

Women, Work, and Care: What Can We Learn from Cross-National Comparisons?

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Overview

- **Theoretical origins**
Rosemary Crompton and other European feminist welfare state scholars
- **What is encompassed within “work-family reconciliation policy”?**
A set of policy levers
- **What is the role of the EU?**
EU Directives matter
- **Cross-national policy variation: what is currently provided?**
Leave, working time regulations, child care:
A look at 14 high-income countries (11 EU countries + Norway, Canada, US)
- **What do we know (and not know) about the effects of WFR policy?**
Intended consequences (economic, demographic)
Unintended consequences (new forms of gender inequality?)
Selected outcomes from these 14 countries (LIS 2010)
- (If time): **Vis-à-vis work-family reconciliation policies, why is the US such a disaster?**

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” What’s broke?

Three largely distinct conversations about work and family are ongoing in the United States -- and in other high-income countries as well -- cross-cutting research, policy analysis, and advocacy contexts:

- “**Child well-being**”: Parents’ time away from their children compromises children’s early development. In practice, this discussion concerns maternal employment.
- “**Work/family conflict**”: Employed parents (*mothers*) are overwhelmed by a “double shift” in the market and at home.
- “**Gender inequality**”: Women continue to lag men in the labor market and to assume a disproportionate share of unpaid work at home. That leaves women economically dependent on men, and at risk for social and political exclusion.

Each perspective advances policy solutions:

- “**Child well-being**”: Policies that increase parental time at home.
 - E.g.: maternity leaves during the first year of life and other public supports (such as tax benefits) that allow mothers to stay home with older children.
- “**Work-family conflict**”: Policies that enable women to combine employment and caregiving responsibilities.
 - E.g., supports for flex-time, telecommuting, part-time work, and leave opportunities (in practice, for mothers).
- “**Gender inequality**”: Policies that strengthen women’s employment.
 - E.g., provision of publicly-supported non-parental child care.

Because these perspectives all reflect the assumption that fathers will (should?) be employed full-time throughout their lives, and throughout their children’s lives, they all imply a tradeoff between gender equality in employment (economic gender equality) and total parental caregiving time available for children.

Can these perspectives be reconciled? (note: focus here is on heterosexual couples)
 A continuum of divisions of labor (based on Crompton 1999)
 "a flexible framework through which change may be conceptualized"

Figure 1. Gendered Divisions of Labor

traditional gender division of labor < ===== > less traditional gender division of labor
 (continuum from Crompton, 1999)

	male breadwinner / female carer	dual-earner / female part-time carer	dual-earner / state-carer -- or -- dual-earner / marketized-carer	dual-earner / dual-carer
ideological perspectives on employment, caregiving, and gender relations:	↓	↓	↓	↓
"parents' time with children"	emphasized	emphasized	--	emphasized
"helping caregivers blend work and family"	--	emphasized	emphasized	emphasized
"gender equality in the labor market"	--	--	emphasized	emphasized

Our work – phase 1:

FAMILIES THAT WORK

Policies for Reconciling
Parenthood and Employment



Janet C. Gornick and Marcia K. Meyers

What defines the dual-earner / dual-carer model?

- symmetrical engagement by men and women -- as groups -- in employment and caregiving (*core end vision*)
- the option for extensive parental care for children in the early months of life with increasing use of non-parental care as children age
(e.g., ample leave-taking in the early years; later, couples might hold 1.5 jobs, with each partner working for pay “3/4 time”)
- (predicated on) generous and gender-egalitarian public policies that support both caregiving time *and* non-parental child care arrangements

What would support, or enable, a dual-earner / dual-carer society?
What would enable contemporary couples to make such a choice?

- I. Transformation in gender roles (“degendered parenting”)
- II. Restructuring of the workplace with accommodations for leave-takers and realistic options for reduced-hour work
- III. And a package of public policies (our focus), including:
 - family leave policies** that grant job protection and pay for *fathers* and *mothers* (with substantial incentives for men’s take-up)
 - working time measures** that give workers options for reduced-hour employment (and flexible scheduling) without wage or benefit penalties (with requirements and/or incentives for men’s take-up)
 - child care policies** that provide high-quality and affordable care (substantial in the youngest years, available through the lifecycle)

The policy package
and the role of the EU

Work-Family Reconciliation Policy

A variety of policy levers are in place:

- family leave rights & benefits (EU-mandated)
- regulation of “standard work week”
- entitlements to paid days off (EU-mandated)
- part-time parity measures (EU-mandated)
- rights to part-time and flexible schedules
- early childhood education and care

EU Directives – set minimum standards and lead to a degree of intra-European homogeneity

- **1992 Pregnant Workers Directive:** requires 14 weeks job-protected paid maternity leave
- **1996/2010 Parental Leave Directive:** requires 4 months job-protected parental leave
- **1997 Part-Time Work Directive:** requires equal treatment for part-time workers; encourages (but does not require) options for voluntary PT work and flexible organizing of working time
- **1993/2000/2003 Working Time Directive:** requires 20 days paid annual leave; minimum rest periods; 48-hour maximum work week

