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Children and time use of European families

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1. Introduction

In this chapter we present an overview of the currently available data on parental time use and the well-being of children in Europe. This linking of both areas of interest, does not mean we want to present parental care time as an indispensable input for the well-being of children. However, we do want to recognise a tension European parents routinely mention at the beginning of the twenty-first century. On the one hand, every European adult is expected to be active in the labour market, while on the other social expectations of parenthood are on the rise. Not surprisingly, individuals tend to report 'activity scheduling stress': problems to cope with rising demands on their agenda. Moreover, this feeling of overload has not (yet?) diminished with the variety of policy measures that are in place to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life.

Nevertheless, relatively little is known about the link between parental time investments and the well-being of children. Before going into European research on children's well-being and its determinants, we use the following sections to set the scene. How do European parents allocate their time and what do we know about the determinants of their care time, being a basic input for children's well-being.

2. The starting point: data on employment and time use

In its 'Statistics in Focus' publications, Eurostat offers at regular intervals a general overview of employment in the European Union. Unfortunately, these publications are not focused on families and hence, do not offer the specific results we are looking for. However, there are two additional sources of information that allow a family viewpoint.

First, in 2005 Eurostat published the results of a specific analysis of the Labour Force Survey data of 2003 focussing on families with children and reconciliation issues (Aliaga, 2005). The data show that across all member states fathers tend to differ from men without children in a similar way: they do not. In fact, neither the employment rate, nor the number of weekly working hours differs between these two types of men in any of the 25 member states of the EU.[1] However, a very different story is to be told about women. In most countries women with children younger than 12 have sharply reduced employment rates compared with women without children. Table 1 shows that this is most clearly the case for families with three or more children. Moreover, in some countries (the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, the UK and Belgium), mothers tend to work in part-time jobs rather than the full-time jobs of childless women.

Table 1 Employment rates of women aged 20-49 by number of children aged under 12

	EU-25	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	UK
0	75	75	86	77	80	84	57	62	77	60	75	78	80	75	78	37	82	83	70	77	83	81	78	83
1-2	62	70	56	81	62	64	54	52	69	50	72	67	80	62	54	28	71	73	61	77	86	62	75	65
3+	41	49	22	67	38		40	41	40	35	52				13		59	57	45	60		27	56	38

Data: Labour Force Survey, 2003 (Aliaga,2005:4)

Note: blank cells in this table refer to data not available (or unreliable results).

For Sweden and Ireland no data were available at all

Table 2 shows how the large, respectively small, effect of children on mothers' and fathers' employment translates in the parental organisation of paid labour. The table refers to all couples with partners aged 20-49 and confirms the previously mentioned cross-national variation in female employment patterns with some countries relying on female part-time work, others with both partners engaged in full-time jobs and a third category with many jobless women.

Table 2 Organisation of employment of couples aged 20-49

♂ / ♀	EU-25	BE	CZ	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	UK
FT / FT	45	43	64	37	62	47	44	52	38	62	58	60	40	56	22	27	47	49	67	77	66	63	44

[1] Differences are hardly ever significant and all point at increased employment rates and more weekly working hours among fathers, rather than the opposite. The positive impact of children on men's employment rate is also a common results in labour supply analyses (for an overview, see Browning, 1992).

FT / -	29	25	29	26	25	44	43	25	45	27	25	16	35	33	67	21	22	29	21	13	24	21	21
FT / PT	19	24	3	28	4	6	9	16	13	8	5	10	21	2	8	44	27	8	7	2	2	7	30
Other	7	8	4	9	9	4	4	7	4	3	12	14	4	9		8	4	14	5	8	8	9	5

Combinations refer to (1) both partners working in a full-time job, (2) the male partner being employed only, (3) the male partner working full-time and the female partner with a part-time job and (4) other combinations (mostly the female partner being employed only).

Data: Labour Force Survey, 2003 (Aliaga,2005:5)

Note: blank cells in this table refer to unreliable results. For Denmark, Sweden and Ireland no data were available at all

Indirectly, Table 2 also gives an indication of the time parents have available for non-market activities, like providing care for their children. For more direct evidence of the distribution of activities, detailed data of the time use of individuals is needed. Unfortunately, this type of information is available only for a limited number of countries and periods. By mid 2006, the harmonised time use survey (HETUS) efforts of Eurostat resulted in comparable data for the beginning of the 21st century for 15 countries, of which 10 provide data for specific family types. In

Table 3 we show the number of minutes men and women spend on an average day of the year on childcare (physical care, teaching and playing and other childcare). The table differentiates between families with young children (youngest 0-6) and families with relatively grown-up children (youngest 7-17). Table 4 provides similar results on employment of parents. Both tables reveal considerable cross-national variation. Yet, a comparison between the tables shows that within gender variation is larger regarding job time than regarding care time. The range between the minimum and the maximum time declared by mothers with young children is 62 minutes (HU 176 – BE 114) for care time and 109 minutes (SL 181 – DE 72) for employment. Hence, the cross-national variation in employment patterns shown in the previous tables does not necessarily translate into similar variation in parental care time.

Table 3 Minutes spent on childcare by partnered parents

Type of couple	Sex of partner	BE	DE	EE	FI	FR	HU	NO	SL	SE	UK
with youngest child 0-6	Male	51	59	50	63	40	71	73	56	67	60
	Female	114	138	159	154	117	176	137	143	130	142
with youngest child 7-17	Male	16	13	10	9	9	21	11	7	24	12
	Female	32	32	28	19	30	40	28	19	39	26

Time-use on an average day of the year, All type of care activities (physical, teaching and play, other)

Data: Harmonised European Time Use Survey (data collection periods vary between 1999 and 2001)

Eurostat,2005

Table 4 Minutes spent on employment by partnered individuals

Type of couple	Sex of partner	BE	DE	EE	FI	FR	HU	NO	SL	SE	UK
with youngest child 0-6	Male	287	272	272	315	295	286	287	338	293	333
	Female	158	72	120	134	133	91	135	181	137	120
with youngest child 7-17	Male	278	286	292	301	319	290	286	312	309	308
	Female	133	137	215	231	176	215	209	254	234	187

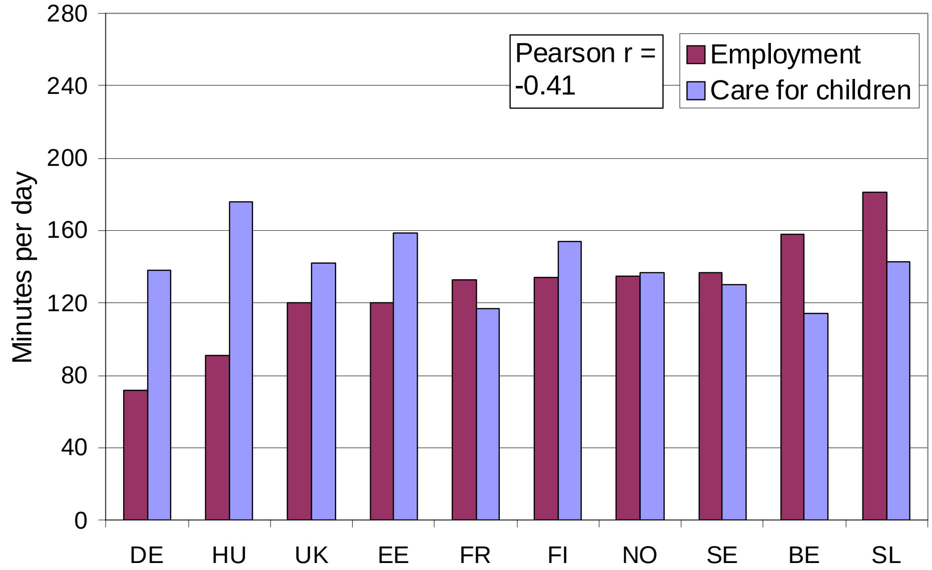
Time-use on an average day of the year, Employment and employment related activities

Data: Harmonised European Time Use Survey (data collection periods vary between 1999 and 2001)

Eurostat,2005

Figure 2.1 Care and employment time for mothers with young children (0-6 years)

Source:
HETUS
1999-2001



In Figure 2.1 we combine time use measures for employment and childcare time of mothers with young children. In general we would expect an inverse relationship at the macro level. In societies who involve mothers to a large extent in employment, mothers have less time available for childcare and vice versa. This inverse relationship is confirmed by the negative Pearson correlation coefficient. Yet, the data also show that the inverse relationship is not a universal fact. In Germany, Hungary, Belgium and Slovenia, childcare and employment time seem to be hard to reconcile, but this does not apply (or to a lesser extent) to the UK, Estonia, France, Finland, Norway and Sweden. More detailed micro-studies may clarify the picture further, as shown in the next section.

3. Determinants of care time: an overview of previous research

In the following paragraphs, we synthesize the most important findings of the relatively scarce literature on micro-determinants of childcare time. Anxo, Flood and Kocoglu (2002) compare the time allocation of parents in France and Sweden. Their ‘double hurdle’ analyses of time diary data indicate that parents tend to spend less time on childcare when their children grow older, that lowly skilled parents tend to spend less time on childcare and that women tend to be more sensitive to all kinds of explanatory factors. Their analysis suggests, moreover, that institutions matter. Swedish fathers spend more time with their children than the French, but the French tend to compensate for the working time of the mothers while the Swedish do not. According to the authors this may be attributed to the Swedish combination of a wide offer of childcare services and extensive career flexibility regulations, which reinforces women's relative power in marriage and allows for a considerable externalisation of the care burden.

Hallberg and Klevmarken (2003) focus on the childcare time of Swedish dual-earner couples. Their analysis of time diary data confirms the effect of the age of children. Furthermore, it shows that Swedish parents treat their partner's childcare time as a complement to their own time rather than as a substitute.

Neuwirth (2004) analyses primary childcare activities from the 1992 Austrian time use survey. He finds that parents' childcare time is mutually positively correlated, while being inversely related to the own job time. Moreover, Austrian women tend to compensate for their partner spending much time on his job, while men do not. This gender differential and the overall observation of the smaller responsiveness of men to observed variation in their household situation suggests that the male chauvinist model is still important in Austria. Furthermore, Neuwirth's 'two stage least squares' analyses show clear links between the various time allocation decisions, which indicates Austrian parents' need to accommodate privately for, say, an increase of their job time.

Deding and Lausten (2004) analyse time diary data of Danish couples, which they enriched with official register data. They compare market work with non-market work and differentiate between housework and childcare within the latter category. The results indicate that there exists a trade-off between market work and non-market work, but that childcare is relatively 'untouchable'. If the time for non-market work is squeezed it is other categories of activities that shrink, not childcare. Moreover, the authors confirm the previously found positive association between male and female childcare time.

Kalenkoski, Ribar and Stratton (2005) differentiate between market work, primary childcare time and secondary childcare time and analyse British time diary data. As in the French and Swedish case, highly skilled parents tend to spend more time with their children and childcare time levels off as the children grow older. Interestingly, primary childcare time is concentrated among the youngest and secondary childcare time tends to rise somewhat with the age of the children before both categories disappear altogether. They also examine parents' child care time among three family types: married, cohabiting and single-parent families. They find no differences between married and cohabiting partners with regard to time devoted to childcare and to market work, but single parents appear to spend more time on child care and less time on market work than other parents.

