Report on incentive structures of parents' use of particular childcare forms

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Abstract:

Parents across the European Union use a range of childcare arrangements. This working paper contributes to our understanding of the determinants and consequences of different childcare arrangements for different families and different family members. The paper has three aims. The first is to deepen understanding of the motivations of parents for using a particular source of childcare. The second is to set the scene for an exploration of the extent of policy implementation gaps between an administrative understanding of statutory childcare service provision and the actual experience of users of these services. Third, the report highlights where the policy community might benefit from improved data to address certain knowledge gaps around childcare use. This research employs a mixed methods approach, combining primary data collection in six countries (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, UK); reviews of the statutory childcare policies in these six countries; and a methodological critique of the available data on childcare use for those countries, including harmonized comparative survey data. The central aim is for this working paper to be used as a reference tool for further analyses.

Keywords: childcare indicators, parents, cross-national mixed methods, policy implementation gap, family policy

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1. Introduction

Children need to be looked after or supervised, so those responsible for them, typically their parents, need to make arrangements for childcare. There are various options available to parents for childcare. Most parents, in particular mothers, will spend a significant amount of time looking after their children. They may also rely upon family members or friends to provide some childcare. In addition, parents may use public childcare, and school. They may also use private care, such as a nanny or a child-minder. In summary, there are different ways that parents can accommodate their responsibility to provide childcare and so we see a variety of parental practices and childcare arrangements.

How might the variation in childcare arrangements be explained? This report aims to better understand the incentive structures for parents' use of particular childcare forms. A guiding question is: what enables parents in their use of childcare? Clearly, there will be cross-national differences, including cultural and structural difference. However, there are also some general aspects to a parent's responsibility to arrange childcare that are likely to be relevant across the member states of the European Union.

It is important to understand the motivations of parents for using a particular source of childcare. Other research conducted as part of the work package to which this report belongs (work package 6) has highlighted the consequences of usage of different childcare arrangements for children and their parents, in particular for mothers (e.g. Del Boca, Piazzalunga and Pronzato, 2014; Brilli, 2015; Brilli, Del Boca and Pronzato, (2015). A better understanding of the enablers and constraints around a parent using a certain kind of childcare may enable us to better support parents and children.

This research employs cross-national mixed methods approach, combining primary data collection in six countries (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, UK); reviews of the statutory childcare policies in these six countries; and a methodological critique of the available data on childcare use for those countries, including harmonized comparative survey data. The report has three aims. The first is to deepen understanding of the motivations of parents for using a particular source of childcare. For this, interviews with parents and parenting-related associations to deepen our understanding of the various incentives structures associated with childcare types. Second, a country-by-country policy review informs a discussion of the extent of policy implementation gaps between an administrative understanding of statutory childcare service provision and the actual experience of users of these services as reported in the interview data. Third, the report highlights where the policy

community might benefit from improved data to address certain knowledge gaps around childcare use.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review of parental practices and childcare arrangements. Sections 3 to 8 are the country specific chapters. Each chapter reviews the institutional context and the childcare system for that country, describes the available data use to inform policy and academic debate, lists the interviewees for the primary data collection and concludes with key issues for that country. Section 9 reviews the international survey data available to inform policy and academic debate. Section 10 concludes with a discussion of the common cross-national themes regarding the incentive structures on parents' use of particular childcare forms.

2. Literature Review: Parental practices and childcare arrangements

There is an increasingly broad interdisciplinary literature on the ways in which households manage work and family life (including childcare), much of which has focused on the extent of the gendered division of labour. Key insights include the persistence of gender divisions in work and family life, despite increases in female employment, and wide variations in the extent and means by which these exist, across space (geographical regions), social groups (class, race, etc.) and time (assuming shifts from traditional divisions of labour). While women continue to bear the bulk of the responsibility for care both with respect to the physical performance of tasks, but also setting in place of arrangements for others to care, institutions, culture, social structure, and individual preferences each play a role in shaping the particular constraints a household might face and the strategies they employ to negotiate the organisation of work and care. For the most part, this literature has focused on broad associations and typologies rather than day-to-day 'micropractices' (e.g. Medved, 2004).

The comparative policy literature in particular has focused on the importance of institutional arrangements, with a special emphasis on access to formal childcare services in both promoting female employment and reconciling work and family obligations. Comparative analyses often rely on associations between formal childcare use and maternal employment in order to justify calls for increased public investment in formal care services.[2] The implication seems to be that access to formal services is either necessary or sufficient (depending on the analysis) for parents (or, rather, mothers) to work and/or to work full-time.

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[2] See, for example, Gornick, Meyers & Ross, 1997.

This type of analysis emphasises macro-level patterns and causal factors, with only limited attention to micro-level variation or appreciation of everyday practices.[3] A focus on the relative use of formal services not only underestimates the vast importance of informal social networks but also tends to ignore the everyday challenges of organising care, which exist even when formal services are widely available and publicly provided (Larsen, 2004). Drawing heavily on the sociological 'household strategies' and human geography literatures this review maps the current literature on the everyday practices and logistics of arranging childcare cross-nationally, with a focus on both the constraints within which families operate and the strategies used to overcome these constraints.

The articles selected for this review were chosen on the basis of a systematic key word search through academic bibliographic databases. Roughly 100 articles were selected for review based on the keywords related to childcare and the articles' relevance to understanding the everyday practices of childcare arrangements. The search included both general and country-specific academic literature and was not limited to European countries. Only contemporary literature (roughly since 2000) was reviewed. 'Grey' literature such as policy documents or reports written by advocacy groups and other non-profit organisations was not included.[4] Furthermore, the search included only sources which were published in English. Those texts selected from the keyword search were compiled into an annotated bibliography, grouped by theme, along with about 25 further sources identified from the reference lists of the original sources.

The review begins with a discussion of the key frameworks used to understand how parents arrange care for their children, focusing on the twin issues of constraints and strategies. The main types of strategies (adjustments to work, adjustments to care and coordinating mechanisms) identified from the review are explored in detail. Finally, the review discusses the most common methodological approaches and their limitations before forming a synthesis of the key findings.

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[3] For an exception see Kroger & Sipila.

[4] The scope of this review is limited to understanding what academics have researched on the issue of daily care management; however, a full treatment of the subject would necessitate a review of the 'grey literature' which often has a more localised, practical focus and is well-positioned to explore this topic. Policy organisations in particular often conduct their own data collection and analyses, to which academics do not always have full access. For an example see Daycare Trust & Children in Scotland (2012). *The Scottish Childcare Lottery*. London: Daycare Trust.

2.1. Childcare constraints and challenges facing dual earning families

The challenges of balancing work and family life apply to all households to varying degrees, not only parents and not only parents with younger children. However, the demands of caring for children place additional constraints on parents leading to the organisation, coordination and management of their work and care responsibilities being particularly demanding. Schwanen & de Jong (2008) highlight three types of constraints facing families: spatial, moral and institutional. Spatial constraints include the distribution of facilities (housing, employment, schools, care services); moral constraints include local cultural norms; and institutional constraints include rules, regulations and policies. Broadening spatial constraints to include time as well as space (spatial-temporal constraints), these three types can be used to group the range of constraints identified among the studies in this review.

The role of spatial constraints and their interaction with time is a key contribution of the human geography literature, a sub-section of which has focused specifically on work-life challenges and gendered strategies (e.g. Kwan, 2000; Schwanen, 2007; Hubers, Schwanen and Dijst, 2011). Time constraints are well-documented in the work-family balance/conflict literature at large, where there is often a great deal of emphasis on working time in particular.[5] Similarly, the analytical framework of the economics of the household literature focuses on time allocation between work, family and leisure.[6] The gendered nature of time spent in employment or care work is well-known. Similarly, work-life conflict more generally is often presented in terms of a lack of time (for leisure, care and domestic labour) due to increased working hours, particularly among women and mothers.

However, this literature has paid much less attention to the way in which time constraints interact with space constraints, or what geographers call 'space-time fixity' (e.g. He, 2013). Time is a constraint not only due to (limited) quantity but also due to the necessity of being in particular places at set times (Jain, Line & Lyons, 2011). For example, drop-off and pick-up times of formal care services and schools are often relatively fixed, and in some cases may be exceedingly rigid. Skinner (2005) refers to these as 'coordination points', highlighting in particular the morning journey from home to care/school and then to work; pick-up from school, and pick-up after work.[7] The complexity of these transport systems themselves

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[5] See, for example, Jacobs & Gerson, 2004.
[6] For a review see Kooreman & Wunderink,1997.
[7] Skinner (2005, p.110) also notes that for UK parents, there is commonly a fourth 'coordination point' circa lunchtime due to short nursery education sessions (morning or afternoon). One family's process is as such: 'The oldest child finished early education at 11.45 a.m. but could not go on to private nursery until the afternoon session began at 1 p.m. To fill that gap of one and quarter hours, the father and the mother both came home from

constitute a barrier to employment, particularly among mothers who usually shoulder the burden of managing it (Skinner, 2005).

To the extent that the childcare literature has recognised issues of space, this has primarily been in terms of access to care services (formal or informal), often linking access to maternal employment.[8] This is usually couched in terms of the *availability* of care services but the spatial component of *proximity* (distance between home, work and care/school) tends to be under-stated. In contrast, the geographical literature has highlighted the importance of space in terms of travel and transport – taking children to and from school and care, and coordinating these journeys with work schedules (Skinner, 2005; Schwanen, 2007; Jain, Line & Lyons, 2011). This particular challenge has become of increased importance with a marked decline in children's independent travel[9] and therefore creates an increased burden on parents.

Nevertheless, the physicality of the space-time element does not always capture the entirety of the constraints mothers face. Skinner (2005) notes that many of the mothers in her sample did not physically transport the children but were still in charge of making sure that someone (e.g. a child-minder or family member) did so. She argues that her concept of 'coordination points' captures both the time-space element and the management aspect. This issue of who is ultimately responsible for overseeing children's care has a deeply normative element. Duncan and co-authors (2004) suggest that mothers make decisions about appropriate childcare through the lens of 'gendered moral rationalities', which often prioritises children's needs. Similarly, Forsberg (2009) argues that particular practices are about enacting parental ideals (such as the norm of involved parenting). These norms about appropriate roles and appropriate care place moral constraints on the behaviour of parents, and mothers in particular, who may have concerns about placing their children in the care of 'others', including the father of their children. Cultural norms may also influence the acceptability of paying for care services. For example, Forsberg (2009) further argues that in Sweden it is rare to pay for a babysitter or nanny due to a general discomfort with domestic

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work at different times over the lunchtime period to look after their son and take him to and from the different providers.'

[8] For Asia see Chen, Short & Entwisle (2000). For Europe see Van Ham & Mulder (2005); Heylen, Mortelmans, Hermans, & Boudiny (2012). For North America see Compton (2013); Compton & Pollak (2014).

[9] For brief reviews of this phenomenon, see Barker (2011); He (2013).

services; thus where Swedish families use non-parental care outside of formal group services it is usually an unpaid family member or a friend.[10]

Families may also face different constraints depending on the institutional context within which they live. The importance of institutions is well recognised in the comparative policy literature, including studies which focus on childcare in particular. The concept of 'care regime' is often used to capture variance in institutional and cultural factors such as the relative use of formal versus informal care or the extent of public provision and funding of care services (e.g. Bettio & Plantenga, 2004; Mahon, Anttonen, Bergqvist, Brennan & Hobson, 2012). Care regimes are ideal types used to highlight differences in care arrangements across countries, but usually in terms of who is the main provider of care at the macro-level rather than how care arranging is carried out at the micro-level. The institutionalist focus often implies or assumes that families in different care regimes have very different ways of coping with the challenges of home and work; however, a few comparative studies have questioned this assertion by pointing out that families face similar problems across countries and particular types of families may have more in common with similar families in different countries than with other families in their own country (Larsen, 2004; Kröger, 2010). For example, Kröger (2010) demonstrates that the care arrangements of lone mothers is remarkably similar across countries, and argues that a focus on everyday practices, rather than the policies or overall provision of formal services which form the basis of most 'care regimes', shows much greater cross-country similarity and suggests the need for a more modest appraisal of the importance of policy.

This disconnectedness between formal policies and everyday practices is further highlighted by Yerkes and co-authors (2010) who note that policies may have little relevance for families, either because it is difficult to take advantage of their provisions or because the policies do not match their needs and preferences.[11] Consequently while child and family policy can facilitate parents' attempts to manage work and care, it can also exacerbate or create further problems for parents.[12] Further challenges can arise in relation to broader infrastructures (rather than childcare provision or policy specifically). The school system has long been criticized for continuing to assume the presence of a non-employed or part-time worker with the ability to navigate short hours and holiday schedules, and early education or

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[10] For additional sources on the role of local cultural norms see Barker, 2011, p. 417 on 'local moralscapes' as well as Holloway (1998) and McDowell, Ray, Perrons, Fagan & Ward (2005).
[11] See also Lowe & Weisner (2004) and Sun (2012).
[12] See, for example, Wiggan (2010) concerning UK tax subsidies.

childcare services which follow school hours may exacerbate this problem. Transport systems can also pose additional challenges for parents attempting to navigate daily work-school-care journeys.

At the same time, certain social groups face additional challenges in coordinating work and care. In their study of immigrant families, Wall & Sao José (2004) note the unique problems they face in terms of the absence of close kin networks, strong pressure to work (often long or atypical hours) and integration problems such as social isolation, lack of information regarding services, and housing difficulties. Parents whose children have additional needs sometimes cannot rely on group care services due to concerns about the safety and well-being of each child (Jinnah & Stoneman, 2008) or to the necessity of increased supervision (McCann, Bull & Winzenberg, 2012). Due to a lack of financial resources or cultural divides regarding appropriate forms of care, lower income households may also face challenges making use of formal care services, increasing the need for reliable informal arrangements (Press, Ragan & Laughlin, 2006; Vincent, Braun & Ball, 2008; Stefansen & Farstad, 2010).

The labour market situation of being a non-standard or atypical worker has attracted scrutiny in relation to childcare. Scholars are divided on the extent to which non-standard working (working evening/nights/weekends, shift work, etc.) should be considered primarily a constraint on parents' decisions or a strategy to accommodate certain preferences. Where atypical working is seen as a constraint imposed on families or individuals from outside, it is perceived to be a result of rigid employer demands or a lack of suitable childcare services. Preston and co-authors (2000) argue that such workers frequently do not have much control over their hours, and that mothers in particular often work atypical hours due to the constraint of working around their partners' work schedules, which take priority. The timing of atypical working can make it difficult to access formal childcare services, which often do not provide services in the evening, weekends or overnight (Statham & Mooney, 2003). The non-conformance or variability associated with non-standard work is thus partly an issue of timing, but also an issue of predictability: atypical work may also refer to work schedules which change from day to day or week to week, making it difficult to make childcare arrangements in advance (Preston *et al*, 2000; Moss, 2009). To the extent that atypical working increases the complexity of arranging childcare, it can therefore be a source of stress and work-life conflict (Moss, 2009). Where atypical work is considered a constraint, the emphasis is on alternative strategies to deal with non-standard schedules, such as the use of

informal care or multiple arrangements (Moss, 2009), taking children to work or resorting to sibling or self-care (Grosswald, 2002).

Whether non-standard work is a constraint or a deliberate strategy (or both) depends on its characteristics, given the wide variation the term encompasses. Le Bihan & Martin (2004) argue that four dimensions should be included: hours (and how much they differ from the standard); variability in period of work (days, weeks, etc.); predictability of hours/period; and control/ability to negotiate when they work. For example, Grosswald (2002) presents some of the more problematic aspects of shift working as a driver in San Francisco. However, much of the conflict of not being present for children seemed to stem from the overly long hours (12 hour days) rather than the atypical nature of the work per se. Additionally, institutional context must be taken into account (That & Mills, 2011), as atypical working may be considered an unusual situation and so a source of stress in some countries or the norm in others (though it may still be stressful, even if it is the norm).

2.2 Conceptualising the daily practices or strategies of organising work and care

Scholarly and policy attention to the organisation of work and care has emerged as a result of the partial breakdown in the standard normative template where women are responsible for the unpaid labour of the home and men are responsible for the paid work of the market. Increased employment for women has challenged their willingness and ability to be the sole labourers in care, leading to increased warnings about the impending 'care deficit'. These changes can be characterised as a shift from a standardised strategy implicit in the gendered division of labour to more individualised strategies (Hubers et al, 2011).

In a general sense, typologies regarding the extent of 'male-breadwinner-ism' are informative about how households manage care (Lewis, 1992): they tell us whether households use the traditional strategy of a stay at home mother/worker father or not. However, this tells us very little about how dual earning families organise the practical detail of care arrangements – how they manage care. Care-work typologies have also focused on two main modifications to the male breadwinner strategy: the 'outsourcing' or 'marketization' strategy (where there is substantial reliance on non-parental care, often in the form of professional services) and the 'modified breadwinner' or 'one and a half earner' strategy, where one parent (usually the mother) engages in minimal paid work which does not challenge primary caregiver status (Crompton, 1999; Lewis, 2001). These broad typologies

give a general sense of how households manage care responsibilities, but still miss the everyday practices in which parents negotiate space-time constraints in order to ensure their children are cared for on a daily basis.