Cross-national policy variation: a snapshot of 14 high-income countries

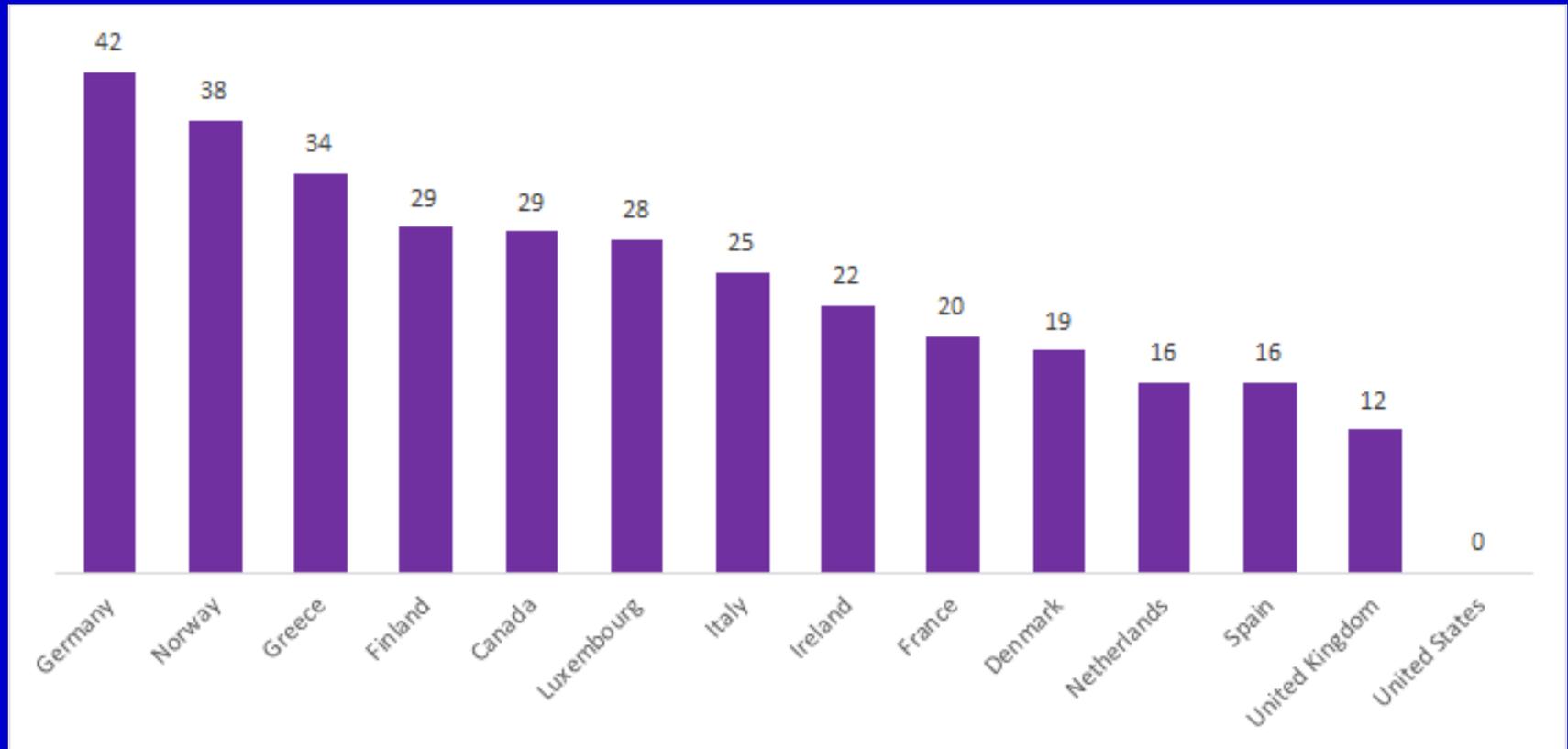
(policy framework from FTW,
policy provisions updated to 2010)

Leave Policy — Generosity Indicator (2009):

weeks available to mothers (FTE weeks)

Source: Ray, Gornick, Schmitt (JESP 2010)

- The generosity of national leave provisions varies across high-income countries.



Gender Equality Index: Gendered Allocation

Source: Ray, Gornick, Schmitt (JESP 2010), extension of Gornick/Meyers 2003

Table 1 Gender Equality Index: allocation of points for fathers' portion of leave

<i>Portion of a couple's leave that is reserved for the father's use</i>	<i>Portion of a couple's leave a father has if he takes his reserved leave, and all additional transferable leave</i>	<i>Resulting score</i>
0	0	0
0	Less than 16.7%	1
0	At least 16.7% but less than 33.3%	2
0	At least 33.3%	3
Less than 16.7%	Less than 16.7%	4
Less than 16.7%	At least 16.7% but less than 33.3%	5
Less than 16.7%	At least 33.3%	6
At least 16.7% but less than 33.3%	At least 16.7% but less than 33.3%	7
At least 16.7% but less than 33.3%	At least 33.3%	8
At least 33.3%	At least 33.3%	9

Gender Equality Index: Wage Replacement

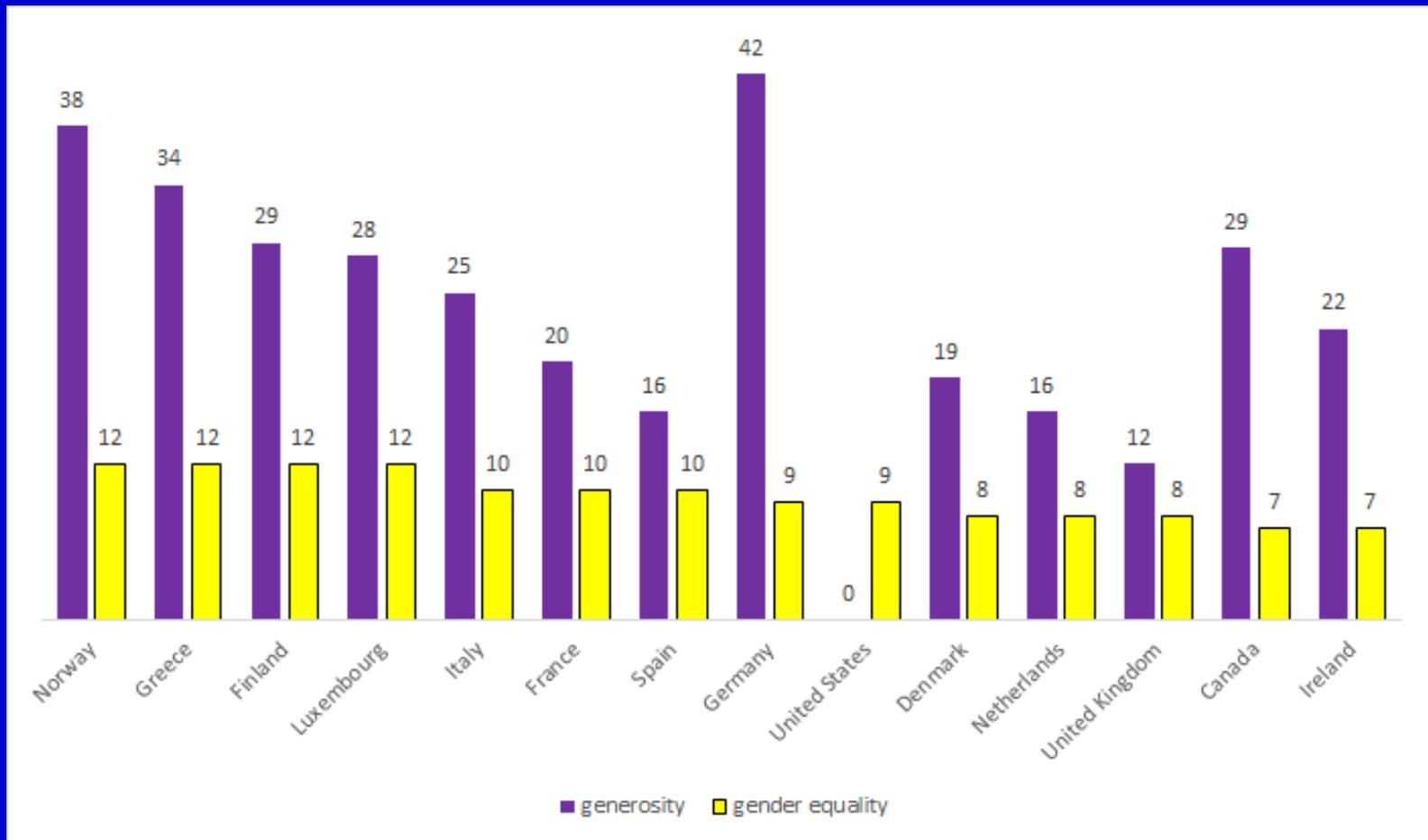
Table 2 Gender Equality Index: allocation of points for wage replacement rate during fathers' leave

<i>Average wage replacement rate during fathers' leave</i>	<i>Resulting score</i>
None: all leave for fathers is unpaid	0
Some payment but less than 16.7% of fathers' usual wages	1
At least 16.7%, but less than 33.3% of fathers' usual wages	2
At least 33.3%, but less than 50% of fathers' usual wages	3
At least 50%, but less than 66.7% of fathers' usual wages	4
At least 66.7% of fathers' usual wages	5

Leave Policy — Gender Equality Index (2009):

extent to which policy rules encourage gender-symmetrical leave-taking

- Generosity (FTE weeks) and gender-egalitarian design *are* distinct policy features.



