

Social Indicators Research Series 59

Dagmar Kutsar  
Marjo Kuronen *Editors*

# Local Welfare Policy Making in European Cities

 Springer

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Volume 59

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Editors

# Local Welfare Policy Making in European Cities

 Springer

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With the support of the 7th Framework Programme of the European Union (grant: SSH-CT-2010-266806) and the Estonian Research Council (grant: PUT499)

Neither the European Commission Office nor the Estonian Research Council nor any person acting on their behalf are responsible for the use which might be made of the information contained in the present publication. The supporting agencies are not responsible for the external websites referred to in the present publication.

ISSN 1387-6570 ISSN 2215-0099 (electronic)  
Social Indicators Research Series  
ISBN 978-3-319-16162-4 ISBN 978-3-319-16163-1 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-16163-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015938230

Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London  
© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2015

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# Preface

EU welfare policy relates to the promotion of employment, lifelong learning and gender equality. This is the case especially in the field of childcare where the target to improve formal childcare provision in the EU member states is connected with the political agenda to increase the involvement of women in the labour market. Care for older people is also of particular importance as ageing populations are an issue across the world. Ageing populations create new challenges internationally, nationally and locally, not only in terms of how to organise care, but also how to keep both older men and women healthier and working for longer.

The European Union 7th Framework Programme funded research project, “Impact of local welfare systems on female labour force participation and social cohesion” (FLOWS, EU grant SSH-CT-2010-266806 for the years 2011–2014, coordinated by Professor Per H. Jensen from the University of Aalborg, Denmark), aimed to analyse (1) how local welfare systems support women’s labour market participation and (2) the extent to which (and under which conditions) female labour market integration has contributed to strengthening social cohesion in 11 European cities. More information about the FLOWS project, including additional publications, can be found at [www.flows-eu.eu](http://www.flows-eu.eu).

This book presents findings from the FLOWS project and focuses particularly on local welfare policy making and its relation to women’s labour market integration. It includes theoretical discussions, empirical findings and comparisons between 11 European cities – Aalborg in Denmark, Bologna in Italy, Brno in the Czech Republic, Dublin in Ireland, Hamburg in Germany, Jyväskylä in Finland, Leeds in England, Nantes in France, Szekesfehervar in Hungary, Tartu in Estonia and Terrassa in Spain. Local welfare policy making in the different cities is compared and also considered in relation to the respective national welfare policies. In comparative welfare research, the focus has been on national welfare systems and policies. Our aim is to fill the gap in understanding local welfare policy making that is shaped by sociocultural settings, historical traditions and governance patterns. Our objective is to demonstrate the local nature of policy choices and thus extend the existing cross-country explanations.

We are very grateful to the FLOWS Consortium members from the University of Aalborg in Denmark, the University of Hamburg in Germany, the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, Trinity College in Ireland, the University of Masaryk in the Czech Republic, the Central European University in Hungary, Politecnico di Milano in Italy, the University of Tartu in Estonia, the University of Leeds in England, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Ange-Guépin in France, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain and the Danish Red Cross for their commitment and contribution to the project. Thank you to all the authors who contributed to this book, sharing our joint academic journey. We wish to thank Derettens OÜ ([www.derettens.com](http://www.derettens.com)) who offered expertise in language editing. Last but not least, we thank the Estonian Research Council (PUT499) for supporting the preparation of this book after the FLOWS project formally ended on April 30, 2014.

Tartu, Estonia  
Jyväskylä, Finland  
15th November 2014

Dagmar Kutsar  
Marjo Kuronen

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Marjo Kuronen and Dagmar Kutsar

### 1.1 Local Welfare Policy Making

This book focuses on local welfare policy making and service provision in 11 European cities with special emphasis on care policies for children and older people in relation to women's labour market integration. We ask whether local welfare policies might either support or discourage women to enter, re-enter or remain in the labour market, the extent to which local policy actors recognise women's labour market integration and their care responsibilities as important policy issues, and what their actual possibilities to influence these issues are within the national policy framework. Local welfare systems are further studied in conjunction with local production systems and women's labour market opportunities in their specific socio-cultural contexts.

