

## **Families, care and work in European Mediterranean Countries: findings and lessons from a comparative analysis of work-life balance policies.**

*Valeria Pandolfi\**

### **How to cite**

Pandolfi V. (2014). Families, care and work in European Mediterranean Countries findings and lessons from a comparative analysis of work-life balance policies. [Italian Sociological Review, 4 (1), 93-116]

Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.13136/isr.v4i1.75>

[DOI: 10.13136/isr.v4i1.75]

### **1. Author/s information**

\* Department of Science of Education, University of Genoa (Italy)

### **2. Contact authors' email addresses**

\* [Valeria.Pandolfini@unige.it](mailto:Valeria.Pandolfini@unige.it)

### **3. Article accepted for publication (*data*)**

February 2014

**Additional information about  
Italian Sociological Review**

**can be found at:**

**[About ISR - Editorial Board - Manuscript submission](#)**

*Families, care and work in European Mediterranean Countries: findings and lessons from a comparative analysis of work-life balance policies*

Valeria Pandolfini\*

Corresponding author:  
Valeria Pandolfini  
E-mail: Valeria.Pandolfini@unige.it

**Abstract**

The article explores work-life balance policies in five European Mediterranean countries: France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Turkey. The aim is to analyze how the interplay among different role of state, markets, third sector and families shapes work and family-care dimensions, within the economic, social, cultural contemporary context and the challenges prompted by the conditions of global crisis. Through a cross-national comparison using Eurostat and Oecd data, it draws a synthesis of national labor markets' features, shows the main trends regarding families' size, composition and models and presents statutory Maternity, Paternity and Parental leave arrangements, early childcare services' availability and family allowances system.

Findings identify common aspects and differences among countries' regulations, confirming the relationship between work-life balance policies and the different socio-economic contexts as well as cultural patterns and welfare regimes. The article concludes providing recommendations for politics to close the gap between today's work and family realities and policies and practices governing their interrelationships, reflecting on the potential impact not only on individuals, but also on organizations and society.

Keywords: work-life balance, reconciliation policies, cross-national comparison.

---

\* Department of Science of Education (Di.Sfor.), University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy.

## **1. Labor market and family composition: trends in European Mediterranean Countries**

In the last decade the socio-economic context in all European countries has deeply changed, as a consequence of significant transformations in labor market as well as in family-management. So, the difficulties in balancing work and family life have become more visible and problematic (Bianchi, Milkie, 2010; Crespi, Rossi, 2013). In particular, the “reconciliation” issue (European Commission, 2005) has become a key issue in European employment policy as the result of several factors. First of all, the increased participation of women in labor market and, therefore, lower availability of women for caring tasks (Lewis, 2009). Secondly, the increase of non standard or flexible job situations with their irregularity, unpredictability and insecurity (Bauman, 2005), which has influenced the private lives, regarding both the fragmentary transition to adulthood of young generations, as well the freedom of choice in terms of family formation. A third important aspect refers to the increased number of dual-earners families (Pfau-Effinger, 2005), where both partners are working full time, or where a single parent has to combine a professional activity and look after one or several children. Moreover, the recent economic crisis has hit labor markets full-on: all EU Member States were affected, with different timing and intensity but, generally, the crisis has lead to increasing unemployment and rising part-time in all economical sectors.

In this article we'll focus on five European Mediterranean countries: France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Turkey. They share some common aspects in their welfare systems<sup>1</sup>, and they have been particularly affected by the actual

---

<sup>1</sup>The countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea are considered in the literature (Zanatta 1998; Castles, 2009; Kazepov, 2009) such as welfare systems in itself, characterized by low levels of spending on welfare and social safety and by the role assigned to the family as primary social security cushion, where the production of welfare is based on the principle of passive subsidiarity (Bertani, 2013). In Esping-Andersen's typology (1990) France is placed in the *conservative* welfare system model, referring to the countries of continental Europe, including in addition to Italy, Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, but also Finland. Such welfare regimes have historically evolved along traditional conservative principles, and welfare benefits have been closely tied to the 'breadwinner' wage. Standard 'male breadwinner' jobs have been protected, and the provision of non-family state care rather limited, assuming that care will be provided within the family. Consequently, women's employment levels tend to be relatively low (Crompton, Lewis, Lyonette, 2007:7). As well known, the Esping-Andersen's welfare regimes typology has been criticized on theoretical, methodological and empirical level, so that many authors (Castles, Ferrera 1996; Zanatta 1998; Kazepov, 2009), due to the core differences with Continental Europe countries, have proposed to apply the “Mediterranean” welfare label to the southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain), characterized by low levels of de-familiarization of care and by the prevailing traditional function of social reproduction carried out by the family (Bertani, 2013). Regarding France, it's difficult to set the countryfully

economic crisis. So, such national contexts represent emblematic cases in order to analyze the impact of the recession on work-life balance policies and practices.

In 2010 the EU-27 employment rate for persons aged 15–64 is 64,1% (Eurostat, 2012). In all the considered countries the employment rates are lower, shifting from 46,3% in Turkey to 63,8% in France. Considering gender differences, the EU-27 employment rate gender gap<sup>2</sup> is equal to 11,9 pp: only in France we find a lower data (8,4 pp), while in the other countries values are higher, from 12,4 pp in Spain to 40,5 pp in Turkey. Similar considerations emerge observing the activity rate, which is 71% in EU-27, 77,6% for males and 64,4% for females, with a clear gender gap (13,2 pp), particularly observable in the Mediterranean area, still highly variable, from 8,8 pp in France to 44,9 pp in Turkey. Finally, EU-27 data related to unemployment rates don't show significant differences between male and female; specifically referring to each country, the highest unemployment rate gender gaps are in Greece (-6,3 pp) and in Italy (- 2,5 pp), while the lowest are in Turkey (-0,1 pp, tab. 1).