Paley (2005) considers the timing of parental childcare and includes both 'active' childcare time and 'passive' childcare time, conditional on the other parent not being actively caring at the same moment. She uses data from the 1997 time diary supplement of the US Panel Study on Income Dynamics. Paley observes how the job schedules of parents can effectively 'force' men to enhance their childcare time relative to other fathers. However, she also finds that mothers do not treat their partner's increase as a substitute, but rather exhibit compensatory behaviour. In other words, when arriving home later than the father and the children, the mother will spend relatively more time with her children than other mothers. Among men, though, there is no such compensatory behaviour.

Ghysels (2004, 2005) analyses a 1997 ECHP-dataset of two-partner households in a simultaneous equations framework incorporating both childcare time and job time. His analyses show that childcare time is positively correlated among Danish, Belgian and Spanish parents. However, the simultaneous equations framework revealed no direct impact of a respondent's job time on the own childcare time, nor his or her partner's, except in Belgium. In Denmark and Spain the link between childcare and employment proved restricted to a one-way relationship with the amount of personal childcare determining one's job choice.

Besides studies about parental childcare time in general, some researchers investigate childcare time spent by one of the parents. Kimmel and Connelly (2006) focus on time *mothers* spend with children because women tend to experience conflicts between market work and family responsibilities more intensely than men do. They estimate a simultaneous four-equation system using data from the 2003 American Time Use Survey. The results of their analysis show that mothers' time with children does not respond to price or demographic changes as pure home production or leisure do. As a result, maternal childcare time should be considered a distinct time spending category, next to paid labour, leisure and pure household work production. Furthermore, Kimmel and Connelly (2006) notice important differences between time allocation on weekdays and during weekends. Therefore, a separate analysis of time between these types of days seems appropriate.

Stancanelli (2003) elaborates several regression analyses on ECHP-data[2] to investigate *fathers'* care time. Her results show that time allocated by fathers to child care is responsive to their own hours of paid market work[3] (-) and to their spouses' paid working hours (+). In addition, caring time by fathers is found to be positively related with employment in the public sector and with a high level of education of the spouse. Self-employed men appear to spend substantially less time caring for their children.

4. Parental Work and Children's Outcomes in European Welfare States

4.1. Review of the literature on Parental Work and Children's Outcomes

One of the most contested topics in social policy today is what support the government should provide to parents with young children, both in terms of paid leave entitlements and child care, in order to enhance labour market attachment and early return to work (especially for mothers). Furthermore, the implementation of these government policies have to be carefully evaluated in relation to the influence that they have on parents' decisions about the care of their young children and through that on children's health and development.

Although there is a fairly extensive literature in economics and related disciplines on the impact of maternity leave policies and child care choices on labour market outcomes for women (see for a review Del Boca and Wetzels 2007), fewer studies have examined the links between parental leave policies and child care choices, and parental employment on the one side and outcomes for children on the other.

This literature review addresses the question whether early parental employment is bad for children, i.e. it has a causal effect on children's development in pre-school age, and whether the effects on child cognitive or behavioural development persist or they fade out over time. In fact, research on attitudes from the World Values Survey shows a high variability in the

[2] Data from the European Community Household Panel
[3] This is also shown by Gray (2004).

percentage of respondents who agree that a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works (from 18% in Denmark to 87% in Malta, see Billari 2006).

Economic theory does not predict clear effects of parental work on children's well being. In fact, there are two effects at work. From one side, there is a reduction in time devoted to the children if the mother works[4]; on the other hand, the mother can devote more resources and provide better educational and life opportunities to her children, given that she can rely on a higher family income (Ermisch and Francesconi 2005). Furthermore, from an empirical point of view, the observed relationship between maternal employment and child outcomes might reflect other factors that affect maternal labour supply and children's development (Ruhm 2004). For example, a woman with high ability is more likely to have a child with high cognitive ability and is also more likely to work. Hence, if the mother's ability is not properly taken into account, a statistical analysis would attribute the effect of this woman's higher skills to employment, and the estimated effects of maternal employment on her child's cognitive outcomes would be upwardly biased. Things are similar for low ability mothers and low ability children: mothers may choose to compensate by spending more time with children and the estimated effect of maternal employment on child's cognitive outcomes would also be upwardly biased. These considerations affect the way in which the relationship between parental employment and child outcomes can be seen as causal.

Researchers from different disciplines have been deeply interested in the link between parental work choice and children's well being. Some of the literature suggests that maternal employment has detrimental impacts on preschoolers cognitive and/or behavioural outcomes (Baum, 2003, Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; Berger, Hill, & Waldfogel, 2005; Blau & Grossberg, 1992; Brooks- Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2002; Datcher-Loury, 1988; Desai, Chase-Landale, & Michale, 1989; Ermisch & Francesconi, 2005; Fleisher, 1977; Gregg, Washbrook, Propper, & Burgess, 2005; Han, Waldfogel, & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Harvey, 1999; Heyns & Catsambis, 1986; Hill & O'Neill, 1994; Lefebvre & Merrigan, 1998a; Lefebvre & Merrigan, 1998b; Milne, Myers, Rosenthal, & Ginsburg, 1986; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994; Ruhm, 2004). While some of the research finds enduring impacts of early maternal employment (Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1991; Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991; Berger et

[4] There is evidence that the active time that employed mothers spend with children is not reduced by employment as much as expected (see Bianchi 2000 and recent work by Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004, Kimmel 2006 and Folbre, Yoon, Finnoff and Sidle Fuligni 2005, and older work by Nock and Kingston 1988)

al., 2005; Brooks- Gunn et al., 2002; Desai et al., 1989; Ermisch & Francesconi, 2005, Joshi and Verropoulou 2000; Liu, Mroz and Van der Klaauw 2003; Gregg et al., 2005; Han et al., 2001; Harvey, 1999; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994; Ruhm, 2004), other researchers find that negative impacts of maternal employment in the first year after a child's birth are offset by positive effects in the second and subsequent years (Blau & Grossberg, 1992).

Other researchers find no negative impacts on child outcomes, or qualify the negative impacts as small (Baum, 2004; Greenstein, 1993; Gregg et al., 2005; Harvey, 1999; Lefebvre & Merrigan, 1998; Leibowitz, 1977; Murnane, Maynard, & Ohls, 1981; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994). Vandell & Ramanan, (1992) find that in low income families, early maternal employment positively predicts children's' math achievement, and that recent maternal employment positively predicts children's reading achievement. Other researchers (Haveman, Wolfe, & Spaulding, 1991) find that mother's work is a significant determinant of high school completion. In their review, Parcel & Menaghan (1994) suggest that the dangers of maternal employment to children when they are young have been over generalized.

Some studies examine whether the impact of maternal work is related to mother's skill level or her socio-economic status (Datcher-Loury, 1988; Fleisher, 1977; Gagné, 2002). Datcher-Loury, Fleisher, and Gagné find that mother's home time is associated with better child outcomes when mothers are relatively well educated. Fleisher finds that this exists for boys. However, (Greenstein, 1995) does not find this relationship.

Parental work schedules

There is currently very little research that specifically looks at the impact of parental work schedules on child outcomes (Presser, 2003). Presser reviews these few studies, most of which find negative impacts of non-standard hours, although some of the studies suggested positive impacts. It is unclear whether the studies included comprehensive controls. Lefebvre & Merrigan 1998 and Strazdins Korda, Lim, Broom, & D'Souza, (2004) analysed the impact of non-standard work schedules on children by using the NLSCY. The NLSCY data had not matured enough for most studies to look at longer periods than two to five years. Both studies found negative impacts of non-standard schedules. Both studies relied on cross-sectional analysis and summarized shift work into one measure (non-standard) schedule. While Lefebvre and Merrigan looked at effects of non-standard schedules on cognitive and behavioural outcomes separately, Strazdins et al. combined behavioural scores into one measure defined as any behavioural problem. Gagne (2005) uses up to four sets of observations on each particular child to estimate the effect of work hours and shift work on behavioural outcomes in a longitudinal framework. Control variables include seven separate categories of shift work for both mothers and fathers in families where both parents or the single parent work and four separate categories of hours of work, including none, for both mother and fathers. Separate fixed effect equations are estimated for each behavioural outcome (hyperactivity, conduct disorder, indirect aggression, and emotional disorder) and for three measures of parenting or family emotional health (PMK depression, ineffective parenting, and family dysfunction). She finds that long hours of work do not have consistent direct impacts on child outcomes in two parent families..

Timing of return to work after child birth and social policies

There are still few studies that analyze the question of timing, that is whether and how parental employment early on in the first year of the child's life affects the child's outcomes (Berger, Hill, and Waldfogel, 2005). In fact, it is important to know not just whether maternal employment in the first year affects child outcomes, but also, more specifically, whether returning to work after a certain amount of weeks affects child outcomes. This issue is closely related to the one of maternity rights legislation and child care availability.

Several European countries have very different family and social policies, which are in turn very different with respect to the US. While in many European countries, government provides at least a part time place in a nursery school for children over the age of three, the situation changes substantially when we consider children under the age of three and especially under the age of one. Some countries (such as Germany) provide an extended period of paid maternity leave but little support for non parental care, which leads women to withdraw from the labour market to personally take care of their children, at least during the first years. In contrast, the US provides little support for maternity leave and more support for child care. The Nordic countries provide both generous parental leave and support for non-parental child care. In the last 5 years some countries started to move in this direction: the UK has extended the maternity leave to 12 months and has increased the availability of child care subsidies. In Ireland, parental leave was introduced in 1998 and in the UK in 1999 (14 and 13 weeks respectively); in Italy it was extended from 6 months to 10 months in 1998 and in Portugal to 24 months, in Greece from 3 to 6 months and there the weeks of maternity leave were extended to 17 weeks in 2000. At the same time paid maternal leave was reduced in

Poland from 26 to 16 weeks in 2002. Furthermore, most OECD countries set a certain percentage of wage replacement, ranging from 50% to 100% of wages, except for the US, where maternity leave is unpaid.

Estimating the effect of maternal leave on child outcomes is challenging, because women who return to work early are likely to be a select group and standard econometric methods may not adequately account for that selection (Berger, Hill, and Waldfogel, 2005).
When we look at children's outcomes during the first years of life, the type of child care a family uses is clearly a crucial determinant of whether the child benefits or is harmed by the mother’s absence due to paid work. If the quality of care provided while the mother is working is lower than that which she herself would provide, then we might expect the child to suffer from her absence. Conversely, if the relative quality of non-maternal care is higher, the child may be better off if she is at work.

It is a difficult question to answer with non-experimental data because parents decide on the child care arrangements for their children, and parents do not make these decisions randomly. As a result, observed associations between child care quality and cognitive development could be the result of family selection bias rather than child care quality (Harvey 1999; Bernal 2004; Del Boca and Vuri 2004). In other words, parents who choose better quality care may also provide children with other advantages (e.g., other educational opportunities) and those other advantages may account for the links between the quality of child care and cognitive outcomes.

Since, women remain children’s primary caregivers and because recent studies have shown that the first five years of life are crucial to brain development as well as children’s cognitive and socio-emotional development (Shore, 1997; Danziger and Waldfogel, 2000) it is important to examine the first five years of child’s development in relation to women’s time-use including her labour supply and earnings. In the next section we will review the data sources and indicators available to analyse this question in a cross country comparative perspective.