Much of the relevant literature on micro-practices is a part of, inspired by, or at least loosely related to the sociological literature on household strategies.[13] These strategies are usually positioned in relation to or as a response to the various constraints identified previously, whether they are structural, institutional, ideological or interpersonal. Although some scholars have objected to the use of the term 'strategy' given its connotations of rationalistic, goal-oriented behaviour, most sociologists working in this area use a broader definition.[14] For example, Jarvis (1999, p.228) defines strategies as 'a coordinated set of practices' which includes both 'purposeful and unconscious action'. Similarly, Forsberg (2009, p.165) refers to them as 'practices in which norms about parenthood are enacted'. In contrast, Mennino & Brayfield (2002, pp. 226-227) refer to trade-offs: 'compromises, sacrifices, adjustments, or accommodations that people make in their job and/or their personal life to attain their objectives or fulfil responsibilities', but this has a similar connotation to the sociological use of the term 'strategy', which is often prefaced by 'coping' or 'adaptive'.[15]

Much of the literature provides in-depth analyses of different strategies in isolation, though there have been some attempts to create typologies or classifications of particular forms of strategies (see Appendix 1). This review has identified a variety of individual strategies and types of strategies. These can be classified into three broad groupings, (1) adjustments to paid employment, (2) adjustments to caring, and (3) the use of coordinating mechanisms. Adjustments to paid employment include changes to working time such as reducing hours, working on particular days, or taking up atypical work patterns such as evening or shift work, as well as changes to location such as switching to more family-friendly employment, telecommuting or working from home. Adjustments to care include sharing within the nuclear family, or 'getting help' either through informal support networks or professional services. Coordination mechanisms include the use of material goods or infrastructure like information and communication technologies (ICTS) (such as mobile phones) or private transport. While some of these strategies may be taken on an individual

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[13] For a brief discussion of some of the seminal works in this area see Becker & Moen, 1999; Hyman, Scholarios & Baldry, 2005.

[14] For an exploration of the concept of 'household strategies' and its proponents and detractors, see Wallace, 2002.

[15] See Becker & Moen, 1999; Hyman *et al.*, 2005; Pagnan, Lero, & MacDermid Wadsworth, (2011).

basis, many are negotiated within the household and depend on complementary strategies of spouses/partners. Additionally, many of these strategies are used in conjunction with one another depending on the particular circumstances of the parents.

2.2.1 Adjustments to paid employment

Changing work schedules or reducing employment demands is perhaps the most well-studied care management strategy because it is the crux of the gendered division of labour: women often exit or reduce their paid employment in order to care for their children.[16] A vast literature has studied the causes and consequences of this strategy among women, but there is increasing recognition of the use of this strategy among men as well (e.g. Becker & Moen, 1999).

Studying dual earner American households, Becker & Moen (1999) refer to these as 'scaling back' strategies: reducing/restructuring work demands to avoid conflicts with family life. They identify three types of such strategies. The first is what they term 'placing limits' on work hours/overtime or refusing additional responsibilities through promotions and travel (often combined with limits in other areas such as reducing housework, leisure/social engagements). The second is having one 'job' and one 'career' (prioritised) where the partner with the 'job' is responsible for home/care. This is often but not always traditionally gendered, where women perform a modified caregiver role, similar to the one and a half earner strategy. The last is similar to the second, but more egalitarian. Termed 'trading off', the person with the 'job' versus the 'career' shifts over the life course in response to changing circumstances. This strategy often goes hand in hand with egalitarian ideologies, but is also a way of adjusting between strategies (e.g. from one job/one career to dual career[17]).

Unsurprisingly, Becker & Moen (1999) find 'scaling back' to be performed disproportionately by women, but they note that men also engage in these strategies, particularly in households using the trade-off strategy. Though they are almost always used by those with young children, other households also use 'scaling back' strategies. At least in the American context, the study highlights the prioritisation of paid work and the value of flexibility in order to enact individualised strategies. However, 'scaling back' is a more universal phenomenon. Forsberg (2009) refers to a Swedish study which showed that Swedish mothers often work shorter hours than their partners and reduce work commitments

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[16] See Mennino & Brayfield, 2002, pp. 227-228 for a brief review.
[17] Note that the authors do not discuss 'dual career' as a strategy largely because the study is framed in opposition to the perception that such households are common.

in order to manage childcare. The use of part-time work to manage care work among British and Dutch mothers is also well-known (e.g. Gash, 2009).

In addition to restructuring work to manage time constraints, parents also adjust their employment to overcome spatial constraints. This might include changing location by switching to more family-friendly employment or by telecommuting/working from home. The challenges and effectiveness of telecommuting has spawned its own literature (e.g. Sullivan & Lewis, 2001; Crosbie & Moore, 2004; Johnson, Andrey & Shaw, 2007; Peters & van der Lippe, 2007; Hilbrecht, Shaw, Lohnson & Andrey, 2008). Working at home due to increased employment demands, similar to the issue of the constraints of atypical work more generally, tends to increase work-family conflict rather than acting as a strategy to alleviate it. However, some home- or teleworkers perceive working at home to afford them greater flexibility which is conducive to the organisation of work and care. For example, while intensive caregiving may be incompatible with simultaneous work, the supervisory or 'being there' role of passive care may be undertaken and may be appreciated as a way of increasing time with children (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson & Andrey, 2008). The reduction in travel time may also allow for increased care or leisure. However, as noted by Hubers *et al.* (2011), telecommuting as a strategy may not be that helpful or may increase complexity if it is only available on certain days.

Telecommuting exemplifies the broader issues of adjusting employment through atypical working, which is often used as a strategy to overcome space-time fixity and improve coordination, despite the possibility for increased work-family conflict or other negative consequences. Literature on female part-time work has long highlighted this aspect, with mothers limiting their work hours in order to spend more time personally caring for their children. Indeed several studies found that parents considered increased personal time with their children or the ability to avoid more formal types of care to be a key benefit to working non-standard schedules (e.g. Moss, 2009; That & Mills, 2011). In particular, atypical work schedules are a key factor in paternal involvement in the care of their children and more equitable care-giving between mothers and fathers. A common strategy for arranging care is shift parenting or 'tag-team parenting' where parents arrange work and care such that one works while the other cares for the children and vice versa (Moss, 2009; Pagnan *et al*., 2011; Taht & Mills, 2011.

2.2.2 Adjustments to care

Adjustments to care can involve a variety of strategies including 'delegating' or 'outsourcing' care to professional workers or informal family and friend networks or distributing/sharing care within the nuclear family (including partners, older children, or self-care among children). It is well-recognised that professional care services can be a vital asset to working parents, hence the focus on increasing access to formal early education and care services in the comparative literature. In addition to large group/institutional services, parents may also pay child-minders, nannies, au pairs or babysitters to look after their children either on a routine or occasional basis. However, many of the studies reviewed found that most parents do not make use of formal services exclusively, but also depend on a range of informal support by family and friends, especially grandparents (Wheelock & Jones, 2002; Wheelock, Oughton & Baines, 2003; Larsen, 2004; Le Bihan & Martin, 2004; Moss, 2009). In some circumstances, parents may eschew formal services entirely in favour of these forms of informal care.

Called the 'childcare jigsaw' (Wheelock & Jones, 2002, p. 443) parents often make use of multiple arrangements not only as children age, but also within the same week or even day in order to navigate the space-time constraints of their particular circumstances. For example, informal services are often used to complement formal services, which usually have fixed start/end times that may not correspond to times in which parents are available for care (Skinner, 2005; Moss, 2009). Parents may also combine several types of formal care (e.g. publicly provided care and privately purchased care) in addition to various forms of informal care (Larsen, 2004). Although many of these studies are conducted in anglophone countries (e.g. the UK), Larsen (2004) provides evidence that the combination of formal and informal care is widespread and common across very different country contexts, including those with robust systems of publicly provided formal services. Hank & Buber (2009) and Igel & Szydlik (2011) also show that informal care is used across a wide variety of European countries, but that the frequency and intensity of use varies. Whilst informal care may be used as the predominant form of care by some families, in others, it may be used for only a short period of time per day or only intermittently over time, as it is combined with formal services or predominantly parental care.

While informal support networks are a crucial resource for parents, some opt for strategies which prioritise care within the nuclear family. In particular 'shift parenting' or 'tag-team' parenting, discussed briefly above, is frequently used to distribute care among

mothers and fathers. This strategy is often used when one or both parents engage in atypical work, allowing them to trade responsibilities: when one works the other cares and vice versa. As noted previously, it is well recognised that women often work atypical hours in order to facilitate personal care of their children, but several studies found that fathers are also much more likely to spend substantial amounts of time taking care of their children when they work atypical hours (Han, 2004; Pagnan *et al.*, 2011; That & Mills, 2011). Why parents engage in shift-parenting is a matter of some debate. To some extent the tag-team parenting strategy is an accommodation to fixed non-standard work schedules rather than a preference for a high degree of parental care or paternal involvement (Preston *et al.*, 2000; Grosswald, 2002) but it is not always clear which is the case and in practice there is likely to be a bit of both.

Taht & Mills (2011) argue that in the Netherlands, many parents adopting this strategy have the preference and the opportunity (due to a widespread acceptance of atypical working) to avoid formal care. They argue that much of the literature citing the problematic nature of atypical work comes from the US, where non-standard work is frequently a 'bad job' (contributing to conflict/stress) but that this does not necessarily hold in the Netherlands, where non-standard work is becoming the new standard.[18] Similarly, Le Bihan & Martin (2004) provide examples of shift parenting in Finland where formal services are widely accessible.[19] At the same time, however, the maximization of parental time with children can come at the expense of parents' time together or individual leisure (Pagnan *et al.*, 2011).

Sharing between parents has also been highlighted in studies focusing on the problem of transport (between work and care/school). Several studies describe a rota system of transport responsibility among parents who trade-off who picks up the child and when (though this may also include people outside the family such as friends, neighbours or professional caregivers) (Skinner, 2005; Jain *et al*., 2011). This literature has noted that despite a sharing of tasks, mothers are still primarily responsible, particularly for daily, routine journeys rather than special circumstances (Barker, 2011; Craig & Powell, 2012).

Children themselves play a crucial role in the organisation of care, either by caring for themselves independently or by looking after younger siblings (Romich, 2007; Morrow, 2008; Hafford, 2010). Children are therefore not just constraints on parents' behaviour but also active agents who contribute to the running of the household. Studies on children's 'self-care' often take a negative view of the practice, particularly as the age of the child decreases,

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[18] For more on shift parenting in the Dutch context see Van Klaveren, van den Brink, & van Praag, (2011).
[19] This is only an example, however. In another Finnish case in the same study, the family used formal services despite working atypical hours, because the provider offered overnight care.

referring to this strategy as 'child negligence' (Wall & Sao José, 2004). Self-care can refer to a wide range of arrangements, however, with children in varying degrees of supervision. Self-care sometimes includes the presence of siblings, having access to a neighbour next door, and frequent phone calls with 'checking in' by parents.

Moreover, it is not objectively clear at what point a child should be considered sufficiently independent to be left alone for a few hours, and parents themselves are often conflicted about what to do with children in the in-between stage between being clearly too young and clearly old enough (Polatnick, 2002). While some countries have legal rules stipulating at what point 'self-care' becomes neglect or even abuse, these are often unevenly or not at all enforced, particularly where the regulations are out of step with local practices and norms. In terms of enforcement by social welfare organisations, it is often 'outsider' groups such as immigrants, ethnic minorities or low income households who are assumed to be using self-care to the detriment of their children, due to poverty and an inability to afford other care arrangements or differences in culture.

While an inability to afford care explaining levels of self-care may be the case for some families, several studies have challenged these assumptions. For example, Greene, Hynes & Doyle (2011) found no difference in the likelihood of self-care among immigrant and non-immigrant families. Casper & Smith (2004) found no evidence that self-care was related to an inability to afford care, but rather to issues like neighbourhood context (e.g. perceived safety), child's personal characteristics (e.g. age/maturity) and the availability of parents for care. Similarly, in an earlier study, the authors showed that lower class and ethnic minority children were less likely to be in self-care, and parents with higher education were more likely to leave their children in self-care (Casper & Smith, 2002). At the same time, however, middle-class and white children are less likely to be in self-care for an extended period of time (Mahoney & Parente, 2009).

There is a growing literature which looks specifically at the factors associated with the use of particular types of care and/or the processes by which parents plan, search for, and choose care arrangements (Kensinger & Elicker, 2008; Sandstrom & Chaudry, 2012; Huff & Cotte, 2013; Suárez, 2013). Families choose particular forms of care in response to constraints and limited resources, but also to satisfy their own predispositions and ideologies. Using particular forms of care depends in part on access to services, whether formal or informal, but also compatibility with work schedules or ease of coordination as well as normative considerations about the appropriateness of certain types of care. For example, keeping care within the immediate family may be due to a lack of alternative options

(including formal services or an inability to rely on extended family). At the same time, normative preferences for parental care and/or distrust and misgivings about the safety or appropriateness of care by people outside the family also play a key role. Studies have consistently found trust to be a crucial factor in the selection of particular care arrangements and the use of parental or informal care in particular (Halliday & Little, 2001; Wheelock & Jones, 2002; Katras, Zuiker & Bauer, 2004). The appropriateness of particular forms of care is also wrapped up in ideologies of motherhood and gendered identities (Halliday & Little, 2001).

Different forms of care may act as substitutes or complements, but a single form of care is rarely sufficient to meet varied needs, which change even among the same household in response to particular circumstances (children aging, job changes, emergencies/one-off events etc.). This leads to complexity in the management of these different forms of care which may cause stress or conflict. While the broad childcare literature has tended to include the use of multiple types of care in its analyses, it is less common to focus on how parents actually organise these different forms. Some scholars have argued that this coordination problem is precisely why many families rely heavily on informal care, which is perceived to have a greater capacity for handling complexity or responding to sudden changes (Skinner, 2005). Informal care is not without its challenges, however. In some cases it is simply not available. Additionally, parents sometimes perceive informal care to be unreliable, either due to the caregivers' own constraints or due to an unwillingness to overburden friends and family (Moss, 2009).

Adjustments to care can serve to alleviate certain challenges but may often necessitate further strategies to manage or coordinate them. For example, parents might change their location in order to be closer to their own parents/family members in order to benefit from their informal support (Heylen, Mortelmans, Hermans & Boudiny, 2012) while distributing care between partners involves negotiation and daily communication.

2.2.3 Coordinating mechanisms

Enacting particular strategies requires the coordination of a variety of 'agents' including the individual in question, partners or other informal support and professional caregivers, but also material goods (Hubers *et al.*, 2011). For example, private transport such as a car or a bike has been consistently identified as a crucial resource for negotiating complex childcare journeys (Skinner, 2005; Jain *et al.*, 2011). Given the tight time-space frames within which parents are operating, the use of public transport can be challenging or impossible, depending

on its timing and availability. Although parents often prefer private transport as a simpler way of managing multiple journeys (Skinner, 2005; Jain *et al.*, 2011) this can further complicate matters, for example by increasing road congestion (Jain *et al.,* 2011). Complex journeys may be a source of stress but the journeys themselves may be perceived as a benefit, in terms of additional social interaction time between parents and children (Barker, 2011; Jain *et al.,* 2011).

In addition to the role of private transport, there has also been some research on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to manage work and care. In particular scholars have made note of the use of mobile phones to coordinate among various caregivers throughout the day to ensure the child in question is always in someone's care. Hubers *et al.* (2011) note that this literature has not come to any firm conclusions on how ICTs complement or substitute for other coping strategies. They may increase the complexity of juggling care and work, for example, though the ability to be 'always on' even when physically away from work but they may also reduce space-time fixity and allow for easier coordination of various schedules and locations. In their own study, the authors find that the use of ICTs is usually used to complement rather than replace other types of strategies.

2.3 Methods and limitations

In general the bulk of the studies in this review use qualitative methods, primarily interviews,[20] although some studies have used innovative methods such as travel diaries (Jain *et al.*, 2011) and ethnographic video recordings (Forsberg, 2009). To some extent this is due to the nature of the question. Understanding what parents do on a daily basis requires asking them and it is more difficult to understand these processes through more scheduled interviews or questionnaires. An advantage of an in-depth qualitative interview is that it can procure a very detailed understanding of the different arrangements and the ability to capture complexity. However, this method makes it difficult to discern how generalised these strategies might be. For example, many of the qualitative studies focus on heavily localised contexts, such as particular regions (e.g. Hubers *et al.*, 2011) or towns/cities (e.g. Debacker, 2008).

In contrast, some scholars analyse household care strategies cross-nationally (Larsen, 2004; Wall and Sao José, 2004; Sümer, Smithson, das Dores Guerreiro & Granlund, 2008) or

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[20] For example, Larsen, 2004; Medved, 2004; Wall and Sao José, 2004; Skinner, 2005; Moss, 2009.

have used implicit comparisons by discussing their results in terms of studies in other contexts (e.g. Stefansen & Farstad, 2010; Hubers *et al.*, 2011). These comparative analyses go some way toward understanding the extent to which the logistics of arranging childcare differ across cultural and institutional contexts, but often at the cost of relying on more general typologies/categorisations in terms of differences between women and men in the extent of time devoted to care or work, or broad emphases on types of services (formal, informal; public, private).[21] Most of the cross-national studies are Euro-centric, as many of them are funded by the EU.[22]

Some studies use quantitative methods, primarily through questionnaires or time use studies rather than larger surveys.[23] However, the quantitative literature by its nature usually focuses on the factors affecting the use of particular arrangements or strategies rather than the process of managing them. For example, Hubers *et al.* (2011) use a purpose-built questionnaire and hierarchical cluster analysis to identify combinations of strategies and the factors associated with them in the Netherlands. A potential limitation of this approach is the use of closed-options (types of strategies were identified theoretically and afterward respondents were asked whether or not they use them) which may exclude or misrepresent actual practices. Some of the studies using quantitative methods also employ qualitative methods in order to benefit from both approaches and triangulate methods (Schwanen, 2007; Taht & Mills, 2011).