Leave Policy — Gender Equality Index (2009):

(original results – from JESP 2010)

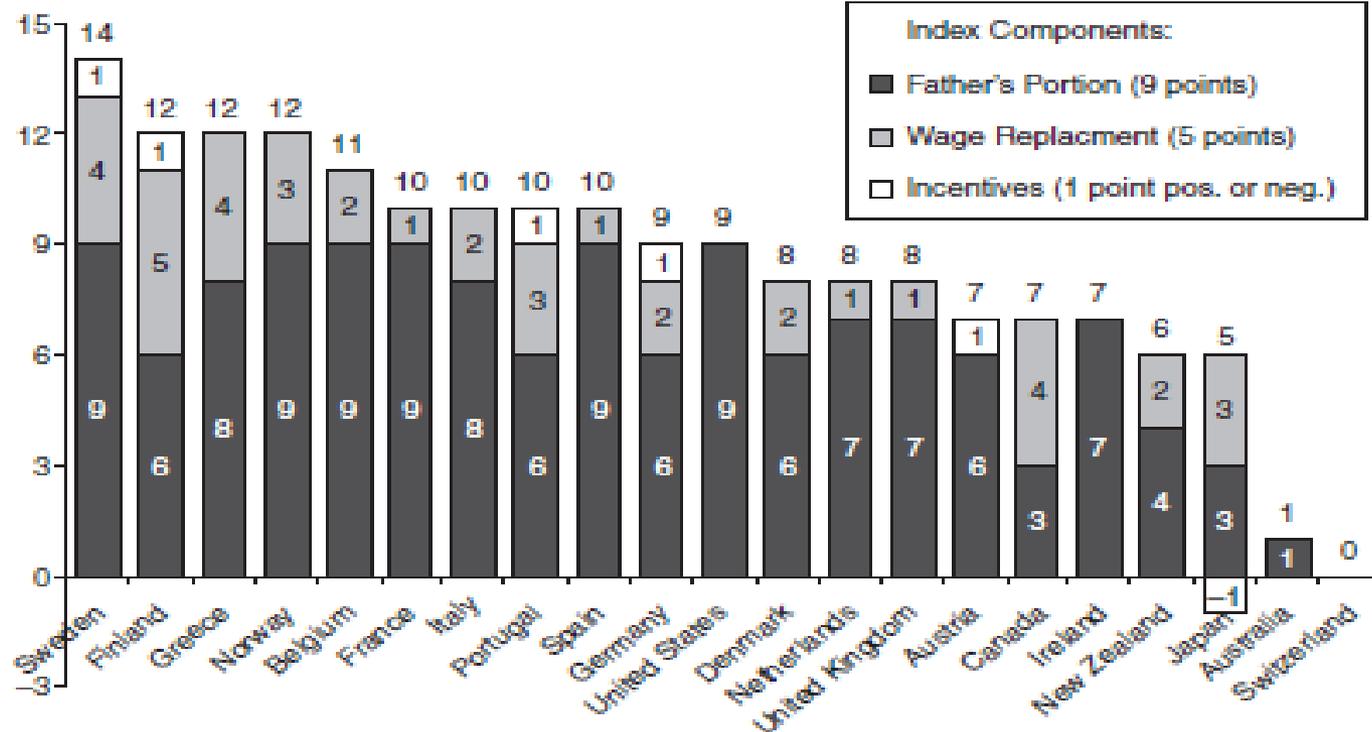


Figure 4 Gender Equality Index

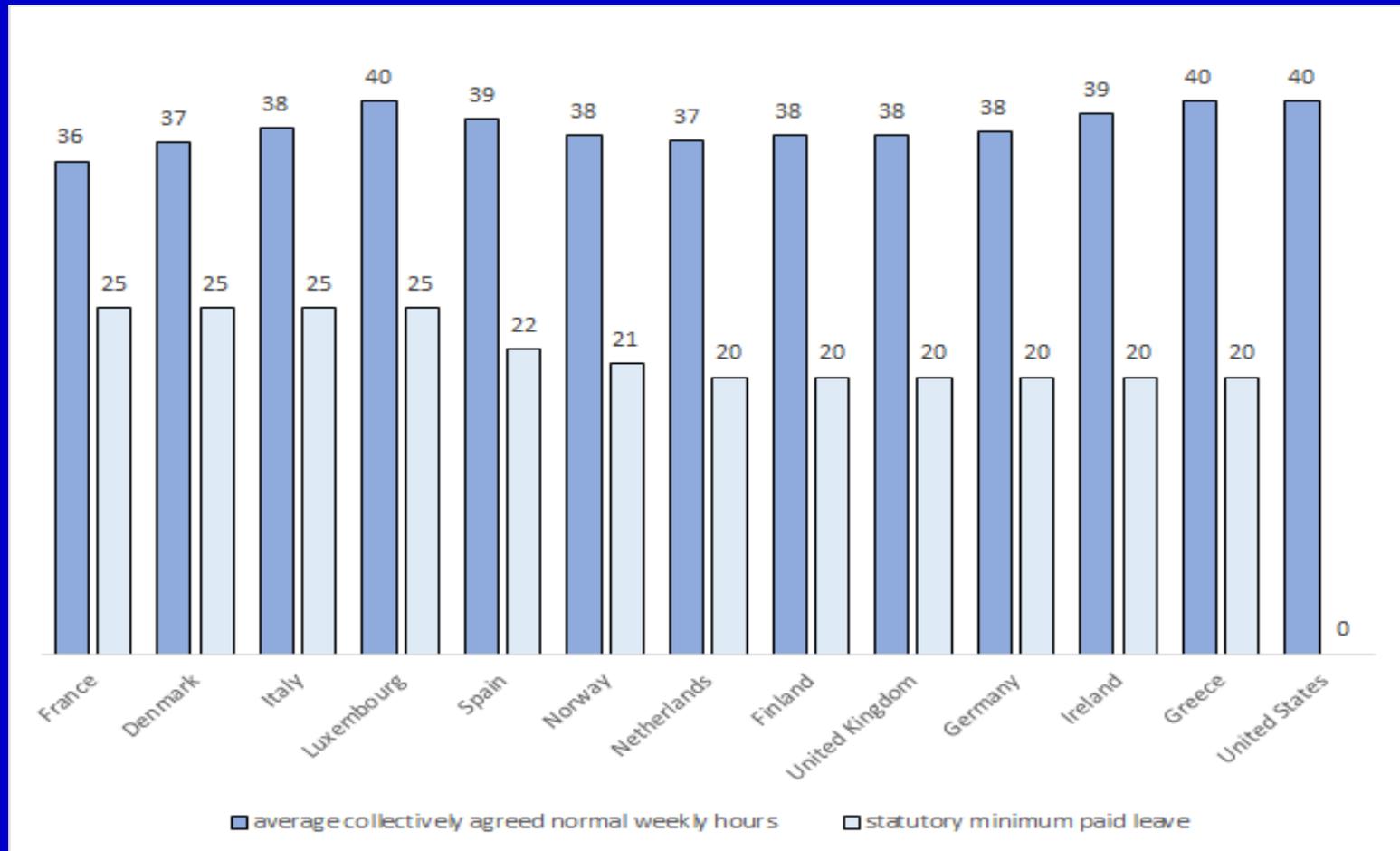
Source: Authors' analysis, Ray (2008), and Ray et al. (2008).

