Working time in a life course perspective: European Trends

Dr. Hubert Krieger

European Foundation (Dublin)
Think Tanks and the life course debate

- Rediscovered usefulness of
  - Analytical life course approach
  - Integrated life course policies
- New instrument
  - More sophisticated analytical instrument to deal with dynamic and complex changes of work biographies and their effect on employment, income, work-life balance and social security provisions
  - Preventive and holistic policy instrument to cope with these changes
Proposals of Think Tanks

- Miegel: Decompression of working life course and restructuring of personal use of time over life course (2004)
- High level working group on social policy: flexible work biographies, better combination of care and work over the life course (2004)
- ETUI: New working time policy over life course, significant reduction of living long working hours (1999)
Aims and activities of the Foundation on life course

Aims

- Stimulate debate on life course policy in Europe
- Support post-Lisbon reform process of employment and social policy

Contribution of Foundation (2002-2004)

- Life-long learning and life course (CEDEFOP)
- Pension reform (Italian Presidency conference)
- Care services (Irish Presidency)
- Transitional labour markets (Berlin TRANSLAM)
- Analysis of work biographies (Commission-Siswo)

Scientific base

- Two comprehensive reports (Naegele et al; Anxo/Boulin)
Life course approach I

Analytical perspective
- Mapping of relevant working time options
- Mapping of work biographies
- Life course proving of long-term effects

Policy perspective
- More flexibility for both sides
- Better capital endowment for employees
- Higher employment rates over the life course
- Prolongation of working life
- Better inter-temporal distribution of time and money
- Higher sustainability of social protection systems
- Better quality of life through better combination
- Improved equal opportunities
Life course approach II

Normative perspective

- More choice
- Enhanced individual capability for employees
- More individual responsibility
- Increased social responsibility of companies
- Collective risk sharing with vulnerable groups
- Support for social systems with un-conditional support
- Creation of win-win scenarios
Proposals to change EU policy initiatives

- Systematic integration of a life course perspective in employment and social policy
- Life course proving of individual policy measures
- Initiation of a wider ranging debate in Europe on life course issues including the basic normative principles of a life course policy
- More comparative research on new working life courses and their effects
More systematic integration of life course perspective

- Employment rate over the life course
- Work-life balance with a life course perspective
- Sustainable capacity to work over the life course
- More focus on time conflicts around life long learning
- Adjustment of social protection systems
- New balance between collective and individual risk management
- Modernising equal opportunities agenda
- Strong involvement of social partners and civil society
Innovative EU policy developments

- Joint pension report
  - More and better jobs
  - More adaptable skills
- Active ageing
  - Comprehensive strategy to enable participation in work over the whole life course
- Director General O. Quintin speech (2001)
  - More choice
  - Shorter working weeks and more holidays during stress phase of life in return for prolongation of working life
Working time options in a life course perspective: Overview

Distinction into two types of working time options

- **Life event specific**
  - Maternity, paternity and parental leave
  - Flexible and phased retirement

- **Life course specific**
  - Reduced working times (e.g. part time)
  - Care and educational leave
  - Sabbaticals and career breaks
  - Long-term working time accounts

- Both types have life course effects
Working time options in a life course perspective: Policy relevant results

Life event specific options: Developments
- Prolongation of leave periods
- More individual flexibility
- More variety in family phase
- Reduction of variety in pre-retirement phase
- Attempts to reduce gender bias

Life course specific options: Trends
- Innovation process mainly driven by the state
- Slow progress in strengthening part time rights
- Innovation with insufficient regulation
- Debate on integration of various life event and life course schemes in a integrated leave and income replacement scheme
Replacement income: Inter-temporal saving schemes

- Individual saving of money and time (working time accounts)
- Credit by finance sector
- Demographic working hours in companies
- Loan pre-financed by financial sector secured by income due to expected longer working life
- Use of capital accumulated in supplementary pension schemes

Advantage: Increased capability to work longer

Disadvantage:
- Poverty risk at old age
- Strategy mainly suitable for employees with high capital endowment
Replacement income: Inter-personal redistribution

Need for publicly funded scheme:

- Activity is socially useful
- Availability of individual capital endowment sufficient funds, particularly of risk groups
- Consensus of collective risk sharing (e.g. with employees taking high flexibility risks)
Leave and combination schemes

- Combination schemes with part time are more suitable than long-term leave
- Long-term parental leave lasting income effects
- Proper regulation of part time can minimize negative effects
  - Right to reduce and increase
  - Non discriminatory social security and tax provisions
  - Changed working time culture: Excepting time needs outside paid work
- Better access to educational leave for older and low qualified employees
Activation of unemployed

- Activation and re-integration: largest challenge
  - Particularly for the long and very long term unemployed
- Activation measures differ in regard of
  - Methods
  - Target groups
  - Degree of activation and coercion
- Missing: Assessment of long-term effects over the life course of activation measures
- Extremes between proper integration and long-term marginalisation
Mapping of new life courses: Key dimensions

- Time allocation over the life course
- Combination of activities
- Continuity and discontinuity over the life course
- Choice
- Duration of working life course (compression)
- Standardisation
Typology of work biographies of families and couples

- Male breadwinner
- Universal breadwinner (both full time)
- Female breadwinner
- Part time combined with full time
- Patch work with strong discontinuities
- Workless couples or couples being “work poor”
Key results I

- Larger variety and plurality of work biographies
- Male breadwinner is not dead
- Modernisation
  - Combination part time and full time
  - Universal breadwinner model
  - Internal variation over the life course
- Discontinuity through unemployment plays increasing role
- In certain countries contribute atypical forms of employment contracts to increased discontinuity (e.g. in Spain)
- But also the non-availability of part time work in Southern Europe leads to increased discontinuity
Key results II

- Trend to compressed life courses continues
- Netherlands and Spain: Pre-retirement turns into de-facto retirement phase
- Sweden and Spain have strongest standarisation
- Small child phase seems to be a pre-determining phase
  - Netherlands and Spain for future phases of work biography
  - Significant difference in Sweden
Future work of Foundation

- Wider scope of life course proving by including
  - atypical forms of employment contract
  - new forms of work organisation
  - and other HRM initiatives into life course proving
- Wider regional scope
- More empirical analysis of
  - discontinuity
  - Social security
- More in-depth analysis of opportunities and challenges of an integrated life course policy
- More life course guidance and improved Social Dialogue