A common limitation across approaches, but especially among those using qualitative interviews, is the tendency to study particular issues or social groups in isolation. Holistic treatments of the logistics of organising work and childcare are rare.[24] Instead, many studies concentrate on particular challenges or strategies, such as the literature on atypical working or telecommuting. At the same time these studies often focus on particular social groups to the exclusion of others. For example, several of the qualitative studies interviewed mothers only[25] or even mothers with pre-school aged children only.[26] The exclusion of fathers may partly be out of the researchers' control, however; Barker (2011, p. 415) notes that fathers are often reluctant to participate in interviews about the care of their children, telling the researcher to ask the mother about it instead. Additionally, some studies focused on participants from

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[21] For example, Larsen, 2004; Raeymaeckers, Dewilde, Snoeckx & Mortelmans, (2007).
[22] For example, the SOCCARE project – Larsen, 2004; Le Bihan and Martin, 2004; Kroger & Sipila, 2005; see also Sümer et al., 2008.
[23] For example, Raeymaeckers *et al.*, 2007; Hubers *et al.,* 2011; Craig & Powell, 2012.
[24] Examples include: Forsberg, 2009; Hubers *et al.*, 2011; Medved, 2004.
[25] See Jain *et al.,* 2011; Medved, 2004.
[26] See Skinner, 2005.

particular social classes; a concentration on how low income households manage their work and care responsibilities was popular, particularly in the American context (e.g. Henly & Lyons, 2000), though others spoke only to professionals (e.g. Johnson *et al.,* 2007; Hubers *et al.*, 2011). To some degree these purposeful selections are due to assumptions about who is most likely to struggle with arranging and managing care. In addition to the emphasis on mothers and low-income households, many studies focused on lone mothers or separated parents (e.g. Raeymaeckers *et al*., 2008; Kröger, 2010; Bakker & Karsten, 2013); immigrants (e.g. Wall & Sao José, 2004; Obeng, 2007); and those living in rural areas (Halliday & Little, 2001; Katras *et al.*, 2004). Nearly all studies focused on dual earning households rather than households with a non-working parent. To some degree there is empirical evidence for focusing on these groups to the exclusion of others, but they also reflect assumptions which may not always be borne out in practice, given the nearly universal challenge of managing work and care.

2.4 Discussion of key findings

Although the literature on how families manage their work and care responsibilities on a daily basis is still somewhat fragmented, some general conclusions can be drawn from emerging themes. The first is that the challenge of organising and coordinating care arrangements with the work schedules and other needs of each caregiver is fairly universal. Although certain institutions and infrastructures (e.g. formal care services) can make some aspects of arranging care easier, there is nevertheless a persistent need for flexibility and coordination to deal with changing circumstances and unexpected events. Institutions and cultural norms play a role by structuring general constraints and resources for parents, but the individual circumstances and preferences of each household determines the particular strategies employed to utilise those resources and negotiate those constraints.

The strategies that households use are complex and dynamic. Parents may use a combination of strategies and arrangements to deal with particular issues, and may further adopt and tweak strategies in response to the challenges created by earlier practices. Strategies also change over the lifecourse as children age and employment opportunities wax and wane. The complexity of these arrangements can lead to stress or conflict, but at the same time families are highly adaptive.

Not all families face the same constraints, therefore there is wide variation in the type and combination of strategies used across groups, contexts, and time. Social divisions such as

class and gender structure the types of strategies individuals adopt. Although many studies found that mothers and fathers frequently share childcare, all found that responsibility still lay primarily with the mother. Even where particular tasks are split, everyday management continues to be gendered.

At the same time there are many commonalities. There is a high degree of fluidity between challenges and strategies; indeed the two are not mutually exclusive, as the example of atypical working shows. Families face similar challenges of not only coordinating the timing of work and care, but also the spatial aspect of getting to and from particular locations, and the normative aspect of negotiating local cultures and moralities. The availability of key resources, particularly informal support and social networks, is invaluable. For mothers, the participation (or not) of fathers in childcare is crucial to the ability to adopt particular strategies.

The sociological and human geographical literatures have provided key insights into the everyday management of work and care. To some extent this has filtered into the social policy literature, with a few isolated studies noting the work-care challenges of coordination or comparing the work-care strategies of families across institutional contexts, but for the most part the emphasis has remained on improving access to formal care services, with little appreciation for the daily struggles parents face and the coping strategies they employ when organising work and care.

3. Childcare in Germany

This chapter serves as a brief guide to the childcare system in Germany. It aims to map the key sources of available information. It also gives brief details of the qualitative interviews conducted in Germany during the course of the project and summarises the key issues around childcare in Germany.

3.1. Institutional context and the childcare system

Germany is a federal state where government is split among three levels: the federal level, the states or Länder, and the municipality. The historical divide between East and West Germany continues to be relevant in terms of institutional and cultural differences. Demographically, the birth rate has fallen, but net immigration boosts the population (Eurydice, 2013).

Comparatively, the German system offers generous monetary benefits for families (e.g. child allowances and tax deductions) that explicitly encourage the provision of care within the family, usually by the mother. This contributes to a high degree of part-time work among women (Trzcinki, 2000). Mothers are entitled to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave; two months post-birth is compulsory. By contrast there is no statutory entitlement to paternity leave. There is an individual entitlement to parental leave, available for both parents up to three years (paid for up to one year) after childbirth. Over a quarter of German fathers make some use of this leave (Blum & Erler, 2013).

There are three main types of childcare facilities in Germany, distinguished by the age group they serve: institutional group care for children under three years (*Kinderkrippen*), for children between age three and six (*Kindergarten*), and for school-age children (*Hort*) (Kreyenfeld & Hank, 2000; Bode, 2003; Spiess, Kreyenfeld & Wagner, 2003). There is a high degree of enrolment in kindergarten – nearly universal. These services are frequently provided on a part-time basis; in particular, there has been a legal entitlement to at least four hours a day of kindergarten for children from age three to compulsory school age since 1996 (Leu & Schelle, 2009). Some kindergarten classes also accept two year olds (Leu & Schelle, 2009). In contrast, there is a much lower use (and availability) of kinderkrippen for children under three years of age, especially in West Germany (Hübenthal & Ifland, 2011; Rauschenbach, 2013). Since 2013, children are entitled to a childcare place from the age of one, in line with a recent policy push to expand access to childcare services for children

under the age of three, although the availability of places remains low (Hübenthal & Ifland, 2011; Rauschenbach, 2013; Zimmer and Rüttgers, 2014; BMFSFJ, 2015).

Public childcare services are highly subsidised, with most funding coming from the Länder or local authorities, although the recent push to expand childcare for younger children was bolstered with funding from the Federal Government. However, the majority of services are not delivered by public bodies. About two-thirds of providers are private – usually churches or other non-profit organisations; commercial providers make up only a very small proportion of these providers (Kreyenfeld & Hank, 2000; Bode, 2003; Muehler, 2010). Some revenue is provided via parents' fees, which are variable according to their income (Bode, 2003).

Childcare provision falls under the policy area of child and youth welfare rather than under the policy area of education. Responsibility for childcare provision is divided across the levels of government, with the Federal Government setting out the legal framework, each Land responsible for specific legislation and municipalities responsible for the provision of services (Leu & Schelle, 2009). This decentralisation in the governance system, coupled with persistent differences between East and West Germany, means that there is wide variation in the characteristics of services (e.g. availability, opening times) across the German Lander and local authorities (Leu & Schelle, 2009). In particular there is higher availability of kinderkrippen in the former German Democratic Republic (Hagemann, 2006; Pfau-Effinger & Smidt, 2011).

The use of private in-home childcare is relatively low. Family day care is most likely to be used for children under the age of three years (Bode, 2003; Leu, & Schelle, 2009). The purchase of private care could potentially increase with recent policy reforms. In particular, a benefit called 'Betreuungsgeld', introduced in 2013, allows parents who do not make use of publicly-subsidised childcare facilities to claim a cash benefit which may be used to support familial care or to purchase other forms of care (Müller & Wrolich, 2014).

3.2. Description of available information on childcare

3.2.1. Key academic studies

There are a few studies which give an overview of the German childcare system and trace recent policy developments (Trzcinski, 2000; Leu, & Schelle, 2009; Hübenthal & Ifland, 2011). Several studies have explored the political drivers and constraints on the development of family and childcare policy in Germany and how this differs by geographical regions within Germany (Morgan, 2002; Naumann, 2005; Hagemann, 2006; Foerres & Tepe, 2012;

Andronescu & Carnes, forthcoming). Relatedly, many studies have compared the German system with that of other countries, especially those with ostensibly similar institutional contexts and welfare regimes such as Austria and France (Lammer & Letablier, 2007; Leitner, 2010; Fagnani, 2012; Krapf, 2013; Oliver & Mätzke, 2014). Several of these comparisons have focused on similarities between (West) Germany and policy developments in England, where both countries have moved toward expansion of ECEC in recent years after a long historical period of low public support for childcare services (Evers, Lewis & Riedel (2005); Fleckenstein, 2010; Rüling, 2010). A few studies have explored the relationship between childcare services and mothers' participation in the labour market within the German context, specifically with reference to high subsidisation but low availability of places (and short opening hours) in facilities (Kreyenfeld & Hank, 2000; Wrohlich, 2008; 2011). In addition, some studies have analysed inequalities of access to childcare facilities, especially with regard to social class and immigrant status (De Moll, & Betz, 2014). Lastly, some studies have explored the institutional structure of childcare provision in Germany as a mixed economy (Bode, 2003; Muehler, 2010).

3.2.2. Policy documents, governmental and non-governmental reports

Several key policy documents and items of legislation have been identified from the academic literature. These are listed in the following table.

Table 3.1 Key policy documents and items of legislation for Germany

1990	Child and Youth Welfare Act/Child and Youth Service Act (later amended in 1992; 1996)
2004	Framework for Early Education (Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen)
2005	Day Care Expansion Act (Tagesbetreuungsgesetz – TAG)
2008	Children Promotion Act/Children's Support Act (Kinderförderungsgesetz – KiföG)
2009	Children's Advancement Act (current)
(Ongoing)	Recommendations on ECEC for under-3s (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Landesjugendämter)
2010	Early Opportunities Offensive: Focus-Kitas, Language & Integration (Offensive Frühe Chancen: Schwerpunkt-Kitas Sprache & Integration)

Further reports on the German early childhood education and care system are available from the German Youth Institute [Deutsches Jugendinstitut (DJI)].[27] Policy reports and evaluations

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[27] Available at: http://www.dji.de/

may be obtained from the German Institute for Economic Research [DIW Berlin - Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung].[28]

3.2.3. News media

In addition to the news database Factiva, three additional sources (*The Local* - Germany; *Der Spiegel*; *Deutsche Welle* – all of which offer English versions) were searched for relevant news articles. 25 articles were returned between the period 2011 and 2014. Common themes included critical discussion of the inability of increased public expenditure on family policies to boost low birth rates, problems meeting the targets for increased childcare facilities, and controversy over the introduction of the 'Betreuungsgeld' benefit.

3.2.4. National statistics/administrative data

The German Federal Statistics Office[29] provides estimates of the number of children enrolled in childcare services by age and type of care as well as detailed information on childcare workers.

3.2.5. Survey data

The German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugendinstitut, DJI) combined four of its surveys - Familiensurvey (family survey), Jugendsurvey (youth survey), Kinderpanel (children's panel) and Kinderbetreuungsstudie (childcare study) – into one big survey in 2009, Aufwachsen in Deutschland: Alltagswelten (AID:A, 'Growing up in Germany'). While its scope goes beyond childcare, informing German policy makers about the quality of and demand for childcare is one of its key tasks. Besides its main survey that is to be conducted once in every legislative period and had a sample of 25.000 people in 2009, it is supplemented by a range of other studies, amongst them:

- KiGöG, examining childcare of children aged 0.5 to 3,
- Kompik, a study of the developmental level of 3.5 to 5 year old children in nurseries,
- Studies of demand for childcare of children aged under 3 on communal levels,
- other studies focussing on civic engagement of youth.

Two of Germany's big social population studies, the Mikrozensus and the Socio-economic Panel (SOEP), also contain some childcare related questions. The Mikrozensus only roughly

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[28] Available at: http://www.diw.de/en
[29] Available at https://www.destatis.de/EN/

captures whether formal and informal care is made use of for children up to age 14; the SOEP goes into more detail by capturing formal childcare hours and monthly childcare costs, though capturing this only for children who are not yet in school. The Governments of the 16 German federal states produce further statistics on formal childcare facilities in the reports on the Kinder- und Jugendhilfe (help for children and youths).

3.2.6. List of interviewees

A total of 10 interviews were conducted with individuals representing parent- and family-related organisations in Germany. The table below gives a brief description of each organisation as well as the geographical location or area represented. Interviews were conducted in German, transcribed and then translated into English.

Table 3.2: Organisations interviewed in Germany

Description of organisations	Geographical area/region
Federal association of single mothers and fathers	National
Federal child minding association	National
Catholic family association	Regional, Bavaria
Third sector organisation supporting re-entry of women into the labour market	Regional, Bavaria
Parents' association of preschools by independent providers	Regional, Bavaria
Parents' association of afterschool clubs	Local, Munich
Independent day nursery chain	Local, Berlin
Parents' association of preschools	Regional, Land Berlin
Regional child minding association	Regional, Bavaria
Association of single mothers and fathers	Regional, Bavaria

3.3. Key issues for Germany

Having conducted the interviews and reviewed the available information around the childcare system in Germany a few key issues begin to emerge as areas of concern. The first is the low availability of provision for the under-3s. There has been recent legislative expansion, including for the under-3s, but there is concern that there may be potential mismatch between new legal entitlements and actual availability. Second, and related to the first point, there is also a potential short-run tradeoff between rapid expansion in the sector and quality, due to a shortage of professional staff. Thirdly, it is clear that there are inequalities of access to childcare facilities by region.

4. Childcare in Hungary

4.1 Institutional context and the childcare system

With the transition from socialism, Hungary has been a parliamentary democracy since 1989. Demographically, the majority of the population is Hungarian (Magyar) and Catholicism is prominent. Declining population and birth rates have been a source of policy concern for decades, which has led to various pro-natalist policies and extensive family support, including cash allowances and paid leave schemes (Bicskei, 2006). In particular, substantial public support for parental care of children under the age of three is built into the welfare system (Korintus & Gyarmati, 2013). Mothers are entitled to 24 weeks of maternity leave (fathers are entitled to a paternity leave of five days). There is an additional system of two years of parental leave, paid at varying rates depending on eligibility. Large families (three or more children) are eligible for an additional leave and payment.

These lengthy leave schemes are largely taken by mothers (Hobson, Fahlén & Takács, 2011), contributing to low employment rates among mothers of young children. Most mothers return to work only after their children begin kindergarten (Hemmings, 2007; Brayfield & Korintus, 2011). Recent policy reforms have had the aim to increase maternal employment, but without radically changing the system of parental care for young children. For example, parents are allowed to work a certain number of hours (usually under 30/week) and still collect childcare leave and allowance. Additionally, employers have been legally obliged to allow mothers returning from maternity leave to work part-time until their children turn three (Korintus, 2014).

Childcare services are structured into a split system of (largely public) nurseries for children under the age of three and kindergarten for children aged three to five. There are also after-school services for older children (Szikra & Szelewa, 2010). Kindergartens are part of the state school system, and all municipalities are obliged to provide kindergarten, though they may also be established by private bodies such as churches. Kindergarten becomes compulsory from the age of three in September 2015 (previously attendance was mandatory at age five) (Eurydice, 2012-13). Municipalities are also responsible for the provision of nurseries but are only legally compelled to provide them if the population numbers more than 10,000.

These services are technically free of charge, but parents pay for children's meals and extra activities, with low-income households eligible for reductions in these fees (Hemmings, 2007). Places are normally for a full day in both nurseries and kindergarten. Facilities are

usually open for at least 10 hours a day during standard working hours; services that accommodate atypical working hours are rare (Korintus, 2008).

In practice, there are not always public places available for eligible children, especially for children under the age of three and those in rural areas, which has led to overcrowding (Brayfield & Korintus, 2011), especially as there are few private providers as an alternative (Korintus, 2008). The September 2015 change in kindergarten attendance is likely to exacerbate this overcrowding. While family day care and home childcare services have increased, few children are cared for in these environments (Brayfield & Korintus, 2011). Children under the age of three who are not attending nursery are often assumed to be in the care of their parents (usually their mother) (Korintus, 2008). Grandparental care is also prominent (Aassve, Arpino & Goisis, 2012).

4.2. Description of available information on childcare

4.2.1. Key academic studies

There are a few academic studies of the childcare system in the Hungarian case specifically (Bicskei, 2006; Korintus, 2008; Brayfield & Korintus, 2011); as well as several studies which have compared countries within Eastern Europe, exploring similarities and differences in childcare policy and provision in such countries (Kocourková, 2002; Szelewa, 2008; Polakowski, Korintus & Stropnik, 2009; Szikra & Szelewa, 2010; Inglot, Szikra & Raț, 2012). These studies generally emphasise the 'familialist' nature of the Hungarian childcare system, with its emphasis on parental and especially maternal care of very young children. There has also been an evaluation of a programme designed to increase kindergarten enrolment for children of lower socio-economic status, which demonstrated that financial incentives via cash benefits can have an effect, but that a key issue is the lack of availability of places (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2013).

4.2.2. Policy documents, governmental and non-governmental reports

It is difficult to find many official Hungarian policy documents translated into English. Based on academic sources on the Hungarian case, the main legislation governing the kindergarten system includes a series of Education Acts (1993, 2003) as well as the 1997 Act on the Protection of Children. In addition to these government documents, there are some research

reports conducted by non-governmental organisations such as the Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis.