4.2. *Data sources: US and Canada*

The considerable amount of research on the impact of parental (usually maternal) work on family outcomes has been conducted mainly in the US and Canada over the years, and the results are still mixed. Gagne (2005) reviews 34 published articles on the Effect of Maternal Employment on Child Outcomes. From her review follows that 17 out of these studies used the NLSY and two used the PSID, whereas 4 used the NLSCY for Canada. Much of the earlier research in the US and Canada was conducted using small unrepresentative field samples. More recently, as the U.S. based NLSY79 Children and Young Adults matured, a greater focus was placed on exploiting this resource to examine questions related to child outcomes. The NLSY79 is a nationally representative sample of 12,686 young men and women who were 14-22 years old in 1979. In 1986, a survey of all children born to NLSY79 female respondents began. The NLSY79 Children and Young Adults (subsequently referred to as NLSY) includes a variety of measures for these children, including cognitive, socio-emotional, and physiological assessments. ("National longitudinal surveys") While the survey contains a large number of children from all over the U.S., because the survey is based on children of NLSY79 female respondents, it is not a nationally representative survey of U.S. children. Children in that survey tend to over-represent those with parents that have a greater propensity to have children at an earlier age, usually parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Statistics Canada began a nationally representative survey of children in 1994. The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) has been administered every two years since. This survey also collects a variety of measures for children, including cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and health assessments. Cycle 1 of the survey included children aged 0 to 11. New cohorts of children aged 0 to 1 were added at cycles 2 and 3. At cycle 4, the sample included three longitudinal cohorts each originating from one of the previous cycles. Cycle 5 of the survey has recently been made available. Both the NLSY and the NLSCY have been used to explore the determinants of child development and well-being, although research that uses the NLSCY to explore the impact of hours of work and/or shift work on children is still quite limited. Much of the research on parental work and child outcomes has focussed on trying to measure the impact of or associations between *maternal* work and child outcomes. Some of the research reviewed here focussed on particular demographic groups, while other research looked at all children. Some of the research looked at the impact of early maternal employment, while other research looked at current employment, or longer horizons of maternal employment. Most of the research estimated OLS equations. A few coded the dependent variables as binary and used a probit or logistic regression. One study used hierarchical multiple regression, another used path analysis, and one used seemingly unrelated regression equations.

The US PSID data includes children's time diary data and the traditional survey data from the Child Development Supplement (PSID-CDS) of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), which is a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of individuals and families in the United States, with over-samples of low-income and immigrant families. Starting in 1997, the PSID conducted the PSID-CDS, which collected data on children's time use, child development, home environment, and family characteristics for approximately 3,600 children between the ages of 0 and 12. In 2002, 2,907 of the original sample of children were re-contacted for the second round of data collection.
We summarize here a few examples of the indicators of child outcomes available in these non European data sets. For examples in NLSY studies outcomes are tested by the: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised (PPVT-R), Behavioral Problem Index (BPI), and Early maternal employment. The findings are that employment during the first year may be detrimental for children's vocabulary skills. However, this may be only for advantaged children, e.g., White children (Waldfogel et al., 2003), middle-class boys (Desai et al., 1989). The effects on BPI depend on children's age, mothers' marital status, family income (Harvey, 1999)

Previous studies (Canadian studies) have used the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) in which the outcomes are tested by the: PPVT-R, Hyperactivity, physical aggression, emotional disorder (unhappiness, anxiety), pro-social behavior, behavioural problem index, and current maternal employment. The findings from these studies are: maternal employment is not related to PPVT-R (Gagne, 2003; Lefebvre & Merrigan, 1998), the effects on behavioural outcomes vary by children's age (Lefebvre & Merrigan, 1998; Miller et al., 2002; Roberts, 2003).

Two recent papers use the NLSCY (Nomaguchi 2004) and the PSID (Hsin 2006). Nomaguchi (2006) focuses on pre-school children in Canada. Other than controlling for socioeconomic characteristics, mothers' characteristic, and family structure, she also controls for children's temperament and for parenting practices and childcare. She finds at bivariate level that maternal employment appears to be related to better child outcomes because of other characteristics, e.g., socioeconomic statuses, mothers' marital status, and birth order. Controlling for other characteristics, mothers' current employment is related to: better vocabulary skills for all children, higher pro-social behaviour, especially for children in families below poverty line, and higher anxiety for children in families below poverty line, while it is related to lower anxiety for children in other families. Controlling for other characteristics, mothers' employment within three months from their child's birth is related to higher physical aggression for girls, lower hyperactivity for boys. Harsh parenting is related to all behavioural outcomes, but not to PPVT-R scores. Childcare types are not related to child outcomes, except: Non-relative care (not in day care) is related to less pro-social behaviour Hsin (2006) uses children's time diary data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics and its Child Development Supplement to obtain direct measures of both the quantity and intensity of time children spend with their mothers, as well as information on the quality of parenting behaviour and maternal employment. The study attempts to examine three key questions: (1) Do children who receive more maternal care and/or more intense maternal care during early childhood have higher cognitive outcomes than children who received less quantity/intensity of maternal care? (2) Is early maternal employment associated with negative child cognitive outcomes, controlling for the quantity and intensity of maternal time investments in childcare? (3) To what extent does the quality of early parenting influence children's later cognitive outcomes? The preliminary results suggest that it is not the amount of time children spend with mothers nor maternal employment but the quality of early parental care that matters for children's later development. Family home environment and positive parenting (e.g. positive mother-child relationships measured by maternal warmth, emotional encouragement, and cognitive stimulation) have the strongest and most consistent relationship with children's cognitive test scores.

4.3. Indicators of Child Outcomes: the European Data sources

Recently, the European research community has recognized the need to conduct research on children's outcomes in connection with parents' employment and with parents' time use. The first step has been to find comparable data on children in European countries that are related to their parents' socio economic status. Across countries quite good and quite similar data on children' health are available, but data on social and psychological behaviour are not collected in a standardized format. Indeed, child outcome indicators are dependent on age and the indicators would seem standardized across countries, however practice reveals that the checklists used, the questions asked differ across countries.[5]

To analyze children's outcomes in a welfare comparative European perspective there is a need for comparable data on the outcomes of children, and on the household situation, the parental inputs, and non-parental inputs in children. Looking into available data sources reveals two potential sources of data: a) cross country comparative data with some info on children and parents, and b) detailed rich national or regional data sources.

a) There are three recent initiatives which deal with European comparable data collection on children other than children's health. The first is the COST Action 19 that had run from September 2001 till June 2005. It was coordinated by Jonathan Bradshaw (see for an elaborate description of the project www.york.ac.uk). This project searched for data on children outcomes from a child well-being perspective without the purpose of analysing the link between parental employment and children outcomes that we would like to examine. However, since this project clearly has searched all possible cross country comparative data sources and summarized these, and, in addition makes clear the need for children mainstreaming of research we will describe a few contributions of this project.
The project gives a brief history of the search for data on children in the European Union. Children in poverty have been named by the European Union as target groups in the Common Outlines and Common Objectives of the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion and also in the March 2005 EU Presidency Conclusions. However, among the so called Laeken Primary and Secondary indicators of social inclusion only one indicator with a child breakdown had been included (the proportion of children under 16 living in households with equivalent income before housing costs less than 60 per cent of the median and using the modified OECD equivalence scale). Although in the report by Professor Tony Atkinson and colleagues prepared for the Luxembourg Presidency (Atkinson et al 2005) there was a proposal that children should be 'mainstreamed', it was suggested (by the Head of Eurostat)

[5] The following indicators are considered:
During pregnancy, birth, 14 months: health and medical data on premature birth such as: birth weight, (breast)feeding, health problems, handicaps, excessive crying, sleeping behaviour, learning to speak etc
2-3 year olds: social development (play), sleeping, language; 3 years also aggressive behaviour (ITSEA infant toddler social and emotional assessment test (12-36 months)
4-6, 5-6 year olds: cognitive development, hyper activity; 6-12: indicators of anxiety;
0-12 year olds: psycho-social and physical health (ITSEA, CBCL) e.g 4-8% of children have psychosocial problems (according to parents-Netherlands, report by SCP 2005) 15% of parents indicate problems with parenting.

that only one other child related indicator should be added to the Laeken Indicators – on educational attainment.

The index of child well-being developed in Bradshaw et al (2006) is based on a multidimensional understanding of wellbeing, where possible to the unit of analysis is the child and the data is about children if not provided by children. There are eight clusters:

- Material situation.
- Housing.
- Health.
- Subjective well-being.
- Education.
- Children’s relationships.
- Civic participation.
- Risk and safety.

These clusters contain 23 domains and the domains are made up from 53 indicators. Bradshaw(2006) shows in figure 1 that Cyprus, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark are at the top of the league table of child well-being. The Slovak Republic, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are at the bottom of the league table of child well-being. For four of these countries Cyprus, Malta, Luxembourg and the Slovak Republic more than 25 per cent of the indicators making up the index are missing so it is probably safer to ignore them.

What factors are related to overall wellbeing? Table 1 shows those indicators from the set of 53 on Bradshaw (2006) which correlate most highly with the index of overall well-being. The selection is restricted to those with coefficients in excess of r=0.6 and which are statistically significant at least the 95 per cent level. They are presented in rank order. All of these variables are better indicators of child well-being than relative child poverty rates and educational attainment.

Table 5 Indicators with high correlates with child well-being

Indicator	Correlation coefficient r
Teenage fertility rate	0.88***
Feeling unsafe in neighbourhood	0.82***
Life satisfaction score	0.81***
Low family affluence (deprivation)	0.78***
Infant mortality rate	0.74***
Under 19 mortality rate	0.67***
Bullied last month	0.67**
Self rated health	0.64**
At least two household problems	0.63**
Low educational possessions	0.60**
Peers kind and helpful	0.61**

Bradshaw (2006) concludes that the relative child poverty rate which has been adopted by the EU as the only child related primary or secondary indicator of social inclusion is not adequate to represent variations in child well-being across the EU25. Educational attainment, which might be adopted, is even worse. There are some single indicators that are highly correlated with child well-being and for which there is data across the EU25. However Bradshaw pleads for adoption of the kind of multi-dimensional index of child well-being of the kind explored in his 2006 paper.

From our perspective all these indicators are not very helpful for our analyses of child outcomes and the effects of parental labour supply on the child outcomes. We wish to understand using micro data on parents and children how the relationships affect children's outcomes. However, it also shows that children outcomes are on the political agenda, but that data collection needs a collective effort beyond one or two indicators.

The second project on a European level is the Coordinated Action WELLCHI which is the acronym for "The well-being of children: The impact of changing family forms, working conditions of parents, social policy and legislative measures - WELLCHI NETWORK" is a coordination action under the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission

(2004-2007). The purpose of this project is to set up and operate a network to improve our knowledge of the impact of changing family forms, the working conditions of parents, and social policy and legislative measures on the well-being of children and their families. Its goal is to bring into focus, co-ordinate, channel and publicise the results of research that has already been carried out through the organisation of international workshops and conferences. Debates hinge on the extent to which marital instability and other processes of family transformation, in contemporary Europe and in the context of different institutional and policy arrangements, can affect the welfare of children and lead to divergences in outcomes. Another goal is statistical harmonisation but this goal has not yet been realized.

The third initiative is by Eurostat and Statistics Finland to organise a meeting in November 2006 where a special session will discuss the child data that is and will be collected by Eurostat. Miles Corak form Statistics Canada will lead this session.

