



Families
in Context

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Policies and gender equality in the family realm

Conference on *“Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality:
The Role of Family Policies and Exchange of Good Practices”*

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Life course perspective: increasing popularity among policy makers

- Early experiences shape later life
- Linked lives (family!)
- Macro influences

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Today's talk

Interdependence

Gender

Policies

A focus on interdependence in families

- Is consistent with demographic reality



6 generations of same family living in Ontario

Baby boy is introduced to 4 generations of grandmothers

CBC News | Posted: Jul 14, 2013 6:34 PM ET | Last Updated: Jul 14, 2013 10:14 PM ET



6 generations of same family living in Ontario 2:28

A focus on interdependence in families

- Is consistent with demographic reality
- Draws attention to similarities in the needs of young and old



Families in Context





In my work, I focus on laws and policies in

- EU-28 + Norway + Switzerland
- US, Canada
- But sometimes OECD, world

Structuring the lives of men and women: Gender in laws and policies

Roles limited to one gender, e.g.

- suffrage
- conscription
- care leaves (Switzerland: parental leave for mothers only)

Gender differences in age borders

- age of majority
- marriageable age (Luxembourg: age 16 women, age 18 men)
- age of consent
- pensionable age (several EU-countries: lower age for women; privilege??)

Structuring the lives of men and women: Gender in laws and policies, cont'd

Gender differences in credits for role engagement

- care credits (debate between 'care feminists' and 'employment feminists')
- survivors' benefits (redistribution to ever-married)

Policies shaping interdependence*

*financial, material, emotional, practical reliance on / responsibility for family members

- mandate generational interdependence (e.g., legal obligations to provide financial support),

1 July 2013 Last updated at 10:04 GMT



New China law says children 'must visit parents'

By Celia Hatton
BBC News, Beijing

Grown children in China must visit their parents or potentially face fines or jail, a new law that came into effect on Monday says.

China's new "Elderly Rights Law" deals with the growing problem of lonely elderly people by ordering adult children to visit their ageing parents.

The law says adults should care about their parents "spiritual needs" and "never neglect or snub elderly people".



China's elderly population is expected to double by 2030

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- explicitly shape intergenerational interdependence (e.g., daddy quota),



Has the special quota for fathers made men more caring?

Kotsadam and Finseraas (2011): parents with children born after the introduction of the daddy quota less likely to have conflicts over the division of household tasks, and more likely to share them

Boll and colleagues (2014): increased levels of child involvement by the father after the introduction of the daddy quota, particularly for highly educated men.