4.2.3. News media

No Hungarian news outlets offering English translations were identified. The database Factiva was also searched for relevant national news articles within the past two years. No relevant articles (in English) were returned.

4.2.4. National statistics/administrative data

Because the childcare system in Hungary is largely public, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (Stadat)[30] is the key source of data on childcare services. National figures include: the number of public childcare facilities and places (nurseries, kindergarten, and out of school care), the number of children attending and the number of teachers employed.

4.2.5. Survey data

No national childcare related surveys could be identified for Hungary. The website of the Hungarian statistical office refers to regional statistics as well as the EU Labour Force Survey's ad hoc module 'Reconciliation between work and family life'.

4.2.6. List of Interviewees

A total of 11 interviews were conducted with individuals representing parent- and family-related organisations within Hungary. The table below gives a brief description of each organisation as well as the geographical location or area represented. Interviews were conducted in Hungarian, transcribed and then translated into English.

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[30] Available at: http://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en

Table 4.1: Organisations interviewed for the Hungary case

Description of organisation	Geographical area/region
European-wide umbrella association of national associations for parents [Interviewee came from Hungarian national association]	Based in Vienna [with remit for Hungary]
Foundation promoting flexible working practices	Budapest
Interest group for same-sex parents and families	Budapest
Local authority family support centre	Budapest
Parent interest group	National organisation
Parent interest group, specifically for families with 3 or more children	National organisation, regional section – Kőbánya
Private family centre offering childcare and broader family support (partly financed by local government)	Budapest
Public crèche	Budapest
Service centre for examining children's development and readiness for institutions (kindergarten, schools). Formerly public 'upbringing consultancy'.	Budapest
Trade union for kindergarten workers	Miskolc (Northeast Hungary) section of national organisation
Trade union for crèche workers	Budapest (national organisation)

4.3. Key issues for Hungary

Having conducted the interviews and reviewed the available information around the childcare system in Hungary a few key issues begin to emerge as areas of concern. The first was a concern around the availability of places, and that this was leading to overcrowding. This is likely to become worse as attendance in Kindgarten from aged 3 becomes compulsory in September 2015. Although there is no fee for attending public daycare, the costs for food and other activities were seem as high relative to parents' income. Private childcare was rare and beyond the household disposable income of many. Another theme was the lack of flexibility in opening times and the closing of provision over the summer, which makes it difficult for carers (mostly mothers) to be in full time employment. In terms of inequality, the big story is inequality according to ethnicity, with the Roma people very much concentrated in the poorest socio-economic groups and also finding it most difficult to access childcare.

5. Childcare in Italy

5.1. Institutional context and the childcare system

Italy is a parliamentary republic made up of the central State and several Regions composed of larger Provinces and smaller Communes, all of which are autonomous authorities with powers and functions set out in the Italian Constitution. The country is ethnically and religiously (Roman Catholic) homogenous. Demographically, Italy has experienced falling fertility rates since the 1970s, with one of the lowest rates in Europe, which has contributed to their aging population (Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013). Female employment is low by European standards, despite recent increases (Plantenga & Remery, 2009) and as in other countries mothers (and grandmothers) continue to perform the bulk of domestic and care work (Giaconne, 2006).

Spending on benefits for children and families is low in Italy compared to other countries in the EU (OECD, 2014). There is a system of leave for parents: mothers are legally obliged to take twenty weeks of leave while fathers are legally obliged to take one day. Fathers may take an additional two days if transferred from maternity leave. This is a recent policy which has been introduced on a trial basis through 2015 (Addabbo & Giovannini, 2013). Additionally, parents are entitled to six months parental leave on an individual and non-transferable basis. Parents may take leave at the same time; however, if both parents take parental leave, the maximum amount they may take in total is ten months, unless the father uses three months of leave, in which case the father may receive one bonus month. According to administrative data from the INPS (National Department for Social Welfare) in 2011 nearly 9/10 of those taking parental leave were women (Addabbo & Giovannini, 2013).

Early education and care services are divided according to age. The scuole dell'infanzia, which is part of the public education system, is provided nearly universally for children aged three until compulsory school age (aged six years). The majority of scuole dell'infanzia for children over three years are directly provided by the central state via the Ministry of Education; others are provided by the commune or private groups such as religious organisations. Public scuole dell'infanzia are largely free of charge other than fees for meals (Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013). Private groups may charge higher fees, depending on the extent of their subsidization by the central state and the regions (Moss & Bennett, 2010). In general, scuole dell'infanzia provide full days from 08.30 to 16.30 (Moss & Bennett, 2010).

The school semester is determined by each Region, but usually takes place for a total of 35 weeks, although municipal services often offer summer programmes as well (Moss &

Bennett, 2010; Eurydice, 2012-13). Services for school-age children are often provided by private associations, but may be subsidized by the commune (Moss & Bennett, 2010).

Childcare for children under the age of three is separate from the education system and is governed and sometimes financed by regions and communes. As such there is wide variation in the provision of these services across Italy. The most common formal service for this age group is the nido (literally, "nest" – plural nidi), sometimes translated as day nursery, nursery school or centre. Most nidi are provided by the commune or by private groups with funding from the commune. Fees are charged for nidi, which are determined locally by each commune and also vary by income (Musatti & Picchio, 2010). In general they are open for eight to twelve hours per day, year round (Moss & Bennett, 2010; Eurydice, 2012-13).

Because there is limited availability of places in these formal services, in-home group care services have become more common, although they are still relatively rare. Some families employ in-home domestic workers or nannies, which is more common if the mother is employed, especially in a higher status occupation (Sarti, 2010). Much of this unregistered childcare work is thought to be carried out within a large "underground" economy, supported by undocumented migrant workers (Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013).

In practice, most under-3s are primarily in informal familial care by mothers and extended female family members, especially grandmothers, rather than in formal group services (Della Sala, 2002; Sarti, 2010). As of 2010, about 14% of children under the age of three were enrolled in formal services, up from about 11% in 2004 (Istat, 2014). The proportion varies considerably across the country, with higher enrolment in Northern and Central Italy compared to Southern Italy (Musatti & Picchio, 2010).

In recent years there has been increased female employment as well as increased demand for childcare services for children under three years which has been reflected in long waiting lists for public services (Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013). In response, there has been an increase in funding for and provision of nidi, especially by non-state providers (Moss & Bennett, 2010; Musatti & Picchio, 2010; Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013). In 2012, a childcare voucher scheme was introduced which allows mothers to exchange their parental leave payment for childcare vouchers. This was introduced with the intention of increasing the use of childcare for young children and boosting female employment.

5.2. Description of available information on childcare

5.2.1. Key academic studies

There are a few general overviews providing a picture of the childcare system in Italy (Della Salla, 2002; Musatti & Picchio, 2010). Some studies have explored the relationship between childcare services and mothers' participation in the labour market within the Italian context (Chiuri, 2000; Del Boca, Locatell & Vuri, 2005; Del Boca & Vuri, 2007) while others have documented the important role of familial and/or informal care (Sarti, 2010; Arpino, Pronzato & Tavares, 2012) as well as an increase in market forms of care services (Da Roit & Sabatinelli, 2013). Lastly, several studies have compared the Italian system of childcare with that of other countries, including France, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain (Baudelot, Rayna, Mayer & Musatti, 2003; Rubio, 2003; Knijn & Saraceno, 2011; Mamolo, Coppola & Di Cesare, 2011; Oliver & Mätzke, 2014).

5.2.2. Policy documents, governmental and non-governmental reports

It is difficult to find many official Italian policy documents translated into English and academic sources do not usually refer to specific, most recent legislation. Research on families is carried out by the Osservatorio sulle famiglie, a national institute. An additional resource centre for reports on childcare and families is the Italian National Childhood and Adolescence Documentation and Analysis Centre [Centro nazionale di documentazione e analisi per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza].

5.2.3. News media

Along with the database Factiva, a few Italian news outlets offering English translations were identified and searched. No relevant articles (in English) were returned.

5.2.4. National statistics/administrative data

The Italian National Institute for Statistics (Istat)[31] is a key source of data on childcare services. National estimates include the number of preschools and the proportion of children enrolled.

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[31] Available at: http://dati.istat.it/

5.2.5. Survey data

Two national surveys related to childcare were found for Italy. Both were conducted in the early 2000s: the Famiglia e soggetti sociali from 2003 and the "Troppi o nessuno" survey ("Too many or none") from 2002. The latter focused on the issue of which factors influence family planning.

'Famiglia e soggetti sociali' covers a wide range of topics around individual behaviour (e.g. healthy lifestyle) and family life, in which childcare is a part of questions around the private support, as well as access to childcare facilities such as kindergartens and nurseries.[32] Furthermore, the Italian Birth Sample Survey (Indagine campionaria sulle nascite) from 2002, in which mothers were interviewed 18 to 21 months after giving birth, can provide (by now slightly dated) information on childcare for infants.

5.2.6. List of interviewees

A total of 10 interviews were conducted with individuals representing parent- and family-related organisations within Italy. The table below gives a brief description of each organisation as well as the geographical location or area represented. Interviews were conducted in Italian, and then transcribed and translated into English. Unlike the interviews for the other countries, they were carried out over the telephone, rather than face-to-face. This allowed for a greater geographical spread of organisations than would otherwise have been feasible, which was felt to be particularly important for the Italian case.

Table 5.1: Organisations interviewed in Italy

Description of organisation	Geographical area/region
Association of Catholic parents	(Rome) National organisation
Private foundation to assist sick children internationally; also gives financial support to nursery schools in Italy, especially in the South	(Milan) National organisation
Local lobby group for increased childcare provision	Bologna
Parent interest group/Children's rights group	(Rome) National organisation
National research institute which surveys Italian families	(Rome) National organisation
Local authority	Ferrara
Local parents' association	Palermo
Local parents' association	Bolzano
Social association which organises events for parents in the local area	Bari
Association which supports single parent families	Rome

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[32] Istat, 2006 ('il_sistema_di_indagini_multiscopo'), p.23.

5.3. Key issues for Italy

Having conducted the interviews and reviewed the available information around the childcare system in Italy a few key issues begin to emerge as areas of interest. The main issue is perhaps the lack of childcare places. This is particularly acute for children under three years of age across Italy, though there is a lot of geographical variation. There were also waiting lists for pre-school education. The geographical variation in public support for families creates a postcode lottery for families, also in terms of the trust in the quality of supervision and the quality of service infrastructure (e.g. the cleaning of buildings and providing food for the children). This situation creates an incentive for many mothers to stay at home rather than remaining in the labour market. Informal care by other family members, in particular grandmothers, is also very common.

6. Childcare in Slovenia

6.1. Institutional context and the childcare system

Slovenia has been a democratic parliamentary republic since its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Economic development in Slovenia post-socialism has been considered largely successful, and in 2004 Slovenia became a member of the European Union. Demographically, the population is small and aging, with a low fertility rate. Employment rates for both men and women are high in Slovenia and, in contrast to many countries, mothers of young children have higher employment rates than women without children (OECD, 2014). Part-time work is uncommon and the vast majority of men and women work over 40 hours per week (OECD, 2014).

Slovenia has a well-developed system of support for families. Employed parents are entitled to paid parental leave benefits under a system of social insurance. There is an obligatory period of maternity leave for mothers as well as an optional paternity leave for fathers and a further period of parental leave, which may be taken by either parent (Stropnik, 2013).[33] A high proportion of fathers take the first 15 days of their 90 day entitlement to paternity leave as this portion of the entitlement is highly compensated. However, in general it is largely mothers who take leave and who bear responsibility for children's care within the household (Švab & Humer, 2013). Parents may also be eligible for supplemental family allowances based on income and the number of children in the household.[34] One parent in the household also has the right to work part-time while caring for a young child,[35] although in practice this can be difficult to negotiate with employers (Kanjuo Mrcela & Cernigoj Sadar, 2011).

There is also an integrated system of early education and care for children from age one (following the end of leave entitlements) to age six (when compulsory schooling begins) (Stropnik, 2001; Moss & Bennett, 2010). This system is based primarily on state-run preschools (*vrtec*). Local municipalities are the main funders and providers of preschool services and are responsible for ensuring adequate places for all children of the appropriate

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[33] See also Republic of Slovenia Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities 'Rights under insurance for potential protection' Available at: http://www.mddsz.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/family/types_of_family_benefit/rights_under_insurance_for_parental_protection/ [Accessed 4 August 2014].

[34] Republic of Slovenia Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities 'Types of Family Benefit.' Available at: http://www.mddsz.gov.si/en/areas_of_work/family/types_of_family_benefit/ [Accessed 4 August 2014]

[35] Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities 'Rights under insurance for potential protection.'

age. Municipalities determine the level of fees parents pay, which varies by family income. On average parents pay about 1/3 of the costs, with the rest publicly financed (Čelebič, 2012). Nearly all children aged 3 to 5 years attend preschool, and attendance for younger children is also high at nearly 70% of 2 year olds and over 40% of 1 year olds (SORS, 2012). Almost all children attend preschool for a full day (Čelebič, 2012), or between six to nine hours (Eurydice, 2009).

Due to an increased birth rate and policy changes that reduced the costs of care for parents, demand for preschool places has increased, placing pressure on the public system (Hrženjak, 2012). Although private preschools became legal in 1991 and are also eligible for public funding, in practice there are very few in operation. In 2011-2012, 95% of the 922 preschools were publicly provided (SORS, 2012). Alternatives to the preschool include education-based childminding (*vzgojno-varstvena družina*), which may be organised by preschools when there are insufficient places within the institution, and private registered childminding (*registriran varuh predšolskih otrok*). In practice, however, the use of childminders is low and mostly for children under the age of three (Moss & Bennett, 2010).

For primary school-aged children, there are afterschool classes that must be paid for fully by the parents (Moss & Bennett, 2010). It has become more common for school children to attend afterschool classes due to trends in increased working hours among parents: nearly two-thirds of schoolchildren attend afterschool classes (SORS, 2008/9).

Informal care is common for younger children and is also sometimes used to accommodate gaps between preschool closing hours and parents' working hours. Grandparents are especially important providers, though some parents also pay unregulated providers working in the 'grey economy', (referred to as unregistered childcare across this report) (Hrženjak, 2007; 2012; Švab, Rener, & Kuhar, 2012; Švab & Humer, 2013).

6.2. Description of available information on childcare

6.2.1. Key academic studies

There are several overviews of the childcare system and family life in Slovenia (Stropnik, 2001; Černigoj Sadar, 2005; Stropnik & Šircelj, 2008; Švab *et al*, 2012). Based largely on national statistics, policy documents and/or earlier academic studies, they create the basis for many of the key points listed in the above overview. There are also a few qualitative studies based on interview data which explore the division of labour between men and women and

how parents balance work and family life (Kanjuo Mrcela & Cernigoj, 2011; Švab & Humer, 2013). These studies suggest that despite high rates of full-time work among Slovenian women, family and care work remains highly gendered and that there is little opportunity for part-time or flexible working arrangements in the workplace. Qualitative studies using interviews with informal care workers highlight the role of unregistered childcare even in a country with a comprehensive childcare system (Hrženjak, 2007; 2012). Lastly, a few studies compare family policy in Slovenia with other post-socialist countries (e.g. Hungary), often noting greater Scandinavian influence on Slovenia (Korintus & Stropnik, 2009; Formánková & Dobrotić, 2011).

6.2.2. Policy documents, governmental and non-governmental reports

As might be expected, it is difficult to find many official Slovenian policy documents translated into English. However, based on academic sources on the Slovenian case, several key documents shaping current childcare policy have been identified, including: the Resolution on foundations for forming family policy in Slovenia (1993); the White Paper on education and corresponding legislation: the Preschool Education Institutions Act and Organisation and Financing of Education Act (1996); Amendments to the Preschool Institutions Act (2008); and the introduction of and subsequent amendments to the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (2007). Research on families is often conducted via the Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia (Inštitut RS za socialno varstvo).

6.2.3. News media

Similarly, few Slovenian news outlets offer English translations, although the *Slovenia Times* is one exception. This online source was searched for recent news articles related to how parents arrange childcare, but no relevant articles were found. The database Factiva was also searched for relevant news articles within the past two years. Only a few articles were returned; relevant topics included increasing enrolment in Slovenian kindergartens as well as parental backlash against proposed lowering of standards (increased group sizes) in kindergartens.

6.2.4. National statistics/administrative data

Because the childcare system in Slovenia is almost entirely state-run, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS)[36] provides a key source of data on the main form of care in Slovenia: the preschool (or kindergarten). The statistics include the number of preschools, whether they are publicly or privately run, enrolment rates and structural indicators of quality such as group sizes/child-staff ratios. They also include limited information on the preschool workforce. The statistical office additionally presents more general labour market and demographic data, as well as information on public expenditure.

6.2.5. Survey data

As for Hungary, no national childcare related surveys could be identified for Slovenia.

6.2.6. List of Interviewees

A total of 10 interviews were conducted with individuals representing parent- and family-related organisations within Slovenia, largely located in Ljubljana, the capital and largest city. The table below gives a brief description of each organisation as well as the geographical location or area represented. Interviews were conducted in Slovenian, transcribed, and then translated into English.

