf Methodological Appendix F). Looking at all managers as a percentage of all employees in ten countries for which comparable data are available, as expected we find considerable differences among countries with the highest proportion in the United States (Table 4).<sup>60</sup> Among them, managerial gender gaps are very small in the United States, Austria, Italy and Sweden, but are to some extent present in other countries. Focusing on gender gaps among managers in the top-half, top-third, and top-fifth of the total earnings distributions among employees, US gender gaps increase to roughly reach levels found in most other countries. Relevant here is the absence of clear patterns of differences among

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<sup>59</sup> Wright, Baxter, and Birkelund 1995.

<sup>60</sup> Because of few countries involved, the use of multilevel analysis is here not advisable.

countries with different family policy constellations; here earner-carer countries are thus roughly similar to the United States.

*(Table 4 about here)*

Hypotheses expecting earner-carer family policies to hinder women from entering positions of power in the private sector can be further evaluated by examining women's access to positions on company boards in the largest firms in 16 countries, using data which have only recently become available (cf Methodological Appendix G). Among European countries, proportions of women in corporate boards are affected by legislation on gender quotas and on employee representatives in company boards.<sup>61</sup> Before adjusting for such legislation, figures on women's total share of all board members show a wide range, from a low of four percent in Italy to a high of 41 percent in Norway (Table 5). The high figure in Norway partly reflects 2006 legislation requiring a 40-60 percent sex balance in publicly listed companies.<sup>62</sup> Also other countries with the earner-carer policies have relatively high percentages of women in boards of the largest companies: Sweden 26, Finland 20, and Denmark 17. Here Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, and the United Kingdom form an intermediate category with 12-15 percent women in such boards. In Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, and Switzerland, less than ten percent of board members are women. Exclusion of employee board representatives and a focus only on members representing shareholders does not reverse this general picture; while the percentage of women decreases in Denmark, Austria, and Germany, they remain higher than in countries with market-oriented family policies. Our few observations on regular board members in traditional-family countries indicate clearly lower levels than among earner-carer countries.

*(Table 5)*

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<sup>61</sup> In most countries, employee representatives on company boards formally have the same rights as board members representing the shareholders, with the exception of issues related to industrial disputes.

<sup>62</sup> The share of women in boards of the largest companies in Norway increased from 31 to 41 percent between 2005 and 2008.

## DISCUSSION

Policies to decrease age-old traditions of gender inequalities activate traditional tensions associated with gender divisions as well as between private and public sectors of economies, tensions generating unavoidable tradeoffs between differently valued aspects. Separate constellations of family policies emerging among Western countries reflect economic and cultural cleavages structuring broad-based collective action and partisan politics: the left-right cleavage running through all countries, in Continental Europe partly modified by confessional parties associated with Catholicism. In this context, also women's collective mobilization to change social norms on gender relations have been important. Since the 1960's these cleavages have significantly structured transformations of social care. In analysis of their consequences it is fruitful to identify specific institutional policy structures mediating effects of actors on outcomes with respect to gender inequalities. Our results clearly contradict now widely accepted assumptions of uni-dimensional family policies.

In analyses of gender inequalities, we have to consider not only material inequality and subjective satisfaction but also inequalities with respect to capabilities to choose over a range of alternatives, with women's labor force participation as one major indicator. As shown here, in most countries women with tertiary education have high labor force participation rates irrespective of family policies; women most likely to have individual resources enabling them to make real choices thus tend to choose paid work. Major effects of family policies are instead visible among women without university-level education, facilitating or discouraging them in making choices similar to those of their economically and educationally more favored country-women. In terms of bringing women without tertiary education into employment, earner-carer policies would appear to contribute more than do prototypical market-oriented policies, a policy constellation which in turn tends to have lower gender agency inequalities than most countries with traditional-family policies.

Based on highly problematic causal interpretations, earlier analysts have asserted that policies encouraging women's employment by transferring social care work to the public sector generate severe tradeoffs between quantity and quality of employment in ways impeding women's access to top wages and positions of power. When we take account of socio-economic differences in women's probabilities to join the labor force, differences among countries in women's chances to enter the top earnings quintiles are subdued. Hypotheses that earner-carer policies soften the will as well as the capabilities of women to attain powerful and prestigious positions are questioned by our findings of only minor country differences in gender gaps among well-paid managers. New data indicate that although modest in the majority of countries, women's access to boards of large corporations appears to be better in earner-carer countries than in prototypical market-oriented ones, while women under traditional-family policies tend to be at a disadvantage. In this context it is also relevant to recall that since the 1970's, women's shares of seats in diets and cabinets are clearly higher in earner-carer countries than elsewhere.<sup>63</sup>

From an egalitarian perspective, an earner-carer policy constellation increasing opportunities for women without tertiary education and with working class backgrounds to enter the labor force appears as a major achievement, decreasing both class and gender inequalities. Under other constellations of family policies, these women are more often found in feminine niches as homemakers or with only marginal labor force attachment. Furthermore, gender wage gaps at medium and low wage levels tend to be much larger in countries with traditional or market oriented family policy constellations. It is often stated that women in public sectors of earner-carer countries are relegated to "female-typed jobs," a label traditionally associated with disadvantages in wages, work conditions, employment security, and skills. But during the past few decades social care work in earner-carer countries has been

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<sup>63</sup> Korpi 2000.