The second option, to use national or regional data with detailed information and start the cross country comparison from this perspective seems most fruitful for our research purposes. However, a review of available data reveals that not only indicators differ in the European countries. In addition, data collected on children differ also by whom provides the info: parent, health care worker, child care centre, school, children (e.g. similar model estimates of the effects of socio demographic characteristics of the child, and parents on psycho social problems differ a lot by whether info from healthcare workers, and parents info (SCP 2005). Moreover, the different child care and school systems in Europe lead to different parental time inputs during the day, during the week and during life. Finally, the different cultures and ethics of measuring e.g. school performance on the one hand and using administrative data fro research purposes on the other in Europe .leave researchers in this area with different data on child outcomes.

Indeed, a European comparison of child outcomes in relation to mothers' and fathers' labour supply and caring would mean that data are collected on quantity and quality of care and child outcomes by age of the child and on the labour market and time use behaviour of parents. Because of data limitation, cross country comparative research on the relationship between parental labour supply and child outcomes is extremely rare. Two examples are: 1) Ermisch and Franscesconi (2005) who consider the impact of mother's employment during childhood on the child's well being, focussing on the trade-offs between her time spent in nurturing the child and household income. They find some empirical evidence that while the loss of mother's child care time has a negative effect on the child's well being, it is also the case that the additional income has positive implications for expenditures on goods consumed for the child. These effects vary across countries and across family types so the net impact of mother's employment on child's welfare can be expected to vary across national environments as well. 2) Aughinbaugh and Gittleman (2003) examine the effect of income on child development in the United States and the United Kingdom, as measured by scores on cognitive, behavioural, and social assessments. In line with previous results for the United States, they find that for both countries income generally has an effect on child development that is positive and significant, but whose size is small relative to other family background variables.

The FAMNET –group (joint work by Hsin and Wetzels) on child-outcomes has started their cross-country comparative research on child outcomes and labour supply and working hours of parents by a comparison of the US and the Netherlands that will be extended with Danish and German data. In this Project we extend the research in three ways. First we include the information on mother's partner's labour supply, secondly we specifically analyse the potential effects of parents who work part-time as opposed to parents working full-time, and thirdly, this is the first study that analyses the effects of parental working in two countries with similar short maternity leave but different child care provision. We are specifically interested in the research question: whether and in what way a child that needs "extra" time will affect the return to work decision of the mother, taking into account all standard variables, but also mother's partner's labour supply and hours, and the social policy environment. The parental part-time work is especially interesting in a comparison with the Netherlands where the quantity of working hours around the birth of the first child changes considerably (8% of the fathers in Amsterdam reduces their work hours to 25-32 , and 4% of the fathers work already 25-32 at the time the woman is 16 weeks pregnant of the first child) Wetzels (2006). This is also important since most of the research in the US focuses on the effect of working full time on child´s cognitive development

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Intergenerational relations.
Between public and private patterns of solidarity and exchange

Agnes Blome, Wolfgang Keck and Chiara Saraceno

Intergenerational relationships are at the center of a growing, albeit heterogeneous, body of literature and research, as well as of many policy debates. However, what is conceived of when speaking of generations and of intergenerational relationships (be it of solidarity, conflict, or mutual estrangement), differs substantially depending on the field of study as well as the discipline. It is not only a nominalistic issue, of course. When one speaks of parents and children, or of grandparents and grandchildren, one is not speaking of age groups or cohorts, as when speaking of the young, the middle aged and the elderly. Thus, it is incorrect transferring research results on age groups, or cohorts, to individuals who stand in specific, familial relationships with each other, and vice versa. Before describing trends, approaches and findings in studies on intergenerational relations it is, therefore, necessary to first clarify the different underlying concepts and then to indicate which studies and concepts we are dealing with in this report.

1. Generational relations – concepts and definitions

1.1 Generation – the concepts

A first task is to separate the term *generation* from the terms *age group* and *cohort*. Neither popular nor academic language is particularly precise in this respect (for a discussion see Vincent 2005). There are at least three notions in social sciences that are relevant with respect to generations, namely socio-historical generations, familial generations, and social generations.

(1) *socio-historical generation*: this term stresses the chronological order of birth cohorts who are socialised in the same cultural and social context. Historical events such as wars, revolutions, sharp political change, economic depression or rapid economic development – create dividing lines - watersheds - among people who encounter these events at different chronological ages and life course phases (see e.g. the seminal study by Elder (1974) on

children of the Great Depression). Distinctions between age groups or cohorts may also be created by more gradual social and cultural changes. Following the Marxian distinction concerning class, Mannheim (for example Mannheim (1928 (*1964*)) distinguished between generations *per se* and generations *in se*. The latter are "simple" birth cohorts; the former develop only when particular socio-historical circumstances mark and shape the outlook of those who experience them in such a way that they "recognise" themselves and each other. Following Mannheim, Eisenstadt (1956 (*2003*); 1996) speaks in this respect of a *generational consciousness* as a constituting element of a generation. On this note, *generations* are referred to as groups whose mentalities are formed by a common historical background. Mannheim's definition and distinction has been widely popular. Edmunds and Turner (2002), for example, advocate the differentiation between *chronological generations* (birth cohorts) from *social or political generations* (participants in historical conflict and change). There are studies that provide empirical descriptions of some of the social characteristics of the different cohorts (Evandrou and Falkingham 2000; Rogler 2002). There are also efforts to analyse the cultures of different generations (e.g. Gilleard and Higgs 2000) and approaches to explain structural inequalities between age groups, cohorts and generations (Chauvel 1999; Warren and Hauser 1997). More generally, Mannheim's attention to the social and cultural distinctiveness of age groups has influenced the sociology of age and the life course, and on the other hand brought forward attention to the demographic components of social change (size and composition of birth cohorts) (Riley and McCarthy 2003). Little, however, is known yet about how watersheds such as the regime change in the Central and Eastern European countries affects contact, learning, as well as conflicts across generational lines in these countries

(2) The concept of *familial generations* is the most precise, at least from an anthropological point of view. Generational positions and generational relationships are – literally - generated only within the vertical network of families (Hareven 1994a; Kertzer and Keith 1984; Lamb 2001). The generational status is not identified by age, but by lineage position with regard to persons in other generational statuses. A "generation of parents", even of parents of children of the same age, may include more than just one birth cohort. And individuals may lose or add generational statuses over the life course, as well as hold simultaneously more than one generational status. As Hagestad (2001) observes, families create their own constellation of life phases, ages and cohorts, their own population pyramids. Moreover, in family lineages members often serve as "cohort bridges" for each other through communication and mutual learning, thus mediating social change.

(3) The concept of social generations extends the concept of familial generations to the societal level (Schütze 2001), identifying the four positions of children, youth, parents, the elderly. Although often used interchangeably with that of familial generations, the concept of social generations is radically different. Firstly, it is not dynamic. One is either a child or a parent. Secondly, the relationships between "generations" are abstract, or statistical, or at best mediated by social institutions, and they are not of a personal nature. Actually, the concept is very similar to, but less precise than that of age groups, since it mixes age criteria with (abstract) family characteristics (see also observations by Kertzer (1983). A useful conceptual distinction to separate generational relations within the family from those within society has been introduced by Leisering (1992). He distinguishes social interactions between members of different familial generations (*Generationenbeziehungen*) and the correlation between the living conditions and the collective destinies of different age groups or cohorts mediated through welfare state institutions (*Generationenverhältnis*). One aspect of the latter addresses institutional demarcations between different cohorts, such as compulsory school age or legal retirement age. This aspect constitutes *institutional generations* (Kohli 1985). With his distinction, Leisering points to one important aspect when analysing generational relations in the family vs. in society: the necessity to differentiate between micro-sociological and macro-sociological approaches and between longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses. In the same direction argues Pilcher (1994), who advocates the use of *generation* when reference is made to kinship relationships and *social generation* when reference is made to any cohort related phenomena (Pilcher 1994: 490).

This state-of-the-art report focuses on studies using the second and third concept and particularly on those that address the issue of relations within family and social generations.

1.2 Dimensions of Intergenerational relations

Generations – in the family and in society – stand in relationship with each other and constitute the context for each other, both relationally and with regard to the distribution of resources (Riley and McCarthy 2003). Institutions, patterns of allocation of resources, division of labour, and demography itself, are the outcomes of decisions taken by previous generations and shape the context in which, and with regard to which, new generations define their interests and their options in relation to others.

Each generation, therefore, cannot be studied in isolation from the others. And the study of *generational relations* is an important feature of the analysis of generations. Broadly speaking, generational relations are formed and experienced where members of different generations live together, act collectively and sometimes come into conflict with each other, within families and within society at large.

Generational relations are discussed both in terms of *solidarity* and of *conflict*. Solidarity is mainly the focus of research on family intergenerational relationship. Conflict is instead mainly the focus of relationships between social generations (or cohorts).

Solidarity

The term *solidarity* refers to social cohesion, thus pointing to mutual feelings and behaviours of responsibility that are perceived as being essential for the continuity of societies, states, or families. Human beings act not only according to their interests, but their behaviour follows as well altruistic motives; that is, people cooperate in situations where common (social) interests are perceived as more important than individual interests (Andreoni 1989; Kaufmann 1984).

The increased life expectancy has inspired not only the establishment of a new discipline, social gerontology, but it has also prompted a great deal of scholars from different fields and disciplines to examine the consequences on generational relations by enlarged family ties between (great-)grandparents, parents, and children (Bengtson 2001b; Bengtson and Dowd 1980). Also, changes in patterns of family formation and dissolution have initiated research questions concerning their impact on intergenerational relations. (Bengtson 2001b; Ikkink et al. 1999).

Bengtson and Roberts (1991) have developed a framework to analyse intergenerational solidarity that allows us to examine multiple kinds of solidarity that also may be complementary. They distinguish six components that characterise intergenerational exchange relations: structural solidarity (*opportunity*), associational solidarity (*interacting*), affectual solidarity (*emotional closeness*), consensual solidarity (*agreement of opinions*), functional solidarity (*help and support*), and normative solidarity (*obligation*). This rather wide conceptualisation has been condensed in the sense that solidarity only refers to concrete exchange patterns, whereas opportunity structures and exchange motives are dealt with as preconditions (Szydlik 2000).

Conflict

Conflicts between generations are in general discussed in terms of diverging interests. At the societal level, this theme is focused on particularly with regard to the social insurance systems in a context of demographic change. One assumption is that the elderly today "exploit" the welfare state and younger generations have to pay the price without daring to expect similar benefits in old age (Esping-Andersen and Sarasa 2002; Thomson 1989). A similar point is made by referring to the unequal representation of age groups in national parliaments, that is, the over-representation of elderly persons in politics and the possible effects for democracy and the welfare state (*gerontocracy*) (Dychtwald 1999; Sinn and Uebelmesser 2002).

Thus, the familial and the societal perspective seem to offer contrasting views of intergenerational relationships: one based on solidarity and common interests, the other based on conflict and divergent interests. Both views are probably over simplistic – as some recent research suggests (see below). But they also point to possible divergent outlooks and behaviours by individuals when they act as members of family generations rather than of social generations. The links between the two generational positions and relationships – in the family and in society – and the ways individuals negotiate them, in fact, still needs to be explored. Only such a kind of research might actually offer some empirical ground to the question of whether generational conflicts are just a myth, as some argue (Arber and Attias-Donfut 2000).

