Working Time Distribution and Preferences across the Life Course: a European Perspective

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Main Objective of my presentation: Identify and explain cross-country disparities in working time distribution and working time preferences

Restrict the analysis to seven EU-member states (F, D, I, NL, PL, SW and the UK), representing distinct welfare state regimes, employment, working time and industrial relation systems, family policies, and gender contract.

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Backgrounds and objectives

- Research financed by the European Foundation, based on the analysis of the fifth European Working Conditions Survey (27 MS+ candidate countries. Joint project with Christine Franz and Angelika Kümmerling (IAQ).

- Published report including all the countries and analysing, working time distribution, working time preferences, atypical work, work life balance and unpaid work.
Our study Based on the 5th European Working Conditions Survey, 2010

- The whole survey:

  Relatively large sample: 43 816 interviews (between 1000 and 4000 interviews per country). Both Wage earners and self-employed

- Our sample:

  Population: we restrict the analysis to wage earners in the above mentioned 7 Member States: Sample size: around 7 000 observations
Conceptual framework: Triangle of interactions impacting on working time

- Welfare state
  - Industrial relations and employment regimes
  - Gender contract

- Workplace characteristics / working conditions

- Working time arrangements

- Individual characteristics,
  - Life stages
Stylised household life-course typologies (Entry, union formation, parenting, empty nest and old age)

- **Single and childless young people**
  1. Single persons (18-35 years), living with their parents or relatives
  2. Single persons (under 46 years), without children

- **Childless couples**
  3. Younger couples (woman under 46 years), without children

- **Couple households with resident children**
  4. Couple with youngest children (age of children is under 7 years)
  5. Couple with young children (age of children 7-12 years)
  6. Couple with teenage children (age of children 13-18 years)

- **Older couples without children living at home**
  7. Midlife 'empty nest' couples without resident children (woman aged 46-59 years)
  8. Older couples without resident children (woman aged 60 years or older)

- **Older singles**
  9. Single persons (aged 46 years or older), without resident children
GENDER CONTRACT: EMPLOYMENT PROFILES ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE, SWEDEN

PROFILES OF EMPLOYMENT RATES OVER THE LIFE COURSE, SWEDEN 2004

EMPLOYMENT RATE

Singles with Parents 20-25
Singles <36 on their own
Couples <46 no children
Couples, children 0-6
Couples, children 7-12
Couples, children 13-18
Couples empty nest age 46-59
Older retiring couples >59
Older singles >59

Men
Women
EMPLOYMENT PROFILES ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE. FRANCE AND ITALY

Profile of employment rate over the life course variant, ITALY, 2002-2003

Profile of employment rate over the life course, FRANCE 1998-1999
Gender Contract: Unpaid work. Italy and Sweden
AVERAGE WEEKLY WORKING TIME, WAGE EARNERS.

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DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING TIME, EU-27, WAGE EARNERS

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WORKING TIME PROFILES ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE

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The higher the skill level the lower is the probability to work short part-time and conversely the higher is the probability to work long hours.

Short part-time is much more prevalent in wholesale, retail, education and health.

Long working hours: significantly lower incidence among the female dominated services oriented industries.

Long working hours are overrepresented among traditional male dominated industries such as construction and transport.
Marginal part-time (female) and long hours more prevalent in the private compared to the public sector.

Employment contract: both part-time work and long working hours more prevalent among employees working on short-term contracts.

Men and Women working at night and on weekends have a higher probability to work long hours.

Positive correlation between work intensity and long hours

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Not surprisingly, the impact of life stages on working time differs across gender.

**FOR WOMEN:** the probability to work (long) part-time increases mainly during the parenting phase but declines with the age of the children.

The likelihood to work long hours is significantly reduced for mother with young pre-school children.

The incidence of female part-timers varies also significantly among our countries. Compared to Sweden, female short part-time is, *ceteris paribus*, more prevalent in all countries except France and Poland.

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FOR MEN: Contrasting with their female counterparts fathers are not more inclined to work part-time (short or long part-time)

Male part-time is *ceteris paribus* more prevalent at the entry (combination work and education) and during the exit phase (progressive retirement) of the labour market.

Fathers with resident children between 7 and 12 years show a higher probability to work long hours

the likelihood to work long hours is significantly higher for men living in Poland and the UK, while men in France and the Netherlands are less inclined to work long hours
A large majority of respondents in our selected sample seems to be satisfied with their current working time: around 55 per cent of employed individuals do not want any change in their current working time.

Men are on average more satisfied with their working time but the gender gap in working time is small.

But a significant larger share of employees report that they would prefer to reduce their working time than to extend it.
**MAIN RESULTS OF ESTIMATIONS: WORKING TIME PREFERENCES**

- **WOMEN**: Working time preferences are dependent on their current actual working hours. Clear preference for an increase of working time among those who work part-time and especially for those who work short part-time.
- High skilled female employees have, *ceteris paribus*, a significant higher likelihood to prefer a reduction of working time.
- Compared to Sweden, female employees in France, Italy, Poland and the UK have a lower probability to want a reduction of working time.
- Regarding the variation of working time preference across our stylized life course *our estimations show that mothers are more likely to prefer a reduction of working time* with a probability slightly decreasing by the age of resident children.

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MAIN RESULTS OF ESTIMATIONS: WORKING TIME PREFERENCES

- **MEN**: Globally and compared to their female counterparts a higher share of male employees wishes a reduction of working time, but the gender difference remains low.
- Remarkably working time preferences of men in the selected countries are mostly independent of life stages and household composition in sharp contrast with the situation among women.
- Swedish Male employees are significantly more prone to prefer a reduction of working time than men in all other observed countries.

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CONCLUSION

- Our select sample of countries display a high gender polarisation of working time with a significantly higher share of women working part-time and conversely a higher proportion of men working long hours.
- Women’s working time is strongly influenced by their life stage. In all life stages employed women do work fewer paid hours than their male counterparts.
- In all our selected countries women’s working time decreases during parenthood while at the same time the gender gap in working time significantly increases.
A majority of economically active individuals seems to be satisfied with their current working time. But for those not satisfied: clear preference to a reduction of working time.

Our estimations tend also to show that a preference for a reduction of working time is positively correlated with skill level and also to work intensity.

Working time preferences are also strongly related to employees’ current working time.
Against this background and the current gender polarization of WT, male and female employees in our selected countries aspire to some convergence of working time.

Regarding country differences in working time preferences, both men and women in Sweden seem to have a stronger preference for a reduction of working time in spite of a relatively short weekly working time.

Interestingly, French, Italian and Polish employees are more inclined to favour a lengthening of working time.
CONCLUSION

- The current gendered working time distribution is a reflection of the still prevailing traditional gender contract regarding time allocation between paid and unpaid work.
- Need to implementing measures favouring a more balanced gender division of labour and family-friendly, flexible and reversible working time options across the life course.