Table 6.1: Organisations interviewed in Slovenia

Description of organisation	Geographical area/region
Family centre funded by the municipality of Ljubljana (drop-in centre for parents, usually mothers on maternity leave, and their children)	Ljubljana
Small institute (non-governmental) which provides counselling and support to parents and professional staff working with parents	Ljubljana
Publicly funded family therapy programme (financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)	Ljublijana
Publicly funded, non-governmental association which provides a variety of children's services, including childcare	Ljubljana
A public kindergarten	Ljubljana
National government ministry responsible for family policy	Ljubljana; national ministry
National government ministry responsible for family policy	Ljubljana; national ministry
Research institute (on families and children); contractor for Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	Ljubljana
Informal association for parents of young children	Ljubljana
National government ministry responsible for education	Ljubljana

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[36] Available at: http://www.stat.si/eng/

6.3. Key Issues for Slovenia

Having conducted the interviews and reviewed the available information around the childcare system in Slovenia a few key issues begin to emerge as areas of interest. The first was the issue of gaps between kindergarten hours and the hours of work. It seemed there was not so much flexibility in terms of opening hours of kindergarten, and this makes it difficult for some parents. A second concern was over-crowding and related loosening of standards related to increased group sizes. Third, despite high labour force participation among women in Slovenia, on a full-time basis, gender inequities in care work remain.

7. Childcare in Sweden

7.1. Institutional context and the childcare system

Sweden is commonly known as a prototype of the 'social democratic regime' (Esping-Andersen, 1990): the Swedish welfare state, supported by robust corporate arrangements between employer organisations and trade unions, is characterised by the principles of equality and universalism and has relatively strong redistributive effects. The reconciliation of work and family is a key element of this high-tax/high-productivity balance as reflected in comprehensive high-quality childcare provision and generous parental leave policy. As such it is often considered an exemplar of the 'Nordic model' of dual-earner gender equality (Lister, 2009). High levels of employment among both men and women support this extensive welfare system.

In line with its broader system of welfare and commitment to universalism, there is an extensive state support system for families which includes provision of parental leave followed by a universal entitlement to publicly funded childcare services until primary school age, during which children have access to heavily subsidised afterschool care. This system is built on the dual aim of supporting all children's early development and learning, and facilitating parents' labour market participation (Naumann, 2006).

Swedish parental leave entitlements generally aim to encourage gender equality and are therefore based largely on shared parental leave rather than maternity and paternity leave. These leave entitlements are comparatively well remunerated at 80% of earnings. Parents also have the right to reduce their working time by up to 25% (Duvander & Haas, 2013). The availability of paid parental leave allows very young children to be cared for by their parents. Less than half of one year olds are enrolled in preschool (*förskola*).[37]

By two years old, however, most children attend preschool, usually on a full-time basis.[38] Every child has a legal entitlement to a preschool place from the age of one to school entry (SME, 2006; Naumann, 2011). These preschool places are predominantly publicly provided at the level of the municipality, though some independent providers, such as for-profit companies or parent co-operatives, also provide places, which are subsidized. Fees for both public and independent preschool settings are set by the municipality. How much parents pay

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[37] Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.
[38] Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

depends on the number of children they have and their income, but on average parents pay less than 10% of costs.[39]

Less used alternatives to preschool include family day care or childminding, referred to as 'pedagogical care' (*pedagogisk verksamhet*) as well as an 'open preschool' (*öppna förskolan*) offering playgroup activities to children (mostly under three) accompanied by their parents or carers.

School-aged children attend 'free-time services' (*fritidshem*) outwith school hours. They are usually provided at the school and are strongly state subsidized. The vast majority of children age 6-9 attend these services although it is much less common for children age 10-12.[40]

Little is known about the use of informal types of care, though high levels of full-time preschool and after school care enrolment suggest comparatively limited reliance on informal care.

7.2. Description of available information on childcare

7.2.1. Key academic studies

A few studies have traced the development of the Swedish childcare system over time (Nyberg, 2000; Bergqvist & Nyberg, 2002; Naumann, 2005). It is common to examine Sweden as an example of the Nordic and/or social democratic approach to welfare, including childcare policy and provision (Rauch, 2007; Earles, 2011; Eydal & Rostgaard, 2011). Similarly, several studies have compared the Swedish case with other institutional contexts, especially but not limited to liberal welfare approaches (Mahon, 2007; Naumann, 2011; Van Lancker & Ghysels, 2012). A few studies have explored the relationship between childcare provision and women's employment within the Swedish context (Gustafsson & Stafford, 1992; Lundin, Mörk & Öckert, 2008).

7.2.2. Policy documents, governmental and non-governmental reports

Key legislation includes the 1998 introduction of the preschool curriculum (Läroplan för förskolan, Lpfö) and 2010 amendments as well at the 2010 Education Act.

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[39] Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.
[40] Sveriges officiella statistik, 2012.

Additional documentary evidence on childcare provision is available from the Ministry of Education and Research.[41]

7.2.3. News media

In addition to the news database Factiva, one additional source (*The Local* – Sweden which offers articles in English) was searched for relevant news articles. Fewer than 10 articles were returned between the period 2011 and 2014. Common themes included discussion of night-time and 24-hour childcare services as well as criticisms of the childcare allowance.

7.2.4. National statistics/administrative data

Because the majority of childcare provision in Sweden is publicly provided, administrative data from the National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) or the national statistical agency (*Sveriges officiella statistik*) is one of the most commonly used sources. This provides information on children enrolled in preschool and out-of-school services.

7.2.5. Survey data

One survey related to childcare was identified in Sweden: the Swedish Level of Living Survey from 2000. It included every child under 18 in the private households of the sample. Seven formal childcare forms were asked about in the questionnaire, and the childcare costs per month were included. Interestingly, in contrast to most other surveys, the three informal care options provided included not only the parents themselves (whose care engagement most surveys provide no information on; even in the case that one parent no longer lives in the household, only few surveys ask about the absent parent's childcare engagement) but also the option that the child manages alone – something not at all considered in other surveys that we examined.

7.2.6 List of interviewees

A total of 10 interviews were conducted with individuals representing parent- and family-related organisations in Sweden. The table below gives a brief description of each organisation as well as the geographical location or area represented. Interviews were conducted in Swedish, transcribed and translated into English.

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[41] Available at: http://www.government.se/sb/d/2098

Table 7.1: Organisations interviewed in Sweden

Description of organisations	Geographical area/region
National parents' association	National
Interest organisation for private child minders	Stockholm (regional)
National association for single parents	National
Children's charity and interest group	National
Employer organisation	National
National trade union, organizing childcare workers	National
National teachers' union, organising nursery school teachers	National
Women's organisation	National
Interest organization of afterschool pedagogues	National
Independent day nursery led by parent cooperative	Vallentuna (local)

7.3. Key issues for Sweden

Having conducted the interviews and reviewed the available information around the childcare system in Sweden a few key issues begin to emerge as areas of interest. The first was the debate around whether benefits for home care encourage inequalities. The second was the potential mismatch between official opening hours (e.g. for pre-school) and the pressure to pick up children early from pre-school. Thirdly, was the discussion around night time nurseries, or childcare for those working irregular hours. Finally, the interviews revealed concerns around the quality of ECEC, particularly in terms of group sizes.

8. Childcare in the UK

8.1. Institutional context and the childcare system

The United Kingdom is constituted by four culturally and politically distinct nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Of these, England is the largest demographically and also has the largest population density. In terms of the labour market, the UK is notable for high rates of part-time work, especially among women, of whom around 40% work part-time (OECD, 2014).[42]

UK-wide public benefits for families include means-tested cash or tax benefits for those with children as well as labour market regulation such as parental leave schemes and the 'right to request' flexible working hours. Women are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, 39 of which are paid. Less than half of women make use of the remaining unpaid weeks of leave (O'Brien, Moss, Koslowski & Daly, 2013). Some of this leave may be transferred to the father. In contrast, fathers are entitled to two weeks of paid paternity leave. Most fathers take some leave around the birth of their child, although only about half of those taking statutory paternity leave make use of the full two weeks (O'Brien *et al.*, 2013). There is in addition a statutory system of unpaid parental leave available to each parent, although it is less widely used (O'Brien *et al.*, 2013).

Policy regarding education and social services, including early education and childcare, is devolved and therefore differs to some degree by nation. In general there is a system of part-time early education which is publicly funded for children just under compulsory school age as well as an additional low level of public services for children considered to be in need. Take-up of part-time education in high at around 95% of three and four year olds in both England and Scotland (DfE, 2012; Scottish Government, 2012). In England there are also Sure Start Children's Centres in some areas, which provide a community service for local families, including subsidised childcare.

Private provision is common and includes: nurseries, playgroups, and child minders which are regulated by public agencies as well as unregulated care by grandparents, friends and neighbours, nannies or other in-home carers. Grandparents in particular play a key role in childcare (Wheelock & Jones, 2002; Gray, 2005). There are also special services for school-age children, which provide 'wrap-around' care before and after school hours, often provided by non-profit community groups. Parents receive some subsidies via the tax system for the

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[42] OECD (2014) OECD Family Database. OECD: Paris. Available at:
http://www.oecd.org/els/family/oecdfamilydatabase.htm

purchase of private care services, but not all parents are eligible and they do not fully cover fees, which are among the highest in Europe (Penn & Lloyd, 2013).

8.2. Description of available data in the UK

8.2.1. Key academic studies

There is an extensive academic literature that explores the development and effects of the childcare system in the UK; however, to the extent that there is variation among the nations of the UK, most of the literature focuses on England only. Several studies have traced the development of family and childcare policy in the UK since reform under New Labour in the late 1990s (e.g. Ball & Vincent, 2005; Penn & Randall, 2005; Sylva & Pugh, 2005; Lewis & Campbell, 2007; Daly, 2011) and a few studies have taken longer-term historical perspectives (e.g. Randall, 1995; Randall, 2002; Penn, 2004; Lewis, 2012). There has also been increasing attention to the role of for-profit provision within the UK system (e.g. Penn, 2007; Campbell-Barr, 2009; West, Roberts & Noden, 2010; Penn, 2011; Blackburn, 2012b; Paull, 2014. Other studies have analysed particular policies in-depth (e.g. Glass, 1999; Skinner, & Finch, 2006; Wiggan, 2010; Lewis, 2011; Lewis, Cuthbert & Sarre, 2011), especially with regard to the affordability of care (Penn & Lloyd, 2013), inequalities of access (Gambaro, Stewart & Waldfogel, 2013) and effects on maternal employment (Hansen, Joshi & Verropoulou, 2006). Additionally, a substantial qualitative literature has explored the everyday challenges parents and families face in arranging childcare and how this differs across class and gender (Halliday & Little, 2001; Vincent & Ball, 2001; Skinner, 2003; 2005; Statham & Mooney, 2003; Vincent *et al.*, 2008; Vincent, Braun & Ball, 2010).

8.2.2. Policy documents, governmental and non-governmental reports

There has been substantial ECEC policy change in the UK since the late 1990s. The following table charts the main policy documents and legislation during this time period.

Table 8.1: Policy documents for the UK

Year	Organisation	Title of document
1998	Department for Education and Skills (DfEE)	[England] Meeting the Childcare Challenge [the National Childcare Strategy]
2003	UK Government	[England] Every Child Matters
2004	HM Treasury, DfES, DWP, DTI	[England] Choice for Parents. The Best Start for Children: A Ten Year Strategy for Childcare
2006	DfES	[England] Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children: Making it Happen
	UK Parliament	[England] Childcare Act
2008	Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DfCSF)	[England] Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
2008	DfCSF	[England] Building Brighter Futures: Next Steps for the Children's Workforce
2008	DfCSF	[England] 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy
2008	Scottish Government	[Scotland] Early Years Framework
2009	DfCSF	[England] Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare: Building on the 10-Year Strategy
2010	Scottish Government	[Scotland] Curriculum for Excellence
2012	Department for Education (DfE)	[England] Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage [Revised]
2013	DfE	[England] More Great Childcare
2013	DfE	[England] More Affordable Childcare
2013	Scottish Government	[Scotland] A Guide to Getting it Right for Every Child
2014	Scottish Government	[Scotland] Children and Young People Act
2014	UK Parliament	[England] Children and Families Act

In addition to these policy documents, there is an extensive evidence base on the childcare system through governmental publications such as evaluations of key policies and programmes or commissioned research reports as well as nongovernmental research and advocacy briefs evaluating the effects of policies and documenting changes over time. The main organisational sources of this literature are listed in the following table.

Table 8.2: Governmental and non-governmental organisations for the UK

Government departments/bodies
Department for Work and Pensions
Department for Education
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
National Audit Office
Scottish Government
Non-governmental organisations (incl. voluntary/third sector, think tanks)
Resolution Foundation
Policy Exchange
Social Market Foundation
IPPR
Children in Scotland
Institute for Fiscal Studies
Centre for Research on Families & Relationships
Family and Childcare Trust (formerly Daycare Trust/Family & Parenting Institute)
National Children's Bureau Research Centre

8.2.3. News media

There has been a high degree of media coverage of the issue of childcare in Britain in recent years, in line with substantial reforms to the childcare system (e.g. expansion of early education funding; changes to the tax system). An individual online search of six main news sources in England and Scotland (i.e. the BBC, the Guardian, the Telegraph, the Independent, the Scotsman and the Herald) returned over 80 news articles between 2011 and 2014, the majority of which discussed the high cost of childcare and/or plans for reform to the system.

8.2.4. National statistics and administrative data

There are distinct sources of administrative data on childcare for each nation of the UK. For example, the Department for Education in England provides information on take-up of funded early education places (DfE, 2012). Similarly, the Scottish Government provides general statistics on the number of providers and places across Scotland (Scottish Government, 2013). Regulatory bodies are an additional source of information: Ofsted provides basic aggregate information for all registered providers in England (Ofsted, 2014), while the Care Inspectorate provides similar information for Scotland (Care Inspectorate, 2013).

8.2.5. Market research

Market research on the nursery sector by Laing & Buisson constitutes a key source on childcare provision in the UK, given the market-based nature of the childcare system (Blackburn, 2012a). However, their annual reports are not publicly available and their purchase is subject to a substantial fee.

8.2.6. Survey data

There are, in comparison to other countries, perhaps a surprisingly large number of sources of survey data related to childcare in the UK. A few general panel and cohort studies are UK-wide while the purely childcare-focused surveys tend to be country-specific and very detailed. Amongst the UK wide surveys are the *Survey of Childcare and Work Decisions* and the *Millennium Cohort Study* and *Understanding Society*. The *Lifestyle (formerly General Household) Survey* and *Families & Children* are conducted within the boundaries of Great Britain. The *Childcare and Early Years Survey of Parents* is put to parents both in Wales and England, though executed separately for each country part. In Scotland, the *Scottish Household Survey*, the *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare 2006* and *Growing up in Scotland* deliver information on childcare arrangements.

These local, detailed childcare surveys capture information on a range of aspects of the everyday life childcare arrangements of parents that are usually overlooked. Earlier in this report, based on Schwanen & de Jong (2008), three types of constraints (spatial-time constraints, moral and institutional constraints) and three types of strategies in childcare arrangement (adjustments to work, adjustments to care and coordinating mechanisms) were discussed. In many surveys in which childcare is merely one of many topics, only adjustments to work and care are targeted in a generalizing manner by asking for the hours worked, the predominant childcare supplier(s) and sometimes the hours of childcare used. Within the surveys focusing on childcare in one part of Britain, on the other hand, constraints and strategies are captured in much greater detail. They cover, e.g., spatial-time constraints (amongst other things by asking about the distance between home and childcare), the complexity of care arrangements (e.g. capturing all forms of care that are used and allowing for differences in childcare between term time and school holidays), care arrangements for children with special needs, care arrangements of parents with irregular or unusual working hours and the ease of finding information on available childcare services.

The 2006 questionnaire of the Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey, to give one example, contained the following question and response options:

> Now think about the times when your usual childcare arrangements broke down unexpectedly or your requirements changed temporarily. When your usual requirements break down or you need additional childcare outside your normal arrangements, what are the problems you encounter when making arrangements?
>
> - It is more expensive than normal provision
> - It is difficult to find someone suitable to provide childcare
> - It is difficult to make the necessary travel arrangements
> - It is difficult to get childcare of the same standard as my usual provision
> - It is difficult to find someone who is suitable qualified
> - None
> - Other
> - I have never had this experience

This example demonstrates that surveys specialising in childcare are more prone to capture issues surrounding it on a micro level. Since international surveys, in contrast, are conducted with the aim of macro-level comparisons, these differences stand to reason. However, they highlight the importance of local, more in-depth surveys.

8.2.7. List of Interviewees

A total of 10 interviews were conducted with individuals representing parent- and family-related organisations within the UK (England and Scotland). The table below gives a brief description of each organisation as well as the geographical location or area represented. Interviews were conducted in English and transcribed.

Table 8.3: Organisations interviewed in the UK

Description of organisations	Geographical area/region
Professional association for day nursery staff	England (Huddersfield) & Scotland
Interest group and research centre for families	England (London) & Scotland
Playgroup - childcare service for children age 3-4	England (York)
Local authority centre providing information on childcare to parents	England (York)
Children's charity and interest group	Scotland (Edinburgh)
Professional association for childminders	Scotland (Stirling)
Lone parent support and interest group	Scotland (Glasgow)
Non-profit organisation providing support and information to out-of-school care service providers	Scotland (Glasgow)
Research institute which focuses on families	Scotland (Edinburgh)
Foundation to increase the number of men working in the childcare sector/local authority support centre for families in need	Scotland (Edinburgh)

8.3. Key Issues for the UK

Having conducted the interviews and reviewed the available information around the childcare system in the UK a few key issues begin to emerge as areas of interest. Perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the childcare system in the UK is the high government expenditure *and* some of the highest fees payable by parents for childcare in the EU, leading to issues of affordability. A second issue is that of the mismatch between childcare provision, particularly that provided by directly funded state institutions such as pre-schools and working hours, leading to a childcare jigsaw, which becomes ever more complicated the more children are involved. Thirdly, the complexity of funding or both parents and providers was strongly criticized by our interviewees.

