



## **Deliverable 6.2**

# **The Multilinks data base on the institutional framework of intergenerational family obligations in Europe. Conceptual framework, indicators and first analyses**

## **FINAL REPORT**

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## Summary

The aim of WP1 was a) to review the existing comparative sources of data and policy literature on intergenerational obligations for all EU 27 countries, plus Norway, Russia and Georgia (which take part to the Gender and Generation Program) in order to chart and evaluate cross-national similarities and differences, and to integrate findings that remain often separate in their own specialized fields; b) to develop indicators of the institutional (legal and policy) framework of intergenerational obligations that can be used cross-nationally, both for purposes of measurement and discussion of the validity of existing welfare regime typologies and of the usefulness of a regimen approach in itself.

Following on an extensive review of the literature and comparative sources, a conceptual framework for the construction of a system of indicators has been developed, using the commodification/decommodification and familialism/defamilization dimensions. On the basis of this conceptual framework, 72 indicators have been identified and collected through a variety of sources, including national informants, to constitute a, highly documented, data base which will be open to the interested researchers by the summer 2011 and will hopefully continue to be updated.

This data base, and the conceptual framework behind it, has been used in the first place to identify “families of countries” which share similar approaches in their definition of intergenerational obligations in families and between families and society, either with regard to downward or upward, financial or care obligations. The findings suggest that forcing countries in typologies does not help further the understanding of the complex mechanisms in which individuals and communities define and negotiate intergenerational obligations. This occurs not only because policies and legal regulations are only one, important, dimension of contexts, but also because policies concerning downward obligations may follow a different logic from those concerning upward obligations. The same may occur for policies concerning financial and caring obligations. Research using some of the policy indicators to better understand cross country differences in attitudes and behaviors with regard to intergenerational support, confirm both the importance of the policy framework and the complexity of the underlying mechanisms.

## **1. Introduction**

One of the objective of the Multilinks project was to develop a data base on the policy and legal conditions under which intergenerational obligations are defined and experienced in all EU 27 countries, plus the three European non EU countries which participate to the Gender and Generations program: Norway, Georgia and Russia. This data base should allow the project member, as well as other researchers in the future, to contextualize their micro analyses of how specific dimensions of – upward and downward – intergenerational obligations are perceived and played out in the various countries. Policies and legal norms are, of course, only a part of the overall context – at the national and regional level. Demography, economic development, labour market patterns, family and gender cultures are other important macro dimension to be taken into account. But they are neither included in the data base nor the focus of this report, which presents the data base nor the ways in which the research group has started to use it.

In the following, therefore, we will first discuss the role we allocate to the policy and legal framework in the analysis of intergenerational obligations, followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework which has guided the identification of domains and indicators. We then describe the data base, its structure and its sources. In the last section, we present the results of the studies performed by Multilinks team members using this data base.

## **2. Intergenerational obligations: An important, but fragmented research field**

Intergenerational obligations – who is responsible for whom and what within families and kinship – are an important structuring dimension of family relationships and more specifically of intergenerational relationships. They are often embedded in relationships

of affection, but are also independent from them (e.g. Finch 1989). In this perspective, Mavis Maclean (2005) has spoken of “contextualized individualism”, rather than “pure individualism” in modern developed societies. Obligations refer to norms which have complex and multiple roots: in expectations developed in individual and family biographies, in long standing family and social cultures and norms and in legal norms of different kinds. These include, in fact, civil law norms that explicitly regulate family relationships and obliged kin and social security norms that may or may not define entitlement to benefits also in reference to expected family obligations.