Working Time Regulation / Collective Agreements (2010):

standard work week (hours), minimum paid annual leave (days)

Source: EIRO Working Time Developments - 2010

- EU and national policies shape definition of work week and work year.



Regulation of Part-Time Work

- The EU Part-Time Work Directive prohibits discrimination against part-time workers.

PART-TIME WORK DIRECTIVE 97/81/EC / 15 December 1997

Clause 1: The purpose of this Framework Agreement is:

- to provide for the removal of *discrimination* against part-time workers and to improve the quality of part-time work
- to facilitate the development of part-time work on a voluntary basis and to contribute to the flexible organization of working time in a manner which takes into account the needs of employers and workers

Clause 4: Principle of *non-discrimination*:

- [P]art-time workers shall not be treated in a less favourable manner than comparable full-time workers solely because they work part time
- Where appropriate, the principle of *pro rata temporis* shall apply

Rights (to Request) to Change Work Hours

Source: Hegewisch and Gornick, 2008, *Statutory Routes to Workplace Flexibility in Cross-National Perspective*, IWPR.

- Most European countries grant parents some rights to flexible work hours.

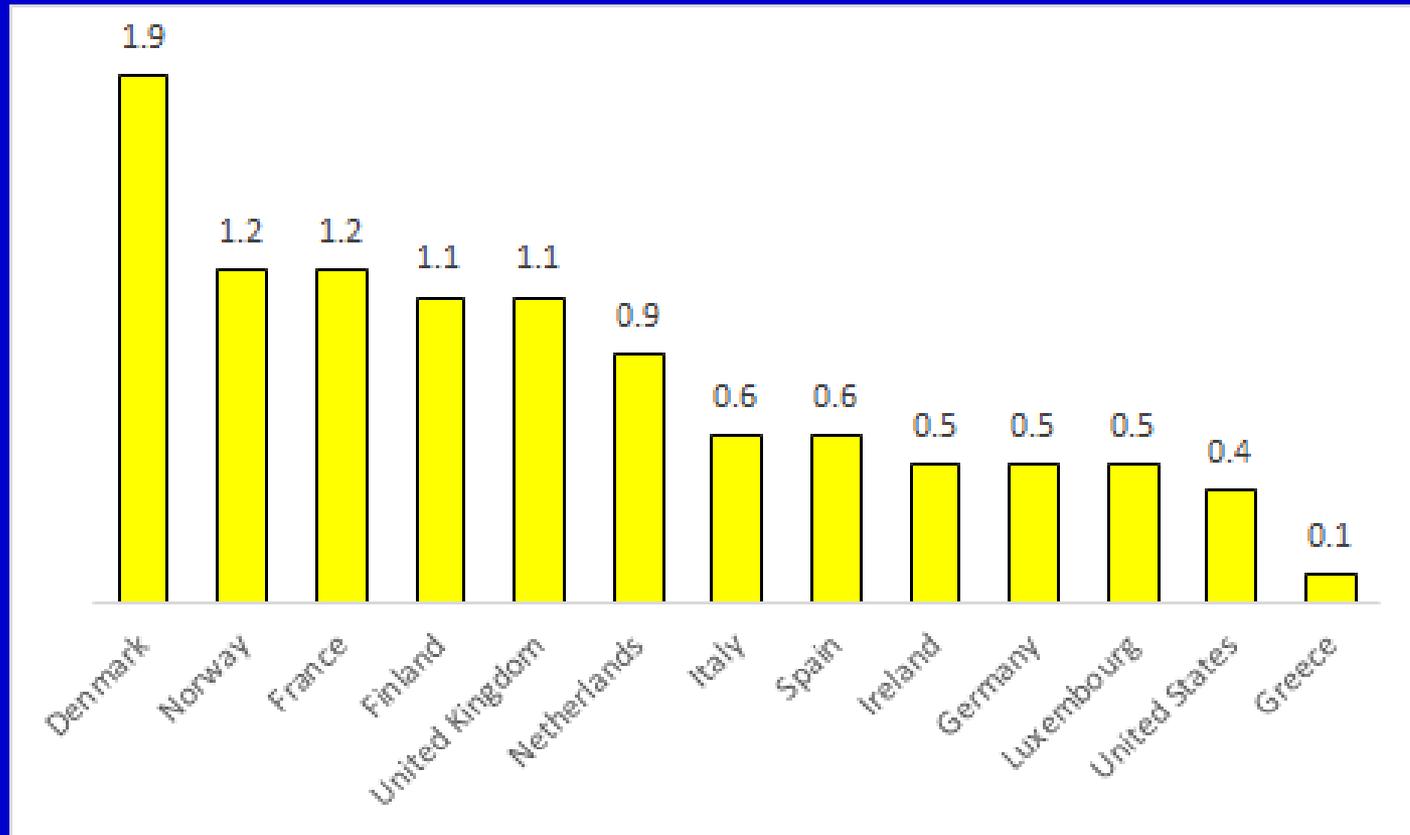
	Australia	Austria	Belgium	Canada	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	New Zealand	Norway	Portugal	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom	United States
STATUTES ENABLING PART-TIME/REDUCED HOURS AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS																					
Right to reduced hours: all employees			✓			✓	✓	✓					✓								
Parental rights																					
Gradual return to work		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Parental leave on part-time basis		✓				✓						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Reduced hours and other AWAs	✓	✓												✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Refuse overtime/shift patterns															✓		✓		✓		
Care for Adults																					
Reduced hours and other AWA	✓		✓											✓			✓			✓	
Training and education																					
Reduced hours and other AWAs			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Older workers																					
Reduced hours with partial pension		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			

Early Childhood Education and Care (2010):

Public expenditure on childcare and pre-school as % of GDP

Source: OECD Family Database

- Expenditures vary nearly 20-fold, from a high of 1.9% GDP (Denmark) to 0.1% GDP (Greece).