upgraded to good professional standards; thus, for example, in Denmark and Sweden preschool teachers are required to have at least three years of university training. Anglophone countries with small public sectors tend to have much lower staff requirements.<sup>64</sup> However, also in earner-carer countries, gender differences in time spent on household tasks remain large.<sup>65</sup>

Since women have intermittent work more often than men, in all countries they face major risks for employer statistical discrimination and difficulties for human capital accumulation hindering them from occupational advancement. Earner-carer family policies have a potential for decreasing such discrimination. By being, on the average, more available and affordable as well as having higher quality and continuity, provision of social care via the public sector is likely to be more effective in supporting mothers' paid work than are provisions via the private sector. Judiciously designed parental leave programs improve incentives for women to enter and to remain in the labor force. In most countries with traditional-family or market-oriented gender policies, we find more of short part-time work, longer interruptions in connection of childbirth, and difficulties in finding day care, factors likely to generate even more severe motherhood penalties.<sup>66</sup>

The transfer of social care to public sectors is however associated with other forms of tradeoffs. One critical tradeoff concerns effects of wage setting in public sector employment, tending to decrease wage dispersion at the low as well as at the high ends of wage distributions. Among well educated women, those in public sectors of earner-carer countries tend to have somewhat lower wages than women in the private sector. The fact that such public-private sector wage differences are considerably greater among men than among women points to structural differences between wage setting in these two sectors, especially at top positions. Here the nature of services produced as well as constraints for wage setting

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<sup>64</sup> Gornick and Meyers 2003, pp. 220-23.

<sup>65</sup> Evertsson and Neramo 2007; Hook 2010.

<sup>66</sup> Gornick, Meyers, and Ross 1998.

are relevant. Public sector social services are in principle public goods, benefiting all, and therefore creating free-riding when non-contributing persons can not be excluded from benefits. Wage setting in the public sector is a result of decision-making in the context of political democracy, where available wage funds are determined by relatively well organized and mobilized tax payers. In the private sector, the rule often is to take from typically unorganized customers what competition on markets can bear. Since the early 1980's, in most of our countries very top wages in the private sector – mostly to men – have accelerated dramatically.<sup>67</sup> In earner-carer countries, such changes are of relevance for increases of public-private sector wage gaps, with larger increases for men than for women. In the same period, the long decrease of gender wage gaps in Western countries came to a halt.

Family policy tradeoffs with positive signs appear to be associated with childcare and fertility. In Continental Europe, countries with traditional-family policy constellations tend to combine relatively low female labor force participation with low fertility rates. The earner-carer constellation is found to have positive effects on fertility rates.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, while in some European countries fertility rates tend to be low among families with high education, in earner-carer countries birth rates are more evenly distributed among socio-economic levels.<sup>69</sup> Some economists argue that earner-carer policies have a major drawback by being expensive and constituting burdens on public budgets.<sup>70</sup> However, also expenditures for early childhood education can be seen as investments in human capital likely to give future benefits.<sup>71</sup> Studies indicate that the earner-carer constellation tends to have positive effects on children's wellbeing and development<sup>72</sup> as well as on child poverty rates, especially among single

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<sup>67</sup> Atkinson and Piketty 2007.

<sup>68</sup> Björklund 2006; Ferrarini 2006; Neyer and Andersson 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Organization for Economic and Cultural Development 2007. To improve its very low reproduction rates, in 2007 the German confessional-left cabinet introduced a Scandinavian type of parental leave legislation.

<sup>70</sup> Datta Gupta et al. 2008.

<sup>71</sup> Jenson and Sineau 2001.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs 2001; Waldfogel 2004

mothers.<sup>73</sup> Possibilities to transfer the earner-carer model to other countries have been debated.<sup>74</sup>

The above discussion points to tensions in the relationship between class inequality and gender inequality. These tensions bring up the question if gender inequality is to be counteracted over the whole range of socio-economic positions, or if gender inequality at the top should be decreased even at the cost of increasing socio-economic inequalities among other women. This policy dilemma emerges in the suggestion that the advancement of more women to top earnings should be facilitated by some women having access to cheap maid services generated by widening class inequality so that an increasing number of working-class women are willing to accept low-paid private service jobs. A variant of this alternative is now well underway in several Western countries, where increasing flows of immigrant women from low-income countries form what has been referred to as an international chain of care to take such jobs in the rich countries.<sup>75</sup> As indicated above, the earner-carer constellation offers a more complex alternative not premised on a widening of class inequality: the promotion of a more equal sharing of parental child care. In the context of relatively generous parental leave benefits as well as affordable and good public child care, the beginnings of such tendencies can be discerned in earner-carer countries.<sup>76</sup> In a long perspective on inequalities, it can be recalled that since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, gender inequalities have tended to decrease hand-in-hand with class inequalities; after the 1970's these two components of inequality have parted company. Class inequality reflected in widening income differences has turned to marked upsurge; the decline of gender inequalities has accelerated.

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<sup>73</sup> Bäckman and Ferrarini 2010; Hobson and Takahasi 1997; Misra, Moller and Budig 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Gornick and Meyers 2008; Shalev 2008.

<sup>75</sup> Crompton 2006.

<sup>76</sup> Morgan 2008.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

*Abbreviations:* Two-letter country labels as in country internet addresses.

*Tables:* - Denotes missing information.