*Tab. 1: Employment, activity and unemployment rates (2010)*

|                        | Employment rates* |      |      |      | Activity rates* |      |      |      | Unemployment rates** |      |      |      |
|------------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|------|----------------------|------|------|------|
|                        | M+F               | F    | M    | M-F  | M+F             | F    | M    | M-F  | M+F                  | F    | M    | M-F  |
| France                 | 63,8              | 59,7 | 68,1 | 8,4  | 70,5            | 66,1 | 74,9 | 8,8  | 9,8                  | 10,2 | 9,4  | -0,8 |
| Greece                 | 59,6              | 48,1 | 70,9 | 22,8 | 68,2            | 57,6 | 78,9 | 21,3 | 12,6                 | 16,2 | 9,9  | -6,3 |
| Italy                  | 56,9              | 46,1 | 67,7 | 21,6 | 62,2            | 51,1 | 73,3 | 22,2 | 8,4                  | 9,7  | 7,6  | -2,1 |
| Spain                  | 58,6              | 52,3 | 64,7 | 12,4 | 73,4            | 65,9 | 80,7 | 14,8 | 20,1                 | 20,5 | 19,7 | -0,8 |
| Turkey                 | 46,3              | 26,2 | 66,7 | 40,5 | 51,9            | 29,6 | 74,5 | 44,9 | 10,7                 | 11,4 | 10,4 | -1,0 |
| European Union (EU-27) | 64,1              | 58,2 | 70,1 | 11,9 | 71,0            | 64,4 | 77,6 | 13,2 | 9,7                  | 9,6  | 9,7  | 0,1  |

\* Employment rate (% population aged 15-64) and Activity rate (% population aged 15-64)

\*\* Unemployment rate (% labour force 15+)

*Source: Our elaboration on Eurostat (2012)*

---

amongst *conservative* welfare states because the French system has historically shown high levels of support for working mothers (Crompton, Lewis, Lyonette, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> The gender gap is the difference between employment rates of men and women in total employment rates.

One of the most significant change occurred in labor force composition in the last decade is the growing number of flexible workers. The onset of the crisis has accelerated this trend, deeply increasing gender differences. In 2010, 19,2% of employees in the EU-27 have worked part-time (Eurostat, 2012, tab. 2): 31,9% females vs 8,7% males (with a significant gender gap, equal to 23,2 pp). Focusing on the analyzed countries, part-time gender gap is higher than the EU average just in Italy (23,5 pp) and in France (23,4 pp). On the other hand, fixed-term employment has increased steadily in the years before the crisis, but the trend seems to be changed in 2008 and has continued downward in 2010. The EU-27 registers a share of 14% of employees in 2010: among the analyzed countries, the highest percentage of temporary contracts is in Spain (24,9%) and in France (15,9%). In the other observed countries the values are lower than the EU average. Finally, as observed regarding part-time jobholders, temporary contracts are mostly diffused among women rather than men.

*Tab. 2: Part time and fixed-term employees (2010)*

|                        | Part-time jobholders<br>(% total jobholders) |      |     |       | Temporary contracts<br>(% total employees) |      |      |      |
|------------------------|--|------|-----|-------|--|------|------|------|
|                        | M+F  | F    | M   | M-F   | M+F  | F    | M    | M-F  |
| France                 | 17,8   | 30,1 | 6,7 | -23,4 | 15,0                                       | 15,9 | 14,1 | -1,8 |
| Greece                 | 6,4  | 10,4 | 3,7 | -6,7  | 12,4                                       | 14,4 | 10,9 | -3,5 |
| Italy                  | 15,0   | 29,0 | 5,5 | -23,5 | 12,8                                       | 14,5 | 11,4 | -3,1 |
| Spain                  | 13,3   | 23,2 | 5,4 | -17,8 | 24,9                                       | 26,1 | 23,9 | -2,2 |
| Turkey                 | 11,7   | 23,8 | 6,9 | -16,9 | 11,5                                       | 12,5 | 11,1 | -1,4 |
| European Union (EU-27) | 19,2   | 31,9 | 8,7 | -23,2 | 14,0                                       | 14,6 | 13,4 | -1,2 |

*Source: Our elaboration on Eurostat (2012)*

Analyzing family dimension, we note many changes about fertility issues as well as family size and composition (tab. 3). First of all, we observe a postponement in age of first motherhood: historical data analysis (Eurostat, 2011) shows a growth in women age at the birth of the first child from 1995 to 2009, ranging from 0,5 year in France to 2,2 years in Greece. In 2009, the age was about 28 years on average in the OECD; focusing on the other countries the age varies, ranging from 28,6 in France to 29,9 in Italy. Another important factor is the Total Fertility Rate (TFR)<sup>3</sup>. Theoretically, assuming

<sup>3</sup>The TFR indicates the number of children that would be born in a specific year to each woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and if the likelihood of her giving birth to children at each age was the currently prevailing age-specific fertility rates. It is generally computed by summing up the age-specific fertility rates defined over a five-year interval (OECD, 2011).

there are no migration flows and that mortality rates remain unchanged, a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman generates broad stability of the population (indeed, it is also referred to as the “replacement fertility rate”, as it ensures replacement of the woman and her partner with another 0.1 percentage points to counteract infant mortality). In 2010 TFR resulted under the replacement rate in the OECD average (1,7), as well as in all analyzed countries (except in Turkey, 2,03, OECD, 2011).

*Tab. 3: Some trends in fertility behavior and maternal employment*

|              | Mean age of women at the birth of the first child (1) |      |       |                  | Total fertility rate (2) | Maternal employment rates compared to female employment rates (2008) (2) |  |
|--------------|---|------|-------|------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
|              | 1970  | 1995 | 2009* | Change 1995-2008 | 2009                     | Female employment ratio (25-49 age cohort)                               | Maternal employment ratio - child under 15 (2) |
| France       | 24,4  | 28,1 | 28,6  | 0,5              | 1,99                     | 77,6   | 64,9   |
| Greece       | 25,0  | 26,6 | 28,8  | 2,2              | 1,53                     | 64,0   | 51,9   |
| Italy        | 25,0  | 28,0 | 29,9  | 1,9              | 1,41                     | 61,1   | 50,0   |
| Spain        | 26,6  | 28,4 | 29,7  | 1,4              | 1,40                     | 67,7   | 56,6   |
| Turkey       | -   | -    | -     | -                | 2,12                     | 27,4   | 21,5   |
| OECD average | -   | 26,2 | 27,8  | 1,6              | 1,70                     | 71,9   | 61,4   |

\* Data refers to 2006 for France, 2007 for Italy, 2008 for Greece and Spain

(1) Source: Eurostat Demographic Statistics (2011)

(2) Source: European Labour Force Surveys (2008-09)

Besides, interesting considerations emerge basing on Eurostat data (2011) comparing maternal employment rates (i.e. mothers in employment as a percentage of the population of mothers with at least one child aged under 15 living at home) to female employment rates (i.e. women aged between 25 and 54, this being the age cohort typically most concerned with rearing of young children). The comparison between these two employment/population ratios shows that maternal employment rates are lower in all observed countries: on the OECD overage the gap is equal to 4,7 pp and, among the analyzed countries, the gap is highest in Italy (3,9 pp) and Spain (3,8 pp, tab. 3).