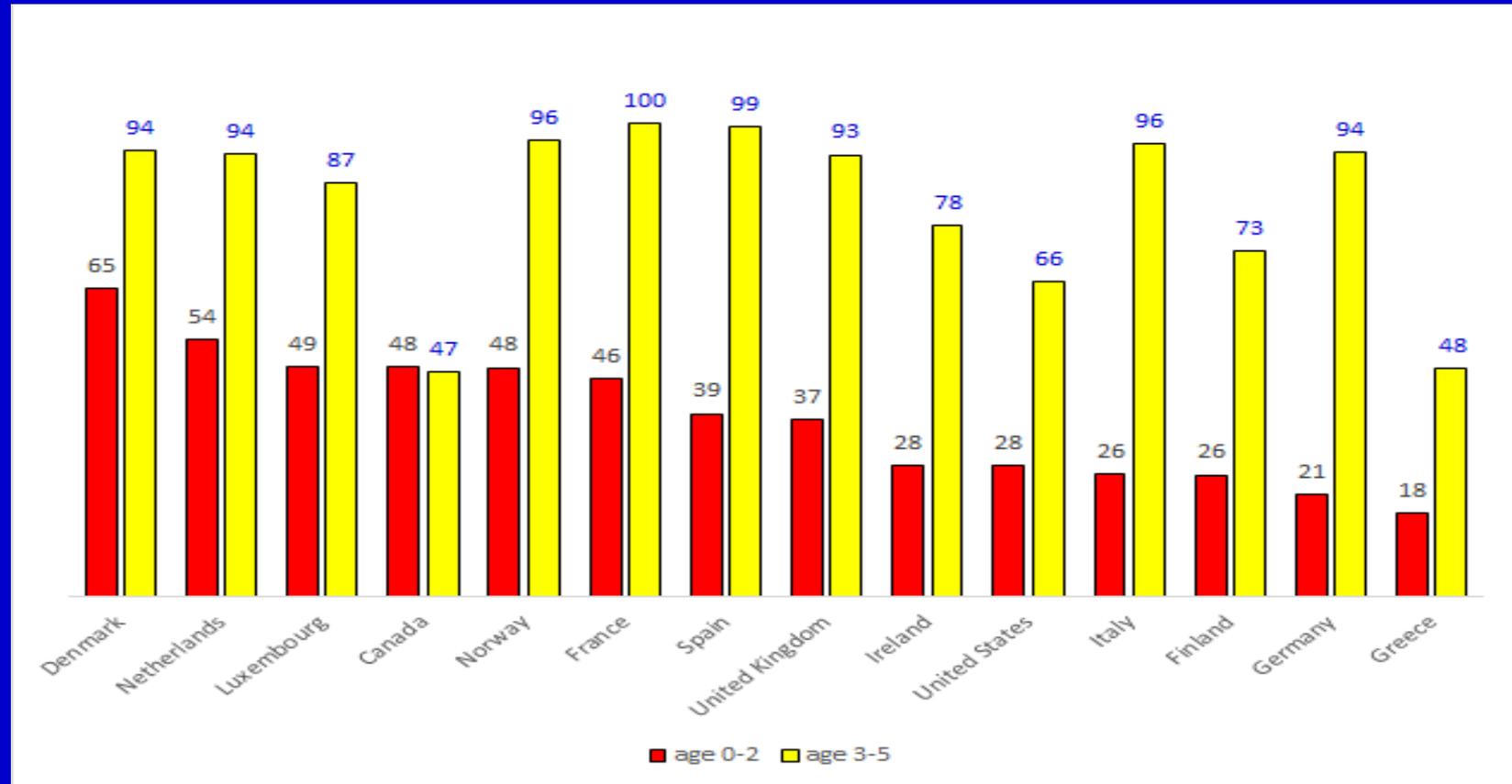


Early Childhood Education and Care (2010):

Enrollments, the “under threes” and age 3-5

Source: OECD Family Database

- Enrollment is limited and varied for younger children; nearly universal in several countries for older children.



Key conclusions (in FTW):

These countries have the most generous and gender-egalitarian policy designs:

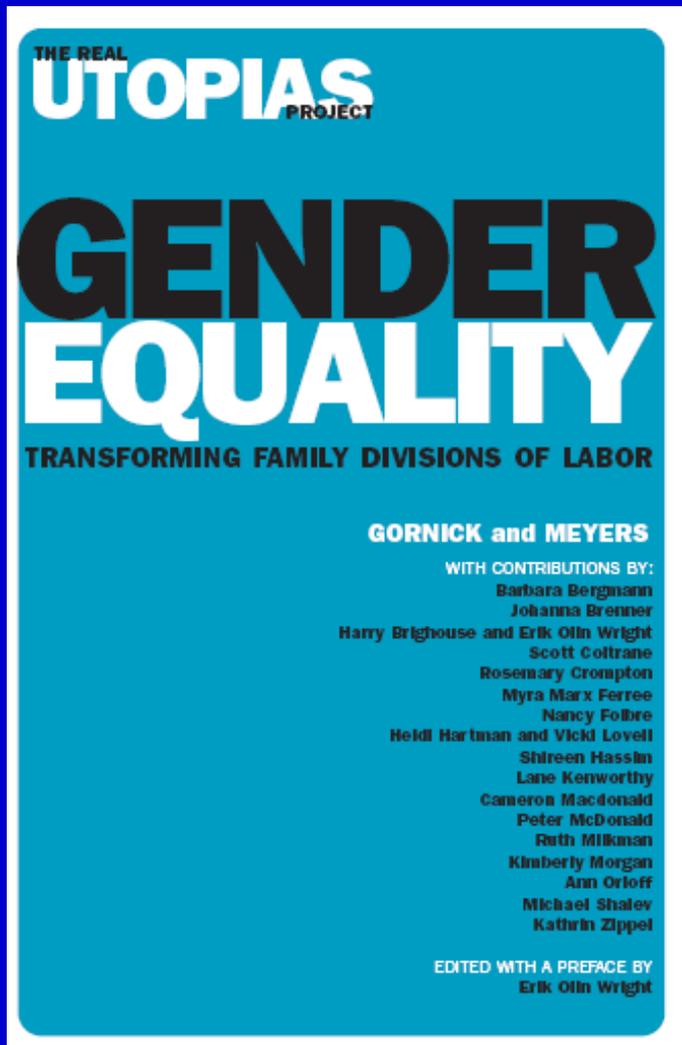
- Denmark
- Finland
- Norway
- France

The effects on gender equality “at home and at work” are overwhelmingly positive. Main vehicle: raising women’s employment rates, relative to men’s.