### A. Country Scores for Family Policy Variables (Normalized Values; Average = 0; Standard Deviation = 1)

Country (with suffix)	Traditional Family	Dual Earner	Dual Carer	Earner-Carer
Australia (AU)	-1.32	-1.34	-1.01	-1.17
Austria (AT)	1.30	-1.42	-1.01	-1.22
Belgium (BE)	3.95	-0.25	-0.72	-0.49
Canada (CA)	-2.07	-1.88	-0.34	-1.11
Denmark (DK)	-0.43	4.89	0.95	2.92
Finland (FI)	-0.79	2.90	2.47	2.69
France (FR)	2.30	0.13	-0.72	-0.30
Germany (DE)	4.38	-1.59	-1.01	-1.30
Ireland (IE)	-1.25	-1.63	-1.01	-1.32
Italy (IT)	2.18	-0.96	-1.01	-0.98
Japan (JA)	-2.11	-0.34	-1.01	-0.67
Netherlands (NL)	1.65	-0.29	-1.01	-0.65
New Zealand (NZ)	-0.30	-1.58	-1.01	-1.29
Norway (NO)	-1.11	4.22	3.52	3.87
Sweden (SE)	-1.88	5.82	5.95	5.89
Switzerland (CH)	-0.45	-2.45	-1.01	-1.73
United Kingdom (UK)	-1.33	-1.13	-1.01	-1.07
United States (US)	-2.72	-3.14	-1.01	-2.07

Information on levels of cash and fiscal family benefits are from The Social Citizenship Indicator Program (SCIP) (<https://dSPACE.it.su.se/dSPACE/handle/10102/7>). Useful comparative data sources on public daycare and parental leave have been European Union Eurydice database on education systems and policies in Europe ([http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurybase_en.php)); Comparative Family Policy Database (Gornick and Meyers 2003); Bradshaw and Finch (2002); OECD (2007); Parental Leave Benefit Dataset (2009); Nordic Council Social Statistical Committee, NOSOSCO (<http://nom-nos-indicators.skl.se/sif/start/>); European Union Mutual Information System on social Protection, MISSOC ([http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/spsi/Missoc\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/Missoc_en.html))

### **B. Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) and Luxembourg Employment Study (LES)**

Luxembourg Income Study (<http://www.lisproject.org>) is a data archive with harmonized micro-data from a number of countries on incomes, labor market participation, and education as well as on demographic characteristics. In most countries original data come from national surveys with numbers of respondents varying from about 4 000 up to 15 000 but around 20 000 in France, Germany and Italy up to more than 50 000 in Canada, United Kingdom and the United States. In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden information on incomes comes from national registers. Luxembourg Employment Study (LES) includes harmonized data from labor force surveys in a number of LIS member countries and is available at LIS but no longer updated.

### **C. European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC)**

EU- SILC (<http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/dsis/eusilc/library>) has micro-data from special surveys on income, labor market, demographic and educational data for households and individuals in EU member countries and Norway. Numbers of respondents range from 6 000 to about 16 000.

### **D. Employment and Wages**

All data for the multilevel analyses on employment and wages come from the fifth wave of LIS around 2000 and cover the following countries and years: Netherlands, United Kingdom (1999); Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United States , (2000); Australia (2001). A number of indicators are used to define employment to assure that an individual is in paid civilian employment during the income reference period. Self-employed and farmers are excluded in the analyses.

European Labour Force Survey with standardized information is found at [http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu\\_lfs/index.htm](http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm)

### **E. Gender Wage Gaps**

Gender wage gaps are defined in terms of the difference between proportions of men and proportions of women above a specified percentile in the pooled wage distribution for both sexes. Data are here limited to full and part-time civilian employees, excluding persons with less than 10 or over 100 weekly hours of work. Wage gaps are calculated by quantile regressions as differences between men and women in logged hourly gross wages at, respectively, 20<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup>, and 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles with LIS as the main source (Australia 2001, Austria 2000, Belgium 2000, Canada 2000, France 2000, Germany 2000, Ireland 2000, Italy 2000, Netherlands 1999, United Kingdom 1999, the United States 2000, Finland 1991, and Switzerland 1992). National data sources are used for Norway (Level of Living Survey 2000), Sweden (Level of Living Survey 2000), Japan (Japanese General Social Survey 2000). For New Zealand (2001) data come from Organization of Economic and Cultural Development (2002, p. 97). Danish information on wage gaps are based on the same national register source as income information in LIS. We thank Mette Deding for helpful assistance with Danish data. Detailed descriptions of data handling are available from authors.

### **F. Managerial Occupations**

Managerial occupations are based on the EU-SILC 2004 using ISCO-88 at the two-digit level (cf above). Data for United States come from LIS (2000), where we used Ganzeboom's algorithm for translation of occupational classifications into ISCO-88 (<http://home.fsw.vu.nl/hbg.ganzeboom/ismf/ismf.htm>). Farmers, military personnel, self-employed and family workers are excluded.

## **G. Women in Corporate Boards**

European data come from the European Commission, stating women's share of boards in the largest publicly quoted companies (European Commission 2009, "Database on Women and Men in Decision-Making Bodies") covering a maximum of 50 largest publicly quoted companies in each country

*([http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/women\\_men\\_stats/defcon\\_en.htm#L](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/defcon_en.htm#L)).*

Companies registered abroad are excluded. Comparable data for women in the largest companies in Australia, Canada, Switzerland, and the United States have been assembled by Catalyst (<http://www.catalyst.org>), a non-profit organization specializing on issues related to women and work.

