

Work-Life Balance over the Life Course

WU Team

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Activities

- **Care for children and care for (elderly) adults**
 - **Film** „Work-Life Balance – visions of children“
 - **Film** „Elderly Care and Paid Work“
 - **Leaflet** „New Working Conditions and Work-Life Balance“
 - **Leaflet** „Caring Relatives – Current findings from Austria and the EU“
 - **Flipcharts** „Work-Life Balance“ Students from the Vienna University of Economics and Business
 - **Focus Group** „Child Care and Elderly Care – main policy recommendations“
 - **Urban and rural events** (in Vienna, Tyrol and Vorarlberg)
 - **TV and Radio interviews**
 - **Press conference, press articles**

Main insights: **The role of attitudes**

According to the European Social Survey (ESS 2004/05 and 2006/07)

Source: **WORKCARE Project**

The striking majority of the Austrian respondents (80%) **are in favour of** the statement

"Women and men both have the same rights to employment if vacancies are scarce" (2004/05).

The **agreement on equal rights** to employment for both sexes reflects the European tendency.

56% of the Austrian respondents **oppose**

"full-time employment of women who have children under the age of three" (2006/07).

The rejection of full-time employment of women with children at a young age is relatively low in other countries: Finland with 8%, Denmark with 12% and Sweden with 14%, but also the UK, France or Poland with results ranging from 25% to 29% clearly fall below the numbers for Austria.

In %

Involuntary Part-time

(„could not find a full-time“)

Part-time – caring responsibilities within family

(„care for children or for dependent adults“)

	Men	Women	Men	Women
DK	16,1	17,5	:	15,8
SE	33,4	25,7	13,2	39,6
IT	61,9	34,8	1,9	40,1
PT	46,6	50,5	:	9,4
Austria	20,7	9,7	6,9	52,9
NL	10,8	4,0	28,8	64,8
UK	34,1	6,8	18,6	68,6

Source: Labour Force Survey 2007, in: Lewis & Plomien (2009) WORKCARE

Conclusion

„Thus in countries where women are expected to work part-time and to care, the proportions reporting „voluntary“ part-time work are also high. Given the importance of cultural and institutional contexts, it may not be possible to treat such figures as the simple expression of preferences.“

(Lewis & Plomien, 2009, 84)

Conclusions

- We can witness a **stark contrast** between tendencies towards egalisation on the level of individual **attitudes** and people's day-to-day **realities**.
- Rising numbers of female part-time employment can **only in part** be taken to represent a **modernisation** of the male breadwinner model and its consequences on the division of labour.

Conclusions

- Even when **women are working**, they **remain** the ones who are **responsible** for the family, whereas **men** primarily dedicate their **time to employment**.
- **Both women and men strive for flexibility** to be available for their respective areas.

Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Policies that **implant adequate support measures and additional infrastructures of facilities and services** have become necessary.
- ❖ **Trust in the quality of these institutions** needs to be build, and high quality services for childcare, all-day schools, new school systems, services for childcare during holiday times, adjustment of opening hours to the needs of people in employment
- ❖ **Innovative solutions for multi-generational facilities** offering childcare and care of the elderly are required.

Policy Recommendations

- ❖ Politics and economy jointly need to find **ways of minimising the strains our economised society exercises on individuals.**
- ❖ Time pressure, increased intensity of work processes and requirements for mobility have to be decreased for the **benefit of autonomy and self-determination** of working times
- ❖ **Contracts that provide security, and more planning security**
- ❖ **Work-Life Balance** has to become a priority and should be considered of **equal importance as economic cost-benefit calculations.**

Last but not least...

„(...) we must conclude that true gender equality will not come about unless, somehow, men can be made to embrace a more feminine life course.“

(Gosta Esping-Andersen, 2002, 95).

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