Welfare policies, as well as research in this field, have traditionally been state-centred and focused on the redistributive features of income security systems. How welfare is produced at the local level has, though, played a secondary role in social policy analysis (Burau and Kröger 2004). However, nation states are facing new 'glocal' (local in the global) steering and legitimation challenges and pressures that they cannot handle with the conventional modes of legitimate domination (Beck et al. 1994; Webster 2002). Therefore, the states must increasingly rely on the effectiveness of their policies and the steering capacities of the governing institutions 'above' and 'below' them (Heffen et al. 2000). Thus, in welfare policy

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research increasing attention is being paid to local welfare policies, governance systems and the roles of and relations between different territorial levels (Kazepov 2010; Vabo and Burau 2011; Andreotti et al. 2012; Burau and Vabo 2011; Ranci et al. 2014). The relationship between the national and the local level in welfare policies and service provisions has been studied particularly in the Nordic countries, where a crucial question concerns the principle of universalism of the welfare state in relation to local self-government, decision-making and organisation of welfare service provisions (for example, Kröger 1997, 2011b; Burau and Kröger 2004; Trydegård and Thorslund 2010; Burau and Vabo 2011; Vabo and Burau 2011). However, the relationships between national and local policy making are varied, as will be shown in this book, and the relationships require further attention throughout Europe.

Local welfare systems, as identified by Andreotti et al. (2012), are dynamic arrangements that are developed as a consequence of bottom-up and top-down transformative pressures in specific local socioeconomic and cultural conditions with the participation of different political actors. Local welfare policy making and service systems are combinations of several economic, social, political, organisational and cultural circumstances related to different policy processes. Thus, how local welfare policies are formed and implemented, and how they influence the integration of women into the labour market, is a multifaceted issue. First of all, local policy making combines vertically and horizontally governed policy processes. On the one hand, it is under the pressure of international and national guidelines, laws and policies, and on the other, policy effectiveness and the steering capacities at the local level. Second, local policy making is impacted by its subjective factors – the mindsets – ideas, stereotypes, and attitudes – and power, roles and strategies of local policy actors (see, for example, Weible and Sabatier 2005; Braun 2012; Baekgaard et al. 2014, and especially Chaps. 6 and 9 in this book). The mindsets and power of local policy making is not merely a product of interactions between political, economic and cultural factors. It also integrates messages from everyday social practices, such as the interplay between the work and care incentives of women and the economic and labour market structures and situations (Chaps. 2, 3, and 4), for example, whether women outside the labour market with informal care responsibilities are seen as a labour force reserve by the policy actors (Chap. 13). Within the international and national policy framework the local policy actors are the closest and, thus, have the potential to recognise the needs and problems that women have concerning local labour markets and welfare service provisions.

The international pressure on local and national policymaking comes from the EU policy to promote employment and gender equality. In the field of social care, formal childcare provision is particularly encouraged in the frame of women's labour market participation (Lisbon employment targets called for a 60 % employment rate for women by 2010) and reconciliation of work and family life (Mahon 2002; León 2009). It forms the most general policy frame for local policy making by sending signals to the local policy actors about how society should be organised. However, it can be considered and integrated into local policies to a differing extent, depending on the national policy frameworks and local policy preferences

(see, for example, Chap. 10). Thus, women's activity patterns in the labour market allow the assessment of the local actors' abilities to provide women with job opportunities and create services that make the employment of women with family care responsibilities possible (Chaps. 11 and 12).

## 1.2 Women as Carers and Workers in Local Welfare Policies

The position of women in the labour market and their obligations as informal care-givers in families is shaped by societal contexts. One can distinguish between structural, institutional and cultural factors (Albertini et al. 2007) determining or directing their choices and possibilities. Structural factors include the demographic aspects of households and families, the labour force structure and income and wealth distribution between generations. Institutional factors refer, for example, to social welfare systems and employment policies. Cultural factors, as general family and gender values, religiosity and religious traditions, age and generation values, form the basis for women's involvement in care-giving and in employment (for example, Pfau-Effinger 2004). In this respect European countries are diverse and several researchers have identified and divided them into different welfare or care regimes (e.g. Anttonen and Sipilä 1996; Bettio and Plantenga 2004; see also Chap. 14 in this book). Thus, the opportunities for women with care responsibilities vary from country to country, and, as shown in this book, within countries as well (especially Chaps. 8, 11, and 12).