In particular, through civil and family law the state regulates a) what constitutes a family; b) who belongs to a family; c) what are the rights and obligations between family members. Rules concerning who can marry whom (see the implicit heterosexual norm present in almost all marriage laws, but also rules concerning age at marriage or the definition of incest), adoption, the distinction or on the contrary the equivalence between “natural” and “legitimate” children, divorce laws, and more recently laws regulating access to reproductive technologies – are among the main instances in which the state regulates and to some degree constructs “the family”. But the state regulates and constructs “the family” also, so to say, from the outside: through social policies not directly, or explicitly, aimed at the family, but also through education policies and more recently also through labour market policies. In regulating labour relations and conditions, and in defining which needs might be socially acknowledged and (at least partly) supported through welfare arrangements, social legislation and then social policies from the beginning have implicitly regulated, or at least interfered, with family and household formation models: redefining the relationships of dependence and interdependence between gender and generations, modifying the conditions and costs of reproduction, rewarding, or vice versa disincentiving, particular family patterns. An example of this is the introduction of old age pensions at the beginning of the century: having a pension, in fact, allowed the elderly not only to look with a degree of security to their future out of work; it also allowed them not to depend too exclusively on their kin’s, particularly children’s, solidarity. On the contrary, restrictions on child and women’s labour, together with the introduction of compulsory schooling, de facto, constituted a means of regulating workers’ households, with regard to gender and intergenerational

relations: first of all by distinguishing household members between “workers” and “family dependents”. The male breadwinner household model is a specific construction of labour market and welfare state arrangements, with or without the support of fiscal policies, depending on the country. To some degree, the same may be said of the emergent ideal/normative model of the dual or one and a half earner model, in so far not only public discourses, but also welfare state arrangements support it (e.g. in the field of pensions, through the provision of childcare and more generally in the move towards an individualization of social rights).

When focusing on the impact of social policies on families, and specifically on gender and intergenerational arrangements, dimensions that are usually overlooked in standard welfare state studies and debates become visible. One has also to take account of policies usually not included in expenditure-based welfare state analyses, such as the regulation of maternity and parental leaves, family and child allowances, taxation systems, and care policies for children and the frail elderly.

Furthermore, social policies shape the institutional framework not only directly – through specific regulations- but also indirectly, by providing or not providing resources for individuals, as well as through the actual patterns of provision and the ways in which certain kinds of provision are perceived in a given country. Not only, in fact, different countries define obligations differently and offer different provisions. The “same” provision may also have a different meaning across countries.

The specific “packaging “ of intergenerational obligations, therefore, varies greatly across countries, as it has varied across time, shaping different contexts in which intergenerational relationships are played out. There are countries, such as the Mediterranean ones, where legally regulated intergenerational obligations are extensive and ever lasting and others, such as the Scandinavian ones, in which legal obligations are restricted to parents and their underage children. Whether these differences impact on the quality of intergenerational relationships, and in what direction, has started to be studied only recently, from the perspective of the relationship between elderly parents and their adult children.

The different dimensions that make up the complex institutional and normative framework, in which intergenerational relationships are regulated, are addressed by different kinds of literature and research fields. These different literatures, however, often ignore each other and therefore render it difficult to construct an integrated approach, particularly at the comparative level. A further fragmentation is constituted by the fact that the different generational positions and age groups are also dealt with by different research traditions, for instance responsibilities towards underage children are object of a different literature than that concerning responsibilities towards adult children; and responsibilities towards elderly kin are part of still a different field of research. Only recently, and mostly only within the research on social care using a gender perspective, issues concerning the allocation of responsibilities for care for children and for the elderly to the family, the state, the community and so forth are starting to be addressed jointly. The pioneer comparative works in this perspective have been those by Millar and Warman (1996) and Anttonen and Sipilä (1996). Overall, responsibilities towards underage children are the most explored, possibly because they are at the crossroad of many different concerns: demographic issues, gender equality and reconciliation issues, poverty and human capital issues. The least focused on responsibilities in the direct generational line are those towards adult children.