The last indicator provides information on children in different types of households along the employment status of parents (age 15-64) as in the Labour Force Statistics (LFS). Dependent children (age 0-14) are classified by Eurostat (2009) along the parental employment status and the categories of family couples include: i) “dual full-time earners”, both partners working full-time; ii) “sole earner”, one partner working full-time and one partner not in paid work; iii) “one-and-a-half earners”, one partner working full-time and

one partner working part-time; iv) “no earners”, neither partner employed; v) “others”, including any other combination (e.g. both parents working part-time, one parent working part-time and one parent not in paid work). Data (tab. 4) show that dual-earner family is the most common model among couple families in the majority of countries. However, we note significant differences among them: while this model is very common in Greece (48,0%) and in France (37,8%), in Italy and in Turkey the majority of children live in one-earner family (data are, respectively, 43,5% and 68,9%).

*Tab. 4: Children aged 0 -14 by parental employment status (2008)*

|              | Children in couple families |             |                         |            |        |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------|--------|
|              | Dual full time earners      | Sole earner | One-hand-a-half earners | No earners | Others |
| France       | 37,8                        | 28,9        | 24,4                    | 4,6        | 4,3    |
| Greece       | 48,0                        | 42,6        | 6,1                     | 2,3        | 0,9    |
| Italy        | 30,2                        | 43,5        | 20,0                    | 4,1        | 2,3    |
| Spain        | 40,2                        | 39,0        | 16,5                    | 2,8        | 1,8    |
| Turkey       | 11,6                        | 68,9        | 3,3                     | 13,4       | 2,9    |
| OECD Average | 39,7                        | 34,2        | 19,1                    | 4,9        | 3,1    |
| EU- Average  | 43,5                        | 33,3        | 16,3                    | 4,7        | 3,0    |

*Source: European Labour Force Survey (2008-2009)*

In the next pages we'll focus on work-life balance (WLB) issues, emphasized as a key to improve work quality and productivity, to achieve socioeconomic progress and to increase female employment rates, child well being, individual independence and gender equity (European Commission, 2005).

## **2. Work-life balance policies: main instruments aiming at reconciling work and family duties**

The term “reconciliation” appears at the beginning of the ‘90s in European Commission documents defining all those measures aimed to sustain the combination of paid work and caretaking responsibility. European Commission (1998) defines it as “the introduction of systematic actions taking into account families’ needs, maternity and paternity leave, child and elder care, as well as the development of a workplace context to favor the conciliation between working and family responsibilities both for men and women”. For the first time, it has been underlined that reconciliation is an issue regarding both genders to guarantee everybody a better quality of public and private life (Canal, 2010), producing optimal results for states and families, such as economic efficiency, gender equality and child well-being (European

Commission, 2005). The concept of reconciliation, however, has been understood in various social and geographic contexts, according to different contents and objectives reflecting the various characteristics of welfare and labor market systems and the family model that relies behind it. So, the direct comparison of the consequences of various types of WLB policies is difficult due to cross-cultural variations in government regimes, employment policies and labor-market conditions (Ackers, 2003). Even if in all European countries WLB have gained policy attention since many years, each country's legislations present significant differences. Generally, three main instruments for a direct policy aiming at reconciling work and family could be distinguished: Parental leave, early childcare services and child and family allowances. Regarding the first one, we find three main types in Europe (Moss, 2010): a) Maternity leave, generally available to mothers only aimed to protect the health of the mother and newborn child before, during and immediately after childbirth; b) Paternity leave, directed to fathers only, usually to be taken soon after the birth of a child; c) Parental leave, intended for children care at home by mother or father. There are two types of such leave: if the right is a family right, parents must choose who will make use of the parental leave. Other ways, if both parents have an individual, non-transferable entitlement, then both can claim a period of leave and if one parent doesn't take advantage of this entitlement, the right expires consequently. The second instrument, i.e. early child care services, refers to pre-school services (children under 6): they may be public-funded or private and, if public, they may be directly run by a public administration or by private bodies. The public-private mix varies considerably among countries. Finally, child and family allowances are cash payments to families with children to cover care expenses. The benefit amount may vary in different ways, for example by the ordinal position and the age of the child and/or the parent employment status. In some countries, family allowances may be supplemented by birth or school grants, child rearing/care allowances, adoption benefits, special supplements for single parents and allowances for adult dependents and disabled children. Now, we'll focus on the regulations in place in the five considered countries in order to identify common aspects as well as differences.

### *2.1. Maternity leave*

Even if Maternity leave is one of the most homogeneous measures in Europe, due to the existence of an EU directive which imposes a minimum level to all member countries (Moss, 2010), observing the regulations in place



in each national context the provisions vary distinctly across countries, by the duration of leave, the conditions of eligibility and the payment's amount.

First of all, the length of Maternity leave varies from 16 weeks in Turkey, France and Spain to 20 weeks in Italy, while in Greece is 17 weeks in private sector and 20 weeks in public sector<sup>4</sup>. Beneficiaries may combine pre- with post- birth leave and in all analyzed countries in the case of multiple or premature births the length of leave increases by some weeks. Secondly, where there are eligibility conditions to take leave, they are related to the period of service in employment and the paid insurance contributions. In Italy and Turkey there are no conditions for access to the leave, being eligible all residents women, while in the other countries some months of prior employment is required. In France 12 months during entire working life or six months during the last seven years prior to leave are needed and the mother needs to be making social security contributions at the beginning of the leave or be receiving unemployment contributory benefit. French mother under 21 years do not need any previous period of social security contribution, and those between 21 and 26 only 90 days, in the last previous seven years, or 180 days during working life. In Greece 6.6 months in last two years are needed, while in Spain women must be working or must be receiving unemployment benefits and must have paid taxes to Social Security for at least six months in last five years. As for the French case, the age of Spanish mother changes the requirements of working experience for Maternity leave: those under 21 don't have to comply with any of the previous contribution requirements to Social Security, while mothers from 21 to 26 years must have complied with half of the general working experience requirements (Ibáñez, 2010). Finally, in all the selected countries Maternity leave is paid and leave takers are compensated more or less for their loss of earnings: the payments is 100% of earnings in France, Greece and Spain, 80% in Italy (public sector employees receive 100% of earnings) and 66% in Turkey.

## *2.2. Paternity leave*

With regard to Paternity leave, we note significant differences across the analyzed countries. More specifically, in France the length of Paternity leave is 11 working days (18 days in the case of multiple births and in both cases the days must be taken within the four months following the birth) and the

---

<sup>4</sup> The information concerning Greece is based on: a) leave arrangements for employees in the private sector that are covered by laws and the National General Collective Labor Agreements signed between the Federation of Greek Industries and the General Confederation of Labor, which set the minimum requirements for all the private sector; b) leave arrangements for public sector employees that are covered by basic laws and the Code for Civil Servants.

payment is 100% of earning. In Greece, there are a two-days' paid (100% of earning) Paternity leave at the time of the child's birth just for men working in the private sector (for public sector there is no statutory entitlement). In Spain, fathers are entitled to two different types of leave. The first one, to be used at the time of birth, is two-day leave and is paid by the employer; the second one is paid by the Social Security for 100% of earning and lasts for two weeks, with the same requirements of eligibility as Maternity leave and it has to be used during or immediately after the end of Maternity leave (Ibáñez, 2010). Nowadays the Spanish government aims to extend the paternity leave period up to one month next year, but this plan has recently postponed due to budget restrictions.