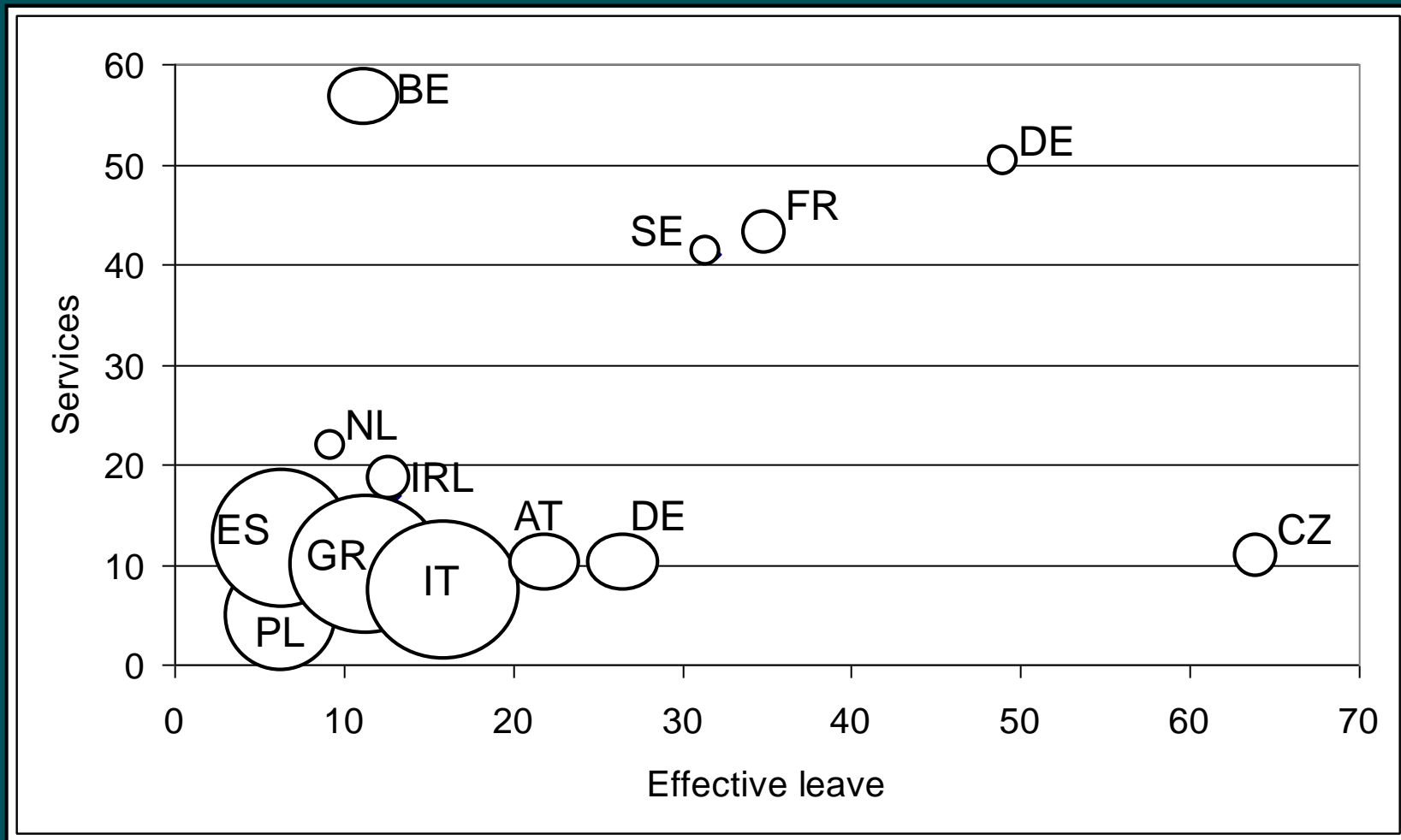
Herlofson and Ugreninov (2014): men more involved in childcare after the introduction of the daddy quota, but not more involved in care for frail parents

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- implicitly shape intergenerational interdependence (e.g., grandparental care in Southern Europe in the absence of publicly funded parental support).

Predicted probability of caring for a grandchild of a working daughter by level of effective leave and services



Source: Bordone et al. 2016, based on SHARE, MULTILINKS

Saraceno & Keck 2011: Importance of distinguishing *types* of public provisions (cf. Gornick & Meyer, 2008; Javornick, 2014; Leitner, 2003)

Different implications for gender and socioeconomic inequality

Cash for care payments: taken more easily by women than men, and by low paid women than high paid women

Services: better assist men and women in reconciling paid and unpaid work

Empirical evidence is now emerging, e.g.

ECHP data

Abendroth et al (2014): the motherhood occupational status penalty is

- lower in European countries where expenditures on public childcare are higher

SHARE data

Schmid et al (2012): imbalance in proportions of men and women providing intensive care is higher

- when aging parents receive cash for care payments (in addition to the care received from adult children)
- than when they receive services in kind

Wrapping up (1)

Overall: gender convergence in structuring of interdependence by laws and policies

Yet: everyday practice shows differences in men's and women's lives
(Levy, 2013: men and women have different master statuses)

Yet: gender differences in use of public provisions, e.g.

- women more often recipients of survivors' benefits (differential life expectancy)
- women more often users of care leaves (economic incentive)
- women less often recipients of home help (gender bias in implementation)

Wrapping up (2)

- Important to avoid a “chopped up” notion of what families are about
- Interdependence structures people’s life course decisions and their life chances
- The challenge is to develop, implement and evaluate* policies that do not reinforce gender inequalities and social class inequalities

*natural experiments, combinations of longitudinal survey data and registry data, cross-nationally comparative data



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Questions?

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