While the concepts of solidarity and conflict aim at defining the character – the moral framework – of intergenerational exchanges, other concepts provide insight into the differing motives that underlie intergenerational relations: *obligations* and *reciprocity*. These shall be looked at in more detail.

Obligations

Exchange patterns between familial generations rely on expectations and norms concerning family obligations. In the study of generational relations the term *obligations* is used to explain binding commitments within kinship. The central question is: who does what, for whom, why and under which circumstances? Finch (1989; with Mason 1993) explores for these purposes the provision of services and income transfers within families. She is interested in detecting the extent to which this provision is determined by laws, social norms, moral beliefs, or affection.

Finch's and other studies have offered evidence that kin relationships include some kind of normative obligation, irrespective of formal (legal) norms as well as of feelings of love and affection (see also Land and Rose 1985). Family obligations might be compulsory and even contradictory to personal interests. In addition, there may be rivalries between family members on who has to be responsible for care. Affection and solidarity between generations is not a prerequisite for support (Aldous 1987; Walker and Thompson 1983). According to some authors, in many cases, a love-hate relationship might be a better description of intergenerational relations than mutual solidarity (Lüscher and Pillemer 1998; Marshall et al. 1993).

Reciprocity

Generational relations are often taken as the epitome of generalised *reciprocity*. Although, in fact, the notion of rational exchange between generations, based on rational decisions and assessment of costs and benefits, has been influential (Cook and Whitmeyer 1992; Homans 1958), studies of generational relations within the family show that exchanges and trade-offs are often not on an equal, precisely symmetrical basis. Rather, they seem driven both by need and social norms concerning expectations about what each generation should receive and give. In contemporary welfare states, financial transfers, for example, are given mostly downward, from older to younger generations (Fritzell and Lennartson (2005). However, this depends on the society and period. In some societies (e.g. where pensions are meagre) financial help goes more to the elderly. Other kinds of support, such as care or emotional support follow less clear lineage directions. Although unbalanced at any given point in time, *reciprocity* implies some kind of balance over time and even over generations. As Leitner and Lessenich (2003) put it, "reciprocity is characterised by an inability to tolerate a structurally unbalanced exchange".

Expectations of middle or long term balances between generations underlie not only intergenerational exchanges within families and kinship networks, they also underlie, even more explicitly, intergenerational relations in society as they are constructed in the social security systems, in particular the pension systems. In the pay-as-you-go system, present contributors fund the pensions of present pensioners with the expectation that future contributors will fund theirs (*generational contract*) (Walker 1996). For this reason, any change in the pension system affects not only the expectations and life plans of a given generation, but the overall contract between generations.

2. Research on Intergenerational relations in the family

Research on parent-child relations has a long tradition (Attias-Donfut 1988; Bengtson and Cutler 1976; Feuer 1969; Finch 1989; Hagestad 1984); the study of kinship beyond the parent-child dyad has a shorter history. The first important studies in the 1970s, studying the elderly, "discovered" their extended family networks that defied all simplistic Parsonsian theories concerning the weakening of kinship ties in contemporary societies. In these studies, the focus was on the elderly. More recently, instead, kinship and particularly intergenerational ties have been studied from the perspective of all its components and generations.

The research strands oscillate between a perspective of intergenerational divergence, which result in conflict and social change, and a perspective of intergenerational solidarity, which emphasises support and reciprocity. A more recent approach tries to combine these perspectives describing intergenerational relations as ambivalent (Lüscher and Pillemer 1998).

Research on intergenerational relations in the family has becoming increasingly important in recent years for at least four reasons. First, the twofold processes of population aging alter the intergenerational structures. Fewer children are faced with a growing share of elderly people. Increasing life expectancy and low fertility rates have changed and will change not only the population structure in Europe's countries (Grundy 1996; United Nations 1956), but also the age and generational composition of kinships (Harper 2004). The lineage becomes taller and thinner. Children might meet their great-grandparents but may have neither siblings nor cousins. Are there new exchange patterns between the generations? How do generational positions change over the life course, since some of them – particularly those of child and parent – last longer and each individual may occupy more than just one or two generational positions (i.e. one may be at the same time a child, a parent, and a grandparent) at any given point in time? Who will care for whom in the future?

Second, demographic change is also one factor that questions the sustainability of social welfare institutions that were developed in a period when the age structure of the population was widely different from the present one. Thus, both the generational and the gender contracts that underlie those institutions are being re-negotiated and the family-market-state balances that underpin the specific welfare mixes redefined (Esping-Andersen 1999; Evers and Wintersberger 1990; Knijn and Komter 2004). Intergenerational (as well as gender) relations are being reshaped both in families and in society, sometimes in a coherent way, sometimes contradictorily. For instance, the shifting back to individual and family responsibilities of part of the financial and caring needs of the frail elderly may be in contradiction with the encouragement for women to be in the labour market.

Third, family structures have been changing in the last decades. Forms of cohabitation have become more pluralised and fragile over the life course (Saraceno 1997). There are two relevant issues here: first, whether divorce affects intergenerational ties and the direction of the effect. For instance, some studies have indicated that divorced mothers keep in contact with, and receive support from their children more often than divorced fathers; other studies found that lone mothers rely on support from their own parents more intensively than partnered mothers (see section

2.3 The impact of divorce). The second issue is whether intergenerational relationships are affected by the form taken by the couple: marriage or cohabitation without marriage, or "living apart together".

Fourth, attention both for social cohesion and for mechanisms that reproduce social inequality—has created interest in family and kinship networks (thus in intergenerational relationships) outside the specific fields of family and age studies, such as in research on social capital and social cohesion and in social stratification and mobility research. Kinship networks and intergenerational relationships, on the one hand, are in fact considered an important dimension of social capital (van Oorshot and Arts 2005). On the other hand, studies on social stratification and mobility are increasingly interested in the transfer – of social capital, of wealth, of skills - mechanisms between generations.

The following paragraphs give a brief summary of the main findings on patterns of intergenerational solidarity in the family and make reference to differences between gender, countries, and to changes over time.

2.1 Intergenerational exchange patterns

Defining intergenerational solidarity in a narrower sense, as exchanges between generations, and assuming opportunity structures and motives as contextual aspects, one could distinguish at least three different dimensions of support: First, staying in contact, providing emotional and social support to yield understanding and prevent social isolation; second, rendering instrumental assistance in terms of caring, doing household chores, paperwork and so on; and third, giving financial and other economic support to family members.

These exchange modes are developed differently by the younger and older family members according to their resources and needs, but also the social, and sometime legal, norms that regulate intergenerational relationships. In most developed countries, adult children tend to contribute more time than money to support their parents, whereas elderly parents give material support by providing free accommodation and board or financial assistance (Aldous 1987; Kohli et al. 1999). There are also gender differences, in so far as, irrespective of age and generational position, women mainly tend to provide time, in particular for care activities, while men mainly tend to provide financial and other economic support (Martin-Mathews and Campbell 1995).

Despite the age and gender specific contribution to support, there are two general exchange patterns: (1) Family members in need will receive support from those who are better off (Ikkink et al. 1999; Lowenstein et al. 2004). (2) The more children parents have, the lower will be the support they give to each of their children, but the higher the total amount of support they receive from their children (Keister 2003; Rossi and Rossi 1990b).

The empirical investigation on intergenerational solidarity often overestimates the amount of intergenerational support because of methodological reasons. Most data sources do not differentiate between the relations of each child to his/her parents, but emphasise either the total amount of contacts and support to all children, or focus on that child who lives closest or provides most assistance. Therefore, many studies tend to highlight the bright side of intergenerational relations and leave the remaining parent-child relations unconsidered. As a consequence, the individuals who cut the bonds to their parents or children are often neglected.

2.1.1 The Relationship between cultural norms and actual behaviour

Scholars have pointed to long standing differences in patterns of family formation and in the role of kinship. Particularly, a distinction has been made between familialistic and individualistic settings (Lesthaeghe and Meekers 1986; Reher 1998a). Familialistic climates can be found in Southern European countries, whereas individualistic climates can be found in Western and Northern Europe. It is believed that the main difference between these countries lies in the strength of kinship networks and norms. In most societies, there exists the norm that one should care for one’s family members in times of need. A clear majority agree that adult children should support their elderly parents (Lowenstein et al. 2004). Results from Eurobarometer surveys show that European citizens agree with the idea that family members should care for their elderly parents. However, obligations toward mutuality and emotional support are more frequently expressed than the obligation of financial support (Lye 1996). These values do not differ strongly between age groups. There is no substantial decline in attitudes towards family obligations in younger birth cohorts compared to older ones. Such norms are especially strong concerning parents’ duty to support their children, but only slightly less so with regard to the duty children have to support their parents. (Lee et al. 1994; Rossi and Rossi 1990a). These norms are believed to be more prevalent and to be stronger in familialistic countries than in individualistic countries.

Norms do not concern only giving, they concern receiving also. In most societies older adults expect to rely on their adult children as sources of support and care in case of need (Burr and Mutchler 1999; Rossi and Rossi 1990b). Yet, in Western societies, including Europe, there is also the norm that one should be independent and autonomous. Studies have shown that many elderly persons express a desire to remain independent as long as possible and to not be a 'burden' to their children, even if and when they become frail (Silverstein and Bengtson 1994). Such norms of autonomy – or at least of not becoming a burden due to private, family obligations - are probably stronger in individualistic countries than in familialistic countries.

While these differences concern the macro level, others may be found at the micro level. A few studies have addressed the issue of the relationship between cultural norms concerning filial obligations and actual behaviour within as well as across countries. Lowenstein, Katz and Daatland's (2004) findings, on the basis of the OASIS study, seem to support the thesis that filial norms are more prescriptive in Southern (Spain and Israel in their study) countries than in the Northern ones, where inter-generational exchanges are more open to negotiation.

While some research has found direct associations between the degree of perceived filial obligations and supportive behaviour (Lewis and Meredith 1988; Parrot and Bengtson 1999; Silverstein et al. 1995), others (Stein et al. 1998) found that the particular relationship a child had with his/her parent was more important than the strength of normative filial obligations. Still others (Finch and Mason 1993) found that the "moral career" within a given relationship and family network is more crucial in shaping both expectations and behaviours in the caring relationship than the general norms on gender-specific filial obligations. It explains, for instance, why one daughter, rather than another, is expected (and expects from herself) to provide care. Moreover, opportunity structures are of importance. Spatial distance between family members and the number of children have an impact on the level of support. In addition, in countries where there is no alternative to family assistance, family members have to support their kin even if they are reluctant. In this case family solidarity is not a matter of choice, but rather one of obligation. This situation appears in countries with low social services and obliterates the effect of familial norms, as Lowenstein and colleagues argue in the Spanish case (Lowenstein et al. 2004). Finally, research suggests that differences in patterns of intergenerational support concern not only differences in country specific contexts on the one hand and the history of each specific generational cohort on the other hand, but they also concern differences in individual resources. Thus, the transfer of money and time-related resources by adult children to their elderly parents depends not only on the needs of their parents, but also on the situation of the adult child. Higher income adult children for example, may substitute time-related transfers with financial transfers to pay for care (Sloan et al. 2002; Zissimopoulos 2001). The same may occur when well off grandparents help pay for their grandchildren's care. Among poorer people, intergenerational exchanges may be, on the contrary, more labour and time intensive.

