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Synthesis of main findings in the FamiliesAndSocieties project

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Abstract

This working paper summarizes the main results produced in the large scale collaborative research project FamiliesAndSocieties, financed in the EU Seventh Framework Programme during the period February 2013 – January 2017. Addressing first the growing diversity of family life courses and their main mechanisms of change, the research then focuses on linked lives and interdependencies through the lens of changing gender and intergenerational dependencies. Societal contexts and policies are addressed in highlighting vulnerable groups, issues of recognition and social inclusion, and family-relevant EU and national level policies. A brief discussion on future social risks and policy challenges, and on the implications of the project findings for policy frameworks concludes this report.

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Executive summary

The main objectives of the *FamiliesAndSocieties* project include investigating the diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe; assessing the compatibility of existing policies with family changes; and contributing to evidence-based policy-making. Relying on a conceptual framework informed by a multidisciplinary approach, the project engages with the growing complexities of family configurations and transitions within and across European countries, along with their implications for men, women and children with respect to inequalities in life chances, intergenerational relations and care arrangements. How current policies address family diversity, and identifying future policy needs based on an integrated foresight activities approach, are also focuses within the project.

The analyses reveal the dynamic nature of families and family life over the life course, shedding greater light on the role of socioeconomic resources for family careers and their intersections with gender, culture and life stage. Family constellations with heightened risks for vulnerability, namely: single parent families, large families, living-apart-together partnerships, same-sex families and stepfamilies, are also highlighted in the project. The reconciliation of paid work and family life is a dimension shown to be of crucial importance for the well-being of families and children, enabling societies to counteract the reproduction of vulnerability. The examination of family dynamics among immigrants and their descendants reveals a remarkable diversity of partnership patterns and family forms, shaped by both mainstream society and minority subcultures.

The ways by which gender and family changes become intertwined are highlighted in the project, as now both women and men engage in earning as well as caring activities. This trend is often reinforced by increasing employment instability and precariousness, impeding any convergence to a singular pattern of family life courses within and across countries. A focus on new parents shows that the birth of a child is one among many turning points leading to changes in the distribution of care work in couples and the gendering of parenting roles. Analyses highlight the significant benefits children of lower-educated mothers, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds in general, gain from formal childcare compared to home-based care; and the positive association between maternal education and childcare usage and child outcomes. With respect to the implications for child well-being of non-standard family arrangements, changes in family structure per se are not the main determinant as to negative outcomes for children. A more pronounced negative association between parental separation and children's educational attainment surprisingly exists in cases of children with more advantaged backgrounds. The associations of non-traditional family forms with child

outcomes are relatively modest compared to other characteristics, such as parental education and income.

Critical interdependencies between family generations, and between men and women within families, as constructed in the daily interactions between family members, and built and reinforced by social policies, entail that the type of public social provision offered has consequences for gender and socioeconomic inequality. Cash payments strengthen a gendered division of tasks as compared to offering care services. The primacy of family members in legal arrangements can constrain interdependence between the childless and their network members, and there are strong contrasts between the actual family roles of men and women related to differences between de jure and de facto practices. The expansion of private care markets contributes to social inequalities, rendering them less likely to provide a viable solution to meeting the increasing care needs of aging societies.

The project contributes to broadening and improving the availability of comparative indicators of family-related policies. Significant cross-country differences are shown in terms of types of support, risks targeted, coverage and receivers of public aid to young adults to facilitate leaving the parental home, setting up an independent household and starting a family. Parental leave use by fathers indicates beneficial impacts to second childbearing and reducing partnership dissolution. Three new databases have been established within the project: i) Assisted Reproductive Technologies regulations (ARPNova), ii) legal family formats available for same-sex and different-sex couples in Europe (LawsAndFamilies Database), and iii) family-policy initiatives of the European Union (EUFamPol) related to fertility, which cut across core aspects of family life, such as employment, care and gender.

The main policy conclusions derived from the research conducted within the project are that: policies should acknowledge the diversity of families; gender equality and social equality are necessary aspects of societal sustainability; and economic, social and legal security are crucial for the well-being of families and individuals in Europe.

1. Introduction

This synthesis report is based on the objectives, aims and main findings of the large-scale collaborative research project FamiliesAndSocieties - “Changing families and sustainable societies: Policy contexts and diversity over the life course and across generations”, financed within the EU Seventh Framework Programme for the period, February 2013 – January 2017. The main objectives of the project include:

- Investigating the diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe;
- Assessing the compatibility of existing policies to family changes; and
- Contributing to evidence-based policy-making.

The overall conceptual framework of the project is based on three key premises:

- Family life courses are becoming more diverse;
- The interdependency of lives matters; and
- Social contexts and policies matter.

Four transversal dimensions are embedded in the conceptual framework: gender, culture (ethnic and cultural identities), socioeconomic resources and life stages. The interactions between these transversals, with the fundamental processes outlined in the key premises, shape the outcomes of the diversification of family life courses for individuals and societies. Differentiation in family life courses according to cultural aspects, gender, sexual orientation dimensions, and socioeconomic resources (re-)produce inequalities across the life course and across generations. These also define the ways in which diversification in family lives are structured according to identifiable factors, defining their outcomes at the level of societies. Finally, these outcomes shape the policy responses appropriate to promoting well-being at the micro-, meso- and macro levels, that is, of individual family members, families and societies. The consortium sought to achieve these main objectives by fulfilling five additional specific research aims:

- To explore the complexity of European families; individual goals, attitudes, decisions and trajectories;
- To gain insight into the differences in family forms and dynamics across European nations, and cultural and socioeconomic groups within nations;
- To examine the implications of family change for social relations, care, well-being and inequality;
- To analyse how policies address family diversity and its consequences; and
- To identify the likely paths of future changes in family compositions and needs to support policy-makers and stakeholders.

Highly qualified experts were brought together from the social sciences, humanities and law representing 25 research partners located in 15 countries, old as well as new EU member

states, in addition to the participation of three transnational civil society actor organizations (see Appendix I for the full list of consortium members). The countries represented in the consortium covered four geographic areas: Northern Europe (Sweden, Finland, UK), Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland), Southern Europe (Italy, Spain) and Central-Eastern Europe (Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania). These countries also represented different welfare state and care regime models: the universal Scandinavian welfare regime (Sweden, Finland), the liberal regime (UK, Switzerland), the conservative welfare regime (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands), Mediterranean familialistic regime (Italy, Spain) and transition post-socialist welfare regime (Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania).

The FamiliesAndSocieties project is organized into twelve interrelated and complementary work packages (see Appendix II). WP1 (management) and WP12 (dissemination) served all the WPs, providing a frame for the research activities (WPs 2-11). This synthesis report focuses on the research produced in WPs 2-10 by topic. Important aspects of the family life course are covered in WPs 2-4: new family configurations, life goals and transitions (WP2), the new roles of women and men (WP3) and the new role of children, and more specifically, childlessness and ART (WP4). WPs 5-9 explore the implications of family life course changes for sustainable societies by focusing on inequalities in children's life chances (WP5), childcare arrangements, determinants and consequences (WP6), intergenerational links (WP7), migrants and questions of social inclusion and exclusion (WP8), and policies (WP9). Foresight (WP10) and the synthesis of research results (WP11) are the two final topics. Two research WPs are central and interlinked with the other research WPs, namely WP2 on family configurations and WP9 on policies. The new gender roles (WP3) are interlinked with children and ART (WP4) and intergenerational links (WP7), in addition to links with the two central WPs. Children and ART (WP4) and intergenerational links (WP7) are also interlinked with childcare arrangements, determinants and consequences (WP6). Research on children's life chances (WP5) is interlinked with both childcare arrangements, determinants and consequences (WP6), and migrants and questions of social inclusion and exclusion (WP8) (see Figure 1 in Appendix II).

This report discusses the main findings of the project, addressing first the growing diversity of family life courses and their main mechanisms of change. We then focus on linked lives and interdependencies through the lens of changing gender and intergenerational dependencies. Thereafter societal and policy contexts are addressed, those in which family transitions and everyday decision-making takes place, as influenced by institutional and policy settings. A brief discussion on the implications of the project findings for policy frameworks concludes this report.

2. Family life courses are more diverse

2.1 Changing family patterns (trends and timing)

Family patterns in Europe have undergone extensive changes in the past half century with respect to marriage choices, birth rates and childlessness. The 1970s saw the end of the 'Golden Age of the Family', an era characterized by high marriage and birth rates at relatively young ages, few divorces, and a low prevalence of non-standard family forms. Fertility rates by the late 20th century declined to well below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, while marriage and parenthood were postponed. New forms of couple relationships emerged, while the propensity to marry decreased. Family dissolution became quite frequent even among couples with children. Individuals increasingly refrained from long-term commitments in respect of partnership formation and childbearing, which led to a de-standardisation of the family life course. Three main drivers for these trends are identified in the project: changes in societal and family norms, as well as in the economic and legislative contexts (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 6(2014)).

The extent and pace at which new family patterns emerged across Europe varied significantly, as also reflected by the variations in policy regime types. Five typologies/clusters are identified in the project: the dual-earner policy (social democratic welfare) cluster, the liberal (market-oriented) cluster, the general family support policy (conservative welfare) cluster, the familialistic (Mediterranean) welfare cluster and the transition post-Socialist cluster. The dual-earner policy configuration has extensive policy provisions facilitating work-life balance for both women and men. The liberal regime has limited and usually means-tested state support to families with a dominance of market-based solutions regarding welfare provision. In the general family support policy regime, the range of state support to families and to women to combine paid work and family responsibilities varies greatly across countries and men's role as the primary breadwinner is not questioned. The familialistic welfare regime has few or none policy provisions to families, maintaining a pronounced gender role differentiation. The fifth, the transition post-Socialist cluster, represents a hybrid typology, heterogeneous in terms of state support to families and to women for combining labour market participation and family life.

The de-standardisation of the family life course, commencing with the decline in childbearing, has led to increasingly diverse family biographies (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 11(2014)). The baby boom of the 1950s-early 1960s was followed by a dramatic decrease of period fertility rates to below the level necessary for the simple reproduction of a population. This decrease occurred first in the early 1970s with the dual-

earner and general family support clusters. Countries having a familialistic regime entered the low fertility path in the early 1980s, followed by the liberal regime and the transition post-Socialist cluster that same decade. Fertility rates continued to decline in all but the dual-earner and liberal regimes, to even below the so-called critical level of low fertility (i.e. 1.5 children per woman on the average), a phenomenon known to accelerate population ageing if sustained over the long term. The German-speaking countries in the general family support policy configuration type also have shown very low levels of childbearing, though more or less counterbalanced by reasonably high fertility rates in other countries within that same cluster. The trends turned slightly upwards during the very beginning of the 21st century, generating hopes for a fertility recovery. However, the rate of increase stagnated and/or reversed after the economic crisis of 2008, with fertility rates close to the critical level in the majority of European countries. The decline in completed family sizes (or cohort fertility) is less pronounced, with exceptions for the German-speaking countries and for cohorts born in the 1970s in the familialistic cluster and most transition post-Socialist countries. For the latter region, the intentions of family formation are less likely to be realised than in other regions of Europe as studies of these countries from a life course perspective reveal (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.5).

The decline in fertility rates is paralleled by a rising mean age at first birth. Women in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s had their first child in their early to mid-twenties, with the youngest first-time mothers in the transition post-Socialist cluster, and the oldest ones in the familialistic cluster. At the beginning of the 21st century, entry into motherhood occurs around the age of thirty in liberal regime countries, and in the late twenties in other clusters. Ages of first fatherhood are a few years above those of first motherhood as men start their family careers at older ages than women. In any event, early entry into parenthood, as in the transition post-Socialist cluster up to quite recently, is not necessarily accompanied by high fertility levels, whereas a late start of childbearing may not be a hindrance to achieving reasonably high fertility rates (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 44(2015)), the latter as seen in the dual-earner and liberal regimes.