Finally, in Turkey there is no general statutory entitlement on Paternity leave (the social partners may agree upon Paternity leave through collective labor agreements), while in Italy the recent reform of the Italian labor market (Fornero Law n. 92/2012) provides mandatory one paid-day of Paternity leave in the first five months of a child's life. In addition, Italian employed fathers may take 3 months' leave following childbirth in particular circumstances (like the mother's death or severe illness, the child being left by the mother or the child being in the sole care of the father) and the conditions are the same as for Maternity leave.

### *2.3. Parental leave*

In relation to Parental leave, the most significant difference is whether it is paid or not: among the selected countries, it is unpaid in Greece, Turkey and Spain (except in some regions). Payments vary from fixed, flat rate amounts in France to (partial) continued payment of salary in Italy. More specifically, in France the leave is unpaid for the first child, starting six months after the end of Maternity leave and paid for the second and subsequent child at a flat rate (pro-rated if taken only part-time).

Although the leave is income-tested (i.e. paid to families whose income is below a certain level) about 90% of families are eligible. In Italy, an income-tested benefit worth 30% of earnings (100% for employees in public sector during the first 30 days of leave), while leaves exceeding the period of six months or after the third year of the child are unpaid, unless the individual applicant's revenue is below the statutory limit (in which case paid at 30% of earnings).

There are also wide variations in the duration of leave and with respect to child's age. Parental leave' length ranges from a minimum of four months in

Greece until the child is six years old<sup>5</sup> to a maximum of three years in France and Spain up to child's third birthday. Italian Law entitles either parents to take up to six months leave at any time until the child is three years old; if the father abstains from work for at least three months, he could enjoy a "daddy quota", i.e. one more month and the leave can be taken at any time until a child is eight years, being possible for each parent to take leave at the same time. Finally, in Turkey a draft Law has proposed to extend unpaid six to twelve months to be shared by both men and women (Süral, 2009).

Besides, in all the analyzed countries legislation is the predominant way in which Parental leave issues are regulated, except in Turkey where a significant role is played by collective labor agreements. In relation to eligibility criteria and employment protection there are some differences across countries. French workers qualify for the leave after working for the same employer for at least one year, having given at least one month notice before taking the leave which cannot be refused by employers and having the right to return to the same or similar job at the same pay.

In Greece, the entitlement is allowed only in enterprises with 50+ employees and the two parents are eligible for leave if they have completed one year's continuous employment with their present employer. For an employee to be entitled, his/her spouse must work outside the home. If both parents are employed in public sector they declare who will make use of it, while if the mother is not employed the father cannot take the leave. It exists a crucial difference between Greek public and private sector: the right of employees is unconditional in the former and conditional upon the employer's agreement in the latter (Karamessini, 2008). While in Italy return to the same job position is always protected, in Spain it is possible only during the first year (after, job protection is restricted to a job of the same category, Columbia University, 2011).

The last difference among countries is connected to which of two types of Parental leave existing is assumed: in Italy and Turkey the right is a family right, while in France, Greece and Spain both parents have an individual, non-transferable entitlement to Parental leave.

Finally, the leave can be taken as part-time leave from work (usually between 16 and 32 hours per week) in France, Spain and Italy (where there are incentives to employers offering part-time leave), while in Greece part-time is possible only upon employer's approval.

---

<sup>5</sup>This is the regulation in place for employees in the private sector, while in public sector the length is up to two years.

#### *2.4. Early Childcare services*

The expression “early childcare services” refers to services encompassing formal care and addressed to children below school-going age, including those designed for children under three years and those for children from three up to six years. Our comparison focuses on three main aspects: a) types of available services in each country and enrolment rate; b); timetable; c) fees.

a) In France nursery schools are for children aged 3-6 (often accepting children from age two), while for those aged 0-3 there are several different types of child care services administered by social sector, including centers, family day care homes, parent cooperatives and part-day, part-week and drop in centers. Although they are not compulsory, attendance levels are high with around 42% of children aged two and nearly 100% by the age of four (OECD, 2008). In Greece kindergartens represent the first formal pre-primary educational stage providing services for children four-six years of age and, since 2006, it is compulsory for children aged five-six years old. Most of all kindergartens are public, but almost all private nurseries offer classes for children aged 3.5-6 years, which follow the same educational program defined by the Ministry of Education for public kindergartens. The second formal pre-primary educational stage is represented by day care centers or nurseries, providing services to children aged between two months (or seven months for the public sector) and up to five years of age (four years old children’ parents can choose to register him/her at a day care centre or at a kindergarten). According to OECD (2008) data, in 2008 formal childcare services covered in Greece just 16,7% of children under three years and 46,6% of those aged three-six years. Referring to the Italian context, child care centers are the publicly or privately funded childcare program serving children aged three months to three years, while preschool is designed to serve children from three to six years. While the school for three-six years children has an offer almost universal and it is attended by 97% of the children concerned (OECD, 2008), the provision of services for children up to three years is very low (data referring to school year 2009/2010 show that Italian formal childcare was available just to 13,6% of Italian children under three years old, Istat, 2011). In Spain, while there is nearly full coverage for children three-six years (98,5%) in primary schools, the enrolment in day care for the under three years in pre-primary education schools is much lower (37,5%) and shows larger regional variations. This education level is not compulsory, nurseries or day care centers belong to local authorities or private networks and are under the political responsibility of Social Welfare or Family authorities. With regard to Turkey, the optional pre-primary education is provided, under the

responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, in crèches (age group 0-36 months), kindergartens for 36-72 months children and in nursery classes for 60-72 months children or “practical” nursery classes for 36-72 months children (Unesco, 2006). Enrolment rates in pre-primary education for ages three-five years are the lowest among OECD countries (28%, OECD, 2008), so that the Government has recently launched a program aimed at fulfilling two targets by the start of the school year 2014/15: universal enrollment for kindergarten and 50% enrollment rate for the pre-primary education level as a whole .

b) Regarding the timetable, early childcare services provides more and more employment-friendly plans, being generally open from 8.00-8.30 am to 4.30-5.30 pm, favouring working parents a better care and work balance. In all the analyzed countries childcare services operate ten or eleven months a year, from September to June/July and five days a week (from Monday to Friday). On this point, French system seems to be particularly favorable since most nursery schools provide care also after school hours (until 6-6.30 pm), as well supplementary services (with income-related fees) are available during school holidays and they are open a half day on Saturdays.

c) In relation to the fee, in all the analyzed countries public early child care services are free of charge, except for meals, extra services and cleaning materials, which require a parental contribution (however, they are fully subsidized for low income families). On the other hand, the monthly fees for private childcare services range between 600 € and 1000 €; in the majority of the cases they are paid just by families, in some cases they are charged according to parental income level and for children in low-income families the costs are paid in part by Government (for example, in Italy fees are capped at a maximum of 18% of costs and in France they are borne fully by the Family Allowance Fund, Columbia University, 2011).