2.1.2 Proximity, contact and strength of relationships

Spatial distance between the homes of family members is a crucial pre-condition for some forms of support, such as care, housework and company. It depends not only on the degree of connectedness and solidarity between family members and households, but on specific family cultures. The topographical structure of the region, the local and national labour market, the structure of the housing market and forms of access to housing, as well as the availability of social services, also contribute to a large degree to the patterns of proximity between generations. For instance, research has suggested that the higher frequency with which children live close to their parents in Southern European countries depends on at least two distinct factors: a) the prevalence of home ownership over renting that renders the young more financially dependent on their parents when accessing housing (Barbagli et al. 2004); and b) the scarcity of social services both for children and for the frail elderly, that constrains households of different generations to rely on each other and therefore renders proximity a necessary solution. Hence, the decision of whether children stay close to their parents or not when they form their own household is only partly an expression of affection or solidarity.

The closer family members live together, however, the more likely it is that they provide regular and intense instrumental support, whereas financial, but also emotional support depends less on geographic distance (Attias-Donfut et al. 2005a; Silverstein and Litwak 1993). A comparative study of ten Western European countries shows that three out of four elderly parents have at least one child who lives no more than 25 km away. Considering the improved forms and availability of transport, one could say that generations in Europe could easily reach each other (Hollinger and Haller 1990; Kohli et al. 2006). Yet, a more detailed view reveals three diverging patterns of proximity in Western Europe. The first pattern applies to the “strong family” countries in Southern Europe. There, more than 40 % of parents aged 50 years and over live with at least one of their children in the same household, due to the late exit from home of the young. In addition, a considerable share of the children who have their own household lives either in the same building or within 1 km. The second pattern appears in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Here co-residence in the same household is less prevalent than in Southern Europe, but up to 15 % of elderly parents live in the same house or building as one of their children. Overall, more than one third of parents aged 50 years and over lives very close to their children. In the other West-European countries and in particular in the Scandinavian countries, parents and adult children on average do not live so close. They represent a third pattern, where the vast majority of elderly parents live fully independently from their children (Kohli et al. 2006). Tomassini et al. (2003) found that children who stayed in their parents' home during early adulthood generally tend to live closer to their parents later on.

Similar results are obtained by the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), which also included the New Member States of the EU. In Malta and Poland, more than 30 % of all 65+ year old people still had a child living in the household, and in Italy more than a quarter of the elderly people lived together with a child. In Hungary, Spain, Slovenia, Cyprus and Greece, this situation applied to about 20% of the elderly (Saraceno et al. 2005).

Co-residence is usually a situation in which children live in their parents' household, not vice versa. The marital status of the child seems the most important feature affecting co-residence. Unmarried or divorced children tend to live more often with their parents than married ones (Aquilino 1990; White and Peterson 1995). In post-socialist East-European countries, co-residence is also an adaptive strategy to cope with economic hardship. The results of a study on five East-European countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Russia) show that single motherhood, retirement status, and employment in agriculture and poverty, increased the odds of living in an extended household (Ahmed and Emigh 2005).

Moreover, research has indicated that there are substantial differences not only in the degree to which the elderly live with their children, but also in the frequency of contacts (Börsch-Supan et al. 2005; Höllinger and Haller 1990; Tomassini et al. 2004). The Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE) reveals that in Western Europe, most people have frequent contact with their family members either face to face or by other modes of communication. Only less than 10 % report that they do not have any contact at all (Kohli et al. 2006). Moreover, the EQLS found that there is only little variation in overall contacts between family members in European societies, but in Eastern Europe people tend to have more face to face contact (Saraceno et al. 2005). This may coincide with the fact that family members live closer together. Overall, research suggests that kinship and particularly intergenerational ties are not weakened by the spread of the nuclear household. Rather, as suggested already some decades ago, "intimacy at distance" may well be the pattern identifying intergenerational relations in modern societies (Lin and Rogerson 1995; Rosenmayr and Köckeis 1963).

There are, however, cross-national differences in the intensity of contacts between family members. Although a minority of people do not communicate at all with other family members, according to SHARE and Eurobarometer data, elderly people seem to have contact less often with their children in “weak family” countries with more spatial distance between the generations, a traditionally weaker role of kinship and a developed social service system (Scheepers et al. 2002).

Emotional ties between children and parents strongly depend on parent-child relations in early family life, the change of social conditions that designate younger age cohorts from the older ones, and on the stage in the life cycle parents and children are (Rossi and Rossi 1990b). Even taking account of these influencing factors, a German study shows that a majority of children and parents define their relations as close. However, parents perceive their relation to their children as tighter than children perceive their bonds to the parents (Szydlik 2000). This could be explained by different perspectives children and parents have when they judge their relations. Children tend to be independent and therefore consider the differences between themselves and their parents, whereas parents see the continuity of themselves and their family in their children; therefore, they highlight continuity of their relationship (Giarrusso et al. 1995; Lynott and Roberts 1997).

The previously cited EQLS study on 28 European countries found that two thirds of Europeans would ask family members for help if they had a serious personal matter; and more than 50 % expect help from the family when they feel depressed (Saraceno et al. 2005). This kind of expectation speaks of trust and closeness to family members. On the contrary, about a third remain that would not/could not ask for support from family in case of need, either because they know that they cannot expect it or because they do not trust their family.

2.1.3 Instrumental support

In all European societies, the family is the main provider of help in household chores and care activities, on a daily basis or in case of emergencies. The European Quality of Life Survey has found, for instance, that the great majority of people count on help around the house by other family members in case they are ill. These support networks are stronger in Eastern and Southern than in Western Europe and the Nordic countries (Saraceno et al. 2005).

Care by family members is widespread in all European countries. In no country, in fact, family care is fully substituted for either from public or from market provision. Rather, care giving and care receiving constitute a package – the social care package (Daly and Lewis 1998), comprising both formal and informal care, private and public, family and non-family provided care. According to Eurobarometer data, the share of family members who take care of another person ranges from 16 % in Spain up to 43 % in Latvia. Informal care is particularly important in the post-socialist countries. In contrast to most aspects of intergenerational support, there is no North-South gradient in the percentage of family care provision (Alber and Kohler 2004). A comparative study on the Nordic countries found that family care is substantial notwithstanding the presence of public service provision (Daatland 1997). However, care arrangements are more time intensive for family members when there are no other alternatives. This is the case more often in Southern and Eastern Europe than in the Nordic countries, where legislative rules and the availability of care services make it more likely that informal care is a supplement, not a substitution for public social services (Kröger 2003; Larsson 2004; Saraceno 2002).

Countries, in fact, not only have different family cultures and norms, but they also have different institutional arrangements for support. There are legal norms concerning intergenerational obligations (see e.g. Millar and Warman 1996), social insurance provisions and the provision of care services. The pioneering study by Anttonen and Sipilä (1996) indicated that the provision of services for the frail elderly (together with those for young children) distinguished welfare states in ways that only partly overlapped either with standard welfare state typologies or with family patterns and cultures typologies. Overall, the public provision of services for the elderly is higher both in the most individualistic and universalistic countries and in most of the continental ones, although in the latter subsidiarity plays a larger role. These services are little developed in the countries where the welfare state relies more heavily on intergenerational solidarity within the family, often enforced by legal duties, as in the case of Southern European countries.

Care needs and care provisions depend on age and phase of the life cycle. Recipients are more likely to be at the extremes of the intergenerational chain, while providers are more likely to be in the middle. Thus, it is not surprising that a German study found that adult children provide care and instrumental support to their parents three times more often than the other way around (Kohli et al. 2000b).

Care for children and frail elderly parents are the most time consuming forms of support. The extent of such instrumental help is strongly associated to proximity. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that in the more familialistic Southern European countries, where adult children and their parents live closer together, care of grandchildren by grandparents is more frequent than in Central or Northern Europe (Attias-Donfut et al. 2005a). Grandparents in those countries are a vital alternative to replace or supplement social care services (Naldini 2003; Reher 1998b). Grandmothers, on average, provide more care to their grandchildren than grandfathers, but also the latter have a stimulating role (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000b).

Also in the case of care for frail elderly parents and relatives, proximity and co-residence are a crucial pre-condition, although research has indicated that children go to great lengths to accommodate their parents' caring needs, even when they live at a distance, e.g. taking turns, hosting for a period, and so forth (see e.g. Finch and Mason 1993). Co-residence, however, is not *per se* an indicator of the direction of support. In the Southern European countries, where children exit the parental household late, in fact, co-residence during young adulthood is often an indicator of – financial and instrumental – support by parents towards their children rather than vice versa. Moreover, there are methodological constraints to capturing instrumental exchange between generations in the case of parents and children living in the same household, because a large part of assistance is not considered as mutual support, but as self-evident family work based on gender and caring roles.

2.1.4 Inter-vivos economic support

Economic support -either in cash or in kind - primarily flows from parents to their adult children or young grandchildren. Financial support from children to their parents is rare and mostly a consequence of parents' economic strain. In central and southern European countries, children's financial assistance to their parents in need is in addition guaranteed by legal obligations. According to recent data from the European Social Survey and the SHARE-Project, less than ten percent of the parents receive financial support from their adult children (Attias-Donfut et al. 2005b). On the other hand, financial or material support from parents to adult children is much more frequent. In Southern Europe, the longer co-residence of adult children with their parents exempts the former from expenditures on housing and other goods. At the same time, regular direct financial transfers may be less important. They become important, however, when children set up their own household, particularly if they want/need to buy an apartment (Barbagli et al. 2004). In Central and Northern Europe, adult children leave their parents' home earlier and therefore often receive regular financial support to live independently (Jürges 1999). The European Quality of Life Survey found that in the new EU Member States, households with elderly people even give material support to other family members in case of an emergency more often than in the old EU Member States. It also found that throughout Europe the family is the first choice to ask for money if somebody is in urgent need. More than 60% of the citizens in the new EU Member States and around 70% in the old EU Member States expect financial support from family members in this case (Saraceno et al. 2005). Unfortunately, there is no information on routine financial assistance, which may differ in amount as well as role between richer and poorer social groups, as well as between richer and poorer countries.

Most of the financial support by parents is assigned to adult children; but there is a considerable degree of cash spending also towards grandchildren (Arrondel and Masson 2001; Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000b; Kohli et al. 2000a). The amount of transfers depends, of course, on the wealth of the donors. The richer the elderly parents or grandparents are, the higher are the financial transfers (Jürges 1999).

There are substantial variations in findings on the frequency and intensity of financial support even within the same countries, due to different methodological approaches. For example, in Germany the share of parents who provide financial support to their children and grandchildren at the turn of the millennium ranged from 15 % to 50 % according to different data sources (Reil-Held 2002). In addition, analysis of transfers often underestimates the total amount of support parents give to their children, because large contributions are bound to special events like marriage, birth, or occasions like the purchase of housing, which are often not considered in surveys (Bhaumik 2001), although they are often a way of anticipating inheritance in an aging society. Some research, in fact, suggest that, on the one hand, this is the first generation of elderly who, as a great majority, can pass on some kind of inheritance to their children. On the other hand, given that higher life expectancy increases the age at which children inherit and that their neediest life phases have been overcome by this age, the elderly often decide to pass on a portion of the inheritance while they are still alive, in the form of donation – or of inter-vivos transfers.