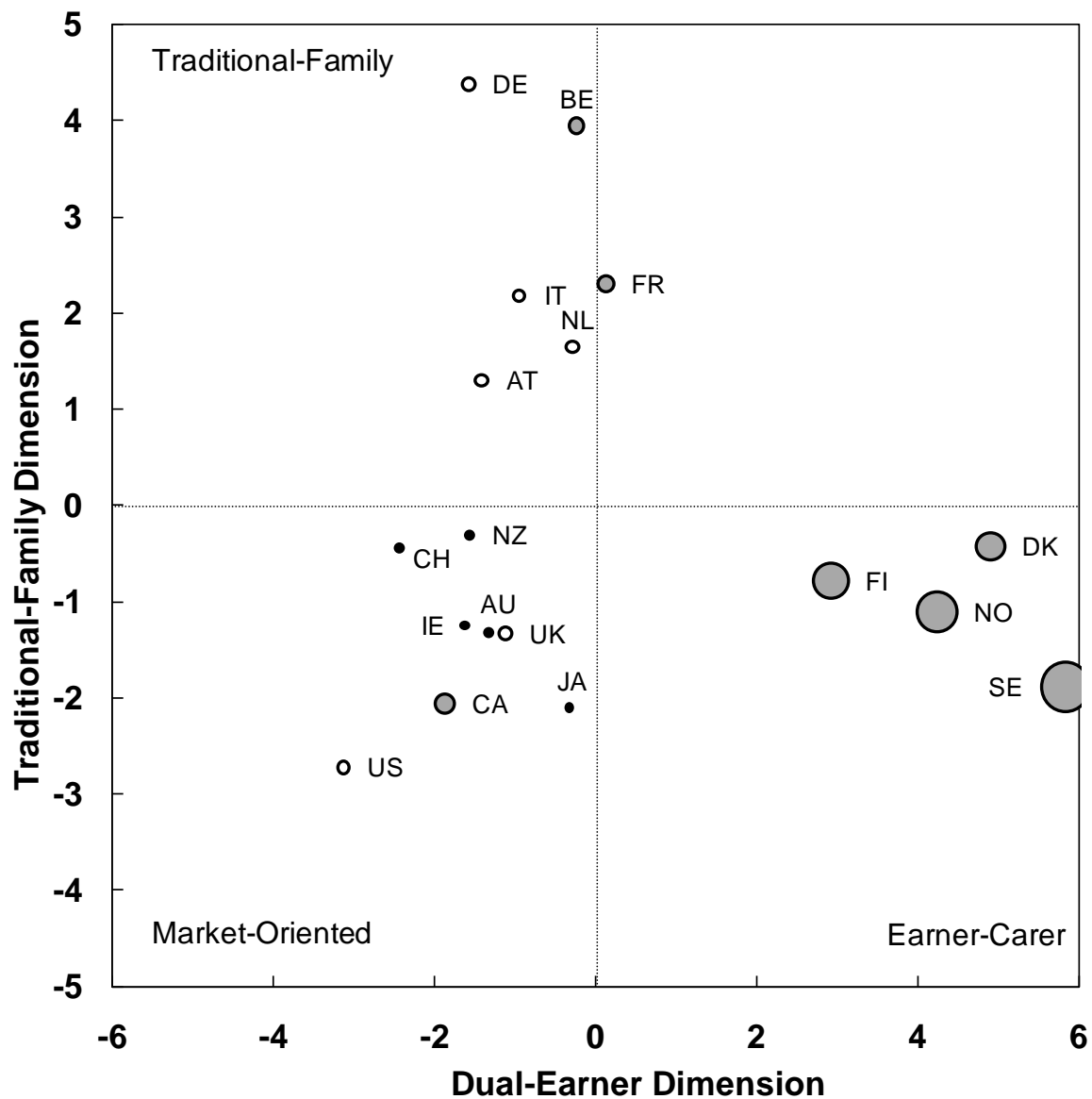


FIGURE. 1.  
COUNTRY LOCATIONS AND CONSTELLATIONS ON THREE FAMILY POLICY  
DIMENSIONS FOR 18 COUNTRIES, 2000.\*

\*Size of grey blots indicate degree of Dual-Carer Dimension. Countries are identified by their internet suffixes.