The postponement of the transition to parenthood is related to prolonged education, the availability of reliable contraception, delays in the formation of committed partnerships, higher levels of family instability and economic uncertainty. This in its turn has contributed to an increase in childlessness in recent decades. Using a wider time-frame, we find that most European countries experienced a U-shaped trend in childlessness among women born in the 20th century, with the recent increase being less connected to non-marriage, in contrast to the first decades of that century (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 69(2017)). Childlessness levels in the dual-earner cluster have only been slightly above the European average, which is

around 14 per cent for the early 1970-cohorts, but close to 20 per cent in Finland. The transition post-Socialist countries have displayed very low levels of childlessness in the 1900s, about 10 per cent, probably related to the dominant patterns of early marriage and childbearing and a negative perception of voluntary childlessness in the region. The more recent increase has peaked in Western Europe at 18 per cent, at above 20 per cent in the German-speaking countries, with the familialistic cluster approaching 25 per cent with no sign for levelling off. Cross-country differences in childlessness levels have been widening in the recent decades, and the relationship with completed fertility is not straightforward. Countries such as the UK, Ireland and Finland have combined reasonably high cohort fertility with pronounced levels of childlessness (18-20 per cent), whereas the low levels in the transition post-Socialist countries have been accompanied by low levels of completed fertility. Aside from the latter cluster, the emerging European pattern is however that higher childlessness goes hand in hand with lower fertility, while the opposite is true for the transition post-Socialist cluster.

The research carried out in work package 4 shows that most of the increase in childlessness in Europe is involuntary and unwanted, which may partly explain the increasing and considerable usage of assisted reproductive technologies (ART), especially at ages of late thirties-early forties and with diminishing success rates. Globally, somewhat more than half of all ART treatments are confined to Europe. The proportion of ART births, which by 2013 reached 5 million worldwide, varies considerably across countries, from around 1.5 per cent in Poland, Ireland, Moldova and Turkey, above 4 per cent in Iceland, Norway and Belgium and nearly 6 per cent in Denmark (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D4.6). The 'net impact' of ART on national fertility rates is much lower, however. This is demonstrated by the difference between the observed number of births and a hypothetical number of births achieved in the absence of ART treatments, taking into account the chance of spontaneous natural conception as well as multiple births occurring due to ART, the dramatic increase of the latter being clearly associated with ART. The 'net impact' of ART on the overall birth rate varies between 0.04 and 0.06, highlighting that ART would not be an effective policy instrument to counter (very) low fertility.

Another important dimension of fertility trends addressed in the project is the upsurge of extramarital childbearing in connection with new partnership patterns. Marriage had nearly ceased to be the dominant form of couple relationships in the dual-earner, the general family support, and the liberal clusters by the late 1970s, as non-marital cohabitation has become increasingly prevalent. The familialistic regime joined the trend in the early 1980s, and the transition post-Socialist cluster followed from the early 1990s, most likely related to growing economic uncertainty and housing shortages. Independent of the cause, marriage formation

has been increasingly postponed since the early-/mid-1980s in most regime types, and since the mid-1990s even in the transition post-Socialist cluster. By the early 21st century, women enter into a first marriage at around age thirty, but somewhat earlier in the transition post-Socialist cluster. In fact, the mean age at first marriage has been above that of first parenthood in the past decades in the dual-earner policy configuration type, as couples enter into marriage after the birth of their first or second child, indicating changes in the traditional sequence of events in the family formation process (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 11(2014)). A similar pattern has also lately emerged in the liberal and general family support clusters.

As the propensity to marry declines, births increasingly occur in consensual relationships. In the early 1960s, when marriage rates were still high, the proportion of out-of-wedlock births was around 10 per cent or less in European countries. This share has increased rapidly in the dual-earner cluster since the 1970s, currently accounting for about one-half of all births there. Other clusters displayed moderate levels of non-marital childbearing up until the late 1980s. Since then, the share of such births has nearly doubled. The familialistic regime joined the increasing trend during the early 2000s. In recent years, nearly one-third of all births occurred out-of-wedlock even in these countries. However, we do find quite large variations across countries in the different clusters with respect to non-marital childbearing, and the association with fertility levels is also far from clear-cut.

New partnership patterns have also had implications for family stability. Couple relationships have become less stable over time as non-marital unions, which are more fragile than marriages, have spread and divorce rates increased. The propensity to divorce doubled between the early 1960s and the late 1990s, and divorce rates remained modest only in the familialistic regime cluster, where it has increased mainly in the last decade. Declining relationship stability is linked mainly to reproductive ages, hence also affecting childbearing. On one hand, this can reduce fertility as the time people spend in couple relationships is shortened (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 66(2017) study no. 7). This can also be due to the choice of having fewer children, as the prospects are either raising children alone or not being involved in the raising due to separation or divorce. On the other hand, high rates of family dissolution can raise fertility rates as second and higher-order partnerships are increasingly formed during the reproductive ages, and couples may opt for joint children even if they already have children from previous relationships. The impact may be context-specific (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.6, study 3) with a fertility reducing effect found especially in the familialistic cluster, while a fertility increasing effect exists mostly for dual-earner regime countries. The high and/or rising instability of partnerships contributes to the remarkable diversity of family biographies in contemporary Europe.

2.2 Growing diversity of family forms

Changes in family patterns, particularly those in later and more prolonged transitions to adulthood, partnership formation and childbearing, have been paralleled by changes in gender roles, although with considerable cross-country and within country variations (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.3). There also has been a notable expansion of the female role as an economic provider for a family, alongside a transformation of men's roles with greater involvement in family responsibilities, in particular care for children. The salience of these gender role changes is captured in the phrase coined by feminist researchers, the 'gender revolution.' An increasing awareness in contemporary family scholarship exists that gender and family changes are interconnected, which is clearly supported by the research findings of the FamiliesAndSocieties project. To understand the everyday realities of modern societies, we need to recognise that the family is a dynamic entity, characterised by growing complexity with respect to decision-making regarding transitions over the family life course and organisation of family life. Work and family lives are increasingly influencing each other as both women and men engage in earning as well as caring activities. This is often reinforced by increasing employment instability and precariousness, impeding any convergence to a singular pattern of family life courses within and across countries (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 71(2017)). Families with disabled children are atypical, since traditional gender role arrangements still prevail, with the father often working additional hours to meet the greater economic needs of the family, and the mother devoting her time mainly to care giving with little if any engagement in the labour market. The lower level of well-being in such families is also gendered, with fewer emotional exchanges for men and less social contact for women. In the long run, there is a greater risk of family dissolution in the family type (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 23(2014)).

These new gender roles are strengthened by the expansion of tertiary education in Europe in recent decades. Male educational advantage has diminished. By the end of the 20th century, there are more highly-educated women than men entering today's marriage market. This shifting gender imbalance in education carries implications for family patterns. The traditional pattern of assortative mating, that is, men marrying women who are less educated and women marrying men who are more highly educated, prevails only to a limited extent in contemporary Europe. It is increasingly being replaced by educational homogamy and an emerging pattern of highly educated women partnering with less educated men. A greater diversity consequently exists nowadays in the educational pairing of couples. Despite some delay in first union formation, and substantial delay in first marriage across cohorts in most European countries, there is no empirical evidence that highly-educated women suffer an education-specific mating squeeze (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.3, study 2). Fertility

however is influenced by couples' educational pairings. While homogamous highly-educated couples are most likely to postpone the transition to parenthood, they are also the most likely to have a second or even a third child compared to other educational pairings. In contrast, couples in which the man is more educated than the woman are less likely to extend their families, despite having their first child relatively early, suggesting an inhibiting effect on completed family size of the traditional educational pairing (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 38(2015)).

Gendered marriage patterns with respect to education may contribute to an increasing diversity of first partnership forms as found in a study addressing a research gap in the knowledge on male family dynamics with a focus on four transition post-Socialist countries. This is in contrast to the previous dominance of marriage due to gaps between increasing demand for highly-educated male marriage partners and their supply (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.4). At the same time, the propensity of cohabitation has increased at least partly due to differences in the effects of educational attainment for entering cohabiting unions compared to marriages. This has resulted in non-marital unions replacing marriage as the main form of first partnerships in three of the four countries studied, hence heightening diversity of family structures in the region. The choice of marriage versus cohabitation as first partnership, and the timing of union formation, seem to be also influenced by educational field, but the pattern varies by gender and country (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 52(2016)). Certain fields of study are associated with later union formation patterns, suggesting possible barriers to employability, while more traditional choices of educational fields are often linked to more traditional partnership patterns, such as early union formation and entering into marriage as a first union rather than non-marital cohabitation.

Childless couples are a family form on the rise, especially as a voluntary postponement of a first child, often related to obstacles in the transition to adulthood, can easily turn into involuntary, permanent childlessness (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 69(2017)). While women acquiring higher education and thus economic independence, is viewed as the main cause of trends towards 'less family', particularly in economic theorising, research on childlessness in the project has revealed that this stereotype no longer holds. Childlessness has been found to be complex and differentiated across Europe. In many cases, it is increasingly situated in lower educated and precarious economic groups in societies, who often face difficulties in forming and maintaining committed couple relationships, a precondition of childbearing. The educational gradient of childlessness is potentially linked to the phase of the gender revolution in a specific country. A positive educational gradient is traced, related to the first phase of the gender revolution with women's increasing presence in the public sphere, in particular in the labour market. It then turns into a negative educational gradient as

the society moves to the second phase, with men's increasing engagement in family tasks and extensive policy support for work-life balance (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverables D4.2, D4.3). The analysis in the FamiliesAndSocieties project shows no gender-specific patterns, but rather that the main variables (such as educational level, occupational status, partnership status, health) act in the same direction for both sexes, in contrast to previous research that suggested that different determinants explain men and women's childlessness. Lifetime childlessness cannot be traced back to one single reason or decision, but is the culmination of several interacting factors contributing to the postponement of childbearing up to the point where having one's own biological child becomes impossible due to reproductive constraints. Not being a biological parent does not necessarily mean a 'childfree lifestyle', as many childless people are actively involved in raising the children of close family members and/or friends, as shown by the study on the narratives of childlessness in Hungary and Romania, countries with low but increasing childlessness levels (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D4.4) reveals.

Another emerging family form is Living-Apart-Together (LAT) relationships, where a couple does not share a residence. More recent surveys made it possible to detect that not all single people are alone; in many countries, nearly one adult in ten is involved in LAT. Several studies addressed this new family type (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 25(2015)), revealing a variety of LAT relationships, considered either as a temporary stage or a more permanent state by the partners involved, a prelude to a co-residential (non-marital or marital) union or a permanent arrangement with separate residences notwithstanding the commitment to each other. Although LAT is hardly ever the context of childbearing, it may be a preferred form for an intimate relationship when partners have children from previous relationships or other care obligations. Among young people, LAT is often the result of constraints, related for example to housing and labour market uncertainties, hence not being able or ready for marriage in societies where cohabitation is less common or institutionalised. LAT may consequently even prolong the transition to adulthood in terms of entering the first co-residential union and having a first child. At later phases of the life course, notably after a family break-up, LAT is usually a choice to maintain privacy and autonomy while engaging in an intimate relationship, which can also facilitate contacts with (adult) children from previous unions. LAT is more a sustainable form of coupledness at ages 50+, as fewer partners move in together despite a (longer) lasting relationship. High levels of non-marital cohabitation do not appear to be a prerequisite for the occurrence of LAT unions, considering its comparable prevalence in France and Italy. Where cohabitation is not yet wide spread and institutionalised, as in Southern Europe, LAT-arrangements are more likely to occur at younger ages and often reflecting constraints. Despite similarly unfavourable circumstances

for youths (regarding housing, employment, etc.) as in Italy, the prevalence of LAT unions in Poland is very low.