2.1.5 Inheritance and bequests

Occasional or systematic financial transfers, including inter-vivos transfers, are only one part of the intergenerational transmission of wealth. We do not address here the issue of the intergenerational transmission of inequality through the transmission of different cultural and social capital. This issue has been dealt with in the chapter on social mobility in the Changequal Report and is taken up again in the EDUC Sate of the Art Report. Here we restrict our interest to that form of transmission of wealth that occurs through inheritance. Bequests, including formalised anticipated transfers during a life time, such as *Schenkung* in Germany and *Donazioni* in Italy, play an even more important role in the parent-child transition of wealth than informal inter-vivos transfers. There are three common patterns for inheritance in European countries. First, bequests flow predominantly from the parents to their children. Second, bequests are more evenly distributed between the children than inter-vivo transfers. Both patterns are inscribed into legislative rules (McGarry 1997). Third, bequests are unequally distributed between the social strata. A small share of children can expect a considerable amount of money from their parents; and a large share can count only on minor legacies (Munnell and Sunden 2003; Szydlik 2004). Whether inheritance increases social inequality or simply confirms it, is a matter that would need further study. Künemund et al. (2005), for instance, on the basis of German data, argue that inheritance does not “add” to inequality. Also Kohli et al. (2005) argue the same, offering two explanations. On the one side, the proportional increase of wealth by a moderate bequest to a poor person improves their wealth more than the wealth of a rich person who receives a large bequest. On the other side, if an inheritance is split between several family members, which is often the case, inequality decreases because the wealth of one person is now more evenly distributed between two or more persons.

Eastern and Western Europe differ in the importance of bequests. The growth of wealth in the last decades has increased bequests in Western European countries both in the number of recipients and in the average amount. According to estimations for Germany, the total sum of bequests per year is equal to two percent of GDP. This figure is even higher if donations as anticipated inheritance during the life time are considered. In the post-socialist countries, given the difficulty to access property during the socialist regime, bequests are much smaller and less frequent (Kohli 2004).

2.2 Gender differences in intergenerational relations

In all aspects of intergenerational relations there are gender differences based on the gender division of labour and responsibilities within the family. Feminist research since the seventies showed that in contemporary developed societies women primarily act as kin-keepers. They are in charge of keeping in touch with the various family members, including their husband's family. In general, men have more distant relations to their kin. Many studies have argued that the modernisation and democratisation of family relations, leaving room for choice in which relationships to privilege, have strengthened the mother-daughter tie. Matrilaterality in contemporary kinship and intergenerational relations would be a consequence of this. Mother/son and father/daughter relations follow. The weakest ties are between father and son (Bahr 1976; Rosenthal 1985). Yet, possibly because of a higher density and involvement in kinship relations, daughters report more often strain in these relationships than sons (Umberson 1992).

There is, however, some controversy both concerning the prevalence of matrilaterality in contemporary kinship and in its being mainly a contemporary pattern, in opposition to patrilaterality in the past (see e.g. Rossi and Rossi 1990b; see e.g. Sweetser 1964). National and regional studies suggest a more diversified picture, both for the present and for the past (see e.g. Barbagli 1991; see e.g. Oppo 1991). Furthermore, Rossi and Rossi (1990) themselves found that obligations between parents and children show no gender differences, but women feel more obligated than men to wider kinship networks.

Evidence of matrilaterality, in any case, may not be found in patterns of proximity. According to SHARE data on ten European countries, for instance, daughters and sons do not differ in the spatial distance they live from their parents. Gender differences in proximity occur for widowed women who live closer to their children than widowed men (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000b).

Considering intergenerational exchange patterns, women's relations clearly differ compared to men, based on the gender division of labour and resources. Mothers and daughters have more frequent contact with other family members and in particular with each other (Lye 1996). Both daughters and mothers provide more instrumental support than sons or fathers (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000b; Martin-Mathews and Campbell 1995). But they also receive more support, mainly within an exchange between mother and daughter (Eggebeen and Hogan 1990). Fathers more often make financial contributions. In synthesis, women exchange mostly time, men money.

These more vivid matrilineal and generally female exchange patterns across generations are to some extent caused by the longer life expectancy of women. They have a longer time over which to develop their relationships. It has also been suggested that women develop stronger intergenerational ties because they are more dependent on each other in case of need, due to their weak participation in the labour market, while men rely on social security (e.g. Rossi 1993). But social security covers income, not care needs. To a large degree, in fact, gender differences in intergenerational exchanges are dependent on the specific kind of exchange women and men are involved in. As opposed to financial needs, care and housework are daily activities. Care needs (one's own, of those one is responsible for) occur at more than one point in time over the life course, and clearly mark both gender and generational statuses.
The caring demands on women and their caring role in intergenerational relationships is increasingly the focus of research in European aging societies where women are increasingly expected to be in the labour force and for longer (Fine and Glendinning 2005; Lewis 1998; Neményi et al. 2006).

2.3 The impact of divorce

The break-up of partnerships has increased in most European countries. Divorce rates have risen since the 1990s and couples increasingly live out of wedlock, which is a more unstable form of partnership than marriage (the rate of separation of unmarried cohabitations is higher than for married ones, and even marriages preceded by cohabitation seem to be more unstable than those with no such background, although some research found the contrary (Brüderl et al. 1997).

Even though changing family structures are a widely reflected issue in Europe, research on the impact of family break-up on intergenerational relations has been mainly pursued by American scholars and only recently by European (Diekmann and Engelhardt 1999). Divorce and separation both on the parent's side as well as on the children's side have a strong impact on intergenerational relations. The divorce of the parents weakens relations with their children. Children of divorced parents tend to live further away, have less contact and provide less support to their parents (Lye 1996). This holds true for mothers and fathers, but the relations of divorced fathers to their children are even weaker (Seltzer 1994). If divorce takes place before the child attains adulthood, parent-child relations are less frequent than if a divorce happens at a later point in the lifetime of the child (Lye et al. 1995). Custody arrangements play an important role in parent-child relations. Perhaps because the custodial parent (or even the resident parent, in the case of joint custody arrangements) is predominantly the mother, children of divorced parents are likely to develop closer ties with their mothers. And fathers who lose daily co-residence with their children and can no longer benefit from their wives' mediating role, risk becoming estranged from their children. In a recent study, Amato (2003) found that 35 percent of children who were affected by a divorce had a weak relationship with their father. This concerned mostly daughters. The strongest decline in parent-child relations is found among non-custodial fathers (Aquilino 1994).

For some Central European countries – as in the USA - scholars found that there is an intergenerational transmission of divorce from parents to their children. Children of divorced parents are more likely to experience a break-up of their marriage (Diekmann and Engelhardt 1999; Manting 1994; Traag et al. 2000). Hence, the circumstance of parents' divorce has a lasting effect on intergenerational relations, which might affect the bonds between the children of their children. In the opposite direction, the divorce of adult children has different impacts for men and women on the relations with their parents. Divorced daughters receive more support from their parents, in particular when they have a child. (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000b; Marks and McLanahan 1993). Divorced sons neither receive nor provide as much help as married sons (Dykstra 1997; Spitze et al. 1994). The impact of children's divorce on their relation to their parents remains however rather small compared to the changes in parent-child relations when parents are divorced.

Other changes in patterns of family formation also have an impact on intergenerational relations. Some research has found that cohabiting couples are significantly less likely than married couples to be in exchange relationships with their parents. Particularly, cohabiting young adults are much less likely than married or single adults to give and/or receive assistance with household tasks and other kinds of support (Eggebeen 2005). An older study found that they are also less likely to receive financial transfers from their parents (Hao 1996) . However, this negative impact of cohabitation on intergenerational support may differ across countries and time, depending on the degree to which cohabitation without marriage is widespread as a pattern of partnering and forming a household.

2.4 Changes over time

Historical research has undermined what William Good many years ago called "the family of our nostalgia". Families in the past were not more loving and less conflictual than at present, although social obligations bound their members together more strictly. Neither were they more stable, since death before old age disrupted them quite often. It is also debatable that family relations in earlier times comprised a wider kinship network than nowadays (Hareven 1994b; Kertzer 2001).

If demographic and historical research have made it possible to compare kinship patterns across time, it is much more difficult to compare patterns of relationships and exchanges within it. We lack, in fact, individual data on past behaviour and values, although historians have shown the informative richness of documents such as wills, family books, labour contracts, letters, and even drawings (Kertzer and Barbagli 2000, 2002).

Comparisons are difficult even for relatively recent periods, since, as indicated above, kinship has been long ignored in contemporary family studies because of the prevalent parsonsian view that kinship was socially irrelevant in contemporary democratic and developed societies. The only comparisons of patterns of relationships over time that can be made concern attitudes and expectations of co-existing generations. At best, therefore, these comparisons are based on retrospective data, with regard to the behaviours and attitudes of the older generation. At worst, they are based on present expectations of generations located differently in the generational chain and in the life course.

Many scholars have argued that family solidarity and intergenerational solidarity would decrease for several reasons, for example due to modernisation and differentiation (Parsons 1949), growing institutional bodies (Wolfe 1989), shrinking social capital (Putnam 2000) and growing individualism (Etzioni 1993). Empirical analyses in Europe and North America in the last two decades, however, could not confirm these consequences with respect to the family. Although there is little information over time, the dominant results of studies in the last two decades are that there is a great deal of solidarity between generations in the families (Arber and Attias-Donfut 2000; Silverstein and Bengtson 1997). Considerations of the demographic change and its consequences seem to reinforce the importance of intergenerational relations in the family (Bengtson 2001a).

3. Public solidarity between generations

The previous chapter has dealt with generational relations in the *family*. Now we turn to examine the debate about intergenerational relations at the societal level. As pointed out above, this perspective mainly concerns the correlation between the living conditions and the collective destinies of different age groups or cohorts mediated through welfare state institutions.

3.1 Intergenerational relations and the age-orientation of the welfare state

In current welfare state research, an intensive debate about *generational equity* or *intergenerational justice* has emerged. Generational equity refers to “the argument that the elderly have been the recipients of an unfair distribution of public resources for income, health care, and social services” (Binstock and Quadagno 2001: 343), and that this comes at the expense of the non-aged population, especially children. As Williamson and Watts-Roy (1999) show, this idea is anything but new. Its growth into a political discourse can be ascribed to Preston's (1984) influential comparison of the well-being of children and the elderly.

While the concept of intergenerational justice has proved fertile ground for political and social theorists (e.g. Laslett and Fishkin 1992), very few empirical studies exist that would allow comparisons of how social provisions for different age groups vary across welfare state types, across countries, or across time. Important exceptions are the works by Palmer et al. (1988), Hedström and Ringen (1990) and Castles and Ferrera (1996), who made significant steps towards the goal of measuring the age-orientation of social policy. Castles and Ferrera, for example, examine housing and pension policies in Southern Europe and come to the conclusion that these welfare states have a particularly strong elderly bias.