To summarize, in the analyzed countries the largest portion of public investment in childcare has been generally channeled into pre-school education for children aged three-six years, while childcare for under three years children is much less developed and doesn't cover all families needs. Secondly, the cost of different childcare services, whether borne by individuals indirectly through taxation or directly through fees, remains a key determinant in the type of childcare chosen by parents. Thus, due to the lacking of public childcare services' availability and to the high costs of private services, many parents have to search for other ways to balance work and family life responsibilities after the end of parental leave. The most common care arrangement is predominantly informal, still at-home care by family members,

usually grandparents: this is very common, for example, in Greece, Spain and Italy.

### *2.5. Child and Family Allowances*

The nature and rules of child and family allowances present significant differences across countries. First of all, they may be unrelated to the family income and paid as universal benefits or they can be income-tested; in such case benefits are usually paid only when family-income is below a specified level and child benefits are reduced as the family income increases. Within the actual economic crisis, recent trends suggest that income-related benefits are growing, targeting benefits on families with children whose incomes are below a certain level (Columbia University, 2011). Secondly, payment rates vary by age and/or number of children: in all of the considered countries benefits are restricted to families with children and in most cases their payment rate increases with the number of children. Let's see more in detail each country's systems.

The basic family allowance in France is a cash benefit provided regardless of income for each child beginning with the second up to age 20 and varying in amount by the child's age (Columbia University, 2011): all French families with at least two children qualify for this benefit and receive it (no allowance is paid for the first child). These allowances are tax-free and the benefit levels, which are usually (but not always) adjusted annually, are linked to prices and related on a formula basis to a base amount equal to about one half the French minimum wage. In Greece, there is a birth grant that is a flat-rate, lump-sum paid on the birth of a child to a parent who has worked at least 50 days in the last calendar year which ended three months before birth (European Observatory, 2002). The Distributive Fund for Employee Family Allowances (DLOEM) administers family allowances to employees not in receipt of such an allowance from their employer and it is financed by equal contributions from employees and employers (each contributes 1% of total pay). The allowances are paid in a lump sum annually and increase by number of children.

Regarding Italy, in the 1960s and 1970s family allowances constituted about 5-10% of a workers wage for a couple with 2 children, but by the early 1990s legislation reducing family allowances for those with income over a certain level was enacted. This has made such kind of benefits available just to a very few families, even if in 1999 a new means-tested benefit was introduced for all families with more than three children below. According to the Financial Law 2006, parents may benefit from a "baby bonus" which is an amount of money (1000 €) paid by chèque to any baby born or adopted in

2005 or 2006. However, also in this case, just the families with income lower than a certain level (50.000 €) could had this right. Finally, in 2011 the “baby bonus” has been replaced by the “Fund credit”: it is no longer a grant, but a loan amounting to 5,000 € for banks participating in the initiative of the Department for Family Policy grant at a subsidized rate families with children born or adopted in the period 2009/2011.

The Spanish Central Administration has different policies based on taxed reduction with regard to entry into parenthood, even if in September 2009 the Spanish Government announced significant reductions in such type of aids due to the economic crisis (Ibáñez, 2010). The only other general allowances are help for large families (three or more children), like reduced transportation fare, reduced university fees, some scholarships and a public housing priority. Finally, recently, a new benefit came into effect providing a onetime means-tested benefit upon birth of a third child and upon multiple births (coverage only for contributors to benefit system, Columbia University, 2011).

Finally, in Turkey children allowances are paid up to two children, if they haven't reached 18 years old age, but the family allowance in respect of a child shall not be granted in the case of children who: 1. get married; 2. are involved in trade on their own account or work for other real or legal persons or are in any type of gainful employment (except those who study and work during vacation periods); 3. have obtained a scholarship or whose education is sponsored by the State. Besides, there is a birth grant that shall be paid immediately by the accountants with no request for a payment order and shall be exempt from all taxes and deductions.

### **3. Families, care and work in a changing social-economic context: countries peculiarities**

The article has drawn a synthesis of the five countries national labor markets' features, showing the main consequences regarding families' size, composition and models and presenting statutory Maternity, Paternity and Parental leave arrangements, early childcare services' availability and family allowances system. From one hand, it has underlined some common trends in relation both to the main labor market indicators, both to the fertility issue as well as family size and composition. On the other hand, it has drawn a divergence scenario relating work-life balance policies, underlining considerable differences across the selected countries in terms of eligibility, duration and benefit levels in taking up Parental leave, as well as in terms of

early childcare services' availability, costs and quality and of cash payments to families.

First of all, the comparative analysis has confirmed some trends characterizing labor market and family issues in Europe. In all the analyzed countries the current weakening of the labor market is mostly the result of worsening economic activity linked to the aggravation of the crisis, impacting on employment, activity and unemployment rates. The unemployment divergence within the analyzed countries is partly the result of differences in development in economic activities, so that the effect of the recession was stronger in the countries with persistent or worsening debt crises, notably Greece and Spain. Although activity rates remained resilient in France and Spain despite the persistent labor market slack, in the other countries they are lower than the EU average. Besides, the increased uncertainty on the economic outlook has led to a growing share of temporary contracts employment, especially in Spain and in France (in the other countries data are similar to the EU average). Similarly, the share of part-time employment in the labor force is significant in all countries (especially in France, Italy and Spain). In such contexts large differences between employment developments for males and females have been observed: the gender gap in employment rates, as well as in activity rates, is higher than EU average in all the selected countries, with the exception of France. On the contrary, part-time gender gap is higher than the EU average just in Italy and in France.

Regarding the family dimension, data showed a growth in women age at first child-birth, so that over the last few decades fertility rates have been declining to a level beneath the replacement rate in the analyzed countries (except in Turkey). Similar trends have occurred in most of EU Member States which, since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has witnessed strong declines in fertility levels, both caused by changes in the number of children, as well as changes in the timing of childbirth (Balbo, Billari, Mills, 2012; Naldini, 2013). According to some authors (Di Nicola, 2008; Del Boca, Rosina, 2009; Sweet, 2012) the crisis of fertility is the effect of the lack of social and family policies aimed to support care-work. In addition, even if the impact of the economic crisis on fertility is not yet reflected in our data, it has to remind that recent studies indicate that recessions often lead to postponement of fertility, especially of first births. Indeed, fertility tends to react to the downs in economy, when high unemployment and job instability are important reasons for young people to delay the formation of new families and for parents to postpone childbirth (Kreyenfeld, Andersson, Pailhé, 2012).