### **3. The conceptual framework for the data base**

In conceptualising patterns of regulating intergenerational obligations, we have combined Esping Andersen's the commodification-decommodification dimension with that of familisation-defamilisation (Orloff 1993, Hobson 1994, Korpi 2000, Leitner 2003, Saraceno 2000, 2004, 2010, Saraceno and Keck 2008, 2010). The latter dimension has a somewhat different meaning when it is considered from a gender and not only intergenerational perspective. From the point of view of intergenerational relations, defamilisation concerns the degree to which needs may be satisfied without the mediation of family resources and solidarity. From a gender perspective, de-familisation concerns both the degree of autonomy from family membership in accessing resources and the

degree to which the gender division of labour within the household and the family are taken as given. More specifically, with regard to the latter meaning, de-familisation concerns the degree to which women's unpaid work in the family, particularly unpaid care, is substituted for by paid labour outside the family, through public or market or third sector services. Symmetrically, from a gender perspective familisation concerns both the degree to which the responsibility to provide care is assigned to women (or to particular women's positions in the family) and the degree to which men are acknowledged as having care responsibilities within the family (Saraceno 2000, 2004).

The familisation-defamilisation dimension must, therefore, be articulated at two levels: one that concerns the degree to which norms and policies shape and acknowledge the degree and duration of family interdependencies; the other that concerns the way these norms and policies take for granted, incentive or disincentive gender specific behaviours with regard to these same responsibilities. Partly re-formulating Leitner's (2003) varieties of familialism typology, we have identified three different patterns along the familisation-defamilisation axis.

- 1) *Familialism by default*, or unsupported familialism, in so far there are no publicly provided alternatives to family care and financial support. It can be implicit, but also explicit, as in the case of financial obligations within the generational chain and kinship networks prescribed by law.
- 2) *Supported familialism*, in so far policies, usually through financial transfers (including taxation and paid leaves), support families in keeping up their financial and caring responsibilities at the intergenerational level.
- 3) *De-familisation*, in so far individualization of social rights (e.g. with regard to minimum income provision, or unemployment benefits for the young, or entitlement to higher education, or to receiving care) reduces family responsibilities and dependencies.

In principle, de-familisation may occur through both state and market provisions (e.g. through market provided services or private insurances against social risks). Yet the two ways to de-familisation have not the same conceptual status, not only from the point of

view of social justice, but also from the point of view of the role assigned to the family. Particularly, but not only, in the field of care, recourse to the market of services is inevitably mediated by family resources. Families, therefore, remain a relevant, and highly socially differentiated, actor at least as employers. De-familisation *via* market, therefore, may be the result both of familialism by default and of supported familialism.

This conceptualization is different from that of Hantrais (2004) in so far it distinguishes between the presence of public support and the form it takes. Therefore it distinguishes between supported familialism and de-familisation. For the same reason it is also different from the proposal by Anttonen, Sipilä and Baldock (2003) to locate countries simply along a private-public continuum.

With the exception of optional familialism, which applies almost exclusively to caring needs and obligations, these ideal types may be used to assess not only family policies, but the entire spectrum of regulations of intergenerational relations within families. They may be present in different combinations within each country depending on the area of obligation, and countries may differ in the kind of familialism they choose at the various levels of intervention. In one country de-familisation may have gone further with regard to frail elderly care, in another with regard to childcare. And, of course, a degree of familialism by default is present also in the most defamilialized or supported familialized countries, particularly in the area of care. With respect to gender, familialism by default is always heavily gendered with regard to caring provision. Also supported familialism presents the risk of gender unbalances, particularly in the area of care. As Korpi (2000) observed, financial transfers instead of services tend to reinforce the gender division of labour. But, in so far it acknowledges not only the right to be cared for but also that to care (Knijn and Kremer 1997, Leira and Saraceno 2002, Leitner 2003), supported familialism may also allow a re-balancing of the gender division of labour. A case in point is the extension of the entitlement to parental leave to fathers. Optional familialism may be both gender neutral and on the contrary gendered, depending on how the entitlement to care leaves is regulated.