Single-parent families, often the result of divorce or separation, are a growing minority among families with children. Although single-father families have recently become more common, the vast majority in this family form is single-mother families, in which changes in the educational gradient are detected. Up until the late 20th century, higher-educated women were more likely to become single mothers. However, lately education has become increasingly negatively associated with single motherhood, not only in the dual-earner cluster at the forefront of the gender revolution, but also in the familialistic regime where it has barely begun (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.6, study 5). This changing educational association has been mainly driven by the transformation of the educational gradient of union dissolution from positive to negative. This in turn is likely to be affected by the increasing probability of partnership break-up in cases of a less stable labour-market position (e.g. due to unemployment) of partners, a condition more prevalent among the less educated. This effect is clearly gendered. The unemployment of male partners increases the risk of partnership break-up in all countries, but the woman's unemployment matters only in societies with high levels of female labour force participation. Even where it does have an effect, the impact of the woman's unemployment is about half that of the man's unemployment (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.8). In economic theorising, women's employment is considered as increasing marital disruption, a question addressed in the project. A four-country comparison suggests elevated divorce risks of employed women in Italy and Poland, that is, countries with relatively low levels of divorce, but not in Germany and Hungary where marriage dissolution is quite common (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.3, study 4). Thus the findings indicate that an improvement in women's socioeconomic status does not necessarily increase the risk of divorce. Women's earnings in contrast can have a stabilising effect on the family budget and hence the marriage. Selection into employment and women's anticipatory employment adjustments may operate differently in different contexts.

Stepfamilies, or its more complex form, 'blended' families with both joint children and children with previous partners, is another growing non-standard family form. Stepfamilies are linked to the decreasing stability of couple relationships even among families with children and during reproductive ages, based on repartnering after shorter or longer experiences of single parenthood. As pointed out by a Belgium study, socio-economic resources affect repartnering, which is more likely to occur in the lowest and highest income groups due to economic needs and financial attractiveness respectively (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.6, study 4). The pattern is more complex for women, however, interacting with gendered patterns of care for children and related values. This can in contrast to men

decrease women's chances to form new unions more than low earnings or weak labour market positions. With respect to educational attainment, no clear pattern across Europe is detected. Repartnered mothers in Spain have lower levels of education than single mothers (ibid, study 5). The educational gradient of 'multi-partnered fertility' varies across countries. The more highly educated exhibit higher risks for second birth in a new union, for example in Finland, but less so elsewhere (ibid, study 3). Differences in welfare regime frameworks do not necessarily explain the variation of fertility behaviour in stepfamilies. The share of stepfamilies will increase among families with three or more children, as indicated by microsimulation results on future family developments (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D10.3), hence enhancing family diversity.

The relatively newly-recognized and understudied domain of same-sex families, is addressed in the FamiliesAndSocieties project combining three perspectives: legal, statistical and sociological. The statistical approach led to an overview of statistical issues regarding the identification of same-sex couples in censuses, population registers and surveys. This generated a collection of comparative statistical data on same-sex families in 12 European countries concerning various forms of registered partnerships and, where applicable, marriage and parenting (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 8(2014)). A sociological analysis addressed the reception of the legal recognition of same-sex partners in Iceland, Italy, France and Spain, countries with great differences in the legal situation of LGBTQ people, ranging from no legal mechanisms at all to extended legal protection, based on 30 qualitative interviews for each country. Legal support is essential for initiating social inclusion and strengthening the feeling of being treated equally (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 75(2017) chapter 8). These two data sources, the statistical and the sociological, are linked to the LawsAndFamilies Database, a database of legal issues concerning same-sex and different-sex families in over 20 European countries recently launched in the project. This database facilitates informed studies of the processes and implications of legal and social recognition of same-sex families over time and across countries, enhancing a deeper understanding of social inclusion related to sexual orientation (ibid, chapters 1 and 2).

Diversity in families is also reflected in ethnic dimensions. As the number of immigrants and their descendants has significantly increased in Europe (even before the most recent waves of refugees), the project examines family trajectories of larger ethnic groups compared to the native population in selected European countries with high levels of immigration over longer periods. Addressing the research gap in the literature, partnership dynamics (i.e. union formation and dissolution) among immigrants and their descendants, fertility behaviour and patterns of inter-marriage are addressed (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Papers 13(2014), 14(2014), 39(2015), 40(2015), 56(2016), 57(2016)). The findings indicate that immigrants

and their descendants are over-represented in non-standard families. There is at the same time a remarkable diversity of partnership patterns and family forms among immigrants that can be distinguished broadly into three groups: one with traditional family patterns (origins in countries with conservative family views and values); the second featuring both traditional and modern family behaviours (origins in countries with less traditional family patterns); and the third following patterns similar to the natives in the 'host' societies (origins from other European countries and their descendants and also Latin Americans). Partnership and childbearing patterns of the descendants fall in-between those of first-generation immigrants and natives, although they too vary across groups. Both the mainstream society and the minority subculture shape the family patterns of immigrants, while the role of the minority subculture appears to prevail more strongly among certain groups, related to large group sizes with high levels of residential and spatial segregation. The country context matters in shaping family patterns of minorities and differences across population subgroups (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 67(2017)). With appropriate policy support, the diversity of family forms can co-exist with a successful labour market and social integration of immigrant minorities and native majorities.

3. Linked lives and interdependencies: Continuity and change

Three topics are explored under the heading of linked lives and interdependencies, changing gender roles and doing family, divorce and family, and intergenerational dependencies. All three of these exemplify the continuity and changes that the research in the project detected with respect to individual life courses.

3.1 Linked lives: Changing gender roles and doing family

Changes in women's gender roles are mainly attributed to their increasing contribution to the economic provision and decision-making in the family that until recently was perceived as the sole province of men. Men's gender roles today are not solely defined by breadwinning but also by their involvement in care. Both of these dimensions of changing gender roles, highlighted in the discussion above on the gender revolution, have led to a flowering of research focusing on dual-earner families and the daily family practices around paid and unpaid work, doing family. The concept of doing gender is applied to interactions at the micro-level between men and women. It assumes that gendered patterns, which often lead to gender inequalities, are reproduced in everyday practices. Doing family is linked to doing or un-doing gender. By recognising the institutional contextual factors structuring these relationships in everyday life, as well as the policies that sustain or seek to alter the

persistence of gender inequalities in care, breadwinning and parenting, the research in FamiliesAndSocieties adds new dimensions to this micro-level interactive framework.

3.1.1 Coping strategies in family-work reconciliation in times of uncertainty

Global competitive markets, and the neoliberal turn in discourse and policy, are reflected in the rising levels of fixed-term and precarious employment across European countries. These macro structures are mirrored in perceptions of insecurity in employment and unstable futures, shaping individual decisions to start families. When men are included in the analysis of childbearing decisions, the salience of the employment situation and economic security becomes even more apparent. The impacts of economic uncertainty on childbearing intentions, as well as on fertility behaviour, are here analysed. A Swiss study (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 12(2014)) shows tensions between high job prestige and traditional gender attitudes for men with respect to the intentions of first and second births, while perceived job instability influenced only childless women (negatively).

A comparison of countries across welfare regimes reveals interdependencies between economic uncertainty and short-term childbearing intentions and institutional context. Using data from the European Social Survey from shortly before the crisis and directly in the aftermath, short-term birth intentions for women and men without children or with one child are analysed in ten countries representing the five welfare state regimes. The results indicate that societal-level economic uncertainty, with respect to unemployment and employment protection, affected fertility intentions. The proportion of persons intending to have a child within three years decreased over the period in countries with higher unemployment rates, although less so for childless women and one-child mothers than for childless men and one-child fathers. Childbearing intentions also decreased where employment protection weakened, especially among one-child mothers and childless men (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 36(2015)). Perceived economic uncertainty at the individual level as seen in job and income insecurities also mattered, but there are variations by gender, age, parenthood status and institutional contexts. The findings highlight the continued importance of men's labour market position for first- and second-birth intentions independent of welfare regime type, with reduced intentions in the event of job instability or economic uncertainty. Younger women's motherhood intentions are similarly affected, while mothers' second-birth intentions are influenced by economic uncertainty in Conservative regime countries in particular.

Studying couples' educational attainment across Europe reveals how various educational pairings cope with labour market uncertainties. Couples comprising two highly educated partners delay parenthood longer than other couples, given their longer stay in education and later labour market establishment (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 38(2015)). Where

only one or neither of the partners are highly educated, parenthood occurs at younger ages, as delay does not improve the couple's joint ability to cope with economic uncertainties. However, couples with two highly educated partners are the most likely to have second and third births as their economic situation is stronger than that of the other educational pairings who are more vulnerable to the economic uncertainty resulting from extending their families. There are no variations in these impacts by institutional context. The findings of these studies suggest a widening gap in capabilities and agency for starting a family and achieving desired family size between those with high and low education, and between those with protected and unprotected jobs (the insider and outsider effect), posing challenges for creating sustainable societies.

3.1.2 Women's breadwinning and new fatherhood

The traditional family, in which men are the sole breadwinners and women responsible for care and domestic tasks, has been undergoing changes in recent decades, reflecting both macro processes and new norms of parenting. First, fewer and fewer jobs offer lifetime security for single male breadwinners in traditional male employment sectors, while at the same time, there has been an expansion in sectors where women dominate. These structural factors in themselves do not explain changing gender roles in the family. Two other factors must be considered: women's aspirations beyond family responsibilities and the emergence of new norms and ideals of fatherhood paralleled by work-life balance policies at the European and national levels, encouraging men to become more involved fathers. Several studies in the project address factors promoting changes in gender roles and the extent to which women are becoming breadwinners and men more engaged in the daily care activities.

Women's investments in education and careers is one crucial dimension shaping the increased contribution of women to the family economy and the growing importance of the female breadwinner role. The gender imbalance in educational attainment observed in many European countries is reflected in the growing number of couples in which women have a higher educational attainment than their partners. Nowadays employed women are increasingly likely to contribute a large share to the family income and can be considered breadwinners. Still, in societies with a strong male breadwinner model, such as Italy, Greece, Germany and Austria, men remain the principal breadwinners even when women are highly educated. Female breadwinner families are still not very common in European countries, but may become more so in the future, which may further strengthen women's abilities to alter the doing of gender in the division of unpaid work within the family (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 71(2017)).

Non-traditional role arrangements are addressed via in-depth qualitative studies of couples with breadwinning mothers and involved fathers in Germany and Hungary by analysing what these arrangements look like; why and how they are chosen; and what effects they have on families' daily lives (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable 3.8). The role of female breadwinners implies not only counter-normative behaviour by the mother, but demands that the father relinquishes the ideal of a male breadwinner. Such an arrangement can carry a significant risk of conflict among partners. Egalitarian gender role identities and strong career orientation by women in many cases seem to have preceded the choice of this gender role arrangement. Male partners of female breadwinners often leave or have left a successful career behind them, so that their gender identity may have partly been grounded in past achievements. At the same time, women still took a strong lead in managing their family's lives, which may contribute to satisfying their own gender role identity. Oftentimes these high earning women could afford to outsource domestic services instead of greater demands for more involvement of their partners in domestic chores.