The article has drawn a very heterogeneous landscape with regard to Paternity and Parental leave measures, while Maternity leave' ones seem to be more homogeneous. Two approaches to leave policy are increasingly



apparent. 1) The more widespread is the traditional concept of a 'Maternity leave' intended only for women, linked to pregnancy, childbirth and the first months of motherhood. Other leave available to women, mainly Parental leave, is additional and available equally to women and men. So under this approach, women are entitled to more leave overall than men. 2) The second, more recently emerging approach is to move away from a 'Maternity leave' only for women: either towards a birth-related leave part of which can be taken by women or men; or towards dropping a birth-related leave altogether in favour of a generic 'Parental leave', usually with periods designated for 'mothers only' and 'fathers only' (Moss, 2010). By 2012, under the terms of Directive 2010/18/EU, all EU Member States must provide at least three months Parental leave per parent, to increase to four months. All the analyzed countries fulfil such terms of Directive. The most significant differences are related to whether it is paid or not and to whether it is an individual or family entitlement<sup>6</sup>. It is unpaid in Greece, Turkey and Spain. In relation to the second dimension, in Italy and Turkey the right is a family right, while in France, Greece and Spain both parents have an individual, non-transferable entitlement to Parental leave. As Parental leave in some countries includes a period of time that only fathers can take (sometimes referred to as a 'father's quota'), the distinction between Paternity leave and father-only Parental leave can be unclear and confusing. It has to be reminded that in 2010 the European Parliament has approved a proposal for a Directive of the European Council which includes the introduction of a compulsory period of paternity (only available to fathers and in addition to Parental leave) of at least 15 working days, paid at 100% of salary, that new fathers may use during the period of compulsory Maternity leave. Observing the regulations in place in the analyzed countries, just in Spain this condition is present; in French 11 days (plus 3 additional days from employers) are granted to new fathers, while in Greece just two days, in Italy only one day and in Turkey there is no general statutory entitlement on Paternity leave.

Regarding childcare services in 2002 Barcelona Summit concluded with two goals to be reached by EU Member States: to provide childcare for at least 90% of children three-six years and at least 33% of children under three years by 2010 (Ibáñez, 2010). As we've saw, just in France and in Spain such goals seem to be almost reached. On the contrary, in Greece and in Turkey the childcare services are insufficient to meet demand: enrolment rates are

---

<sup>6</sup> No payment requirements are specified in Directive 2010/18/EU and Parental leave is defined as "an individual right and in principle non-transferable", though the directive goes on to add that "Member States are allowed to make it transferable" (Moss, 2010: 22).

equal to just 16,7% of children under three years and 46,6% of those aged three-six years in Greece and to 28% for ages three-five years in Turkey. Also in Italy a big development for care services addressed to children under three is needed, since data referring to school year 2009/2010 show that Italian formal childcare was available just to 13,6% of Italian children under three years. Secondly, even if the timetable of public childcare centres is generally employment-friendly, the annual didactic schedule presents problems of compatibility for many families: very few working parents have the opportunity to go on vacation for two summer months, i.e. when child care centres are closed.

The comparative analysis confirms the strong relationship between the reconciliation policies and the different socio-economic national contexts as well as cultural patterns and welfare regimes characterizing each country (Crespi, Rossi, 2013). On the other hand, the individuation of significant differences in countries with similar socio-economic conditions leads to reflect on potential improvement factors in work-life balance policies and services in order to develop new solutions for maintaining good level of social welfare during the contingent crisis.

#### **4. Conclusions: limits and opportunities of work-life balance policies**

The article raises a number of questions about the development of leave and related policies. Here we'll deal with some of them to contribute to ongoing debate on the improvement factors required to implement them, reflecting upon the potential impacts both on individual employees, both on organizations and society. We'll mainly focus on "structural" elements contributing to work-family articulation (Crompton, Lewis, Lyonette, 2007), i.e. kinds of supports provided to employed mothers and dual-earner families, labour market regulation (particularly in respect of working hours) and employer policies (including both work-life entitlements they offer to their employees, both employee management strategies). Such elements are strictly connected to the "relational" ones (*ibidem*), referring to those between men and women, i.e. the extent to which partners share responsibility for caring work. It is no doubt that such elements have an important impact on the achievement of a positive articulation of employment and family life within individual families (Naldini, Saraceno, 2011). At the same time, however, work-family articulation outcomes at the "relational" level has to be analyzed as deriving from "structural" elements (Crompton, Lewis, Lyonette, 2007).

Generally, it is shared the idea that the Parental leave schemes have the potential to structure the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work, the childbearing decisions and the strategies adopted by working parents to balance their work and family life. Thus, the potential effects of Parental leave policies at EU level could be analyzed referring to two interconnected dimensions characterizing the actual society. The first one refers to gender equality issue. On the one hand, Parental leave can be seen as a policy that minimizes the gender employment gap (still high as confirmed from data showed in table 1) and, thereby, it increases women's employment by enabling mothers to combine care with employment. On the other hand, however, it can be seen as a measure that reinforces a traditional gendered division of paid and unpaid work and, thereby, it damages women's future career opportunities, which might further contribute to gender differences in wages and to weaker promotion opportunities (Ejrnæs, 2008). So, if a gender equal society is to be achieved, new workplace laws are required, assuming the dual earner family model (the most widespread, as confirmed by table 4) instead of neo traditional households: Parental leave' outcomes are related to whether such policies support one or another (Kamerma, Moss, 2009).

Besides, it is necessary to promote concrete actions to favor a major father' involvement in family management, thought incentives to the use of Parental leave for child care. This could also operate on a cultural level, reinforcing the concept that the reconciliation is not an exclusive working mother' right, but it is recognized as a both parents' right. On this point, we can identify three aspects more influencing the achievement of a greater gender equality (Littig, 2008). First of all, Paternity leaves have to be conceived as compulsory. The second aspect refers to the allowance provided during such leaves, since male employees usually have higher wages than women and so a lot of them would not to ask for Paternity leave for economical reasons (Ibáñez, 2010). Finally, the opportunity to use Parental leave in part-time form seems to be a good practice, because it would allow both parents to avoid to abandon job for too long, promoting a more equitable distribution of family care loads in and a greater symmetry in labor market. Otherwise, excessively long leaves taken by mothers cause often negative effects on their occupational positions and, consequently, on their careers (Thévenon, 2008).