The interplay between formal care services, on one hand, and family obligations and informal care giving, on the other, has gained much academic attention from different perspectives (for example, Kohli 1999; Kröger and Sipilä 2005; Pfau-Effinger and Geissler 2005; Hantrais 2006; Albertini et al. 2007; Saraceno 2008; Blome et al. 2009). Different types or regimes of welfare states maintain cultural, normative and practical contexts in which the care-giving takes place. The welfare state policies are, to a large degree, not only policies of age and of obligations between social generations, but they are also forms of regulating obligations within family generations (Saraceno 2008), such as legal or moral responsibilities between parents and children or adult children and their elderly parents. Thus, the national and local welfare systems frame the context in which giving and receiving care is embedded.

The policies that regulate family responsibilities influence the choices and possibilities of women between work and care, and lead to defamilizing, familizing or refamilizing effects (for example, Hantrais 2004; Saraceno 2010; also Chaps. 6 and 9 in this book). Familialization refers to the extent to which welfare policies rely on informal care provided in families. It can be either unsupported, when there are no alternatives to family care, or supported, when policies explicitly support families in maintaining their financial and caring responsibilities (Rønsen 1999; Pronzato 2009; Saraceno 2010). In both cases, it affects the gap between female and male labour market outcomes (Ruhm 1998).

Defamilialization,<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, is a process where the state (or the market) has reduced the care obligations of the family and women by creating a system of welfare services causing a shift from informal care to formal care services (Saraceno 2010), and thus supporting both the female carers' integration into the labour market and the dual breadwinner family model. However, even if formal services are available, they are not equally accessible to all. For example, Leitner (2003:357) argues that "... market driven care provision makes defamilialization a class biased issue since only the better-off can afford to be defamilized or the quality of defamilialization varies considerably by income". Consequently, defamilialization is dependent on several factors other than the availability of childcare and eldercare services, for example, on local welfare policies that may direct service provision towards marketization with or without financial support from the local budget. Liberal marketization of services without additional financial support can only potentially create more opportunities for caring women while the locally supported service market uncovers the real defamilializing potential for them. To some extent voluntary organizations, as non-profit service providers, can buffer and fill the gaps in publicly provided services (see Chap. 14).

Refamilialization is the opposite to defamilialization and refers to the changing policies, social situations and ideological trends over time (for example, Mahon 2002; Szelewa and Polakowski 2008; Eydal and Rostgaard 2011; Kröger 2011a). Naldini (2003) and Moreno (2006) relate it to deficiencies (or cuts) in the welfare state during economic recession, which can reinforce the kinship solidarity model and change women's choices towards informal care instead of employment. Refamilialization can also occur locally as an outcome of a worsening situation in the labour market (as occurred in the late 2000s in Europe) accompanied by local budget cuts to services. The shortage of jobs and services also revives deeply seated gender stereotypes in family decision making, giving preference to men to stay in the labour market rather than women. Refamilialization has not only economic but also ideological roots, as a turn towards 'new familialism' (Mahon 2002).

In the countries where care is mainly provided informally, it is an important constraint on women's labour market participation (Bettio and Plantenga 2004). At the other end of the spectrum are the countries where the proportion of women who choose non-activity or part-time work for reasons of care responsibilities is relatively low. However, the authors conclude that due to EU directives and different EU summits, a convergence of care models is taking place. We assume that the local welfare systems can play an increasingly important role in this converging process but, on the other hand, they might also cause increasing intra-national differences.

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<sup>1</sup>The concept "defamilialization" was initially introduced by Ruth Lister in 1994 as a counter concept to Esping-Andersen's (1990) decommodification, (see Kröger 2011a).

### 1.3 Comparative Analysis of Local Welfare Systems

This book is based on a European comparative research project, the *Impact of local welfare systems on female labour force participation and social cohesion* (FLOWS), where the similarities and differences between cities are our special focus. Research on welfare systems and policies, and also in comparative research, the focus has been on comparisons between welfare states and national social and care policies with different methodological orientations. Mabbett and Bolderson (1999) have divided comparative social policy research methodologically into three categories. First, there are *evaluative studies* that compare social policies in a specific field, mainly using statistical data. Second, '*grand theorising*' develops either common factor analysis or welfare regime theories where welfare states are compared as a whole. The third methodological approach is *case studies* that examine the specific institutional, historical and political features of each country in more depth. Anttonen (2005) has further modified this classification and divided comparative research in social policy into *cross-national statistical comparison*, *case-oriented comparison*, *development of regime theory*, and *cross-cultural qualitative comparison*. The formulation of welfare regime theory, along with national statistical comparisons, has dominated the field in recent decades.