In contrast to women's breadwinning, the active father concept is defined more broadly, accommodating a wide range of paternal behaviour including the pursuit of career-oriented, full-time employment. Hence, there is more flexibility in realising diverse gender identities in an active father-carer family than there is in female breadwinner constellations, that is, more scope for negotiating gender roles and less potential for conflict. Rational-pragmatic approaches, such as taking into consideration the financial gains that can be made by granting the breadwinner role to the female partner, or responding to the man's disappointing personal experiences at work, appear to be the driving forces shaping changes in parental roles more so than idealistic-aspirational goals of a commitment to gender equality or ideals of new fatherhood in the interviewed caring father families. Having a close relationship to children is though highly valued by all these men (ibid.). In both types of non-traditional role arrangements, there is an endurance of traditional gender roles and associated norms. Mothers and fathers appear to adopt certain aspects of the role traditionally ascribed to the other gender, resulting in an 'own role enrichment', that is a form of motherhood enhanced by a strong emphasis on employment, and a type of fatherhood with a relatively strong childcare component.

3.1.3 Parenting practices

Doing gender cannot be uncoupled from doing family, as highlighted in qualitative studies on gendered practices in the transition to parenthood in Austria, Sweden and Switzerland. These practices often result in a re-traditionalisation of family roles, as seen in the quantitative analysis of fathers' involvement in parenting tasks in France, Italy, Sweden and the UK based on time-use survey data. This critical phase of gender formation is analysed in countries

differing greatly in relation to gender, family policies and workplace culture. By focusing on the effects of childcare choices on both family time allocation and child development, the interplay between children's and parents' characteristics in shaping child well-being and development is also addressed.

The multi-methods study on Austria highlights how participation in care and employment by both partners within couples changes during the period of pregnancy up to six months after childbirth, via analyses relying on qualitative longitudinal design (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.7). Based on data from two waves of the GGS, couples who had and who did not have a first child during the inter-survey period of four years are matched and their outcomes compared. This analysis confirmed previous knowledge that this transition includes an increase in inequality. In terms of earnings, gender inequality increases among parents but not among their childless counterparts. Childless couples and fathers(-to-be) keep up their working hours across both waves, whereas mothers reduce their time in paid work to about one-third of their prior level. In contrast to fathers, who decide solely as to the time they spend in paid work, one-third of the mothers took such decisions jointly with their partner. The dynamics in the distribution of housework are moreover stronger for parents(-to-be). The share of couples in which women perform most of the housework increased to two-thirds across the GGS waves. Sixty per cent of the couples who distributed housework in an egalitarian way in the first wave shifted to a more traditional division, confirming that the transition to parenthood leads to a much greater specialisation of roles even in the most egalitarian couples. Regarding parental care, the qualitative part of the study shows that a child's birth is but one of many turning points leading to changes in the distribution of care work and the gendering of parenting roles. Six different types of interrelated parenting practices are identified, reflecting different manifestations of the parents' relationality in doing care work. A complex continuum of parental gender relations surfaces demonstrating more than the mere polarity of equality and inequality dimensions. This includes gender relations characterised by inequality (the exclusive caring-absent type), dichotomy (managing-conducting), ambiguity (main caring-co-recognising and key caring-helping) and equality (equal caring and being absent). Correspondingly, one cannot speak of *the* transition to parenthood when focusing on parental involvement in care work; rather, there are several transitions taking place within the transition process.

Motivations and consequences of parental leave use to care for children are highlighted in a Swedish study (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 27(2015)). The quantitative analysis of data from the Swedish Young Adult Panel Study displays the most equal division of parental leave for couples who want to share the leave with each other and where the man's will to stay home determines how the leave is divided. The most unequal division is found for

couples where the mother wants to stay home for a long period, where the father does not want to stay at home, where work-related reasons for the father determine the (limited) division of leave and where the family economy is the most important reason for the division. Mothers' satisfaction with the division seems to be positively related to the length of leave used by fathers, as well as the mothers' paid work hours, the latter increasing fathers' childcare input. Qualitative interviews with couples provide further insights, indicating that ideals of equal parenting, engaged fatherhood and gender equality can lead a couple to an equal division of parental leave. With respect to the economic argument governing a more traditional leave division between the parents, both couples in which the woman earned more as well as couples where the man is the main earner, use that justification, adapting it to their own circumstances. Sharing parental leave furthers cooperating and understanding between parents, in addition to being beneficial for children by having two parents parenting, facilitating the development of children's long-term relationships with both mothers and fathers.

Whether gendered representations and practices of parenthood can be challenged in light of specific company paternal leave policies is addressed in a study on Switzerland, a country with no statutory leave for fathers (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.5). Interviews with fathers and managers at a specific public employer implementing a one-month paid paternity leave indicate that men's leave patterns are the result of individual preferences and couple-level negotiations, but also of workplace influences. The workplace indeed appears crucial for promoting or inhibiting changes in gender roles and paternal involvement in family life. Within the family, however, mothers remain the main parent responsible for children while fathers are temporary and secondary helpers in childcare and household tasks. At the individual level, the paternity leave-use enhanced men's identities as fathers to a certain extent, strengthening their sense of competence to be active fathers in care, and their feeling of being a part of the family. Nevertheless, the few gender equality effects observed in this study are entwined with persisting differentiations between motherhood and fatherhood, underpinned by gendered norms and unequal labour market opportunities for men and women, and substantial differences in the leave entitlements for fathers and mothers.

Time spent by fathers with children, in particular time spent alone with children, as well as time allocated to childcare, can be used to discern how involved fathers perform their roles. Since fathers' family engagement differs across European countries and over time, cross-country comparisons of fathers' time use can provide empirical evidence of this on-going evolution of fathers' roles from breadwinners towards dual earner-carer roles, that is, towards reconciling economic provision with childcare responsibilities. Fathers' involvement with parenting tasks and activities with respect to the allocation of time in childcare, alone or with

a partner, on weekdays and weekends, is studied in the project based on time use survey data from four countries: France, Italy, Sweden and Spain. Each of these countries have different policies, levels of maternal employment and gender equality norms (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.10). The results illustrate how much the specific institutional policy context can affect men's involvement in daily care activities. Irrespective of the time indicators used, such as the total time with children, the total time spent alone with children, time spent in childcare activities alone and with a partner, the highest values observed are for Sweden. Fathers' time allocation in Italy, France, UK reveal a very different pattern; childcare activities and activities carried out by the father alone with children represented a fraction of the total time fathers devoted to their children, most of which involved non-care activities, often carried out together with the mother. Hence fathers' increased time in childcare activities did not necessarily reflect a more equal division of childcare.

Relying on new data for the UK in the period 2000-2015, an increase over time is seen in fathers' childcare activities without the partner, but less time is allocated to non-care activities together with the mother. A statistically insignificant decline for the total time spent by fathers with their children is also noted over time (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 70(2017)). The association between father involvement and their partners working full-time has strengthened. Mothers having a university degree are positively related to fathers' total time with their children as well as childcare time. The results indicate inequalities in family environments for children not only in financial and material terms but also by differences in fathering, even among two-parent families with their own biological children. Those with well-educated parents profit not only from the family's economic resources but also from time spent with fathers compared to children from less educated backgrounds.

The links between childcare choices, maternal employment, parental time allocation and child development are crucial for enriching our knowledge on the implications of family changes for child well-being and the reproduction of inequality. The incentive structures of parents' use of particular childcare forms in diverse institutional contexts is addressed, based on interviews with parents and parenting associations, combined with an analysis of data on childcare use (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 35(2015)). The results suggest that families across countries face similar problems of simultaneously coordinating space and time components to match work and care. 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. Relying (partially) on private arrangements, including paid home-based carers and informal support from friends and family, may increase the complexity of care arrangements and can lead to stress or attempts to relieve the burden by limiting labour force participation. This suggests that the

concept of childcare availability is more complex than is commonly acknowledged and not properly accounted for in frequently used availability indicators. This deficiency can potentially result, for example, in misleading conclusions about the effects of childcare provision on maternal employment.

Results of studies in work package 6 shed light on the effects of different types of care on child development. These studies highlight the differentiation of parental roles, with mothers' role being especially significant during a child's early years, while that of fathers is more influential in later years. Parents' time investments in producing child quality are more important than financial investments (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 17(2014)). Children of low educated mothers, and from disadvantaged backgrounds in general, greatly benefit from centre-based care compared to home-based care, but less so the children of highly educated mothers (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Papers 29(2015) and 30(2015)). Disparities in child outcomes according to household structures (better in two-parent than in single-parent families) are related to differences in the type of care and activities performed (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 21(2014)). A positive association is found between maternal education/socioeconomic status and childcare usage and child outcomes. Maternal employment reduces the likelihood of good school grades but the use of public childcare offsets that effect (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 63(2016)). Social context also matters, as in Finland there are no significant differences in school performance of six-year-olds cared for at home compared to those in public day-care, but among disadvantaged families the home care group of children more often had poorer grades (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 42(2015)).

3.2 Linked lives: Divorce and families

Linked lives, when viewed from the lens of divorce and the well-being of children, relate to the broader issue of non-intact families contributing to the intergenerational reproduction of inequality. The effects of the increasing diversity and complexity of family arrangements and family transitions on child outcomes is a focus of the FamiliesAndSocieties project. Previous studies addressing this issue have been mainly based on US research. There the point of departure is the 'diverging destinies' thesis, with the core argument that increases in non-intact families are leading to widening differences in child outcomes. As children's family life courses are becoming increasingly complex, there is growing need to address, in addition to parental divorce or experience of single-parenthood, the effects of family reconstitution and multiple family transitions in European contexts. Assessment of the causal effects of family transitions raises additional challenges, as such transitions should often be regarded as processes rather than one single event. A range of issues are addressed in the research

especially of work package 5, including economic and psychological effects, the contacts of non-custodial parents with children, father involvement and residential custody, and stepfamilies.

The proportion of children and adolescents experiencing parental divorce or separation steadily increased during the 20th century. The severity of family conflicts and economic difficulties at the same time has decreased compared to that previously characterising children's experiences of parental divorce. Social acceptance of divorce has increased. Social relationships in the family have major implications for child development and well-being. Family dynamics can disrupt relationships and activities, and by affecting children's adjustment and development, changes in parenting and family relationships are seen as a major explanation of the often adverse effects of these events. Parental divorces over time have become more likely among parents with lower class status based on data from Sweden, one of the few countries for which appropriate data are available, covering one hundred birth cohorts (born 1892-1991). Divorces are also more likely to involve residential moves, stepparents and stepsiblings. The negative effects on children's psychological well-being and educational attainment remain unchanged (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 15(2014)). Using the Swedish population register data, the association between parents' divorce and the dissolution of children's own relationships in adulthood remains very stable (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 19(2014)). These studies strengthen the general conclusion of stability in the effects of parental separation, despite the sweeping social changes and the character of parental break-ups.

A central question addressed in the project is whether family *change* really matters for child wellbeing and educational attainment. Through comparisons of children in stable non-traditional households, that is non-standard families, with those in stable two-parent households, the results challenge a core assumption that changes in family structure are the main determinant for negative outcomes for children with respect to cognitive skill development, educational attainment and general well-being (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 68(2017)). Other factors can underlie the association between negative child outcomes in divorced and single-parent families, including socio-economic conditions such as parents' social class, education, and economic difficulties. Parental separation today is a more common experience among children with low rather than high educated parents and family dissolution is also related to lower levels of living.

Whether and how effects of childhood family structures differ across socioeconomic and ethnic groups received much attention in the project. Surprisingly, a more pronounced negative association between parental separation and children's educational attainment for

children with more advantaged backgrounds is shown by the analysis of data from the UK and 14 European countries. The explanation put forward is that children from disadvantaged backgrounds have less to lose in terms of parental resources. In advantaged stable two-parent families, parents are likely to have the resources to invest in the educational attainment of their children and perform intensive parenting. Although parental separation poses additional challenges for children from disadvantaged families, this does not affect parental investments to a large extent because these are low to begin with (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 68(2017)). Focusing on children's school performance for natives and various immigrant groups in Sweden, parental separation penalties are weaker when family dissolutions are more accepted and less stigmatised, when single parenthood is a more institutionalised living arrangement, and when parents and others in the community have better skills to handle family dissolutions (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 51(2016)). This suggests that a certain institutionalisation of family dissolution and greater acceptance of parental break-up may mitigate its negative impact. In contrast, a study on Italy with parental divorce being extremely rare until quite recently, did not find pronounced negative consequences for children of divorced parents (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D5.7).