9. Survey Data on Childcare

Many scholars rely on international reports and databases for their information on national childcare systems. These reports in turn rely on certain sources of data; if the data do not exist, or are of poor quality, then that particular aspect of childcare is unlikely to be included in a report. The OECD is a major contributor to such international reports, with the OECD Family Database providing comparable indicators for a wide range of childcare-related issues, including public expenditure, enrolment, and parental leave schemes.[43] The OECD has also published comparative analyses and country profiles on early childhood education and care.[44] For parental care in particular, the International Network on Leave Policies and Research publishes an annual report reviewing the parental leave systems for roughly 30 developed countries.[45] Much of the data used in such international reports are drawn from a variety of harmonized cross-national surveys as well as national sources of information. See Appendix 2 for a more complete summary of international data sources. This chapter reviews the available survey data on childcare across the European Union. Understanding data availability is important as it in turn plays a role in the framing of discussions around childcare.

Appendix 3 offers an overview of available large-scale survey data on childcare. Overall, international surveys focus on a narrower range of childcare related issues than national surveys. Overall, the topic of childcare suffers from a general lack of information, with two UK surveys standing out from the range of national and international childcare surveys due to the depth of their questions.

9.1 Overview of cross-national data

The two main surveys at European level capturing childcare are the *European Labour Force Survey* (EU-LFS) and the *European Survey of Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC). For both, yearly data are available for a wide range of European countries, including the six focused on in this report.

In EU-LFS, the recurring ad hoc module *Reconciliation between Work and Family Life* (conducted 2005 and 2010) offers childcare information for children under age 15, which,

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[43] OECD (2014), OECD Family Database, OECD, Paris (www.oecd.org/social/family/database).
[44] See OECD portal 'Early Childhood Education and Care'. Available at:
http://www.oecd.org/education/preschoolandschool/earlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm.
[45] E.g. Peter Moss (ed.) (2013) International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2013. International Network on Leave Policies and Research. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/

however lacks any detail, capturing only whether formal or informal childcare was used, whether childcare costs posed a problem and the amount of formal childcare used per week. EU-SILC focuses on children up to 12 years of age, offering six response options for informal care and nine for formal care. It, however, also does not ask about childcare costs and only captures formal childcare hours per week. As noted by Keck & Saraceno (2011), EU-SILC data is not adequate for either policy assessment or for the purposes of cross-national comparison. Harrison Villalba, Villalba & Araújo (2012) also look at the advantages and limitations of using EU-SILC for monitoring participation in Early Childhood Education and Care, in some detail.

The *Generations and Gender Survey* (GGS) holds both questions on childcare within and outside of the household, amongst them who stays with the child when the child falls ill and taking the children to school or to childcare, formal and informal childcare with frequency of use, childcare costs per month and distribution of parental leave amongst partners. However, it is slow in its implementation, so while aiming for pan-European comparability, it is conducted in different countries in different years. Eighteen countries have so far undergone wave 1, amongst them Germany, Hungary and Italy, and nine already the second wave of the panel survey[46].

Further information on childcare can be found in the *Candidate Countries' Eurobarometer 2003.5* for Hungary and Slovenia, although this focuses only on grandparental care and care provided by the employer, as well as the *Harmonised European Time Use Survey*, which offers very limited information childcare arrangements, but may help in determining, e.g., time spent on taking children to childcare.

9.2 Different populations of children

The various surveys base their results on different basic populations. Some look only at children before school age (e.g. *Kinderbetreuungsstudie 2005*), others, such as the EU-SILC, look at children between 0 and 12 years. The GGS and the *German Mikrozensus* ask about children under 14; the EU-LFS collects childcare data for children under age 15; the *Survey of Childcare and Work Decisions* (SCWD) and the *Scottish Household Survey* (SHS) regard under 16 year-olds as children. The *German Socio-economic Panel* (SOEP) has questionnaires for several different child-age-groups. The *Swedish Level of Living Survey*

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[46] This was correct at the time of writing (March 2015), for updates see http://www.ggp-i.org/data/data-access.html.

(SLLS) treats all minors as children to whose age it tailors suiting questions, with a focus on education in higher ages.

Some surveys ask about all children living in the household (e.g. the *General Household Survey* (GHS), while recording different relationships, including foster and step children but not adoptive children). Others distinguish own children from partner's children, adopted children, and/or other cared for children living in the household (*Mikrozensus 2005* focuses strictly on own children).

Also, some surveys randomly pick one child in the household for which childcare is examined, some capture it for all children in the household (EU-LFS asks about the youngest child). The childcare and early years provision parents' survey asks first about all childcare used by the family and goes later on to record childcare arrangements for one child in the week before the interview in detail. GGS, *Mikrozensus* and SCWD treat childcare at household level, which corresponds with the research focus on parents' work arrangements, rather than the child's needs for childcare and education. The respondent asked about childcare also varies. In some studies is almost always the mother (e.g. *Growing up in Scotland* (GUS), other times it may be the household main respondent.

9.3 How is childcare organisation captured?

An area perhaps not captured in enough detail is the distribution of childcare and childcare arrangement responsibilities between partners. Several studies do collect information on whether there is a partner living in the household and on the work times of both adults. While many ask about childcare support and flexible work arrangements of the respondent, not all of them ask this also for their partner.

Something hardly mentioned is the balance of childcare responsibility within the partnership. EU-SILC asks who is more likely to make childcare decisions, the GGS enquires about the distribution of several child care tasks in the household, such as taking care of children when they are ill or taking children to school and other out of home activities, and the respondent's satisfaction with the distribution of child care tasks in the household, and the *Eurobarometer* 2003.5 survey in the new EU member countries captured how much time each of the two partners invested into childcare per week. On the national level, the SOEP asked how satisfied the respondent was with the support they received from their partner, which is, however, a very subjective measurement which is as much influenced by relationship dynamics and normative gender role perceptions as by actual objective facts. A

better picture of this would be required in order to establish the impact that unforeseen problems with out-of-home childcare or long journeys to childcare have on the respondents.

Transportation to the childcare facility is generally an under-explored topic. The *2005 Kinderbetreuungsstudie* asked how far the childcare facility was away from the respondent's home and how the child got there. The *Eurobarometer* survey asked about items that have the most impact on the respondents' time. Neither of these questions, however, give a good picture of the actual impact. The latter question only captures extreme cases, because the way to school competes against a number of other things, such as opening times and school hours. The questions from the *Kinderbetreuungsstudie* do not capture if, e.g., the childcare facility lies conveniently on the way to work or in the opposite direction.

Another blind spot of some studies is that they only ask about a 'typical week in term time' (EU-SILC, General Lifestyle Survey (GLS), although this at least acknowledges that there are other situations. One could say there are three approaches employed in surveys. The first considers the parental work schedule and goes then on to ask where the child is during that time. So *Mikrozensus 2005* asked: "Who mainly looks after your children during your worktime?" The SLLS inquired*: "*How is the care of this child arranged during the week, say between 8 am and 5 pm? (or other time while parents are at work)".

A second approach looks at the way in which childcare facilities are typically organised, including holidays and opening times. There is no ideal typical example of this, but *Kinderbetreuungsstudie 2005* has questions on when the facility closes in the evening and if it stays open at lunchtime, and both SOEP and *Kinderbetreuungsstudie* collect information on the provision of lunch at the facility. As previously stated, EU-SILC and GLS acknowledge the variability of childcare provision over the year by asking "At any time during a typical *term time* week did <child> attend any of the following?" [GLS, very similar in EU-SILC], only to then choose to ignore the non-term phases.

A third approach asks about a typical week, generally about the type of childcare used, or the childcare arrangements during the last week. This seems the most common type of question item. While at first glance all of these variations seem to assume the childcare provision is stable, the latter way of phrasing questions on childcare *could* be utilised to capture differences *if* interviews were scheduled both in term time and in school holidays. Examples for this type are:

a. EU-LFS ("Please give the number of own/spouse's/adopted children living in hh attending…<range of childcare facilities>"),

b. GGS ("Do you get regular help with childcare…?"),

c. SOEP ("If you think about a usual week…")

d. SCWD ("What type of childcare, if any, do you currently use to allow you to work?")

e. SHS [before 2007] ("Which of these childcare arrangements, if any, do you use for {name}?". "Apart form you or anyone you live with, which of these would you say has been your main provider of nursery or childcare for {child} in the past year?").

f. *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006* ("Childcare arrangement over the previous week:")

Two exceptionally in-depth surveys are the Childcare and Early Years Provision Parents' Survey (CEYPPS) and the Families and Children Survey (FCS), which ask both for term-time arrangements as well as for school holiday arrangements in great detail. The CEYPPS also asks about problems that might be connected to using multiple carers and multiple care facilities:

"Did you experience any of these problems because you used more than one place or person? PROBE: What others?"

A High cost
B Transport problems
C The different types of childcare or nursery education did not complement each other/did not go well together
D Problems trying to link up the different providers
E No, none
F Other (PLEASE WRITE IN)

9.4 Forms and sources of childcare

Most surveys capture both formal and informal care in varying degrees of detail. So SCWD only offered three broad childcare categories: (1) Informal arrangements e.g. relatives and friends, (2) formal childcare e.g. child minder, nursery, before or after school club, (3) A mixture of informal and formal arrangements, (4) I/We don't use childcare, whereas all other surveys ask somewhat more in depth about the provider. It should be noted that different surveys have different conceptualisations and thus operationalisations of the different forms and sources of childcare. Some surveys might consider a child minder as an informal provider, other surveys might consider a child minder as a formal provider.

Surveys offering a wider spectrum of possible responses can be divided into those asking about all forms of childcare in a single question and those splitting them up into various items. This split up usually occurs between childcare facilities and persons providing childcare. Examples of the former (childcare facilities) are:

1. EU-LFS

Typecare: *Main type of childcare used for own/spouse's children up to 14 while person is working (apart from compulsory school; normal week omitting school holidays and emergency arrangements)*

    a. Childcare services (including paid child minders), pre-school

    b. Partner who is living in the household

    c. Relatives/neighbours/friends (unpaid)

    d. No childcare used

[And in more detail:] *Please give the number of own/spouse's/adopted children living in the household*

    a. Attending crèche:

    b. Attending kindergarten:

    c. Attending lower primary school (grades 1-4):

    d. Attending post-primary school (grade 5 or higher)

    e. Other children under 15 not attending child care or educational institution

2. SOEP *[age 0-6]*

If you think about a usual week: Are there other people apart from you who occasionally look after the child?

    a. (Ehe) Partner .... (partner)

    b. Großeltern des Kindes .... (grandparents of the child)

    c. Ältere Geschwister des Kindes .... (older siblings of the child)

    d. Andere Verwandte .... (other relatives)

    e. Tagesmutter....................................... (childminder)

    f. Krippe...(nursery)

    g. Andere (z.B. Babysitter, Nachbarn)........... (others, e.g. babysitters, neighbours)

    h. Nein, niemand .... (no one)

3. *Kinderbetreuungsstudie 2005*

Was <child> looked after in the last week by...

    a. Ihnen selbst (yourself)

    b. Ihrem Partner/ Ihrer Partnerin (your partner)

    c. den Groseltern, einem Groselternteil (grandparents)

    d. dem Bruder oder der Schwester (brother or sister)

    e. anderen verwandten Personen (other relatives)

    f. Freunden oder Nachbarn (friends or neighbours)

g. Kindertageseinrichtung, Krippe, Kindergarten (day care facility, creche, kindergarden)

h. einem Au Pair(-Madchen)

i. einem Babysitter

j. einer Tagesmutter/Kinderfrau (childminder/nanny)

k. einer Kindertageseinrichtung, einem Hort (day care facility, after school care)

l. einer Ganztagsschule (all-day school)

m. einer Freizeiteinrichtung (recreational facility)

n. Nachhilfe, Sportunterricht bzw. –Training, Musikunterricht oder ahnliches (private tuition, sports, music lessons or similar)

o. einer anderen, bisher noch nicht erwahnten Person, und zwar _____ (other not yet named person, which is_____)?

4. SLLS

How is the care of this child arranged during the week, say between 8 am and 5 pm? (or other time while parents are at work)

a. Child manages alone at home

b. Parent(s) at home

c. Grandparent(s) or other relative

d. Private child minder

e. Parental cooperate or other private daycare

f. Municipal childminder (incl. three-family)

g. Municipal daycare

h. Preparatory class for 6 year olds

i. After school leisure centre

j. Own nanny/au-pair (employed)

5. Childcare and Early Years Provision Parents' Survey

Can I just check, over the week starting on Monday [date] and ending Sunday [date], did [children's names] receive any of the following types of [childcare or nursery education/ childcare or nursery education or out of school activities/childcare or out of school activities] that week?

a. Nursery school

b. Nursery class attached to primary or infants' school

c. Reception class at a primary or infants' school

d. Special day school or nursery or unit for children with special educational needs

e. Day nursery

   f. Playgroup or pre-school

   g. Child minder

   h. Nanny or au pair

   i. Baby-sitter who came to home

   j. Breakfast club

   k. After school club/ activities

   l. Holiday club/scheme

   m. My ex-husband/wife/partner / the child's other parent who does not live in this household

   n. The child's grandparent(s)

   o. The child's older brother/sister

   p. Another relative

   q. A friend or neighbour

   r. Other nursery education provider (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

   s. Other childcare provider (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

6. Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006

Childcare arrangement over the previous week: (asked twice)

   a. Childminder

   b. Nursery

   c. Preschool

   d. Out of school club

   e. Crèche

   f. Children/family centre

   g. Breakfast club

   h. Holiday Play Scheme

   i. Friend or neighbour

   j. Sitter service

   k. Family member (please state relationship to child)

   l. Other (please name)

   m. Do not use childcare

Examples of the latter approach (persons providing care) are:

1. EU-SILC (2010)

ChAtt SHOWCARD 15 *At any time during a typical term time week did (NAME) attend any of the following?*

    a. Play group or pre-school

    b. Day-care centre or workplace crèche

    c. Nursery school

    d. School (infant to secondary)[47]

    e. Breakfast/After school club

    f. Children's centres/integrated centres/combined centres

    g. Boarding school

    h. None of these

And during that typical term time week did any of the people listed on this card normally look after (NAME), excluding care for social occasions? (Other than resident parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff contact whilst at places previously mentioned)

[Nanny refers to an employed nanny (domestic help to look after children) Code all that apply]

    a. Child's grandparents

    b. Child's non-resident parent/an ex-spouse/an ex-partner

    c. Child's brother or sister

    d. Other relatives

    e. Au Pair/Nanny (includes live-in and day nannies)

    f. Friends or neighbours

    g. Childminder[48]

    h. Other non-relatives

    i. None of the above

2. GGS

Do you get regular help with childcare from:

    a. Babysitter (nanny)

    b. Day care centre

    c. Nursery or pre-school

    d. After school care-centre

    e. Self-organised childcare group

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[47] Note that school is treated as part of childcare.

[48] Note how EU-SILC organises childcare-providers not after formal and informal care but by differentiating institutions and people.

f. Other institutional arrangement

Do you (also) get regular help with childcare from relatives or friends or other people for whom caring for children is not a job?

3. General Lifestyle Survey

At any time during a typical term time week did <child> attend any of the following?

a. Play group or pre-school

b. Day-care centre or workplace creche

c. Nursery school

d. School (infant to secondary)

e. Breakfast/after school club

f. Children's centres/integrated centres/combined centres

g. Boarding school

h. None of these

And during a typical term time week did any of the following people listed on this card normally look after <child>, excluding care for social occasions? (Other than resident parents/guardians and staff contact whilst at places previously mentioned)

a. Child's grandparents

b. Child's non-resident parent/an ex-spouse/an ex-partner

c. Child's brother or sister

d. Other relatives

e. Au-pair/nanny (includes live-in and day nannies)

f. Friends or neighbours

g. Childminder

h. Other non-relatives

i. None of the above

4. SOEP

If you think about a usual week: Are there other people or institutions apart from you who occasionally look after the child?

The following people:

a. (Ehe) Partner (partner)

b. Großeltern des Kindes (grandparents of the child)

c. Altere Geschwister des Kindes (older siblings of the child)

d. Andere Verwandte (other relatives)

e. Kinderfrau, Au-pair (nanny, au-pair)

f. Andere (z.B. Babysitter, Eltern von Freunden des Kindes, Freunde oder Nachbarn) (others, e.g. babysitters, parents of child's friends, friends, neighbours)

g. Nein, niemand (no one)

h. Folgende Einrichtungen / Organisationen (The following institutions/organisations)

i. Schule (Unterricht, AGs, frei betreute Zeit) (school [classes, project groups, supervised spare time)

j. Hort (Schulhort oder andere hortahnliche Einrichtungen) (after school care facility)

k. Soziale Einrichtungen, Zentren, Freizeitorganisationen (clubs etc.)

l. Nein, niemand (no one)

Only a few surveys also distinguish which authority stands behind the childcare facility. The *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006* distinguished public, private, voluntary, informal and other providers. *Kinderbetreuungsstudie 2005* asked "Who runs this facility?" (church/church affiliated charitable facility, public facility, company facility, independent charity organisation [red cross etc.], parents' initiative, other).

The *Childcare and Early Years Provisions Survey of Parents* seems to be the only one asking in greater detail about what kind of childcare/education is provided within the chosen care facility and in how far the two areas are divided or combined. It appears that the other surveys expect to implicitly measure this by merely recording the type of facility used, if they are interested in such a distinction at all.

There is also a difference in the general understanding of who can be a childcare provider. Some surveys, such as the *Childcare and Early Years Provisions Survey of Parents*, EU-SILC, the *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006*, or the GLS, explicitly mean childcare provided by people or institutions other than the respondent or their partner, whereas other surveys include either the partner (e.g. SOEP, EU-LFS, SLLS) or both respondent and partner (*Kinderbetreuungsstudie 2005*).