In this volume, and in the FLOWS research project, the focus is instead on the comparison of local welfare systems and policy making at the city level. National level comparisons largely miss the fact that welfare policies are not only made at the national but also at the local level, and within-country differences in service provision and in the use of them might be considerable. Also, cultural and economic differences within countries have to be taken into account. Individuals and families live their daily lives in local conditions, which influence the options they have and the decisions they make. Burau and Kröger (2004) highlight the importance of local comparisons for two reasons; they show the often distinctly local nature of the service provision, and they extend existing cross-country explanations. Cross-national comparative research is methodologically challenging (see, for example, Mills et al. 2006; Hantrais 2009; Quilgars et al. 2009; Gomez and Kuronen 2011) and even more so when comparisons are made both within and between countries and the main focus is at the local level.

In this book, the local welfare systems and policy making of different cities are compared with each other and in relation to national welfare policies. Single city case studies further deepen the comparative approach. A case-oriented comparative approach (Mabbett and Bolderson 1999; see also Gomez and Kuronen 2011) has been adopted in this project as the main methodological approach to gain a deeper understanding of the local welfare policy making processes in relation to national policies, local service systems and their connections with women's labour market integration and care responsibilities within specific social, economic and cultural contexts.

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted and detailed data from individual cities were collected; this included local and national statistical data,

data from official documents, such as administrative reports, development plans and annual reports, data from the websites of local authorities and service providers, and expert interviews with different policy actors. These were complemented with previous research findings. Each sub-theme of the project also required slightly different data and research orientation. The FLOWS project was divided into several “work packages” each led by one or two of the national research teams.<sup>2</sup> Each work package leader formulated a detailed template according to which national research teams collected data from their city in order to make them comparable. The templates were commented on in advance by the other research teams in the project meetings and email discussions and modified accordingly in order to make them relevant for all the local and national contexts. Welfare service systems are particularly varied and complex, and thus many discussions among the research teams took place to find agreement. Definitions and classifications that are used in official databases (for example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], Eurostat and national statistical offices) were also adopted as far as possible when collecting local level data. After collecting the data required each team wrote a local city report, where methodological problems were also raised. The work package leaders were then responsible for making the comparative analysis and reporting the findings.<sup>3</sup> In this book the findings from several work packages are combined and both individual city reports and comparative reports are used.

We soon found that the statistical data particularly from the local city level were not specific and comparable enough to provide the main basis for the analysis. This was the case when considering the labour market situation of different groups of women, local production systems, and service provisions, and the use of services. Often national and local level data were not comparable. Local data were either missing, came from different years or statistics were classified differently in different cities. Gender specific data were also often missing. Many international organisations, such as the EU and the OECD and their member states, work closely together to provide comparable national statistics and datasets for international comparisons. To some extent, comparable data is also available at the regional level but at the local city level there are still many gaps in the collection and use of local statistical information. To some extent, that was unexpected, as we assumed that local level policy making would be more firmly based on local statistical analyses of the current situation. Thus, we were partly forced to use statistical data from the Nomenclature of Territorial Units of Statistics (NUTS3 or even NUTS2 level) instead of the urban city level, which naturally provided less accurate information

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<sup>2</sup>This book is based mainly on the findings of the first four work packages of the FLOWS research project: Degree and structures of women’s labour market integration (WP1) led by Birgit Pfau-Effinger, University of Hamburg; Local production system (WP 2) led by Lluís Flaquer, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Costanzo Ranci, Polytechnic of Milan; The local welfare system (WP3) led by Teppo Kröger, University of Jyväskylä; and Local policy formation/local political actors (WP 4) led by Dagmar Kutsar, University of Tartu.

<sup>3</sup>These reports are available at the project website <http://www.flows-eu.eu/home/>