Since many children experience not only parental separation but also family reconstitution and stepfamily living, and/or two parental regimes due to shared custody, the concept of family in which children grow up following a divorce should be reconsidered. A study on Sweden, where shared legal custody has been the norm for several decades, and shared physical custody has risen dramatically from 1 per cent of children with separated parents in the 1980s to 35 per cent in 2013, shows that children can benefit from shared physical custody in both continuity in parental involvement and resources. Children in equally shared physical custody reported similarly low levels of stress as do children in intact two-parent families, whereas children living with a single parent experienced significantly higher stress levels (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 24(2015)). This may be related to differences in parenting, seen as a probable mediator regarding the effect of post-divorce family structures and children's well-being.

The parenting of both fathers and mothers matters for child well-being, since it can function as a protective factor after parental break-up. It should, however, be considered from a family system perspective taking into account both family structures and trajectories as revealed by a study in Belgium (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D5.6). Support of the non-residential parent decreases after a divorce, except for residential mother families with a new partner. Father involvement appears to be a crucial dimension in the different outcomes for children with respect to self-esteem and life satisfaction after parental break-up. The results indicate that not only is the parenting of the residential parent a protective factor, but also that the

parenting of the non-residential parent functions both as a risk and a protective factor for children's well-being, depending on the post-divorce family structure. Another study on Italy shows that when neither parent repartners, non-resident mothers have similar levels of contact with their children as those observed for the non-resident fathers (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 22(2014)). Repartnering has however a gendered impact on parent-child contact. In the case of a non-resident father, both his repartnering and that of the resident mother reduced his contacts with the non-resident children, but this is not true when both parents had a new union. In the case of a non-resident mother, her repartnering (independently from father's repartnering) increased the contact with the children.

Recognising the importance of doing family on child well-being, stepfamilies are specifically addressed in a study on Germany combining psychological and sociological perspectives and qualitative and quantitative methods in work package 3. Stepfamilies involve multiple actors in different households and a complex web of relationships between biological and social parents, grandparents and step-grandparents, step-siblings and half siblings, shaping child well-being. Children from diverse family types, including nuclear families, single parent families, families with stepchildren only, and families with stepchildren and partners' joint children (half siblings) are compared in the quantitative part of the study (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.9). The results reveal that children growing up in a complex stepfamily, that is, with half siblings, display the lowest levels of well-being compared to other family structures. The qualitative part of the study shows that children's perception of how family members relate to each other, including sibling relationships, perception of how residential parents manage to cooperate and resolve conflict, and how each parent relates to the different children living in the family play a role in child well-being and self-esteem. The very complexity of such stepfamilies may trigger conflict and affect well-being, as children in simple stepfamilies (not involving half-siblings) did not report significantly reduced cohesion or higher conflict compared to children in intact two-parent families. Furthermore, it is important to see the stepfamily within the larger context of the multigenerational family. Step-grandparents are part of the complex web of negotiated family relationships in stepfamilies, acting as mediators between biological grandchildren, step-grandchildren and their biological and stepparents. A complementary qualitative study of step-grandparents revealed the importance of their 'being there' for their biological as well as their step-grandchildren, compensating for adverse effects of the parents' divorce or separation.

Whether growing up in a non-traditional family gives rise to worse child outcomes is a complex issue. As family transitions are not randomly distributed across society, and parental break-up is more common among socioeconomically disadvantaged families,

associations between family transitions and child outcomes may be due to pre-existing circumstances affecting both family behaviour and child outcomes, rather than due to a causal relationship. Different methods are used in work package 5 to deal with this endogeneity problem, and reveal small but not trivial causal effects of parental separation on children's outcomes, such as increased risk of becoming overweight and obesity, but not on their cognitive ability (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 68(2017)). The research also suggests that the actual physical separation of parents does not have an effect on children's school performance, unlike their educational attainment. However, the associations of non-traditional family forms with child outcomes are relatively modest compared to other characteristics such as parental education and income. Hence even though negative effects may be difficult to avoid, they will not be too important compared with certain other childhood disadvantages (ibid).

3.3 Linked lives: Intergenerational dependencies

The new demographic circumstances in which members of multiple family generations share several decades together compel us to recognise the critical interdependencies between family generations and between men and women in families. These interdependencies are constructed in the daily interactions between family members, but also framed and reinforced by social policies. In line with the emphasis on linked lives in the FamiliesAndSocieties project, the young and old in families are considered jointly. Micro and macro factors, policy and normative context, solidarity between generations with respect to patterns in care and financial support, and co-residence as influencing well-being in families are analysed in work package 7. Intergenerational ties continue in importance for families and across welfare states, and perhaps even more so in our era of welfare state restructuring and the economic uncertainties resulting from the global financial crisis. Particular attention is consequently also paid to individual and family vulnerability and its future course.

Intergenerational co-residence is the first aspect of intergenerational ties considered in the project. The aim is to determine the conditions under which intergenerational co-residence is the preferred living arrangement and those under which it is the default living arrangement. Intergenerational co-residence is a strategy to organise support, as exchanges between co-residing parents and adult children are the highest. Two studies addressed this issue (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.2). The first study focused on the determinants of parent-child distance in Germany, extending the literature by assessing whether the association between the presence of a sibling and parent-child distance varies as a function of parent and offspring characteristics. The results show that the sibling effect is particularly strong for adult children of parents coping with severe health limitations, and for children of

parents living in less urbanised regions, but no effect as to birth order is found. The second study focuses on two Eastern European countries—Romania and Bulgaria, where high levels of co-residence have been associated with a historical pattern of family formation, a high incidence of multigenerational households, and the availability and affordability of housing. The study distinguishes between different life course trajectories of co-residential arrangements: i) co-residence in the parental home where a child has never left the parental home or when a child has left but moved back, and ii) co-residence in the child's home when a parent moved in with a child. These different trajectories into intergenerational co-residence have different determinants. Co-residence in the parental home is associated with both the child's and parents' needs, such as the frail health of a parent and being a never-married child. Co-residence in the child's home is least likely to occur with children having the lowest resources, while the financial and time resources of the parents increase the likelihood of co-residence in a child's household.

A prolonged transition to adulthood also contributes to intergenerational co-residence, with different patterns for migrants facing additional cultural and economic constraints in their transition. A study on the descendants of migrants in France compares the trajectories of youth of North African origin and descendants of Southern Europeans to the native-born French, looking also at the gender pattern and socioeconomic characteristics (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 50(2016)). While the paths to adulthood are quite similar across groups, specific patterns emerged for second generation youths. They stay significantly longer in the parental home, partly because their parents come from societies characterised by strong family ties, and partly because they have greater difficulties in becoming self-sufficient related to their own and their parents' lower educational levels. The parents' lower socio-economic status prevents them from providing their children with financial set-up support. High unemployment levels among migrants is another factor hindering their possibilities for reaching self-sufficiency, reflected in their longer periods of unemployment, especially for descendants of North African origin and particularly men. The prolonged transition for women is linked mainly to their lower probability of entering into a cohabiting union. The descendants of immigrants from Southern Europe behave more like native French people.

Intergenerational support also refers to active involvement in caring responsibilities for old and young, even when family members do not co-reside. The main issue here is how the sandwich generation, especially late-middle aged women, are coping with the double burden of support responsibilities towards younger and older generations, that is elderly parents and adult but still partly dependent children or grandchildren. Despite the often-voiced assumption that 'generational squeezes' will intensify due to ageing, decreases in family care resources

and longer stays in the labour market, our research suggests that simultaneous support that flows both up and down family lines is rare (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.3). In Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, the sandwich generation tends to assist the old more than in countries with a high-level of de-familialisation of care, such as France. With regard to the well-being of the caretakers, a divide between North-Western and South-Eastern Europe countries is revealed by the higher levels of well-being in the former. Those offering support to older adults reported lower levels of well-being in comparison to those not engaged in caregiving at all, whereas care of grandchildren increased the well-being of caregivers. Employed members of the sandwich generation are more likely to be engaged in elderly support than those not working, but employment reduces their care provision for grandchildren. Increasing labour force participation at these ages, especially by women, which is required in order to overcome the negative effects of population ageing, will induce more tensions between paid work and care.

Intergenerational links are also examined from a normative perspective, where the focus is on the relationship between norms of family obligation and the actual giving and receipt of financial support and care. Analysing GGS data for seven Central and Eastern European countries and two Western European countries (France and Norway), norms of filial obligations are stronger in the former group of countries as compared to Western Europe (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.4). The relationship between norms and offering instrumental (personal care), financial and emotional support is also addressed. Adult children in Eastern European countries are more likely to provide personal care. This support is partly a response to a lack of publicly-funded care arrangements, which forces adult children to act upon the needs of their ageing parents. No connection between norms of filial obligation and the offering of emotional support is found. Care and emotional support are gendered in all countries as daughters are more likely to provide support, while financial support is not.

Another study focuses on the care ideals in the Netherlands, assessing their stability over time (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 61(2016)). Four care ideals are distinguished: warm-modern (family and state jointly responsible for caring, egalitarian gender roles), cold-modern (large state responsibility, restricted family responsibility, egalitarian gender roles), traditional (restricted state responsibility, large family responsibility, moderately traditional gender roles), and cold-traditional (large state responsibility, restricted family responsibility, traditional gender roles). A shift away from warm-modern care ideals and towards cold-modern care ideals is traced in the period between 2002 and 2011, even though Dutch policy makers have increasingly encouraged family members to take on an active role in caring for dependent relatives. However, this may have led the Dutch to emphasise even more strongly the value of state involvement in care provision, underscoring the limits to what can be

demanded from family members. Further analysis shows that being able to rely on residential care undermines adult children's sense of urgency to step in and provide care to their parents. In such cases, support to parents becomes more secondary and consists mainly of organising, managing, and supervising care.

The effect of the financial crisis on dependencies in families is also addressed, examining how families mediate the effects of economic hardship on individuals (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.6). The length and severity of the economic crisis in Southern Europe caused an increasing interest in understanding the mechanisms cushioning the impact of economic impoverishment of large segments of the population. Familialistic regimes are expected to activate family solidarity in times of crisis, that is, families tend to function as 'shock absorbers'. However, comparative SHARE data on help and money exchanges between generations casts doubts on the narrative about the strength of familialism in Spain during the crisis. Although a general increase occurred in economic transfers to younger generations across Europe in the early 2010s compared to 2006, this increase is not particularly noticeable in Spain (or Italy) when compared to other European countries. Help is much more likely when parents are well-off. This evidence does not necessarily rule out the possibility that family assistance does indeed function as a shock absorber. The young benefit clearly from the opportunity to remain with their parents when they are unable to find affordable home of their own, and some returned to the parental home when their project to live autonomously fails. A closer analysis of Spanish Survey of Living Conditions (EU-SILC) data reveals that intergenerational households are increasingly characterised by low work intensity, suggesting a strategy of resource-pooling in the family network. In Spain, intergenerational co-residential arrangements rather than financial transfers between households appear to be the avenue by which vulnerable individuals are protected from hardship. However, accepting 'room and board' solidarity is against the primary preferences of young adults, and violates socially shared expectations about the appropriate age for leaving the parental home.