The US stands out as an outlier in policy provisions.

Five Years Later:

THE REAL UTOPIAS PROJECT



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Five Years Later:

THE REAL UTOPIAS PROJECT

1. Gender symmetry is not universally desired; thus the “mild structural coercion” embedded in this policy package may be at odds with what many people want.
2. Policy reform is a weak instrument; policy designs cannot overcome the grip of gendered divisions of labor.
3. Because take-up will (always) be greater among women, generous work-family reconciliation policies will create new forms of gender inequality and worsen others.



Unintended consequences? What are the concerns?

Women are more likely than men to utilize these provisions. That will lead to detrimental effects:

- Demand-side. Employers will statistically discriminate against women (especially mothers and younger women) in hiring, promotion, and/or pay. (Compare Sweden and US).
- Supply side. Women's greater use of leave will widen gender gaps in human capital / skills.
- Key: These effects will worsen gender earnings gaps, especially at the top.

#1) What do we know from the research literature?

#2) What does a “snapshot of outcomes” suggest?

#1) What do we know from the research literature

(on detrimental effects on women's outcomes or GELM)?

Large and growing literatures in sociology (e.g., Mandel, Pettit and Hook, Brady, Shalev, Korpi); in economics (e.g., Olivetti and Petrongolo, Blau and Winkler); and in policy studies (e.g., Hegewisch and Gornick, Waldfogel, OECD).

My wildly simplified summary

First, the methodological challenges are enormous: these policies are extremely complex; they come in “bundles”; there is a small-N problem; the standard causality challenges apply.

Second, the existing literature is spectacularly inconclusive.

My wildly simplified summary (cont.)

That said:

- Findings about detrimental effects are limited to provisions for long **leaves**, i.e., approximately 9-12 months or more. Most negative effects do seem to operate “at the top”.
- There is no convincing evidence that these **working time regulations** (e.g., right to request, PT parity) worsen outcomes.
- There are no negative effects of extensive supports for **child care** (though there may be compositional effects). (This may seem obvious but it gets lost in the discourse).

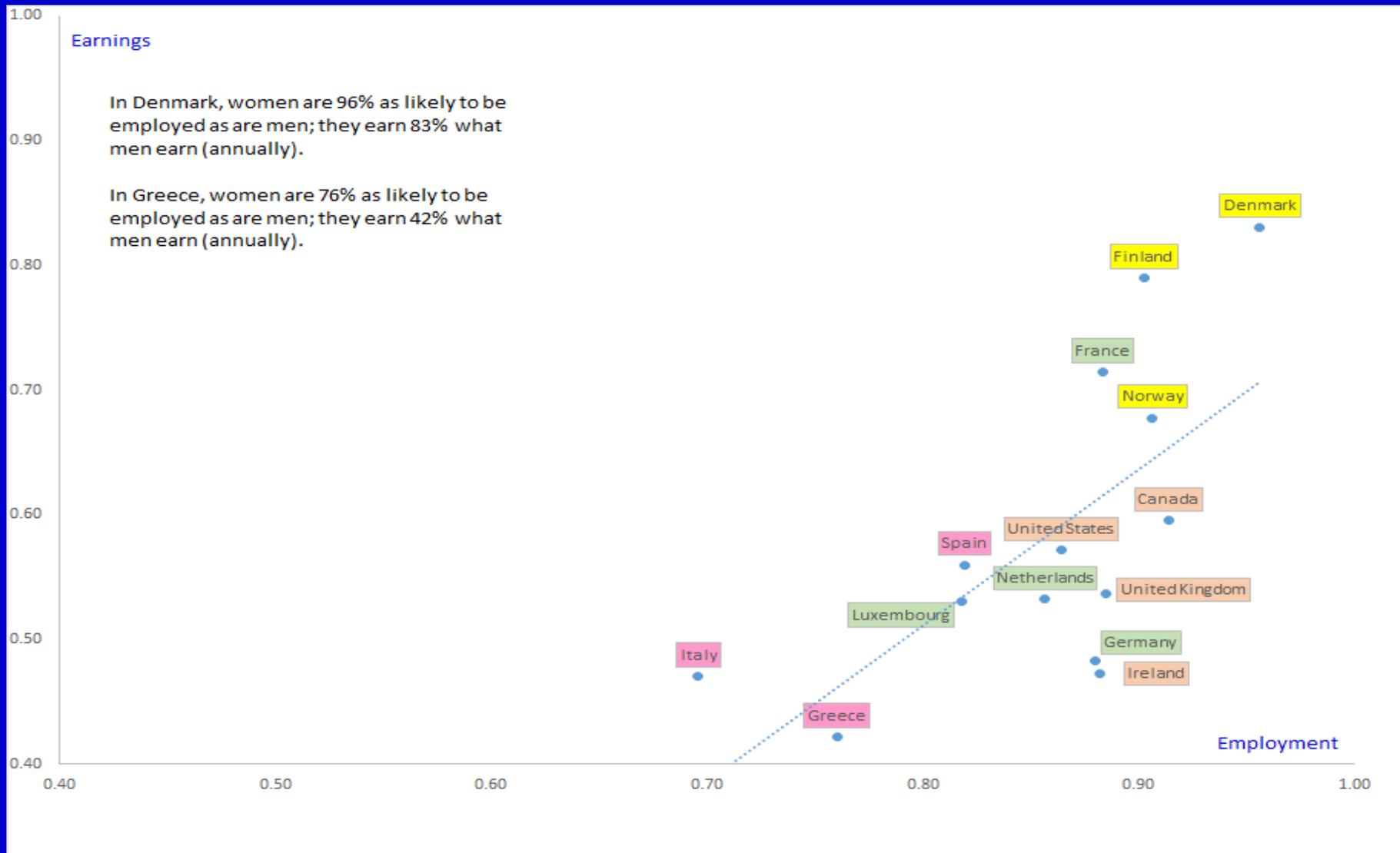
#2. What does a “snapshot of outcomes” suggest?