Having in mind these varieties of familialism, we have developed a set of 72 indicators of institutional regulations and policies. The novelty of the effort, compared to other family



policy data bases, lies in its conceptualization, in the range of dimensions (legal and policy, dealing with financial and caring obligations) it includes and in the dual – upwards and downwards – intergenerational perspective.

The use of this data base may be twofold. On the one hand, it may allow to see whether countries cluster systematically, identifying specific intergenerational regimes, or only partially and in different ways according to the area of intergenerational responsibilities involved. On the other hand, the single indicators may be used as contextual variables in the analysis of micro data. Research developed within the project has exploited both options, as we shall synthetically describe further on.

## **4. The database**

### **4.1 Domains and indicators**

The database on intergenerational policies provides a set of indicators which describes social policies and legal frameworks in the 27 European Union member states as well as in Georgia and Russia at two points in times: around the year 2004 and 2009-2010. The first year has been chosen as a reference point since around that time the first wave of the Gender and generation survey was launched in the countries which first took part to it. The second year is the closest to the end of the project. Hopefully, the data base will continue to be updated, as well made available to the wider research community, if some institution (possibly the WZB) takes the responsibility for it. It should also be linked to the Gender and generation contextual data base which is under the responsibility of the Max Planck Institute for demography in Rostock.

Following the conceptual framework delineated in the previous section, the structure of the data base distinguishes upward and downward obligations, as well as financial and care obligations. Consequently, the database includes information on four domains:

- 1) Responsibilities to care for children
- 2) Responsibilities to provide financial support for children
- 3) Responsibilities to care for frail older people

#### 4) Responsibilities to provide financial support for older people

Within each domain, we selected the policies or legal regulations which, according to our theoretical framework, are most relevant: in the case of responsibilities towards children, maternity and parental leaves, public child care provision and financial support for families with children, in the case of responsibilities towards older parents, old age pension regulations, including minimum pensions, and long-term care policies. We also included the presence of legal obligations to support either adult children or parents in case of need. All together, we have so far identified and collected 72 indicators.

Collecting comparative indicators is a challenging task: concepts and definitions sometimes vary from country to country; indicators do not always refer to the same unit of measurement or point in time; often there are substantial regional variations within countries, which are hidden in national averages; different data sources often offer different, sometime even contradicting, figures. A methodological report, which is available on the website, has been prepared addressing all these issues and explaining and documenting the solutions adopted in each case (Keck et al.2009).

The indicators refer to public policies and are output, not to outcome indicators.

Table 1 summarizes the different policies areas we considered and how they are assigned to the three modes of operation: defamilialisation and supported familialism and unsupported familialism.