4. Social contexts and policies matter

Policy/institutional context is reflected in the differences across societies as highlighted in the above discussions of outcomes in linked lives, including gendered parenting practices, and intergenerational norms and exchanges in support, and the effects of divorce and separation on child well-being. This section addresses how context matters, focusing on specific policies and laws influencing the situations of vulnerable groups and families, and how these policies and laws promote or hinder gender equality and equity, and social inclusion. To grasp if and how policies matter involves embedding them into layers of institutional

normative context: family, workplace, welfare regime configurations and broader economic and global processes, as well as in the context of legal frameworks and specific policy design.

4.1 Vulnerable groups and families

4.1.1 Youth: Economic self-sufficiency and transition to adulthood

Young people face multiple challenges as they attempt to complete their education, move from education to employment becoming economically independent and then start a family. These main criteria of entering adulthood are today littered with many obstacles, with the young entering adulthood in contemporary Europe much later than previous cohorts. However, there is no common pattern within, nor across countries which suggests that how young people structure their life-course is strongly dependent on norms but also on institutions (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D2.3). A significant proportion of young people remain unable to support themselves, much less a family, before their mid to late 20s, and need to rely on their parents and/or the welfare state. Moreover, the recent economic crisis and recession hit youth particularly hard since the recovery has not produced job growth and young people have not seen their situation improving in many countries. As a consequence, young people today struggle to establish themselves in the labour market despite being the most highly educated generation in history.

How European countries enable young adults to leave the parental home and become economically self-sufficient varies according to the types of public benefits and supports with respect to education, housing, employment, and social and child benefits. A study based on OECD data shows more comprehensive support in the Nordic countries, limited support in the Anglophone countries and a strong familialisation in support in Western (except France), Southern, and Eastern European countries (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 34(2015)). In the Nordic countries reflecting the dual-earner institutionalised welfare regime, the transition to adulthood is approached in a holistic manner, since policies take into account the multi-faceted aspects involved in transitions to adult life. This integrated model of social supports enables young people to balance their transitions to employment, family, and an independent household with investments in education. With the exception of the Nordic and liberal regime countries, the familialisation of support persists where parents benefit from family allowances or tax benefits for young adults. The configurations across welfare regimes also differ in the extent to which benefits are targeted to the most vulnerable young adults. Social benefits in countries, such as Ireland and the UK, provide only modest coverage for young adults, although they do provide social support for young people who have left the education system but who are unable to get a job. The role played by social assistance is much more limited in Mediterranean countries. These variations are crucial for understanding the

differences in entry into adult life in advanced economies, in terms of which order and when transitions occur across European countries. When social supports are linked to different phases of life transitions (complementarity), rather than being separated into well-ordered sequences, youth are less likely to remain dependent on their parents. This policy design offers young adults a sense of stability for the future, ensuring them support regardless of their decisions on their education, job market integration, and family life. It explains why young people in Nordic countries leave their parental home at a relatively early age to set up an independent household, a move that exposes them to the risk of poverty – but a risk that they are willing to assume (ibid.).

4.1.2 Single mothers: Policies compensating for disadvantage

Single mothers are a vulnerable group in that they face a high risk of poverty as a single-earner in gendered labour markets where women earn less than men. As single parents, they experience time poverty, taking on both the main breadwinner as well as caring roles. The intersections in class and gender are evident for child well-being in single mother families when parenting is combined with low education and low incomes. A point underscored in the discussion above, related to research in work package 5 especially, on the effects of divorce on child well-being is that family structure per se does not explain the differences between single parent families compared to two-parent households. Rather it is the socio-economic resources of single mothers that can adversely affect their children's well-being and opportunities, their low education and weak attachment to the labour force. As single mothers increasingly tend to be concentrated among the lower educated, they have a 'double disadvantage' in the labour market that offers fewer unskilled jobs and higher unemployment. As single mothers may not be able to accept jobs with long hours or unpredictable hours, their double disadvantage increases their dependence on state support (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 58(2016)).

Accessible and affordable childcare is essential for single mothers' capabilities to be earners contributing to the economic well-being of their family. High-quality external childcare also helps to compensate disadvantages in child development and cognitive skills among vulnerable families, as studies in work package 6 showed. Policies that support reconciliation of employment with family, such as childcare, parental leave and paid sick days, are indispensable for single mothers and their children since having employment reduces their risk of poverty. Furthermore, policies encouraging involvement of fathers in (daily) care of their children through residential custody and shared parental leave can weaken the disadvantages of children from low-educated low-income families where the mother is breadwinner and the sole caregiver. Indeed, countries that encourage women's caregiving at home display higher rates of poverty for single mothers, and the cash for care schemes in

Finland may be a contributing factor to the increase in single mother poverty there (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 58(2016)). However, as earnings from employment for low-educated single mothers are insufficient, social supports targeted at single mothers or more generally for vulnerable families are decisive for the well-being of these families and the children living in them, as also research in work package 10 underscored.

4.2 Legal recognition and social inclusion

4.2.1 Same-sex families

Over the past decades, there have been significant changes in the way same-sex couple unions are regulated in European countries, although they remain a vulnerable group. Since the 1970s, a growing number of countries have started to recognise cohabitation of same-sex couples for a number of legal issues. In 1989, Denmark became the first country to offer a legal framework for the recognition of same-sex couples in the form of registered partnership, and other European countries followed suit. The first inroads into legal recognition of same-sex marriage began in 2001 in the Netherlands and has become a growing trend in Europe. Legal recognition of same-sex families still varies greatly across Europe, nevertheless, there is a clear tendency among the majority of European countries to offer same-sex couples the opportunity to formalise their relationship as marriage and/or as registered partnership (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 75(2017)). Fulfilling the need for a systematic overview of legal aspects of same-sex and different-sex families, the *LawsAndFamilies Database* has been established in the project based on responses to a questionnaire of selected legal experts in over 20 European countries (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 64(2016)). Legal recognition of same-sex marriages and registered partnerships entails similar rights to heterosexual marriages with some disparities in parenting rights and consequences upon the death of a partner. Nevertheless, disparities in policies remain in these legal forms of recognition in access to care leaves, income tax rules, or surnames.

This is a period of transition in the legal recognition of same-sex families, which is still highly contested in public debates in many countries across Europe. A qualitative study conducted in four countries with different social contexts and legal frameworks for same sex partnerships addressed whether the absence or presence of formal laws recognising same sex couples have an impact on life course transitions, including coupling and parenting and coming out (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 75(2017) chapter 8). The conclusion, based upon 128 narratives of lesbian and gay informants, is that enactment of laws recognising same sex couples is an initial and crucial step for the social inclusion of LGBT families and removal of stigma. Formal recognition not only provides legal protections but also has symbolic content, expressed in the feeling of being treated equally even though existing laws still favour

heteronormativity. Interviewees cited administrative constraints for three- and four-parent families, where the non-biological parents have no legal recognition. In addition, in some countries lesbians are denied access to Assisted Reproduction Technologies. Being legally recognised as equals provided access to family benefits and reduced economic, social, and personal vulnerability. Among LGBT individuals there is an awareness that the extension of rights to non-heterosexual couples cannot be taken for granted.

4.2.2 The involuntary childless: Access to Assisted Reproduction Technology (ART)

Involuntary childlessness reflects broader societal changes in marriage markets, influenced by gender differences and structural shifts in employment and education. Delay of first birth is also linked to the constraints in balancing work with children (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Papers 69(2017) and 71(2017)). The research in work package 4 addresses the issue of childlessness, and the demographic, regulatory and economic aspects of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART), as well as their societal consequences. The ARPNoVA database is established based on the findings in the project. The results show that Europe not only has highest initial ART cycle treatments globally, but is also the most regulated. Major ‘consumer’ countries outside Europe, such as the US and India, rely largely on guidelines, proposed by professional organisations to be voluntarily followed by practitioners. Alternatively, access to ART can be regulated by government legislation and/or by insurance coverage which can produce barriers, hence revealing a range of discriminatory practices. Differences exist across European countries in terms of groups that are excluded because of their sexual orientation and partnership status (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverables D4.5 and D4.6). As noted above, although many countries have liberalised partnership requirements, single and lesbian women are still often denied access to ART. Large inter-country variations exist in affordability, based on whether ART is included in the public health care system or reliant upon private insurance. In Europe where many countries have very low fertility, ART is seen as a potential policy lever to raise fertility rates, which is not supported by empirical evidence. Nonetheless, inequality in access affects utilisation and its elimination should be a goal. Infertility is now defined as a condition leading to disability by the World Health Organization and World Bank, both of which assert that infertile people should have a right to treatment.

The ‘myth’ of the highly-educated and career-oriented childless women in Europe no longer holds. Rather, childlessness is complex and differentiated across Europe and in many cases, is increasingly situated in the lower educated and precarious economic groups in society (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Papers 69(2017)), which reveals the need to place ART within the public healthcare system. Discriminatory treatment by partner status and sexual orientation can be overcome with changes in policy guidelines at the European level. This in

turn could result in changes in norms regarding equal treatment for all individuals. Other factors underlying the delay in the transition to parenthood that eventually leads to the usage of ART are bound up with policy issues that need to be addressed, such as those discussed above relating to transition to adulthood and reconciliation policies. In countries with active welfare policies for families, women with higher education levels are less likely to remain childless given the policy support against the opportunity cost of having children. Conversely, countries where such policies have not been implemented, and where there has not been much change in traditional values on gender roles, have the highest percentages of highly educated childless women.

4.3 Policies that make a difference: The EU and national levels

There is a vast literature on how policies shape the organization of care in the family and its gender dimensions, including various indices on family friendly policies and their effects on mother's possibilities for reconciling care with employment, and more recently, on father's participation and engagement in childcare. Parental leave has been seen as a policy instrument with the transformative potential to alter gender relations within the family and gender equality in other domains; particularly employment and career trajectories. The EU has been a crucial actor in promoting parental leave policies in many countries and has introduced guidelines for encouraging more equal parental sharing. A number of comparative studies have been conducted in the project addressing the impact of policies more broadly that can offer valuable insights for policy formation.

4.3.1 Family policy initiatives in the European Union

The scope of the political agenda of the European Union has broadened substantially during recent decades beyond the founding core to create a common market. There has been an increasing awareness that developments outside the market, such as demographic change or gender (in)equality in the family, may affect the enhancement of the market in the short or long run. However, this expansion is not only driven by the aim to further internal market efficiency and economic performance, but also by a wider recognition of the need for a social platform based on fundamental rights. The 2012 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union grants protections to the rights to dignity and equality, to a family, employment, and education, as well as to the rights of the child. These developments have opened up space for family-related issues to come onto the European Union's policy agenda. The expansion of the European Union policy portfolio has also strengthened the normative power of the European Union beyond its power to set legally binding norms in areas defined by the Treaties and led to an increase in non-legal documents outlining, for example, common goals to be achieved or policy directions to be taken.

The policy initiatives taken by the European Union in family related issues are specifically studied in the FamiliesAndSocieties project. A European Union database on family related issues (EUFamPol) that covers binding and non-binding documents has been established to provide a systematic overview. The focus is on policy issues cutting across diverse aspects of family lives and at the intersection of employment, social affairs, gender equality and family development. The analysis of the initiatives over time shows that EU family related initiatives have increased, both with respect to the number taken as well as the topics covered (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 72(2017)). An increase in legally binding as well as legally non-binding initiatives is shown. Family related initiatives also cumulate at specific times, mostly due to internal or external events or to policy activities in areas to which the respective family-related aspect belongs. Not surprisingly, family relevant issues in which the European Union has the competency to legislate or which have been aims of the European Union since its onset, such as employment related issues or gender equality, occur earlier and are more consistently on the agenda than more distant issues. Overall, the findings show that the framing and activity radius of the European Union with regard to family related policies have expanded over the years and that moreover the European Union has addressed family issues far longer than commonly is assumed.