Selected outcomes
in (same) 14 countries

(framework from FTW,
outcomes updated to 2010)

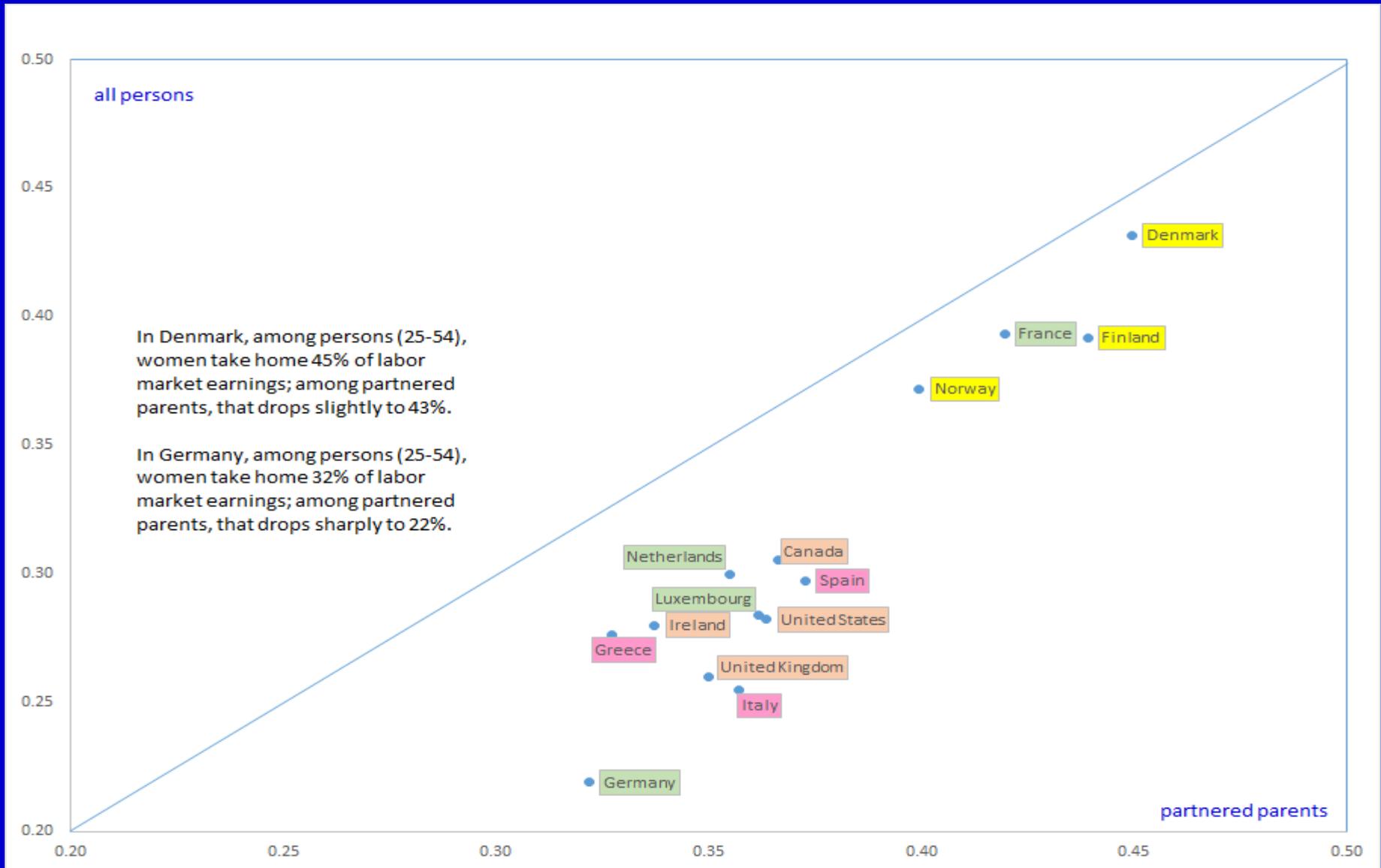
Gender equality in the labor market, 2010

(source: LIS)



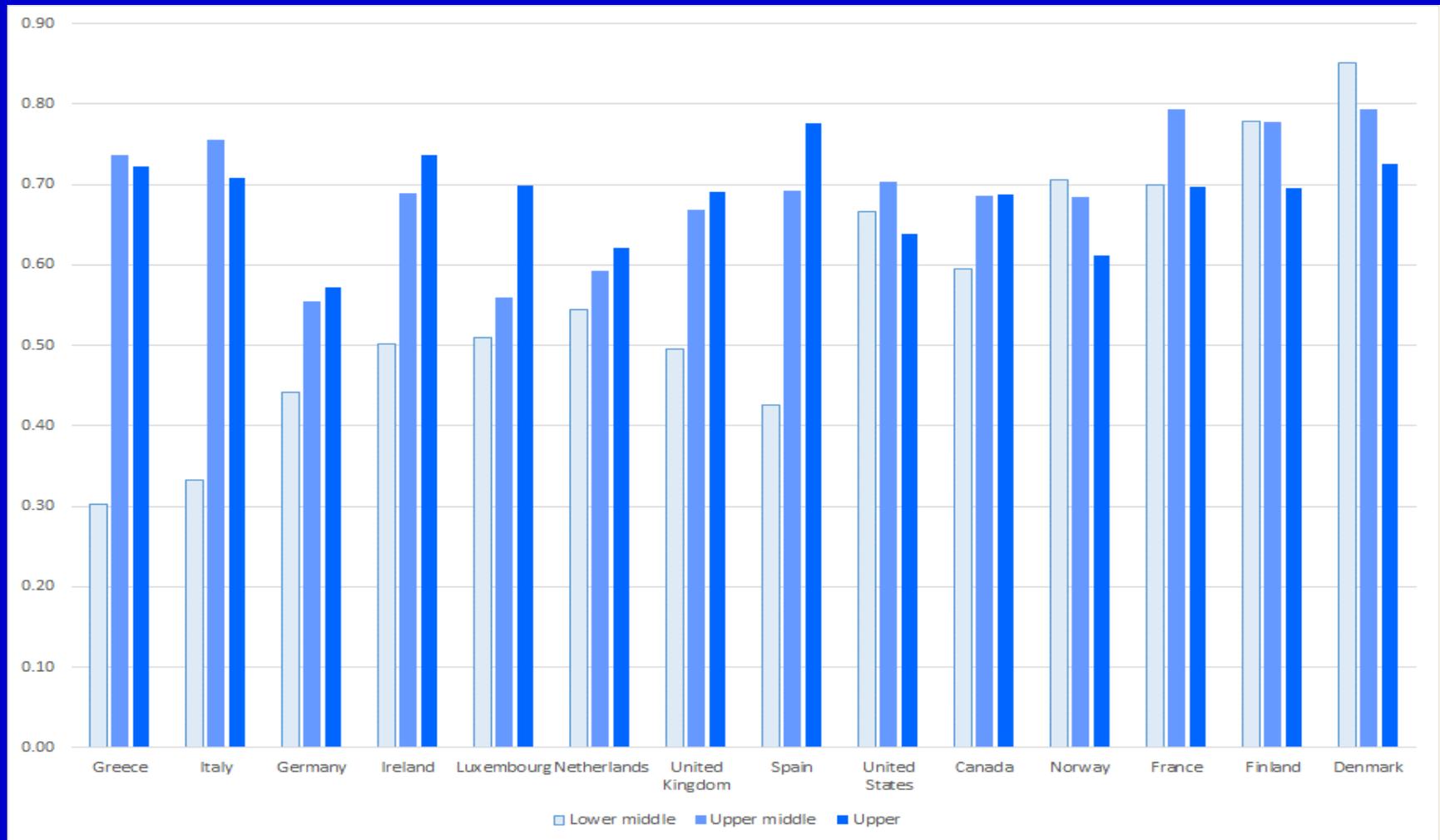
Share of LM earnings taken home by women, 2010