The second dimension, strictly connected to the first one, is related to the growing flexibility in work organization, since legislations intended to implement tools to organize differently working time could strengthen gender inequalities in labor market, rather than diminish them (Hardy, Adnett, 2002). For example, part-time work offers certain advantages for working mothers, improving the management of WLB for some individuals, but it may also reinforce gender inequalities, since part-time job has been associated with a

range of potentially negative consequences including low payment, low job security, lesser benefits and a reinforcement of the traditional male model of work, negatively associated with career aspirations (Craig, Powell, 2011). On this point, therefore, policies applying the “flexicurity principle” are strongly needed to guard the growing number of non standard workers: its link to WLB issues is evident, since “flexicurity should support gender equality, by promoting equal access to quality employment for women and men and offering measures to reconcile work, family and private life” (European Commission, 2007). In other words, according to Di Nicola (2013), care work has to be recognized as work of “public utility”, because it is central for the growing of human capital and social development of a community. Care work should be no longer only female duty and responsibility, since it has to be considered the “ability that allow men and women to exercise greater control over their own biographies of life, already too de-institutionalized and flexible” (*ibidem*: 60).

A strong drawback toward an effective implementation of WLB policies to assist employees in balancing their work and personal life that seems to be common to all analyzed countries is the low availability and inadequacy of public early childcare services. A direct consequence of this situation, considering also the private structures’ high fees, is the significant involvement of grandparents in childcare, which has become more and more important both as substitute to formal services both as support to their use, since this kind of support is flexible in terms of time and for free. However, not all couples can rely on this kind of support, or because grandparents are ill, have died or are still working (situation increasingly frequent considering the latest regulations on retirement in most EU countries), so that it is evident the necessity to plan a developed availability of early childcare services, rejecting the idea that public childcare services are complementary to the “free service” provided by grandparents. This leads to underline the necessity to shift from a “familistic welfare state” (Esping-Andersen, 1990), grounded on parental solidarity and strong responsibility assigned to the family for care and economical support in order to protect its members from the exposure to social risks (Leitner, 2003), to a “community welfare” (Donati, 2006; Donati, Prandini, 2010) founded, in a subsidiary view, on the interventions of different social actors (political institutions, firms, third sector and families). In particular, within the company dimension, it is required a different role played by industrial relations and employers as well Law orienting (also through monetary rewards or tax and contribution relief, as recently tested in Italy) the firms to realize “positive actions” aimed to introduce new organizational and management working time modalities or services qualifying the firms as “family friendly” (for example, the introduction of particular forms of

working hours flexibility or of training programs for the reintegration after Maternity and Paternity leaves). Such arrangements could favour the so called “company welfare state” (Mazzucchelli, 2011), an innovative way to fulfil workers’ needs proposing a model of firm based on the idea of community and social responsibility, in order to support their employees with respect to risks not adequately covered by the social welfare state, or, more generally, to improve the living conditions and well-being .

A final remark has to be referred to the evident change regarding fertility, i.e. the postponement of childbearing. Focusing on the potential effects of a wide availability of reconciliation facilities on the childbearing decisions, four are the main factors that would affect the decision to have child: a) the ease of accessing and maintaining employment; b) a system of taxes and transfers lowering the direct costs of children’s care and education; c) longer periods of parental leave and, lastly, d) a greater availability of formal childcare for pre-school children combined with an adequate adjustment of working hours to childcare (D’Addio, d’ Ercole, 2005). Even if these factors may be effective in raising fertility, researches have underlined differences across countries. For example, combining childrearing and being in employment seems most incompatible in the Mediterranean countries and some central European countries (OECD, 2007: 34). This leads to highlight the strong relationship between the reconciliation policies and the different socio-economic national contexts as well cultural patterns and welfare regimes characterizing each country. Within the current crisis, the reduction of economic resources, the labour market’s instability and insecurity due to career precariousness and fragmentation (combined with an increasing reversibility of reached professional conditions), as well the lack of adequate welfare benefits to cope with an unstable income, could constitute a real obstacle to the childbearing decisions. Such considerations support the notion that parents’ decisions of having a (-nother) child are not taken in a social vacuum but are susceptible to socio-economic and other conditions (Martín-García, 2013). So, the promotion of a social sustainability perspective is needed to favor the development of a deeper workers’ capabilities to deal with the changes taking place.

To conclude, work-life balance policies’ effectiveness has to be evaluated in front of the big economic, cultural and social transformation occurred in the actual society: from the issues regarding the present recession and the consequent growing sense of insecurity and uncertainty as well as the declining workers wages (Walker, Goodwin, Cornwall, 2000) and the persistent precariousness in labor market, to those related to the existing different models of family, till the gender equality. Thus, although some researchers have discussed the consequences of family-friendly policies for individual

employees (Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, 2005), the actual impact of these policies on organizations and society is less clear (Strohmeier, 2008). We think that the reconciliation has to be recognized as a societal matter, which has to be managed at a political level (Riva, 2009: 40), since, especially in a crucial moment like the present one, when important elements of economical and societal crisis are evident, all the involved actors (employers, unions, professional associations and advocacy groups, government, and communities) must engage in an ongoing dialogue on how to close the gap between today's work and family realities, as well on the policies and practices governing their interrelationships.

### **Bibliography**

- Ackers P. (2003), The work–life balance from the perspective of economic policy actors, *Social Policy and Society*, vol. 2, n. 3, 221–229
- Balbo N., Billari F.C., Mills M. (2013), Fertility in advanced societies: A review of research, *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne de Démographie*, vol. 29, n. 1, 1-38
- Bauman Z. (2005), *Liquid Life*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Bertani M. (2013), Families in Italy in the face of the crisis of 'Mediterranean' welfare, *Italian Sociological Review*, vol. 3, n. 2, 85-100
- Bianchi S., Milkie M. (2010), Work and family Research in the First Decade of the 21st Century, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 72, n. 3, 705-725
- Brough P., O'Driscoll M., Kalliath T. (2005), The ability of 'family friendly' organizational resources to predict work-family conflict and job and family satisfaction, *Stress and Health*, vol. 21, n. 4, 223–234
- Canal T. (2010), 'Differenziali salariali e tempi di vita', in Rustichelli E. (ed.), *Rompere il cristallo. I risultati di un'indagine Isfol sui differenziali retributivi di genere in Italia*, I libri del fondo sociale europeo, Roma, 43-58
- Castles F.G. (2009), What Welfare States Do: A Disaggregated Expenditure Approach, *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 38, n. 1, 45-62
- Castles F.G., Ferrera M. (1996), Home Ownership and the Welfare State: Is Southern Europe Different?, *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 1, n. 2, 163-185
- Columbia University (2011), *The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies*, available at [www.childpolicyintl.org](http://www.childpolicyintl.org) (accessed 10 January 2012)