Table 1: Indicators for the three policy approaches

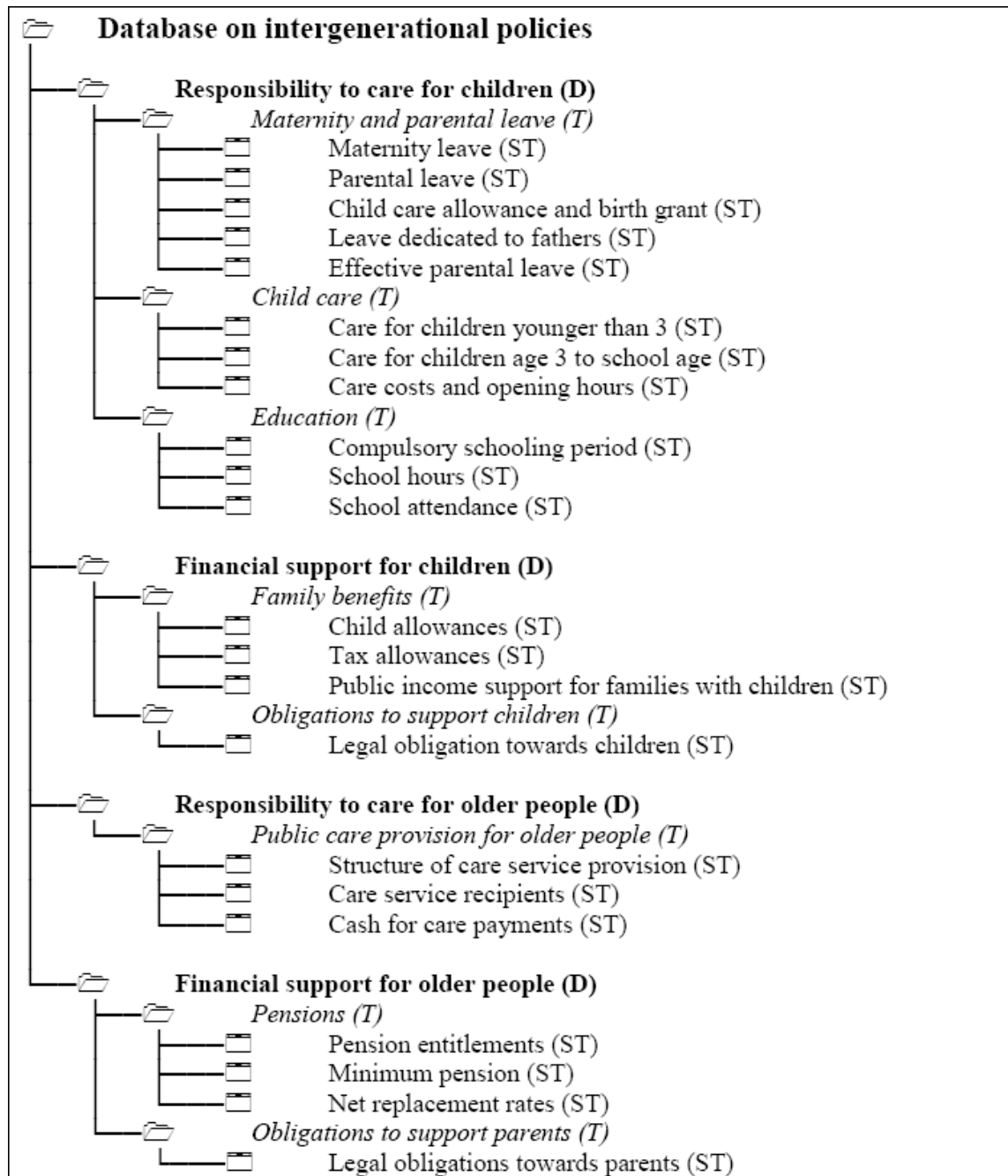
<b>Policy approach</b>	<b>Responsibilities towards children</b>	<b>Responsibilities towards old parents</b>
<b>Unsupported familialism</b>	Obligations to support adult children/grandchildren	Obligations to support parents in case of need
<b>Supported familialism</b>	Maternity and parental leave and benefits; child-related benefits	Cash for care payments with no constraint on use
<b>Defamilialisation</b>	Child care services; school	Pensions and minimum income provision for older people; Publicly funded care services for frail older people

## 4.2. Structure of the data base

One objective of the database was to develop a user-friendly and conceptual based access to the data. We identified three elements to promote this objective. First, there should be a clear structure to navigate between different forms of family-state responsibilities and different policy areas. The database is therefore structured in a hierarchical order with four levels: domains, themes, subthemes, and indicators (figure 1). The domains describe the specific perspective we apply and differentiate between policies towards families with children and policies towards elderly people on the one hand, and between financial and care support on the other hand. Within each domain, the key policy areas (themes) are identified that define and regulate care and financial responsibilities towards children and old parents, respectively. These policy areas are further subdivided into subthemes.

The second element aiming at user friendliness concerns the presentation of the indicators. The user navigates through the hierarchical structure, and has the opportunity to choose a specific subtheme.