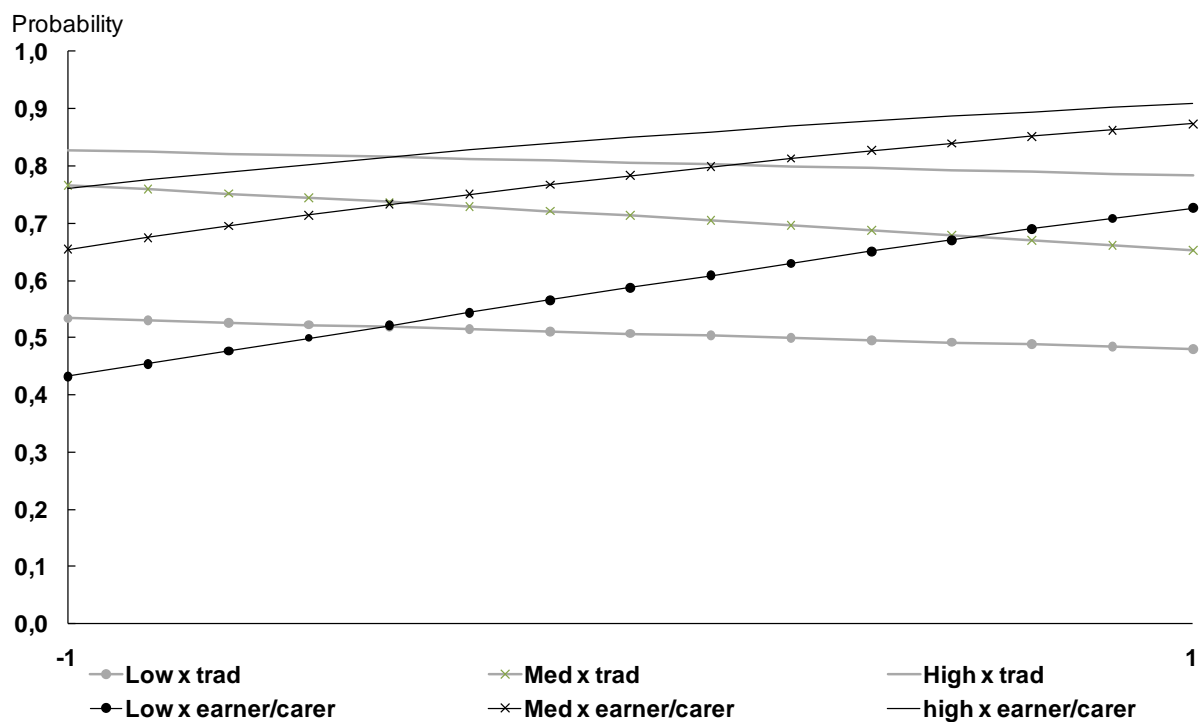


FIGURE. 2.  
 INTERACTIONS BETWEEN WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND FAMILY POLICY  
 VARIABLES ON PROBABILITY FOR WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, BY THREE  
 LEVELS OF EDUCATION.\*

\*Values on family policy variables range from lowest to highest country observations.  
 Based on Table 1, Model 8.

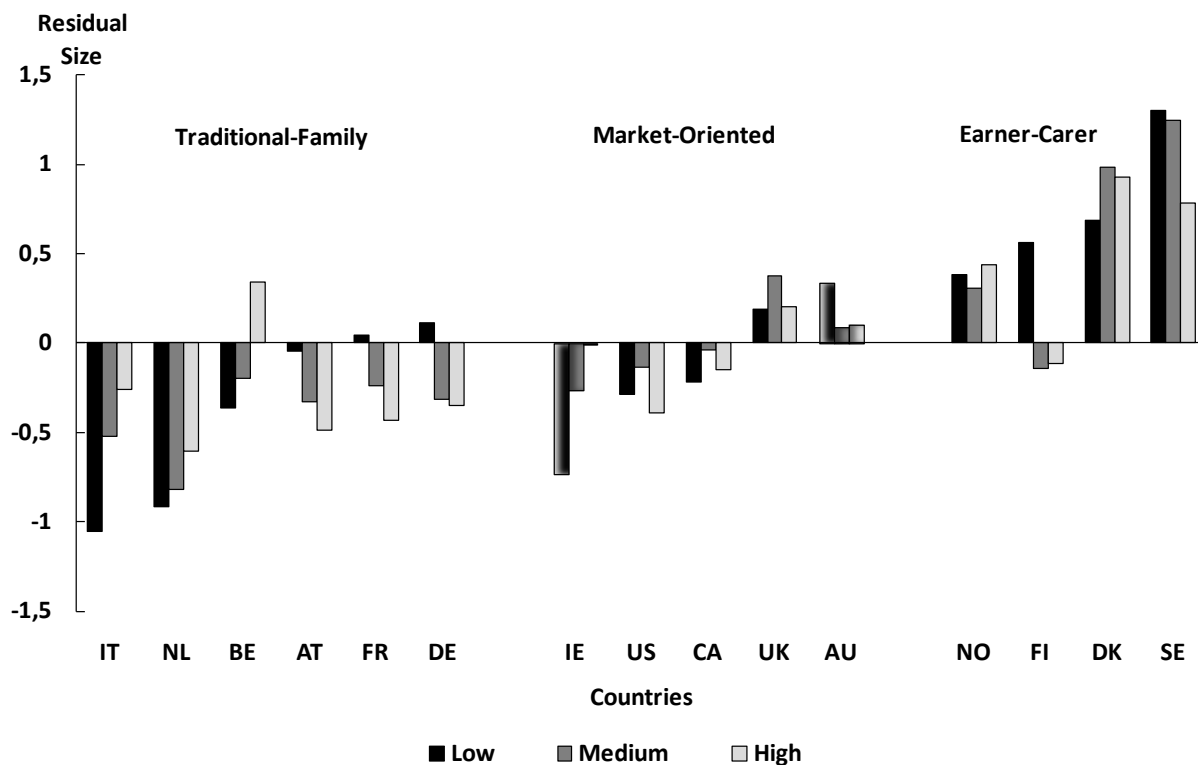


FIGURE. 3.  
RESIDUALS IN 15 COUNTRIES FROM MULTILEVEL REGRESSIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS ON WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN TRADITIONAL-FAMILY, MARKET-ORIENTED, AND EARNER-CARER FAMILY POLICY CONSTELLATIONS OF COUNTRIES, BY THREE LEVELS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION\*

\*Based on separate analyses for each level of education.