There are basically two approaches for assessing the age-specific distribution of welfare state benefits and contributions. One estimates the balance of welfare benefits and contributions of cohorts. The other compares the (preferential) treatment of age groups by the welfare state.
The most sophisticated method as regards the comparison of the contributions/benefits-balance is called *generational accounting* (Auerbach et al. 1998; European Commission 1999; Feist 2003; Kotlikoff and Raffelhüschen 1999). Similar accounts are given by Thum and von Weizsäcker (2000) or Eitenmüller (1996), Schnabel (1998), and Ottnad and Wahl (2005). The basic idea is to calculate the gap between expected benefits and contributions of a member of a specific cohort during his or her remaining average lifetime. Studies arrive at the conclusion that generally - except for countries with a slower ageing population like Ireland – older generations are being treated more favourably than younger generations. However, it is also acknowledged that the results vary much depending on the underlying assumptions of each specific model (Hills 1995; Rürup 2002). As Lynch (2001) points out, the generational accounting technique is limited, insofar as accounts assume *constant* tax and transfer policies for all age groups. Thus, the method is useful for comparing the lifetime tax-benefit position of newborns across countries *if policies remain unchanged*. But when comparing lifetime accounts of generations who have experienced policy change, it is of little utility (see also Kotlikoff and Leibfritz 1998)

An example of the approach that studies the differential treatment of age groups by welfare state arrangements is the analysis by Lynch (2001) of the age-orientation of OECD welfare states. After controlling for the demographic structure, she shows that Greece, Italy and Spain have the most elderly-oriented social policy regimes in Europe, while the Netherlands, Ireland and the Nordic countries have a more age-neutral repertoire of social policies. It is, however, empirically difficult to adequately assign benefits and contributions to certain age groups. In many cases, only positive transfers to the recipients are considered, while taxes and social contributions are not included into the calculation (Adema 1997; Kemmerling 2001). Often redistribution through pensions is contrasted with redistribution through family allowances, and the impact of these two kinds of transfers on the welfare of the elderly and underage children, respectively, is examined (Cantillion and Van den Bosch 2003; Goodin et al. 1999; Micklewright and Stewart 2000). Working age adults, for whom contemporary welfare states are having such widely varying success in assisting the adjustment to changes in employment and family patterns, are left out (Lynch 2001). Because of this omission, and since so little is known about the age-re-distributive properties of other kinds of social policy, it is dangerous to conclude that 'the contemporary welfare state in capitalist democracies is largely a *welfare state for the elderly*' (Myles 1984: 24).

While there are scholars who argue for allocating more resources to families with children because, e.g., of a perceived need to invest into a society's future (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002), others argue that it is more appropriate to have equality across age groups. The "prudential life span account", proposed by Daniels (1988) as a normative standard, seems to ultimately favour equal outcomes. And indeed studies have observed that special benefits for one age group – e.g., free or subsidised access to public transportation or cultural events – are usually legitimised in terms of making up for the disadvantaged economic situation of this group rather than of different needs (Dallinger and Liebig 2004; Leisering 2004).

Finally, in contrast to studies that point to the unequal, and therefore unjust, provision of benefits for different age groups, others argue that the expansion of old-age security should be seen as a success. Far from unduly privileging the elderly, it only gives them their due share by finally bringing them up to par with the active population (Hudson 1999).

3.2 The Public-Private interplay in intergenerational solidarity

Intergenerational solidarity based on the institutional connectedness of age groups and cohorts has a strong link to intergenerational relations in the family. Most of the social security contributions to individuals in need disburden family members from financial obligations;

therefore, they foster independence and individual autonomy. To provide a comprehensive picture of intergenerational exchanges it is neither sufficient to consider only the institutional balance of welfare contributions between generations nor to emphasise the family sphere. It is necessary to combine both arenas of intergenerational exchange. The public/private interplay for the protection of social risks and the redistribution of wealth is important in order to understand specific patterns of intergenerational solidarity.

Comparative research has found that there is interdependency between the structure and the level of intergenerational support within families on the one hand and the availability of welfare provisions and the legal rules concerning family responsibility and obligations, as well as notions of subsidiarity, on the other hand. In the Nordic countries, legal family responsibilities are delimited and welfare entitlements mostly based on the situation of the individual. In Western and Continental Europe, children and parents are obliged to each other more strongly by law and welfare provision mostly based on the situation of the household, that is, the core family (Millar and Warman 1996). In Southern Europe, the family - represented by a wider kin-network - is vastly responsible if a family member needs support. Welfare provisions are modest and legislative rules consider distantly related persons to be responsible for support (Naldini 2003).

Few studies have assessed the circulation of financial transfers between generations considering all three distributive systems: state, markets and families (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000b; Esping-Andersen 1999; Kohli 1999). More attention to the public/private mix is paid with respect to care provisions. In Europe, there are considerable differences in the provision of care services (Anttonen and Sipilä 1996; Bettio and Plantenga 2004). From the vantage point of gender sensitive research and theory, the co-existence of high levels of family care provision with varying levels of public and market care provision for the frail elderly has prompted the development of the twin concepts of “social care” and of a “mixed economy of care” (see e.g. Daly and Lewis 1998). In the Nordic countries, public care services are widespread; in Central and Eastern Europe, public service supply is moderate and in Southern Europe the social service structure is less developed. In regards to child-care services, Belgium, France and some post-socialist countries offer extended public facilities. The former provide them because of a tradition of pro-natalist family policies, the latter because of its traditional support of women’s employment during the communist era. (On the issue of work-family reconciliation, see the specific State of the Art Report).

Until the mid 1990s, elderly care did not attract the same interest as child care issues. Care needs of the elderly have in many countries been considered a private family matter and have therefore not been a focus of attention (Morel 2006). The demographic turn boosted the research on elderly care because of the growing unbalance of care givers to care receivers. As for child care, attention is not only for a specific kind of provision, but for the overall "package" of public, market and family provision developed in various countries and social groups. And while in the case of children the intergenerational chain spans three generations (grandparents providing for their grandchildren), in the case of the frail elderly it seems reduced to two: parents and their adult children.

Notwithstanding conceptual similarities of child care and frail elderly care services within welfare mixes and social care packages, it is mainly the availability of public financial and caring support for the elderly that has spurred the debate on the possible moral risks of generous welfare states for intergenerational solidarity within the family. The key question is whether a growing offering of social services for elderly people crowds out family members and weakens social relations, thus jeopardising the social integration of elderly people (Andersen 1984; Etzioni 1993; Wolfe 1989). This thesis has been challenged however, first by feminist scholars, who have pointed out that, at least in the field of care, intergenerational family transfers continue to play an important role also in the most developed welfare states (see e.g. Lewis 1998; Sainsbury 1996). Subsequently, the crowding out thesis has also been criticised by the first comparative studies on intergenerational exchanges. These studies have offered little empirical evidence that a generous share of public services leads to declining intergenerational relations. Even though some studies point out that in a cross country perspective social contact and support between elderly parents and adult children is lower in countries with a developed service sector (Scheepers et al. 2002), various studies based on comparative sources, such as ISSP, OASIS and SHARE, conclude that there is no crowding-out effect either over time or between countries (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2000a; Künemund and Rein 1999; Motel-Klingebiel et al. 2005; van Oorshot and Arts 2005). Public social services supplement or complement rather than substitute family care provision.

Social services and family caring provide, in fact, different kinds of support to elderly people. The former address mainly functional needs, the latter both functional and relational as well as identity needs (Leira 1994; Lingsom 1997). Furthermore, care needs do not have an upper limit. Thus, an additional source of support from the welfare state may be utilised to better satisfy the needs a person has. Family support still remains. Although support from different providers is substitutable, in the end support on average is rising because needs are not sufficiently satisfied so far (Kröger 2005; Waerness 1990). In addition, support from public social services helps elderly people to be more independent from family members, which might result in a more balanced reciprocity between the care giver and care receiver in the family and therefore disburden intergenerational relations (Daatland and Herlofson 2001; Lewinter 2003).

Motel-Klingebiel et al. (2005) have tested three alternative hypotheses with regard to the relationship between intergenerational family solidarity and the welfare state - substitution, mutual encouragement, mixed responsibility - using the findings from the OASIS (Old Age Autonomy: the Role of Service Systems and Inter-generational Family Solidarity) study on 5 countries. They found support for the "mixed responsibility" thesis first proposed by Künemund and Rein (1999): in societies with well developed services, help from families and welfare state services act accumulatively, while in welfare regimes that rely more explicitly and heavily on family provision this does not occur.

Most of this debate has been based on the assumption of expanding public care services. A Swedish study suggests that welfare state retrenchment in social services results in a crowding-in process. Family members take over responsibilities formerly provided by social services so far (Larsson 2004). Evers and Sachße (2003) suggest that a similar phenomenon, with specific gender dimensions, occurred in Germany after the introduction of the Long Term Care Insurance. Another study comparing the impact of recent developments in payments for care in service-rich compared to service-poor countries offers a less clear cut picture (Timonen et al. 2006).

On the basis of existing data, a final conclusion can hardly be drawn concerning the crowding out or crowding in hypotheses. The lack of historical (for different cohorts) and longitudinal data on intergenerational relations does not, in fact, allow assessing whether change in public provisions has affected change in family provision (keeping in mind the intervening change in the age structure of intergenerational chains). As a consequence, most studies do not investigate in the causal relationships between the public and the private sphere; they rather judge associations between support from family members and public social services over time or across countries.

4. Demand for further research

Research on intergenerational relationships appears increasingly important for various fields of social and economic research as well as for policy reasons.
It is, of course, relevant for family research, as intergenerational relationships seem to represent both continuity and change in families at the macro and micro level. The ageing of the population, in fact, changes the balance between generations at the family and societal level, but also lengthens the duration of these relationships that, therefore, are potentially more stable in a context in which couple relationships are increasingly unstable. But research has only started to study how changes in partnerships affect intergenerational relations, and also what the mechanisms are that mediate between social and individual norms and actual behaviour.

Research on intergenerational relations is important also in order to understand welfare regime patterns in a period when both family and welfare state arrangements are changing – to a large degree re-defining, and not always in a coherent way - the existing private and public gender and intergenerational arrangements.

Intergenerational relations as a form of social capital need to be more fully studied, in their ways of functioning but also in both their positive (social cohesive) and potentially negative (crystallising or even strengthening social inequality, encouraging particularism as against civicness) effects.

Further, existing research has indicated that there are relevant cross-country, but also cross social groups and possibly cross-cohort, differences that need to be further assessed and documented. For instance, different fertility rates and age at first motherhood, as well as different life expectancy rates, produce variability in multigenerational structures and relationships across countries. On the basis of SHARE, for instance, Kohli et al. (2006) found that 25% of respondents aged 50-60 in Austria, Denmark, France and Sweden, as well as 13% in the Netherlands, were in kinship structures comprised of four generations. Knipscheer et al.

(2000) in a two country comparison found that among individuals aged 70 and over, more Hungarian than Dutch were great-grandparents.

One challenge for future research, therefore, is to further pursue the study of heterogeneity of intergenerational relations within Europe and the impact that social structure, family organisation, and cultural norms have on them.

Given the complexity and interdependencies within which intergenerational relationships are constructed and played out, and without underplaying the value of large multi-country surveys, four research approaches seem to be highly necessary.

First, longitudinal studies are needed, which detail decisions concerning intergenerational relations and exchanges in the context of the life course of the involved individuals and of their multiple careers. Generational roles, in fact, may be understood as careers, rather than fixed sets of expectations. As such, they happen and interact with other careers, including other generational careers.

Second, following Finch and Mason's (1993) seminal study, comparative qualitative studies of intergenerational networks would offer more substantial evidence for similarities and differences in the construction and understanding of obligations than survey based studies.

Third, in order to understand the interplay between family arrangements and welfare arrangements, an in depth comparative case study approach seems necessary to complement the approach based on large data sets with very few items.

Fourth, research is needed on how radical changes in Central and Eastern European countries affect intergenerational exchanges and processes of mutual learning, as well as of solidarity.

This broad research program calls also for more systematic interdisciplinary and inter-field collaboration.

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