(source: LIS)



Median annual earnings, ratio of women's/men's, by HH income quartile, 2010

(zero earners included) (source: LIS)



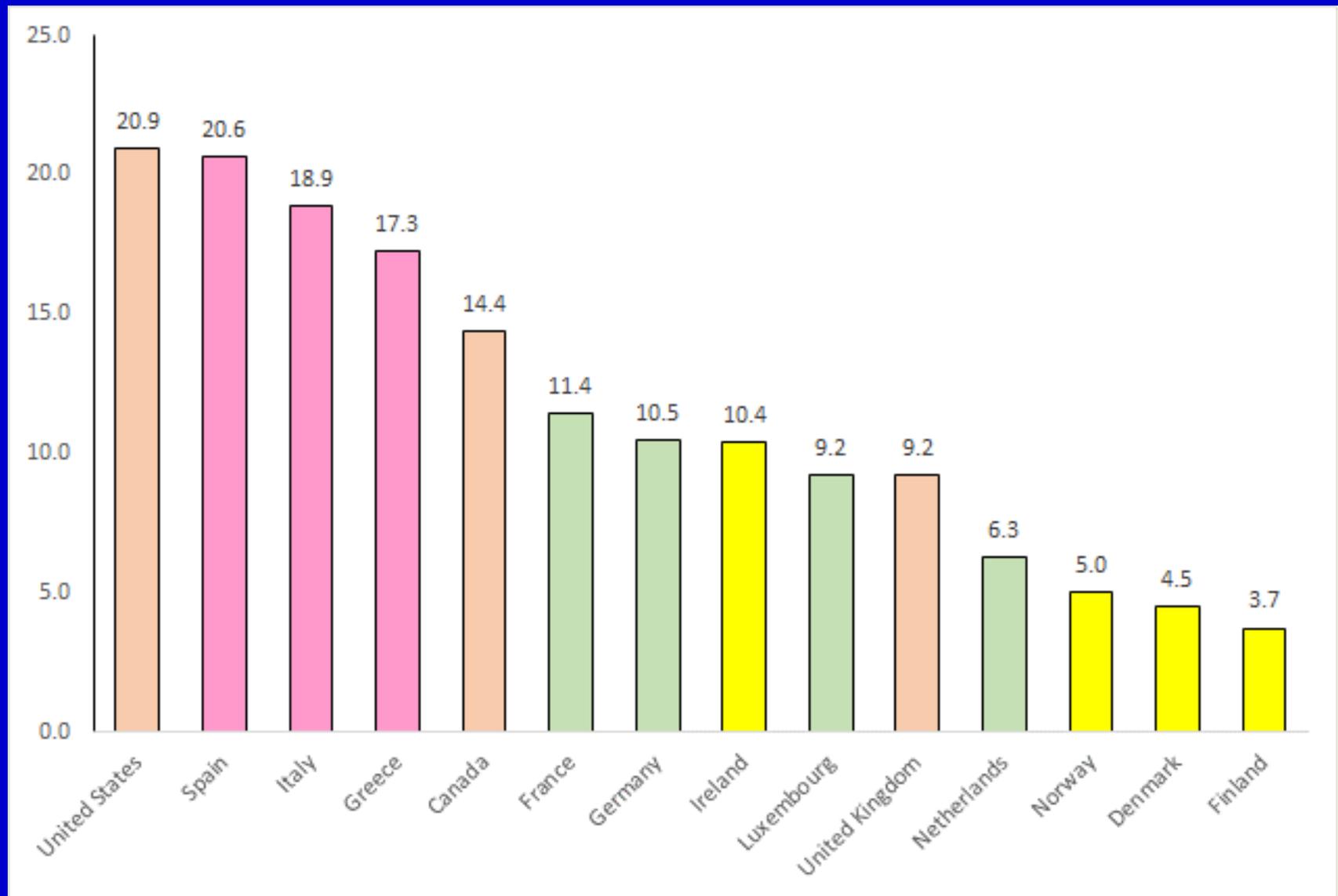
Total fertility rates, 2010

(source: OECD Family Database)

FERTILITY, 2010	
Average number of children born per woman over a lifetime given current age-specific fertility rates and assuming no female mortality during reproductive years	
TFR = 1.9 to 2.1	TFR = 1.4 to 1.8
Denmark	Canada
Finland	Germany
Norway	Luxembourg
France	Netherlands
Ireland	Italy
UK	Greece
US	Spain

Child poverty rates, 2010

(source: LIS)



Conclusions from 2010 snapshot

Generous and gender-egalitarian WFR policies are consistent with:

- higher female employment (absolute and relative to men's)
- higher maternal employment (absolute and relative to men's)
- lower annual earnings gaps (in higher and lower HH income quartiles)
- higher fertility
- lower child poverty (with France as a partial exception)

Research frontiers:

- How do the effects of these policies vary across class / educational / skill lines? Much more work is needed.

Is there “damage” to the top and, if so, how “high up”?
Top 20? Top 10? Top 3?

- Can equalizing usage between women and men remove (or at least) de-gender this top-end disadvantage? (Note: the literature is remarkably fatalistic about take-up.)

What on earth is going on the US?

What is suppressing “work-family reconciliation policy” development in the US? *some thoughts*

1. An unusually privatized conception of childrearing and family responsibility; “work/family conflict” generally viewed as a private issue; Folbre: “children as pets”.

EX: *EEOC v. Bloomberg LLP (2011)*: Federal judge’s ruling, after dismissing charge of unequal treatment of workers following maternity leave (quoting Jack Welch, former General Electric CEO): **“There’s no such thing as work-life balance. There are work-life choices, and you make them, and they have consequences”.**

2. “Hard work” mythicized in American political culture; calls for shorter work hours (especially among men) meet resistance from many quarters; the value of time (versus income) is rarely noted in public discourse.

What is suppressing “work-family reconciliation policy” development in the US? *some thoughts – continued*

3. **Persistent ambivalence about maternal employment;** the “mommy wars” are especially intense and polarizing in the US, partly fueled by the religious right.
4. **Fertility declines not (yet) an issue in the US;** fertility remains high (why? high teen and immigrant fertility; inexpensive services available in the market; unique pattern of expectations?)
5. **Lack of awareness of policy provisions in similar countries.**