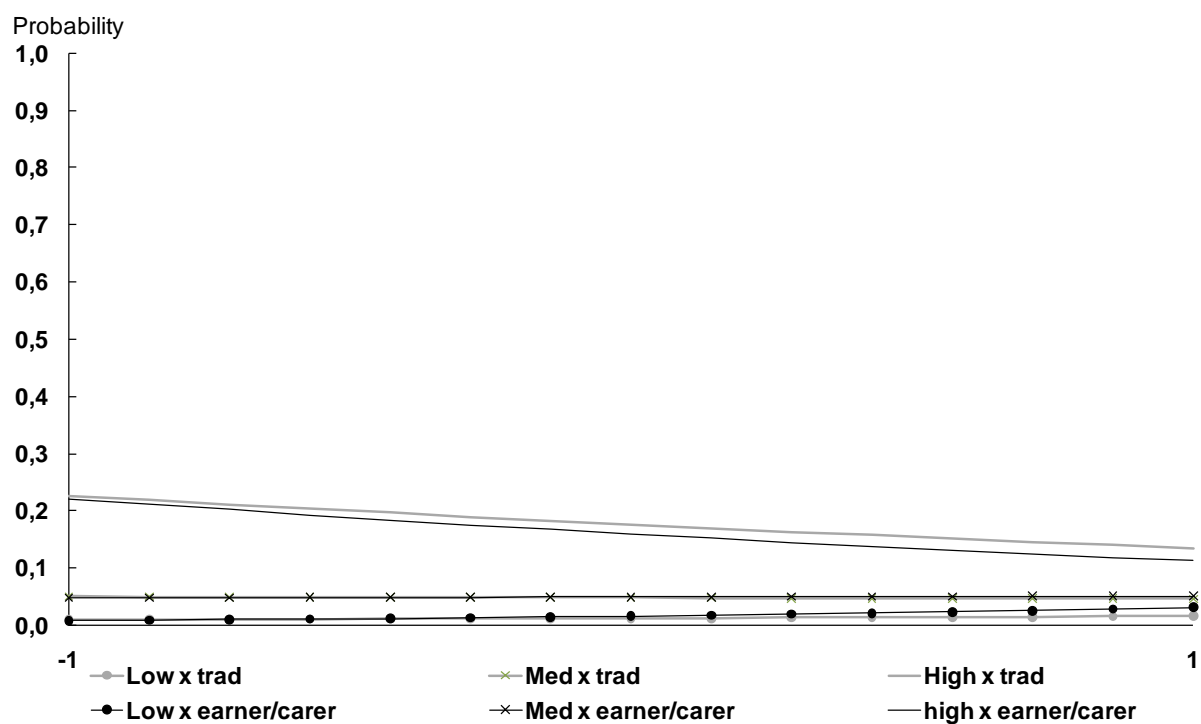


FIGURE 4.  
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN WOMEN'S EDUCATION LEVELS AND FAMILY POLICY  
DIMENSIONS ON PROBABILITY TO HAVE TOP-QUINTILE WAGES\*

\*Values on family policy variables range from lowest to highest country observations.  
Based on Table 2, Model 8.