- Craig L., Powell A. (2011), Nonstandard work schedules, work-family balance and the gendered division of childcare, *Work, Employment and Society*, vol. 25, n. 2, 274-291
- Crespi I, Rossi G. (eds.) (2013), *Balancing work and family care: European experiences*, FrancoAngeli, Milano
- Crompton R., Lewis S., Lyonette C. (eds.) (2007), *Women, men, work and family in Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke
- D'Addio A.C., d'Ercole, M.M. (2005), *Trends and determinants of fertility rates in OECD countries: the role of policies*, Working Paper n. 27 OECD Social Employment and Migration, OECD, Paris.
- Del Boca D., Rosina A. (2009), *Famiglie sole. Sopravvivere con un welfare inefficiente*, Il Mulino, Bologna
- Di Nicola P. (2008), *Famiglia: sostantivo plurale. Amarsi, nascere e crescere nelle famiglie del terzo millennio*, FrancoAngeli, Milano
- Di Nicola P. (2013), Il lavoro di cura tra defamilizzazione e mercificazione, *Sociologia e Politiche Sociali*, n.1, 49-62
- Donati P. (2006), 'Welfare, famiglia e sussidiarietà: verso nuove politiche sociali che possono generare benessere comunitario', in Pera M. (ed.), *Libertà e laicità*, Cantagalli, Siena, 99-107
- Donati P., Prandini R. (2010), *La conciliazione famiglia-lavoro nelle piccole e medie imprese*, FrancoAngeli, Milano
- Ejrnæs A. (2008), 'What is the Role of Parental Leave policies in shaping Work and Care in the Enlarged EU?', in Ejrnæs A., Boje T., Lewis J., Plumien, A. (eds.), *Workpackage 3: Labour Market and Social Policies* University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, 26-48
- Esping-Andersen G. (1990), *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Polity Press & Princeton, Cambridge
- European Commission (1998), *Reconciliation between work and family life in Europe*, OOOPEC, Luxembourg
- European Commission (2005), *Reconciliation of work and private life*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Belgium
- European Commission (2007), *Towards common principles of flexicurity: more and better jobs through flexibility and security*, COM(2007) 359 final, 27 June 2007, Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs, Brussels
- European Observatory (2002), *Family benefits and family policies in Europe-Greece*, European Observatory on the Social Situation, Demography and Family, Belgium
- Eurostat (2009), *European Labour Force Survey 2008-2009*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Belgium
- Eurostat (2011), *Eurostat demographic statistics*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Belgium

- Eurostat (2012), *European economic statistics*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Belgium
- Hardy S., Adnett N. (2002), The Parental Leave Directive: Towards a Family-Friendly Social Europe?, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 8, n. 2, 157-172.
- Ibáñez M. (2010), *Fertility, Female Participation in Employment and Reconciliation Policies in Spain*, REC-WP 13/2010, Working Papers on the Reconciliation of Work and Welfare in Europe, RECWOWE Publication, Dissemination and Dialogue Centre, Edinburgh
- Istat (2011), *Anno scolastico 2009/2010 l'offerta comunale di asili nido e altri servizi socio-educativi per la prima infanzia*, available at: [http://www.politichefamiglia.it/media/71432/asili\\_nidotestointegrale20110718.pdf](http://www.politichefamiglia.it/media/71432/asili_nidotestointegrale20110718.pdf) (accessed 10 May 2011)
- Kammerman S., Moss P. (eds.) (2009), *The politics of parental leave policies. Children, parenting, gender and the labour market*, The Policy Press, Bristol
- Karamessini M. (2008), *The provision of childcare services in Greece*, external report presented to the EU Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Unit G.1 'Equality between women and men'
- Kazepov Y. (ed.) (2009), *La dimensione territoriale delle politiche sociali in Italia*, Carocci, Roma
- Kreyenfeld M., Andersson G., Pailhé A. (2012), *Economic Uncertainty and Family Dynamics in Europe*, *Demographic Research*, vol. 27, n. 28, 835-852.
- Leitner S. (2003), Varieties of familialism: the caring functions of the family in comparative perspective, *European Societies*, vol. 5, n. 4, 353-375.
- Lewis J. (2009), *Work-family balance, gender and policy*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham
- Littig B. (2008), *Work Life Balance: catchword or catalyst for sustainable work?*, Sociological Series, vol. 85
- Martín-García T. (2013), Romulus and Remus or Just Neighbours? A Study of Demographic Changes and Social Dynamics in Italy and Spain, *Population Review*, vol. 52, n. 1, 1-2.
- Mazzucchelli S. (ed.) (2011), *Conciliazione famiglia e lavoro. Buone pratiche di welfare aziendale*, Osservatorio Nazionale sulla famiglia, Roma.
- Moss P. (ed.) (2010), *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2010*, Employment Relations Research Series No. 115, Department for Business Innovation & Skills, London
- Naldini M. (2013), *Family in the Mediterranean Welfare States*, Routledge, London.
- Naldini M., Saraceno C. (2011), *Conciliare famiglia e lavoro. Vecchi e nuovi patti tra sessi e generazioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna
- OECD (2007), *Babies and bosses. Reconciling work and family life. A synthesis of findings for OECD countries*, OECD, Paris
- OECD (2008), *Education database*, OECD, Paris



- OECD (2011), *Family Database*, available at: [http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en\\_2649\\_34819\\_37836996\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1,00.html) (accessed 28 May 2011)
- Pfau-Effinger B. (2005), Welfare State Policies, cultural differences and care arrangements, *European Societies*, vol. 7, n. 2, 321-347
- Riva E. (2009), *Quel che resta della conciliazione. Lavoro, famiglia, vita privata tra resistenze di genere e culture organizzative*, Vita & Pensiero, Milano
- Strohmeier P. (2008), Family Policies in Europe – How do they work?, *Journal of Societal & Social Policy*, vol. 7, n. 3, 1-17
- Süral N. (2009), Anti-Discrimination Rules and Policies in Turkey, *Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal*, vol. 30, n. 2, 245-272
- Sweet S. (ed.) (2012), *Work and family policy. International comparative perspectives*, Routledge, London
- Thévenon O. (2008), *Labour force participation of women with children: disparities and developments in Europe since the 1990s*, Economix Working Papers, 2008-1, University of Paris West - Nanterre la Défense, EconomiX
- Unesco (2006), *Turkey. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) program*, International Bureau of Education, Geneva.
- Walker R., Goodwin R., Cornwall E. (2000), 'Work patterns in Europe and related social security issues', Pieters D. (ed.), *Changing work patterns and social security*, EISS Yearbook, London, 5-43
- Zanatta A.L.(1998), Le politiche familiari in prospettiva europea, *Sociologia e politiche sociali*, vol. 1, n. 3, 29-45