Despite there being a special term – "Schlüsselkind"/"latchkey child" – for children who come home to an empty flat/house after school, the SLLS is the only one offering the response option "child manages alone at home", together with the FCS that offers the response category "old enough to look after themselves". This is as such not childcare, but it is an important category when looking at childcare needs and deficits. Not all surveys list a parent or ex-partner no longer living in the household as possible informal care-giver (EU-SILC, SHS, and CEYPSP do include a non-resident parent).

Grandparenting is covered in most childcare surveys, although usually in a superficial manner, simply by listing grandparents amongst the informal carers. It is not asked, for example, why grandparents might not have childcare responsibility.

9.5 Particular needs and parental motivations for using childcare

Reasons for requiring particular forms of childcare to address any special childcare needs of the family are not addressed in any of the international studies. National studies are more attuned to these motivations. One core question, when establishing the actual need for a specific childcare facility, is "Does the child have any kind of illness, problem or disability affecting his/her daily life (e.g. diabetes, CP, DAMP, dyslexia, hearing impairment, allergy)?" This is the exact formulation asked in the SLLS, which also asks after symptoms of depression. The *Childcare and Early Years Provision Parents' Survey* has several questions on the nature of the special educational needs and disabilities of the child, captures this in greater detail, including in how far they influence transport to and from childcare. It also captures parental disability or longstanding illness.

This was also asked by the *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006*, which captured if the child had any additional support needs and if this affected the childcare with the following options:

    a. I found it difficult to access provision of a suitable nature

    b. I found it difficult to access provision of a sufficient quality

    c. I found it difficult to find a place at all

    d. I have tended to rely more on informal care

    e. I have had to travel further to access a specialist provider

    f. I had to find a specialist provider but was able to do so locally

    g. I had to find a specialist provider but found this to be affordable

    h. No effect on options/decisions

    i. Other

The *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006* also asked about having to work on Sundays (just as EU-LFS 2010 captured shift work, evening work, and Sunday work) and if English was the first language of the respondent, their partner and their child. Additional care responsibilities beyond childcare are addressed by these two surveys.

Furthermore, the *Childcare and Early Years Provision: Parents' Survey* asked in detail about the motivation behind using childcare. There are several instances in the questionnaire when this is asked; the one with the most extensive response list is the following:

Which of the things on this card best describe the reasons you used [provider's name] in the week beginning Monday [date]?

    a. So that I could work

    b. So that my husband/ wife/ partner could work

    c. So that I could look for work

    d. So that my husband/ wife/ partner could look for work

    e. So that I could study/ train

    f. So that my husband/ wife/ partner could study/ train

    g. So that I could look after the home / other children

    h. So that I could go shopping / attend an appointment / socialise

    i. For my child's educational development

    j. Because my child likes spending time with/at the provider

    k. Because my child asked to spend time with/at the provider

    l. So that my child could take part in a leisure activity

    m. Other reason (please specify)

The *Scottish Household Survey* asked the following:

I would like to ask you some questions specifically about the childcare that you use for [random child]. Which of the following best describes the reasons why you are using that childcare for [random child]?

    a. For my child's development and/or education

    b. To enable me/my partner to go to work

    c. To enable me/my partner to work more hours

    d. To improve my/my partners choice of job

    e. To enable me/my partner to earn more money

    f. To enable me/my partner to study/study more

    g. To give me/my partner time to do other (non-work/study) things

    h. Other (Write in)

The SCWD was only interested in why formal childcare was chosen over informal and vice versa and in how far the respondents would be likely to use more childcare if its costs were covered by the government.

The *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006* enquired into specific issues associated with having more than one child. It also tries to envision the ideal childcare choice for the parent.

Suppose you could choose any of the childcare arrangements on the card for <child>. (Imagine all of them are available and you could afford any of them.) Which would be your first choice for childcare for <child>?'

    a. Child minder

    b. Nursery

    c. Playgroup

    d. Out of school club

    e. Crèche

    f. Children/family centre

    g. Breakfast club

    h. Holiday Play Scheme

    i. Friend or neighbour

    j. Family member (please state relationship to child)

    k. No single main type of provision

    l. Other (please name)

9.6 Work flexibility and childcare

Flexible work arrangements to accommodate childcare are quite well captured, both concerning the general availability of these as well as their use. In the EU-LFS, variable working hours were captured with five categories: (1) Fixed start and end of a working day or varying working time, (2) Flexitime\Working time banking, (3) Daily number of hours fixed, but some flexibility within the day, (4) Determines own work schedule (no formal boundaries at all), (5) Other. Respondents were also asked about variable starting and ending times of workdays and the possibilities to arrange working time so that they could take off a whole day for family reasons. Both questions were very similarly asked in the *German Mikrozensus*. The *Kinderbetreuungsstudie* included work flexibility with four response options to a wider question of company support for childcare:

    a. Option of part-time work for parents

    b. Flexible work-time

    c. Telework/work from home

d. Flexible reaction in emergency situation.

The *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey 2006* asked about the widest range of work flexibility arrangements with the following question:

Which of the following child-friendly working practices are available at your place of work?

[6 possible response options are not mentioned in the list below as they are not related to work organisation]

a. Part-time working

b. Flexi time

c. Work from home

d. Job sharing

e. Paid time off when children ill

f. Term time working

g. Longer maternity leave than the statutory

h. More maternity pay than the statutory

i. Career breaks

j. Adoption leave

k. Paternity leave

l. Don't know

What may not be captured properly by these surveys is any possible discrepancy between statutory regulations and actual practice. It could well be that while in principle certain options are offered, in practice it is otherwise. Questions phrased in the fashion of "is this offered/available" leaves it up to the respondent to decide whether to state the official offerings or the actual practices. Some surveys may be able to give some insight into that.

The *Eurobarometer* for EU candidate states asked what has actually been made use of: "Which options have you taken in your main work in the past 12 months?" (Teleworking, working more or less hours if needed, saving up overtime to take as extra time off, carrying over holidays to next year, taking extra pay instead of holiday, taking extra paid time off for study, taking extra time of to look after relatives, child care facilities of your workplace, taking a sabbatical, taking unpaid leave, early retirement, early retirement with part time option). The *Mikrozensus* followed their question on the possibility of taking off a whole day for family reasons with a question of whether the respondent made use of that in the last twelve months. The *Bamberg Panel of Married Couples* asked about the employer's reaction to plans of reducing work hours for childcare reasons, just as it asked how the employer acted when the respondent re-entered work after parental leave.

9.7 Hours spent in childcare

Many studies record how many hours per week the child/children spend in particular forms of childcare. EU-SILC divides the more detailed categories of childcare it asks about since 2010 into broader groups of childcare options:

a. How many hours during a typical term time week did (NAME) spend in the playgroup, pre-school or nursery school?

b. How many hours during that typical week did (NAME) spend in school?

c. How many hours during a typical term time week did (NAME) spend in a

d. Breakfast or after school club or at an organised children's centre, integrated centre or combined centre?

e. How many hours during a typical term time week did (NAME) spend in a day-care centre, crèche, family day care (even if for just a few hours)?

And for individual care by one person:

Thinking of these people, how many hours of paid care did they provide for (NAME) during that typical term time week?

And how many hours of unpaid care did they provide for (NAME) during that typical term time week?

EU-LFS only asks about the "Total number of hours spent in institution or organised child care service per week on average", providing response categories in 10 hour-steps. In the GGS, the frequency, but not the amount, of help with childcare is recorded.

SOEP captures hours of childcare per week for every carer or childcare facility. The *Kinderbetreuungsstudie* 2005 went beyond that and also enquired how since when the child visited the facility/childminder – this is similar to the *Childcare and Early Years Provision Survey*, which asked since when the parents used the childcare facility, which potentially could record any experience with the care-facility spanning the care of several children. The *Childcare and Early Years Provision* survey also captures in detail childcare arrangements for the different holiday periods and captures childcare arrangements from 0-24h for each day of the previous week.

9.8 Emergency childcare

Only three surveys asking about situations in which the usual care arrangements stop working were identified. So the *Kinderbetreuungsstudie* asked if the respondent had an emergency solution if the child grew ill or there were unexpected work obligations, the *Childcare and*

Early Years Provision: Parents' Survey asked which childcare providers would be available for a "one off", and the *Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare Survey* enquires into the problems the respondent has faced when the childcare arrangements broke down, offering the following response options:

a. It is more expensive than normal provision

b. It is difficult to find someone suitable to provide childcare

c. It is difficult to make the necessary travel arrangements

d. It is difficult to get childcare of the same standard as my usual provision

e. It is difficult to find someone who is suitable qualified

f. None

g. Other

h. I have never had this experience

Some of the other surveys may partly aim to answer this question by capturing work flexibility, yet this carries the underlying assumption that the respondent would wish to provide care for the child themselves in such a situation, rather than find an alternative solution, and leaves the question open what respondents do whose employers do not offer flexible work arrangements.

9.9 Examples of best practice

The *Childcare and Early Years Provision: Parents' Survey* is by far the most detailed quantitative study on childcare found by the research team. It is conducted yearly in England, and produces over 1800 variables.

The questionnaire is divided into 11 blocks:

1. Household composition

2. Household's use of childcare in the past week and the past year

3. Household's childcare costs (for providers used in the past week)

4. Detailed record of attendance in the last week for selected child

5. Details of main provider for selected child in past week

6. Attitudes towards childcare in the local area

7. Reasons for patterns of provision

8. Respondent's work

9. Household and child classification questions

10. Provider details, data linkage consent and admin questions

11. Partner's economic activity and classification details

The longitudinal Families and Children Survey has a similarly in depth questionnaire. It is structured in the following manner:

1. Household grid
2. Respondent's health
3. Children's health, education and service use
4. Child maintenance
5. Children living outside the household
6. Caring for people outside household
7. Housing
8. Education and training
9. Work
10. Activity History
11. Childcare
12. Attitudes self completion
13. Future Plans
14. Job search activity
15. Benefits and tax credits
16. Tax Credits
17. Income Support
18. Other sources of income
19. Savings
20. Expenditure Section
21. Future work prospects and social capital
22. End section
23. Relationship history
24. Proxy partner interview

Both surveys, funded by government agencies, focus more on formal childcare, while also including basic questions on informal care arrangements. The formal care is, however, captured in exceptional detail: differentiating between term-time care and holiday care, identifying specific education and care needs of the children, paying attention to physical limitations of the parents and the information network around childcare, and capturing the care arrangements with multiple care-providers minutely for a whole week, which many surveys do not even acknowledge (by only asking about the main provider).

9.10 Summary

This section has reviewed the available survey data on childcare across the European Union, as this data availability plays a role in the framing of discussions around childcare. Examples of best practice have been presented, but it is found that these examples are the exception to the norm and that there is much scope for improving childcare survey data in order that in better inform policy assessments and cross-national comparison.

10. Common cross-national themes[49]

Parents across the European Union use a range of childcare arrangements. Partly, the use of a particular arrangement is determined by the opportunity set, that is to say, what is available to parents. Whilst it might be expected that the six diverse country settings of this report would have – and indeed – they do have different opportunity sets, there are certain common themes in the motivations for parents using a particular source of childcare. One of these common themes is a frequent gap between an administrative understanding of statutory childcare service provision and the actual experience of users of these services.

Much policy debate about the availability of formal childcare has focused on the quantity of places. However as the literature review in section 2 shows, availability is a much more complex concept. In particular, recent work from (largely qualitative) sociological and human geography literature on micro-practices or strategies of managing care and work suggests that the problem of 'space-time fixity', or the need to be in a particular place at a particular time (see Hubers *et al*., 2011; He, 2013), combined with the logistics of organising care arrangements to manage this issue during "coordination points" (see Skinner, 2005) is crucial to our understanding of how and why parents organise their childcare as they do, including whether or not a particular form of care is perceived as 'available' to them or not.

The research underpinning this report has been able to illustrate the relevance of this issue of needing a broader conceptual understanding of "availability" across institutional and cultural contexts via interviews with parent- and childcare-related organisations in six European countries. Respondents include a range of parent and childcare interests in six different childcare systems and this illuminates the extent to which logistical challenges in arranging childcare are common across institutional contexts. In particular, the local knowledge of organisational actors helps us to understand the reality of parents' childcare

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[49] This section is supplemented by a peer review journal article. Please contact corresponding author for further details.

experience beyond what is commonly understood from much large-scale survey data, administrative records and policy documents. It is not that survey data could not be very helpful, but as section 9 has reviewed, there is a lack, particularly of cross-national data, in this regard.

We find that certain logistical challenges do arise for parents across countries and that these challenges hinge on questions of space (whether there are physical locations for children to go to and how they get there) as well as time (when children's and adult's activities intersect and the challenges related to matching work and care hours). In particular, there is a *cross-national* mismatch between the demands of employment and childcare structures such that parents are involved in a complicated dance trying to navigate the two. This is present across countries to some degree, despite their institutional differences. This suggests that policy that attempts to increase the use of childcare services for employment purposes should take into account the logistical challenges of making use of ostensibly 'available' childcare in addition to other considerations such as affordability and quality.

10.1 The challenges and practicalities of arranging childcare for work

It's a question of space…

As noted previously, a key focus especially within the policy literature has been availability in terms of the number of places on offer. As expected, this issue figured prominently within the interviews across each of the six countries. In particular, nearly half of the respondents made specific reference to a lack of places as a key constraint on parents. Discussion included how easy or difficult it was to find a place for children and whether this involved being placed on a waiting list. In some countries (Hungary, Slovenia, Sweden), respondents also expressed concern about overcrowding within facilities and group sizes.

In many cases the interviews re-affirmed issues raised in previous research regarding availability of childcare, such as wide local variation in the supply of places and lower availability for infants and children under the age of three (Kamerman, 2000). Similarly, availability of places is perceived to be more of a problem during certain periods of the year especially holidays and summer vacations, when services often close or reduce their opening hours. Respondents from all countries in our sample, with the exception of Sweden, stressed the challenges that these periods pose for parents.

At the same time the interviews highlighted the subjective nature of availability, with the perception of a lack of places often acknowledged to be a lack of a particular type of place that parents would prefer.

The question of whether a childcare place is "available" or not was repeatedly linked to the issue of distance between an open childcare place and parents' homes or workplaces. This issue was directly raised by over a quarter of the respondents, across country samples. Respondents noted that parents prefer closer services in order to reduce travel time and the overall challenge of coordinating work, care and transport. This was especially a challenge for larger families with more than one child requiring care, especially if this required transport to more than one institution, such as a childcare service and a school building.

While parents express preferences for certain childcare services, in many cases parents have little choice over which childcare place they take, due to limited options in a given radius near their home and work. Several respondents noted that even when parents have a legal entitlement to a place, it may pose severe logistical challenges for them if the travel distance is too great or depending on what system of transport is available.

The challenge arises especially where children are perceived as unable to travel or be alone. This issue was not commonly broached by respondents and appears to be largely assumed. However, in a few cases, the issue was raised explicitly (e.g. in the UK). In other countries respondents did not simply describe the situation but also expressed negative opinions of children being left alone. This is in contrast to situations in which children are perceived as sufficiently independent to engage in self- or group care with other children (such as when walking to school). Crucially this suggests that normative considerations about children's self-reliance (or lack thereof) influence parental perceptions of the need for childcare services and by extension their availability. This is related to an additional prominent factor in availability considerations, besides distance: the particular form of childcare on offer. For example, in our interviews many discussions of a lack of places referred specifically to publicly provided or subsidized services, rather than a lack of *any* form of childcare service

Such discussions signalled the additional and overlapping importance of affordability, with parents preferring to make use of subsidized places where possible to reduce their out-of-pocket costs. Accordingly, discussion of a lack of places was often specifically a lack of places, which were perceived as affordable.

It's also a question of time…

Availability is constrained by considerations of time as well as space, especially for employed parents or those looking for employment needing to coordinate childcare hours with work hours. Consequently, the opening hours of the service, flexibility or rigidity of these opening hours and drop-off/pick-up times featured prominently in discussions of childcare organisation challenges across each country. This was particularly an issue with services designed primarily as educational institutions (including schools). Such services often feature shorter overall opening times and are less flexible with regard to when a child can be picked up or dropped off than services designed primarily or equally as care institutions while parents are at work. Similarly, such services are more likely to close for extended holiday periods, and in some countries, during the middle of the day for lunch periods as well. Respondents often felt that this was due to the persistence of outdated institutional structures, which had been designed during a different time and for a different purpose. Consequently, there was frequently an expression that education policy often did not take into account the needs of working parents.

Some respondents specifically asserted that because of these issues, childcare challenges become *more* difficult, rather than less, when children begin school. This is in contrast to the common notion that school makes organising childcare simpler due to the availability of a free or heavily subsidized place for children to go for a substantial part of the day, also reflected in the main focus within the literature on ECEC, or childcare for children below school-age.

Nevertheless, even services solely designed to provide childcare also pose time-related challenges for parents. Such services are often open during core "standard" working hours, but provide limited availability outside these hours. Several respondents expressed frustration with this aspect of childcare services, especially as more families work and therefore require care outside these hours.

Further, cultural norms and local informal rules can constrain parents' ability to make use of the full advertised opening hours of a given service. For example, in Hungary, Germany and Sweden, respondents told us about the pressures that parents (particularly mothers) feel to pick up their children earlier than when the service formally closes.