4.3.2 National level policies: Care for children and implications of father's leave use

Parental leave is a policy measure of major relevance for gender and social equality, and its consequences are given much attention in policy formation at both European and national levels. The impacts of father's leave uptake on various outcomes are addressed in the project with a focus on the Nordic countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland). These countries are among the first to implement leave policies aimed at de-gendering care and creating a more gender equal division of childcare and economic responsibility. Moreover, high quality register data covering the entire population over the past decades are available in these countries, providing ideal conditions for sophisticated analyses.

Addressing the effect of father's leave on the gender division of care for sick children and on the gender pay gap with a focus on Sweden, it was shown that the introduction in 1995 of the 'daddy-quota' of one month on a use-it-or-lose-it basis led to a more equal sharing of the care for sick children, but the extension of the quota to two months in 2002 had no such effect. However, this latter extension of the father quota is found to have a favourable influence on the income development of low-income mothers with one child due to their increased labour supply (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 72(2017)).

Analysing data from Iceland, Norway and Sweden, another study revealed that if the father takes parental leave with the first child, couples in all three countries are more inclined to have a second child, irrespective of the length of his leave, or whether it exceeded the legal quota (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D9.7). However, no such impact has been found with respect to having a third child. Further studies on Iceland suggest that the introduction of a father's leave policy may have contributed to maintaining the two-child norm and the comparatively high fertility levels in the Nordic countries (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 60(2016)). The latter analyses provides deeper insight about the relationship between gender equality, father's leave and economics: although father's leave taking has become a norm, his leave-taking is still subject to 'breadwinner sensitivity' and to broader economic development, as the economic crisis had the consequence of decreasing the number of parental leave days taken by fathers. Whether father's uptake of parental leave contributes to the stability of partnerships is also examined for the three countries. The results show that if the father takes leave up to or above the quota, couples in all three countries are less likely to separate after the birth of the first child. While these results cannot be interpreted as causal effects, they provide support for the argument that gender inequality within the family may increasingly strain the relationship between partners and lead to lower fertility and higher separation risks (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 72(2017)).

As family policies in the Nordic countries today aim to promote social and gender equality in order to contribute to establishing a more inclusive society, an important indicator of success or failure is immigrant fathers' uptake of parental leave compared to that of native-born. A study on Finland and Sweden (ibid.), both offering leave for fathers but with differing conditions, Finland relying on a 'bonus system' (giving two extra weeks of leave if fathers took some parental leave) while Sweden invokes the father's quota, shows that immigrant fathers use fewer leave days than native fathers. The uptake of leave by immigrant fathers increases with the duration of their stay in the country, which is mainly attributable to their integration into the labour market and their increasing wages. Importantly, there is huge difference in the rate of lower usage of parental leave between immigrant fathers in Sweden (12 percent less) and in Finland (26 percent less). These findings underscore the significant role that policies, their aim and design, may play in promoting gender and social equality and in creating an inclusive and sustainable society. Although further analyses need to examine the links between policy design and usage in greater detail, these findings suggest that in addition to the level of benefit paid during parental leave, fathers' quota may have a greater integrative effect than gender-neutral parental-leave regulations. Legal quotas provide a stronger protection of parental rights to use the leave entitlement than optional systems do, and they ease negotiations with employers and partners.

New norms for fatherhood and care can also be fostered through pro-active workplace policies as demonstrated by the study on Switzerland mentioned above, a country with no statutory leave for fathers (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D3.5). Implementation of a one-month paid paternity leave in a specific public administration body resulted in new norms at the workplace as the leave entitlement guaranteed time off work for fathers for care. This had a two-fold effect. First it undercut the pressures from colleagues or supervisors and enhanced the status of being a father in the work environment, which in turn enabled fathers to become more involved with the daily care of their children. The results thus highlight the importance of the workplace in promoting or inhibiting the change of gender roles and paternal involvement in family life.

4.3.3 Institutional configurations and the intersection of migration and domestic care services

The increase in women's labour force participation in the aging societies of Europe, and the deficits in childcare and elderly care, have given rise to different forms of private markets for care and domestic services. These private markets, subsidised in many countries, are advocated at the European level and by national governments as the policy of choice for families to accommodate their care needs and the time pressures felt by dual earner couples. In addition, the private markets provide an alternative that does not require an expansion of public services. The intersection in socio-economic resources, gender and migration all come into play with private markets, regarding who can afford to use these services and their effects on the low-wage female migrant population comprising the main source of labour for these markets in care/domestic services.

This issue is addressed in the project by a study of Sweden and Spain, countries differing in care, migration and employment regimes. These differences are perceptible in the structures and size of private care/domestic markets: in Sweden firms dominate the market, offering complementary services to the extensive institutionalised state/community-based care system as well as cleaning services for dual-earner families (to cope with time deficits). In Spain, where there is a lack of care services for the elderly and children, the private market is larger (12 percent compared to 7 percent in Sweden); nearly all employers are families. These two cases also vary in (im)migration policies with large portions of undocumented labour migrants in Spain and greater tolerance for informality, contrastingly in Sweden the undocumented represent a small share of the market and informality is less tolerated. Few migrants in Spain are living with partners compared to Sweden, where family unification and asylum are legal channels for entry. Despite these institutional differences, a qualitative study of migrants shows that there were more similarities than differences in the employment conditions and the well-being of migrants (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 46(2015)).

Migrants working in the sector in both countries experienced precarious work situations with underemployment, low wages, unpaid hours and high unemployment, particularly in Spain resulting from the greater impact of the economic crisis in Spain than in Sweden. A quantitative study of users of services reveals further similarities in both countries, that households with the most economic resources are most likely to purchase these market services (though in Sweden there is a generous tax subsidy). The most vulnerable and those with the most need, such as single parents or low-income elderly, are unable to afford these services.

The crisis in care also raises the question of choice and agency in intergenerational dependencies. Filial obligations to care for family members in familialistic countries remains relatively strong: mothers and grandmothers are the mainstay of caregiving, but at what social costs in these societies. The maternal employment rate in Spain (59 per cent in 2014) is one of the lowest in Europe. During a period when gender roles are changing and two earners in the family are needed, private markets do not provide a solution to the acute care needs for the elderly and the lack of care services for children under three. Even in countries where there has been extensive coverage for the elderly, families are providing complementary care, such as Sweden, with the reductions in municipal budgets and services. The findings on migrant care work indicate that private markets are not solving the care deficit in familialist regimes or the time deficit in dual-earner societies, since only the most advantaged (those in the highest income quartiles) benefit from private services.

5. Identifying future social risks and policy challenges

5.1 Vulnerabilities

The Futures task force workshop organised by work package 10 turned attention to the question of vulnerability as a key issue for family development, the well-being of families and children (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 18(2014)). This was followed by focus group discussions with stakeholders and policy-makers in five European cities (Madrid, Stockholm, Vienna, Warsaw and Brussels) which identified family configurations ‘at risk’ of vulnerability, in particular single parents and large families. These family types and their members face a substantial risk of poverty as the reconciliation of paid work and family life, considered decisive for family well-being, is particularly challenging for them (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 49(2015)). Moreover, there is a high risk of an intergenerational transmission of vulnerability within such families. For example, empirical studies show that children of large families are also more likely to have large families

themselves as adults than others. These family types are also more prevalent among some immigrant groups compared to native-born individuals in Europe. Even when no ethnic dimension is involved, much of the reproduction of vulnerability within and across societies is linked to large families and single parent families. With respect to the latter, a study on Finland demonstrated that single parents, in particular single mothers, face growing employment disadvantages related to changes over time in the educational gradient of single motherhood from positive to negative (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 58(2016)).

The link between paid work and family life is central for the concept of vulnerability, as it conveys economic, social as well as emotional dimensions. The inability to reconcile the two spheres of life is likely to lead to serious economic problems. Parents become trapped in precarious jobs or they may feel forced to limit their working hours which, in turn, substantially reduces their income. In extreme cases, they might need to leave the labour market altogether. Consequently, parents no longer would then be able to meet the financial needs of their families. Being out of the labour market can also reduce the social contacts parents have, limiting their social embeddedness (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 49(2015)). Facing substantial difficulties regarding the reconciliation of work and family, parents might choose to greatly reduce quality time with their offspring for the sake of the economic security of their family. This in its turn may have a negative impact on their relations with their children and on the children's emotional well-being. One key challenge is to help vulnerable families not only temporarily (by mitigating the most urgent needs) but also in a long term improving their situation in a sustainable manner. Focus group participants strongly emphasise the importance of education in this respect. Early childhood education in formal childcare empowers children from vulnerable families, providing them with the skills necessary for breaking the 'cycle of reproduction of vulnerability' as it also improves their position in the labour market when they enter adulthood. Parents need to be given the tools, through training and education, to improve their parenting styles and pass onto their children the importance of schooling for their future. Finally, employers need to be educated about the importance of family-friendly working environment.

Future trends of vulnerability were addressed in an online expert questionnaire study (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 65(2017)). The responding experts are pessimistic, predicting both short-term and long-term increases of vulnerability with respect to the economic, psychological and social dimensions. These experts find economic development, in particular unemployment and (in)equality of earnings, to be most relevant for the vulnerability of families with children in the future, affecting all three dimensions of vulnerability. Family policies are also argued to be important with respect to future trends of vulnerability, especially the availability of public childcare and financial transfers, though the latter is

expected to decrease over time in line with continuing welfare state retrenchment. Changes in gender roles are evaluated with some ambivalence: while a further increase or high female labour force participation is seen to increase the future share of families affected by psychological vulnerability, a greater involvement of men in childcare is seen to decrease it. The experts were also asked to assess the relevance of ten selected policy measures to mitigate or even stop the reproduction of vulnerability within families. They ranked public childcare provision, assistance for children with special needs, and raising employer awareness on employees' work-life balance the highest. These results are in line with that of the focus group discussions (FamiliesAndSocieties Working Paper 49(2015)) in that reconciliation of paid work and family life is of crucial importance for the well-being of families and children, as enabling societies to counteract the reproduction of vulnerability.

5.2 Overdependence on kinship ties and gendered systems of old age assistance

Engaging with how policies and legal frameworks structure interdependencies in families and family roles, studies in the project (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.5 and Dykstra and Hagestad 2016) identify policy areas that pose risks for gender and socio-economic inequalities with respect to age borders, employment status and partnership status, and for childless people. These policy challenges underscore the importance of a gendered life course perspective and intersectional approach when considering pensionable age, credits for family role engagements, care leaves and care needs, and the lack of kinship ties.

The primacy of kinship ties pervades the legal frameworks and policies governing care leave entitlements, remuneration for care of the elderly, the sick or disabled. In nearly all contexts, it is a question of a spouse or parent. Non-kin often provide help, but these networks are not always sufficient to meet care needs, for example, among the childless (“generational solos”) particularly in societies built upon familialist support for care (Dykstra and Hagestad 2016). With rising childlessness among men in particular, there is growing interest in care networks, given difficulties in providing services for older childless adults, often socially isolated living in remote areas. Other issues arise in medical situations involving who should be consulted when childless patients are incapacitated, when there are no blood relatives, spouses or children by adoption. These examples suggest that current legal arrangements may be outdated, challenging the perception of what the “family” is (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.5).

Age borders and pensionable age highlight the complexities raised when protecting the vulnerable, and the potential consequences for gender inequalities in laws and practices. Many countries still retain a lower pension age right for women than for men, and some have

gendered mandatory retirement ages, both of which pose risks for women in older ages because they interrupt their working lives and then often cannot meet existing requirements for a full pension. It should be noted that by 2020 most European countries will have an equalized mandatory pensionable age. Allowing for an earlier pensionable age for women arguably recognises gender differences in life courses, as women marry men who often are older and then a couple can retire at the same time. Women's earlier retirement age can also be argued as compensation for the double shift combining paid and unpaid work. On the other hand, a lower pensionable age for women has consequences as to gender inequality in working life. First it can re-enforce discrimination against women (supporting a double standard of aging), most notably in service industries, where physical appearance is important. In countries where the pension system provides women who retire earlier with a higher rate of return on their pension, the penalty for earlier retirement is less palpable. However, the tendency in most advanced economies is toward contributory systems so that lower pensionable age translates into lower pension income and higher poverty risks for women who cannot rely on sharing their husband's pension (Dykstra and Hagestad 2016).