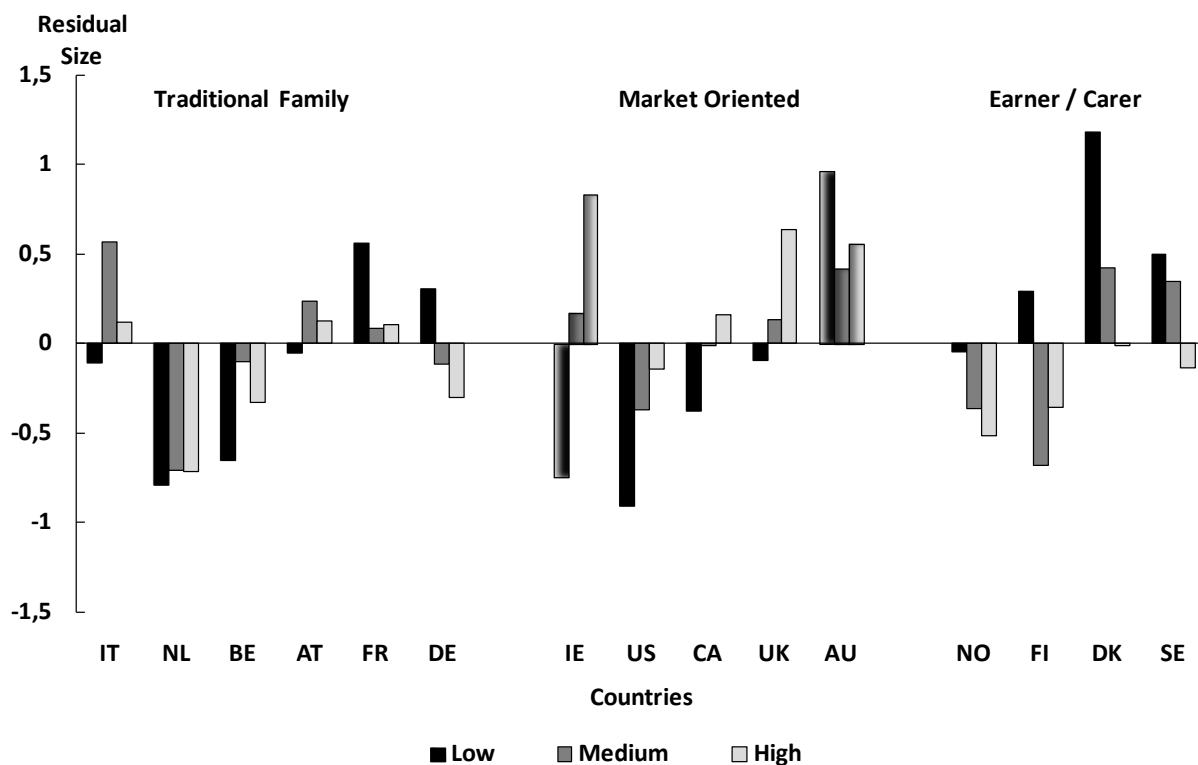


FIGURE 5  
RESIDUALS IN 15 COUNTRIES FROM MULTILEVEL REGRESSIONS ON EFFECTS OF WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS TO REACH TOP-QUINTILE EARNINGS IN TRADITIONAL-FAMILY, MARKET-ORIENTED, AND EARNER-CARER CONSTELLATIONS OF FAMILY POLICIES, BY THREE LEVELS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION\*

\*Based on separate analyses for each level of education.

TABLE 1  
 FAMILY POLICY DIMENSIONS AND WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT.  
 ODDS RATIOS FROM RANDOM INTERCEPT LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVEL  
 DETERMINANTS IN 15 COUNTRIES AROUND 2000 (WOMEN 25-54 YEARS).

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Models and Odds Ratios (p-values in parentheses)</i>							
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
Traditional –family dimension	,94 (.077)	-	,95 (.188)	,93 (.016)	,93 (.001)	,94 (.000)	,95 (.030)	,96 (.306)
Earned-carer dimension	1,18 (.000)	-	1,16 (.000)	1,18 (.000)	1,20 (.000)	1,20 (.000)	1,19 (.000)	1,15 (.000)
Education								
High (ref)	-	#	#	-	-	-	#	#
Medium	-	,64 (.000)	,65 (.000)	-	-	-	,64 (.000)	,62 (.000)
Low	-	,25 (.000)	,27 (.000)	-	-	-	,25 (.000)	,25 (.000)
Age								
25-34 (ref)	-	#	-	#	-	-	#	#
35-44	-	1,10 (.000)	-	1,23 (.000)	-	-	1,10 (.000)	1,10 (.000)
45-54	-	,92 (.000)	-	1,16 (.000)	-	-	,92 (.000)	,92 (.000)
Children								
No child (ref)	-	#	-	-	#	-	#	#
Child 1-2	-	,37 (.000)	-	-	,44 (.000)	-	,37 (.000)	,37 (.000)
Child 3-5	-	,55 (.000)	-	-	,61 (.000)	-	,55 (.000)	,55 (.000)
Child 6+	-	,89 (.000)	-	-	,93 (.000)	-	,89 (.000)	,89 (.000)
No of Adults	-	1,02 (.000)	-	-	-	,99 (.394)	1,02 (.002)	1,13 (.002)
Interactions								
Trad x educ. Medium								,96 (.000)
Trad x educ. Low								1,01 (.328)
Dual x educ. Medium								1,02 (.009)
Dual x educ. Low								1,01 (.097)
N (level 1)	133 014	133 013	133 014	133 014	133 014	133 013	133 013	133 013
Level 2 Variance (Standard error)	0,09 (0,032)	0,25 (0,093)	0,09 (0,033)	0,09 (0,033)	0,12 (0,021)	0,11 (0,037)	0,13 (0,024)	0,10 (0,033)
Log likelihood	-78 424,12	-73 924,49	-75 491,89	-78 320,87	-77 199,28	-78 404,07	-73 917,83	-73 893,93
<b>Empty model</b>								
N (level 1)	133 014							
Level 2 Variance (Standard error)	0,27 (0,100)							
Log likelihood	-78 432,71							
VPC ( $V/(V + \pi^2/3)$ )	0,076							

TABLE 2  
 FAMILY POLICY DIMENSIONS AND WOMEN' WAGES IN TOP QUINTILE  
 ODDS RATIOS FROM RANDOM INTERCEPT LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS OF MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVEL  
 DETERMINANTS IN 15 COUNTRIES AROUND 2000 ( WOMEN 25-54 YEARS).