10.2 Consequences – in-practice solutions and the stress of organising logistics

From our interviews it is clear that the problem of space-time fixity and managing "coordination points" is not specific to one country or to those with limited provision of public childcare services. In fact, these logistical challenges are often magnified by the limitations of institutional forms of childcare, which require children to be picked up and dropped off at particular times of day, often at different buildings, and usually during hours and periods of the year which do not match full-time hours of employment. Thus, in order to make use of these particular forms of care, which are often highly subsidised and/or provide other benefits parents desire (such as the opportunity for their children to socialise or prepare for transitions to school), parents must find some way of joining up the mismatches between care services and employment.

Prior literature has identified several childcare strategies parents use to overcome these challenges, including children's independent self-care or care of younger siblings (see Romich, 2007; Morrow, 2008; Hafford, 2010) and the use of multiple or alternative forms of care, including residence-based market providers and/or informal care by family, friends and neighbours, especially grandparents (Wheelock & Jones, 2002; Wheelock *et al*., 2003; Larsen, 2004; Le Bihan & Martin, 2004; Moss, 2009). As noted previously, a few respondents within our sample explicitly mentioned the role of children themselves in independently looking after themselves or travelling from one care service to another. However, it was more common for respondents to mention non-institutional forms of childcare as a solution.

The role of private arrangements was raised by respondents in each country. In some cases, this included seeking out private institutional services; for example a respondent in Italy noted that parents sometimes seek out Catholic preschools even if they are not religious, in order to make use of longer opening times. More frequently, however, respondents referred specifically to private home-based arrangements such as paid child minders, often specifically referencing a need or preference for greater flexibility.

Private arrangements also sometimes include usually unpaid, often reciprocal care from friends or neighbours.

Additionally, and in line with prior literature, the family remained a primary source of private support, with respondents in each country stressing the importance of spouses/partners and grandparents in particular. For example, some respondents referred to the use of tag-team pick-up and drop-off between parents based on different, possibly flexible

work schedules, a strategy which has also been noted in other qualitative studies (Skinner, 2005; Jain *et al.,* 2011). Others noted that grandparents provide a fall-back solution when institutional forms of childcare are unavailable or provide a limited or inflexible service.

Consequently, a lack of access to such informal options was perceived by a range of respondents as a major difficulty for parents. For example, single parents in particular may lack the support of an involved partner to share childcare tasks. Grandparents, too, cannot always be relied upon as they may live too far away or because they are also working.

Even when stop-gap solutions are available they often involve increased complexity which can lead to stress. For example, mixing and matching different forms of care within a single day was often mentioned in the UK, especially when children were of different age groups. As mentioned previously one respondent (Local childcare provider, UK) described the use of paid child minders to pick up children from different forms of institutional provision and to get them home again (see also Wheelock & Jones, 2002; Skinner, 2005).

Nor is this only a problem in countries like the UK and Germany, which are known for providing childcare services for short or part-time hours. For example, in Slovenia, one respondent describes how parents manage to avoid the cultural stigma of leaving children at kindergarten for the full opening hours:

"*So, they are solving this problem in different ways; also with baby sitter who pick up and bring the child home… Or they do it like this: for instance father brings the child in kindergarten and stays therefore a bit longer at work while mother is early at work and can therefore leave earlier to pick the child up.*" (Local family centre, Slovenia)

Similar practices were also reported by our Swedish respondents.

Crucially, several respondents in the UK and Germany pinpointed the stress of organising these logistics as an explicit factor in parents (usually mothers) reducing their working time or avoiding looking for work altogether. This was especially highlighted for single parents.

10.3 Summary

Our interviews suggest that the challenge of organising and coordinating care arrangements around employment and other needs of various caregivers is fairly universal. Across diverse institutional contexts families face similar problems of simultaneously coordinating space and time components to match work and care. Spatially, parents face the question of geographical proximity between home, work and care facilities and associated issues of transport. Time

considerations, such as the opening hours of childcare services and their relationship with working time are of similar importance. Such concerns factor into subjective assessments of whether particular forms of childcare are sufficiently 'available' for parents to make use of them.

Certain childcare infrastructures such as subsidized institutional care services can make some aspects of arranging care easier by relieving the cost burden and associated stress for individual families. Nevertheless, the rigidity of much institutional care, especially those services designed primarily for the purpose of child education, is also a prime driver of the logistical challenges parents face. Diversity among family circumstances and a persistent need for flexibility to deal with changing circumstances and unexpected events makes sole reliance on institutional care services infeasible for many families. As a consequence, parents look for private arrangements, including paid home-based carers and informal support from friends and family, to manage the limitations of more formal services. However, these solutions may increase the complexity of care arrangements and can lead to stress or attempts to relieve the burden by limiting labour force participation.

These findings are in line with other, usually single-country, qualitative studies that have interviewed parents about their childcare practices and strategies. However, for the most part these qualitative insights have not filtered into academic literature or policy debates on childcare availability, where the emphasis has remained on improving the supply of formal care services, with little appreciation for the daily struggles parents face and the coping strategies they employ when making arrangements to take advantage of these services.

This suggests that the concept of childcare availability is more complex than is commonly acknowledged. In particular, parents who do not make use of ostensibly available services may not be dissuaded solely by alternative factors of affordability or quality, but instead due to the challenges of matching up the time and space constraints of care services and other commitments, including paid employment. Commonly used availability indicators do not properly account for this issue and as such can lead to potentially misleading conclusions about the effects of childcare provision on maternal employment, for example. Consequently, further research in this area would benefit from attempts to develop indicators of logistical complexity and the challenges of space-time fixity in addition to more commonly used measures of the availability of places, affordability and quality.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1: Examples of childcare strategy typologies and classifications

Becker & Moen (1999)	'Scaling back' strategies: Placing limits on employment One 'career' and one 'job' (modified caregiver) Trading off
Bihan & Martin (2004)	Dual earners (relying heavily on outside support) Traditional division of labour 'Relay' caring (alternating between parents)
Larsen (2004)	One primary caregiver (usually mother) Task sharing between parents Parent(s) + additional carer (grandparent, nanny)
Medved (2004)	Routinizing (checking in with caregiver, alternating between partners, prepping in advance, reciprocating with broader informal networks) Improvising (requesting assistance from networks, trading off between partners in emergencies, evading repercussions at work) (Re)structuring (negotiating to reduce personal conflict, deliberating)
Wall & Sao José (2004)	Delegation of care (use of non-parental care) Negotiation of care within nuclear family (between partners, also older children) Mother-centred (reducing paid work to perform care) Child 'negligence' (leaving children alone) Superimposition of care upon work (taking children to work)
Forsberg (2009)	Delegating (to other people, institutions, technology) Alternating (parents take turns) Multitasking (caring during other tasks)
Hubers *et al.* (2011)	2 axes: employment or home-directed and type of agent involved (individual, material goods, professional workers, partner, social network)

Appendix 2: International data sources

2A Databases
OECD Family Database
A regularly updated database which includes 70 indicators under four main dimensions: the structure of families, the labour market position of families, public policies for families and children and child outcomes (December 2013 edition). These include indicators on the types of parental leave available, public spending and enrolment in childcare and early education, informal childcare, out of school care and some indicators on the quality of care. As such it is a highly cited database within the academic literature on ECEC.
See: http://www.oecd.org/social/soc/oecdfamilydatabase.htm

Eurostat
Eurostat makes readily available key indicators on childcare from the EU-SILC survey including the proportion of children in formal, informal or parent only childcare by age and number of hours per week. As such it is a widely used resource for comparisons of childcare use within the EU. In addition, it includes the European Labour Force Survey ad hoc module 'Reconciliation between work and family life' (2005, 2010) which includes data on care responsibilities and flexibility of employment.
See: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/
See also: Margherita, A., O'Dorchai, S. & Bosch, J., 2009. *Reconciliation between work, private and family life in the European Union*. Eurostat Statistical Books, European Commission.

European Platform for Investing in Children
A European Union website which provides brief overviews of the family policy and care system of EU countries.
See: http://europa.eu/epic/countries/index_en.htm

Council of Europe Family Database
A database of quantitative and qualitative data on family policy covering 40 of the Council of Europe's 47 member States, including all members of the European Union. Topics covered include: the institutional framework and family policy objectives, financial benefits for families, childcare provision and leave arrangements. Last updated in 2009.
See: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/familypolicy/database/default_en.asp

MISSOC
MISSOC is the EU's Mutual Information System on Social Protection, covering the EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It provides comparative tables and detailed national profiles of several main areas of social protection, including family benefits.
See: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=815&langId=en

Eurydice, Eurypedia
Eurypedia is the European Encyclopaedia on National Education Systems, which includes detailed information on the structure and finance of education, including early childhood education, for the EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.
See: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurypedia_en.php

See also: Eurydice - EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2009. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*, European Commission.

Luxembourg Income Study Supplements
Several macro-level databases of family policies have been constructed for use with the LIS, listed here: http://www.lisdatacenter.org/resources/other-databases/
These include:
- Work-Family Policy Indicators (2012)
  - Country-level data on leave policies, ECEC policies and working time regulations for 2012. It covers 22 countries in Europe and North America as well as Australia. Assembled by Irene Boeckmann, Michelle Budig, and Joya Misra at the University of Massachussetts-Amherst.
- Family Policy Database (1997, 2003)
  - Country-level data on childcare, leave and working time regulations. Compiled by Janet Gornick, Marcia Meyers and (for 1997) Katherin Ross.

Database for Institutional Comparisons in Europe (DICE)
A cross-national database of European institutional structures, including family policies, hosted by the research group CESifo Group Munich. The database includes a wide range of indicators on childcare, parental leave, family benefits and public expenditure, most of which are in the 2000-2010 range. It also includes visualisation tools.
See: http://www.cesifo-group.de/ifoHome/facts/DICE.html

The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies
Hosted by the Institute for Child and Family Policy at Columbia University in the United States, this website contains comparative information on families and family polices for over 20 industrialised countries as well as individual country profiles. However, it does not appear to have been updated since 2009.
See: http://www.childpolicyintl.org/

Comparative Family Policy Database
Compiled by Anne Gauthier, the database has two components: the "Comparative Family Cash Benefits Database" (1960-2008) and the "Comparative Maternity, Parental and Childcare Leave and Benefits Database" (1960-2010), which together provide information on family allowances and parental leave regulations for 22 OECD countries.
See: http://www.demogr.mpg.de/cgi-bin/databases/FamPolDB/index.plx

2B Key reports

OECD, Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and Family Life: A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries
2007 publication which reviews work and family reconciliation policies (including tax/benefit policies, parental leave systems, childcare support, and workplace practices) and parental labour market and family formation outcomes in Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands (OECD, 2002); Austria, Ireland and Japan (OECD, 2003); New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland (OECD, 2004); and Canada, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2005).
See: http://www.oecd.org/els/family/babiesandbosses-reconcilingworkandfamilylifeasynthesisoffindingsforoecdcountries.htm

OECD, Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators
Annual report presenting data on the structure and finances of the education systems in more than 40 countries, including comparative tables and country reports. This also includes some indicators on pre-primary education, including annual expenditure and enrolment rates by age.
See: http://www.oecd.org/edu/educationataglance2013-indicatorsandannexes.htm

OECD, Doing Better for Families
2011 report which analyses family policies and their relationship with outcomes such as fertility, parental employment and child development across OECD countries.
See: http://www.oecd.org/els/family/doingbetterforfamilies.htm

OECD, Starting Strong I: Early Childhood Education and Care
2001 review of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in 12 OECD countries (Australia, Belgium, France, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, UK, US).
See: http://www.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/display.asp?sf1=identifiers&st1=9789264192829

OECD, Starting Strong II: Early Childhood Education and Care
2006 review of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in twenty OECD countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States). Includes comparative analysis and individual profiles of the countries included. Outlines policy developments since Starting Strong I report and presents country specific recommendations for improvement.
See: http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/startingstrongiiearlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm

OECD, Starting Strong III: A Quality Toolbox for Early Childhood Education and Care
2012 report which sets out recommendations for actions policy-makers can take to improve the quality of early childhood education and care. Includes country-specific profiles for 10 countries (Czech Republic, Finland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom).
See: http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/startingstrongiii-qualitytoolboxforearlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm

OECD, ECEC country profiles
The OECD also makes available country profiles and reports from the early 2000s which outline the ECEC system in a variety of OECD countries and inform many of the comparative reports the OECD publishes. These can be found at the following sites:

- http://www.oecd.org/education/school/earlychildhoodeducationandcare-backgroundreports.htm
- http://www.oecd.org/education/school/earlychildhoodeducationandcare-countrynotes.htm
- http://www.oecd.org/education/school/earlychildhoodeducationandcare-countryprofiles.htm
-

Plantenga, J. & Remery, C. (2009) The provision of childcare services: A comparative review of 30 European countries. European Commission's Expert Group on Gender and Employment Issues (EGGE).
Report comparing the childcare systems of 30 European countries using Eurostat LFS and EU-SILC data.

Peter Moss (ed.) (2013) International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2013. International Network on Leave Policies and Research. Available at:
http://www.leavenetwork.org/
Annual report reviewing the parental leave systems for roughly 30 developed countries published by the International Network on Leave Policies and Research.

2C European Union policy documents

The following table sets out the key EU-level policy documents pertaining to childcare and related issues since the 1990s.

Table A1: EU-level policy documents

Year	Organisation	Title of document
1992	Council of the European Community	Council recommendation of 31 March 1992 on childcare
	Council of the European Community	Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding
1996	European Commission Network on Childcare and Other Measures to Reconcile the Employment Responsibilities of Men and Women	Quality targets in services for young children: Proposals for a ten year action programme
	Council of the European Union	Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC
1997	Council of the European Union	Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC - Annex : Framework agreement on part-time work
2000	European Council	Lisbon Agenda set
	European Commission	Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Social policy agenda
2002	European Parliament and Council of the European Union	Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions
	European Council	Barcelona Targets set
2005	European Commission	Communication from the Commission on the Social Agenda
2006	European Commission	Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
	European Commission	Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems
2008	European Commission	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Implementation of the Barcelona objectives concerning childcare facilities for pre-school-age children
	European Commission	Childcare services in the EU
	European Commission	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe
2010	European Commission	EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
	Council of the European Union	2010/707/EU: Council Decision of 21 October 2010 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States
	European Commission	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015
	Council of the European Union	Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC
2011	European Commission	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow
	Council of the European Union	Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow
2013	European Commission	Barcelona Objectives: The development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth

Appendix 3: SURVEY OVERVIEW								
Survey	**Children's age**	**Child relation to respondent**	**All children/ select child**	**Childcare for each child or summarily**	**Informal care**	**Formal care**	**Childcare costs**	**Childcare time per week**
EU LFS	Under 15	Own, spouse's or adopted children	All (in UK 2010 dataset: only youngest child)	summarily	Yes in 2005, not in 2010	Yes, without going into details	Only if child care costs are problematic	Yes (formal)
EU-SILC	under 16 (health) 0-12 (childcare)	'FOR EACH CHILD AGED 12 YEARS OR LESS IN THE HOUSEHOLD'; But question speaks of 'your child'…	All	individually	8-2 options (care providers are divided into institutions and persons, mixing formal and informal care-givers)	7+2	no	Yes (formal)
GGS	Under 14	All children living in the household, although this question suggests sth. different: 'Does R have any children younger than 14 in the household?'	all	Summarily for household	Partner, relatives, friends, other people	5 options + 'other'	Whole household per month	Frequency of use, formal and informal (not in hours)
Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2003.5	No specification		all		grandparents	Only care provided by employer	no	no
GSEOP	Childcare captured only for children not in school	'children in the household'	all	Each child separately	Relatives Friends/neighbours	Yes, without details	Only for care by person costs per month	Hours per day (formal)
Kinderbetreuungsstudie 2005	Up to six years, not yet in school	It is automatically assumed that in a HH with small children a parent will be resident… interviewer can only code whether they talk with mother or father	all	Each child separately	6	8	Per month for each carer	Hours for each day of the week separately, separately for formal and informal
Mikrozensus	Up to 14	Unclear; 'your child(ren)'	all	summarily	Relatives Friends/neighbours (like SOEP)	Yes, without details	Only if child care costs are problematic	no
Swedish Level of Living Survey (2000)	Up to 18 (born 1982 or later)	Biological, adoptive, spouse's or other (e.g. foster) child in household	all	individually	3, incl. parents themselves and child manages alone	7	Per child per month	no

Appendix 3: SURVEY OVERVIEW								
Survey	**Children's age**	**Child relation to respondent**	**All children/ select child**	**Childcare for each child or summarily**	**Informal care**	**Formal care**	**Childcare costs**	**Childcare time per week**
Childcare and Early Years Provision Survey of Parents	1-14 years	natural adopted Foster child Step child / child of partner Grandchild Other related child Unrelated child	all	both	5	12	Very detailed for each provider holiday and term time	Yes, holiday and term time for each provider
Families & Children	Up to 19, with questions specific to age groups	Son / Daughter (incl. adopted) Grandchild Step child Foster child Unrelated child Other related child	Each child	individually	5	10	Very detailed for 3 most used providers holiday and term time	Yes, holiday and term time for each provider
Survey of Childcare and Work Decisions	Under 16	Not specified ('your child[ren]')	All (unspecified)	summarily	Asking directly about informal	Asking directly about formal	no	no
Scottish Household Survey	Under 16	Each child in hh	Some for each child, 2 for random child	individually	2	6	no	no
Parents' Access to and Demand for Childcare 2006	14 and under	Own children living in household (incl. those for whom respondent is foster parent or guardian)	Child whose birthday is next	individually	2	10	Yes, weekly	Yes, per week
General HH/Lifestyle Survey	0-12 (2008)	Each child in the hh	Each child	individually	8-2 (care providers are divided into institutions and persons, mixing formal and informal care-givers)	7+2	no	For each provider per week