The contributory principle in social security insurance, based on the male life course and breadwinning until retirement, is linked to income loss, whereas absences from work to care for a family member, reflecting more women's life course, are often related to fixed flat rate benefits. Recognising differences in gendered life courses through credits for absences regarding care leaves supports pension and unemployment rights that are beneficial for women. These tend to be low flat rate benefits that provide income support for less qualified lower paid women, but they are not advantageous for skilled higher earning women. Countries that have residence-based minimum pensions (e.g., Iceland, the Netherlands and Norway) are favorable to women because they are not based on employment history (FamiliesAndSocieties Deliverable D7.5).

Systems of old age assistance based on derived rights in terms of pensions and survivor benefits disincentivise women's engagement in paid work, locking them into domestic work or the informal work sector. In most European countries, only married spouses can receive public survivor benefits. Divorced spouses are eligible for survivor benefits only if they do not re-marry (ibid). Women who have never married are not eligible for benefits under any conditions. In essence, these benefits do not redistribute to women per se, but from the never married to the ever married. Acknowledging the appearance of an overall gender convergence in laws and policies that structure interdependencies, studies in work package 7 highlight the contrasts in how lives are lived, de jure and de facto practices, in men's and women's life courses in conjunction with socio-economic resources.

6. Summary: The implications of the project findings for policy frameworks

Promoting equality and combatting vulnerability are the two cornerstones upon which family policy frameworks in Europe need to be constructed, as shown clearly by the research conducted in the FamiliesAndSocieties project. In order to achieve these goals of equality and eradicating vulnerability, the diversity of today's family forms and gender roles in Europe must be recognized in policy. Policies matter, as seen for example with respect to promoting inequality or equality between men and women in family roles. Two explicit examples of inequality as promoted by policy are gender differences in age categories (e.g. pensionable age), and credits for family role engagement (e.g. survivor's benefits). The type of public provision offered always has consequences for socio-economic and gender inequality; cash for care payments strengthen the gendered division of tasks more than the provision of actual care services. Targeted daddy leaves epitomise a positive life course policy that can have spin-off effects: fathers' involvement at an early age in the life of a child can lead to an increased share by fathers in daily domestic tasks and a greater likelihood to share residential custody upon separation. Grandparental care in Southern Europe is an example of a 'negative' life course policy shaping interdependence between family generations as care by grandmothers enables daughters to adopt modern gender roles while grandmothers are taking on the traditional roles for themselves. Although gender roles have changed dramatically in the past decades, the dual-earner and dual-carer model can only be achieved by strengthening men's contribution to care and domestic tasks and women's position in paid work, requiring policies beyond the daddy quota. The work organisational culture in combination with the mediating role of managers is also a crucial dimension for altering gendered norms at the workplace and in certain cases, decreasing family vulnerability.

Co-residence and family support offer youth a safety net in light of their difficulty in establishing themselves in the labour market. However, living in the family home when young adults are in their mid-/late 20s and 30s is often not a choice but the result of barriers standing in the way of their transition to adulthood. Specific policies are needed targeting youth to reach self-sufficiency. Policies can prevent early school leaving by promoting a wider and better combination of work experience during studies, and through welfare policies that support youths directly rather than via their families (social assistance, housing, and education subsidies). Providing youths who lack education or employment with a second chance to obtain qualifications later in life is also a key measure that would ensure a stable income. With regard to immigrant families, rather than cultural/ethnic differences, more important is their weak position in the labour market. Policies for integration of migrants should focus on strategies for social inclusion that address educational disadvantage and discrimination in the labour market.

A lack of recognition in policy of the diversity in families is evident in the heterosexual nuclear two-parent family being the norm, as seen in the denial of family benefits to other types of families, such as cohabitating couples, single mothers, lesbian and gay couples. Same-sex couples as well as single women and mothers can lack access to ART treatment. Gay and lesbian couples can be denied family benefits that heterosexual couples receive. That same-sex marriage in one EU country is not recognised in another reveals the necessity of a European policy framework on the recognition of diversity in couple relationships. A European framework that addresses these forms of discrimination against non-traditional families should be incorporated into equal treatment law.

Another example of how policies fail to recognise diversity in families can be seen in policies organised around biological ties while ignoring the increasing number of childless adults. Older adults often turn to different sources of support when in need, including non-kin, neighbours and friends as well as professionals. Nevertheless, the primacy of (immediate) family members as 'self-evident' sources of support, is strongly reflected in many legal provisions across national contexts concerning, medical decisions, care, inheritance, taxation, blocking the interdependence between the individuals and their chosen network members. There are some signs of change. For instance, in the Netherlands, individuals are entitled to a sick leave in order to provide care for a non-relative (yet, the taxation of inheritance left to non-kin has remained the same – substantially higher than that for kin). There is need for more attention in policy frameworks acknowledging this and other forms of discrimination and vulnerability, being more inclusive of family diversity and non-standard family arrangements.

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Report on the results of the micro-simulation and agent-based approach about future of family forms

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Appendix I

The partners in the FamiliesAndSocieties consortium

P1: Stockholm University (SU) - coordinator

P2: Austrian Academy of Sciences/Vienna Institute of Demography (OEAW-VID)

P3: Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPG)

P4: University of Antwerp (UA)

P5: Institut National D'études Demographiques (INED)

P6: University of Vienna (UNIVIE)

P7: University of Groningen (RUG)* Participation terminated in July 2014

P8: European University Institute (EUI)

P9: Collegio Carlo Alberto (CCA)

P10: Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)

P11: The University of Liverpool (Liverpool)

P12: International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)

P13: Age Platform Europe (AGE)

P14: European Large Families Confederation (ELFAC)

P15: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC)

P16: Tallinn University (EKDK)

P17: Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU)

P18: German Youth Institute (DJI)

P19: University of Leuven (K.U.LEUVEN)

P20: London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

P21: Population Research Institute, Väestöliitto (PRI)

P22: The University of Edinburgh (UEDIN)

P23: University of Lausanne (UNIL)

P24: Leiden University (UNILEIDEN)

P25: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)

P26: University of Padova (UNIPD)

P27: Warsaw School of Economics (SGH)

P28: Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA TK)

P29: The University of Oxford (UOXF)* entered the consortium in August 2014

Appendix II

Work packages in the FamiliesAndSocieties project

Work package 1: Project management

Leader: Livia Sz. Oláh (SU)

This WP covered the scientific and administrative coordination of the project, including the coordination and supervision of the research carried out in the WPs, overall administrative and financial management, organization of consortium meetings and reporting to the EC.

Participating partner: Stockholm University (SU)

Work package 2: Diverse family configurations – Life goals and life course transitions

Co-leaders: Dimitri Mortelmans (UA) & Ariane Pailhé (INED)

This WP focused on the dynamic evolution of family constellations and non-standard families. A dynamic life course perspective is invoked to study the genesis, evolution, dissolution and recomposition of families in Europe and to study the prevalence of non-standard family forms in Europe.

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- The University of Liverpool (Liverpool)
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)
- Vaestoliitto RY (PRI)
- University of Padova – Department of Statistical Sciences (UNIPD)

Work package 3: The new roles of men and women and implications for families and societies

Co-leaders: Rudolf Richter (Vienna Univ.) & Irena Kotowska (SGH)

This WP addressed the complex interplay between the new roles of women and men and the diversity of family life courses in contemporary Europe. The impact of different policy contexts on new constructions of gender in doing family is also examined.

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Work package 4: The changing role of children and societal implications: Assisted reproduction, late fertility and childlessness

Co-leaders: Melinda Mills (UOXF) & Maria Letizia Tanturri (UNIPD)

The broader objective of this WP is to examine the changing role of children, with a specific focus on the rise, determinants and societal consequences of assisted reproduction, late fertility and childlessness.

Participating partners:

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- Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA TK)

Work package 5: Family dynamics and inequalities in children’s life chances

Co-leaders: Juho Härkönen (SU) & Fabrizio Bernardi (EUI)

This WP analysed the effects of family forms and dynamics on children’s short- and long-term welfare, and how families contribute to the intergenerational reproduction of inequality.

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- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)
- University of Padova – Department of Statistical Sciences (UNIPD)

Work package 6: Childcare arrangements: determinants and consequences

Co-leaders: Daniela del Boca & Chiara Monfardini (CCA)

The WP explored childcare arrangements (parental care, family member care, public child care, private care) and the determinants and consequences of their use for different families and family members.

Participating partners:

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- Collegio Carlo Alberto (CCA)
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- The University of Edinburgh (UEDIN)

Work package 7: Intergenerational linkages in the family: The organization of caring and financial responsibilities

Co-leaders: Pearl Dykstra & Niels Schenk [Febr. 2013 - May 2014] / Kasia Karpinska [June 2014 – Jan. 2017] (EUR)

This WP investigated how policy contexts shape the organization of care (practical help, personal care and emotional assistance) and financial responsibilities for young and old family members, and their well-being.

Participating partners:

- Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR)
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)
- Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU)
- Warsaw School of Economics (SGH)

Work package 8: New Europeans – Social Inclusion of Migrant and Ethnic Minority Families

Co-leaders: Hill Kulu (Liverpool) & Amparo González-Ferrer (CSIC)

This WP examined family trajectories among immigrants and ethnic minorities with a focus on partnership changes and childbearing. The role of institutional factors and government policies in shaping the family patterns of immigrants and their descendants is also investigated.

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- Vaestoliitto RY (PRI)
- University of Lausanne (UNIL)

Work package 9: Policies and diversity over the life course

Co-leaders: Olivier Thévenon (INED) & Gerda Neyer (SU)

This WP gathered comparative and EU-level policy information to map out and analyse crucial family-policy issues in Europe and explore the role of social and family policies in essential aspects of family and life-course developments. Particular attention is given to non-standard families and family members in vulnerable situations or in crucial life-course transitions. The WP produced two databases: The first a database of legal issues regarding same-sex and different sex families, and the second a database on EU family policies initiatives.

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- Leiden University – Campus The Hague (UNILEIDEN)
- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)

Work package 10: Foresight activities

Co-leaders: Dimiter Philipov & Thomas Fent [Febr. 2013 - Jan. 2016] / Bernhard Riederer [Febr. 2016 – Jan. 2017] (OEAW-VID)

The main objective of this WP is to inform policy makers about the impact that family-related policies have in the long run on well-being and meeting family needs. This WP aimed at producing a novel, deeper and more multi-faceted knowledge of the future of families that could contribute best to the knowledge needs of policy makers involved in designing family-oriented interventions and promote the well-being of individuals as well as families.

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- The University of Oxford (UOXF)

Work package 11: Synthesis and policy implications

Co-leaders: Barbara Hobson & Livia Sz. Oláh (SU)

This WP involved two synthesis tasks: The first is to produce a synthesis of the state of the art, identifying gaps in research areas and guidelines for research directions, with a synthesis of the findings that have emerged from the WPs, the second is to formulate policy recommendations based upon this research and the dissemination meetings with civil society actors and stakeholders.

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Work package 12: The “FamiliesAndSocieties Forum”

Co-leaders: James W. Vaupel and Andreas Edel (MPG)

This WP disseminated the project findings to the academic community, policy makers, stakeholders, the media and the general public; enhancing the dialogue between policy makers, civil society and research; and updating and extending the Population and Policy Database.

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Figure 1. Work packages and their linkages