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Model – Odds ratios (p-values in parenthesis)</i>							
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
Traditional family dimension	,94 (.017)	-	,94 (.144)	,94 (.029)	,94 (.012)	,94 (.007)	,95 (.179)	,91 (.042)
Earnier-carer dimension	1,01 (.613)	-	,96 (.239)	1,01 (.705)	1,01 (.597)	1,02 (.183)	,95 (.213)	,90 (.013)
Education								
High (ref)	-	#	#	-	-	-	#	#
Medium	-	,23 (.000)	,23 (.000)	-	-	-	,23 (.000)	,22 (.000)
Low	-	,07 (.000)	,07 (.000)	-	-	-	,07 (.000)	,05 (.000)
Age								
25-34 (ref)	-	#	-	#	-	-	#	#
35-44	-	2,00 (.000)	-	1,68 (.000)	-	-	2,00 (.000)	2,01 (.000)
45-54	-	2,20 (.000)	-	1,95 (.000)	-	-	2,20 (.000)	2,23 (.000)
Children								
No child (ref)	-	#	-	-	#	-	#	#
Child 1-2	-	,53 (.000)	-	-	,46 (.000)	-	,53 (.000)	,54 (.000)
Child 3-5	-	,65 (.000)	-	-	,59 (.000)	-	,65 (.000)	,66 (.000)
Child 6+	-	,71 (.000)	-	-	,76 (.000)	-	,71 (.000)	,72 (.000)
Adults	-	,83 (.000)	-	-	-	,83 (.000)	,83 (.000)	,83 (.000)
Interactions								
Trad x educ. Medium								1,08 (.005)
Trad x educ. Low								1,18 (.000)
Dual x educ. Medium								1,12 (.000)
Dual x educ. Low								1,32 (.000)
N (level 1)	132 504	132 503	132 504	132 504	132 504	132 503	132 503	132 503
Level 2 Variance (Standard error)	0,04 (0,017)	0,12 (0,048)	0,09 (0,037)	0,11 (0,036)	0,06 (0,021)	0,12 (0,048)	0,11 (0,042)	0,12 (0,046)
Log likelihood	-34 931,39	-30 696,59	-31 476,73	-34 609,92	-34 640,84	-34 841,47	-30 695,35	-30 544,44
<b>Empty model</b>								
N (level 1)	132 504							
Level 2 Variance (Standard error)	0,11 (0,036)							
Log likelihood	-34 936,14							
VPC ( $V/(V + \pi^2/3)$ )	0,031							

TABLE 3  
 RAW AND ADJUSTED GROSS GENDER WAGE GAPS IN LOGGED HOURLY EARNINGS BY  
 COGNATE CONSTELLATIONS OF FAMILY POLICIES AROUND 2000 (25-54 YEARS). (PERCENTAGE POINT  
 DIFFERENCES)

<i>Family Policy Constellation</i>		<i>Percentiles</i>							
		<i>Raw</i>				<i>Adjusted</i>			
		<i>20</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>90</i>
Earner – Carer	Denmark	10	13	23	30	-	-	-	-
	Finland	17	23	32	35	20	24	29	32
	Norway	14	15	24	33	13	17	25	27
	Sweden	11	15	20	25	12	17	24	29
Market Oriented	Canada	28	25	19	19	30	28	25	24
	USA	25	25	27	30	26	28	29	30
	United Kingdom	32	32	29	32	29	30	29	30
	Australia	7	11	16	21	7	10	17	20
	New Zealand**	7	13	17	-	-	-	-	-
	Ireland	20	19	14	16	21	21	18	18
	Japan	46	58	49	41	49	49	35	29
Switzerland	46	31	24	22	-	-	-	-	
Traditional Family	Austria	23	22	16	17	21	20	15	13
	Belgium	7	8	14	15	10	12	16	17
	France*	14	12	13	15	18	15	16	17
	Germany	28	20	20	20	29	20	18	17
	Italy*	10	7	7	1	9	9	11	11
Netherlands	17	13	18	19	18	11	9	8	

Note.— Sources: Cf. Methodological Appendix E.

\* Net earnings.

\*\* 20-64 years.

Control variables are age, age-squared, education, marital status, and presence of children below 6 years.

TABLE 4  
 GENDER GAPS IN MANAGERIAL OCCUPATIONS AT DIFFERENT EARNINGS LEVELS AMONG EMPLOYEES  
 (25-54 YEARS), BY TYPES OF FAMILY POLICY CONSTELLATIONS (PERCENTAGE POINT DIFFERENCES).

<i>Family Policy Constellation</i>		<i>Managers Among all Employees (%)</i>	<i>Gender Managerial Gaps at Different Earnings Levels</i>			
			<i>All Managers</i>	<i>Upper Half</i>	<i>Upper Third</i>	<i>Upper Fifth</i>
Earner – Carer	Denmark	6	5	6	5	4
	Finland	8	6	6	6	5
	Norway	10	6	7	7	5
	Sweden	4	2	2	2	2
Market- Oriented	USA	16	1	5	5	5
	Ireland	13	6	8	8	6
Traditional Family	Austria	2	2	3	2	2
	Belgium	6	6	6	5	5
	France	7	4	4	4	3
	Italy	2	2	2	2	2

Note.— Sources: Cf. Methodological Appendix G.



TABLE 5  
 WOMEN ON BOARDS OF THE LARGEST COMPANIES IN 16 COUNTRIES IN 2008, BY FAMILY POLICY  
 CONSTELLATION (%).

<i>Family Policy Constellation</i>		<i>Companies On Index Covered</i>	<i>Female Total Board Members (Including Employee Representatives)</i>	<i>Female Regular Board Members (Excluding Employee Representatives)</i>
Earner – Carer	Denmark	18	17	11
	Finland	24	20	20
	Sweden	27	26	25
	Norway	19	41	42
Market- Oriented	Canada	-	13	-
	United Kingdom	-	12	-
	United States	-	15	-
	Australia	-	8	-
	Ireland	20	7	-
	Switzerland	-	7	-
Traditional- Family	Austria	20	6	4
	Belgium	19	7	-
	France	36	9	9
	Germany	30	13	8
	Netherlands	21	15	-
	Italy	38	4	-

Note.— Sources: Cf. Methodological Appendix H.

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