**Fig. 1 Structure of the data base**










The third element for a user friendly, but also transparent, database is a detailed documentation. Towards this purpose, we offer two forms of information: a) at the head of each table, there is a general description of the indicator; b) when necessary, a

warning recommends to consult the methodological report in order to have detailed information on the country specificities of a given indicator (see an example in fig. 2). In this way, users are informed not only of the specific meaning of an indicator and of the population it concerns in any given country (e.g. who is entitled to parental leave where for how long with what level of compensation), but also of the degree of its cross country comparability.

For further details on the technical and methodological aspects of the data base, see the Methodological Report (Keck et al. 2009). The data base will be open for public use around the end of May 2011.

Fig. 2 data table: Public support for children

Project Info	News	Consortium members	Workpackages	Social policy indicators	Advisory boards
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Domain	Financial support for children				
Theme	Family benefits				
Subtheme	Public income support for children				
Indicator	Income support for couple with children (high income) (Percent of average earnings)	Income support for a single parent (Percent of average earnings)	Income support for couple with children (medium income) (Percent of average earnings)		
Austria	16.0	18.4	16.0		
Belgium	12.8	14.1	12.8		
Bulgaria	14.9	14.9	14.9		
Cyprus	4.4	4.4	4.4		
Czech Republic	9.3	24.3	13.8		
Denmark	7.5	19.5	7.5		
Estonia	11.9	23.0	11.9		
Finland	8.6	11.5	8.6		
France	12.1	8.8	9.5		
Georgia	:	:	:		
Germany	13.6	13.3	12.0		
Greece	0.8	0.5	0.8		
Hungary	17.0	18.8	17.0		
Ireland	11.4	25.1	11.4		
Italy	6.6	15.2	7.5		
Latvia	12.1	12.1	12.1		
Lithuania	2.0	2.0	2.0		
Luxemburg					
Malta	0.0	10.2	4.4		
Netherlands	5.9	6.2	5.9		
Norway	6.9	13.1	6.9		
Poland	0.0	0.0 	0.0		
Portugal	7.0	8.8	7.7		
Romania	: 	: 	: 		
Russia	:	:	:		
Slovakia	12.4	12.5	12.4		
Slovenia	: 	: 	: 		
Spain	3.7	5.3	For details please see the indicator's documentation in the methodological report		
Sweden	8.2	8.2			
United Kingdom	5.8	17.1			
Source:	Eurostat 2009	Eurostat 2009	Eurostat 2009		

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### **4.3. Sources and documentation**

Collecting data on social policies of a wide range of countries remains a difficult task even though European integration has fostered the efforts to make information on policies and their outcome more transparent and more comparable. For many policy issues, such as for instance long-term care, comparative data collection and research is still at the beginning. Existing comparative data sources often do not encompass all countries in our study, which includes all EU 27 member states as well as Georgia and Russia (for an overview of available comparative sources see Saraceno and Keck 2008). Missing are particularly data for the countries which joined the EU from 2003 onwards. Also national statistics are not always complete and when they are available, language problems constitute a tremendous barrier for accessing them. We are, therefore, very grateful to national experts who agreed to help us in filling data gaps as well as in better interpreting the available data and in finding our way across a wealth of information which is not always consistent across data sources.

In constructing the data base, we have cross checked different sources. We have also documented when there are contradictions which we could not solve among sources as well as existing gaps (Keck et al. 2009).

## **5. First studies and findings**

The use of the data base by the research group has been twofold. On the one hand, the data base has been used to identify patterns of institutionally defined intergenerational obligations, and of allocation of responsibilities between families and the state, within and across countries. On the other hand, the data base has been used as a source of adequate indicators to set micro level analyses of specific aspects of intergenerational obligations.

In the following, we synthesize the main results of both these approaches. It should be added that, at the end of the project life, studies within the first approach are in a more

mature stage (i.e. publication) than those within the second approach. This explains a certain imbalance in the reporting which follows.

### **5.1 Can we identify intergenerational policy regimes?**

Based on the three-fold conceptualisation of familialism by default, supported familialism and de-familialisation, and on a selected group of indicators found in the Multilinks data base, Saraceno and Keck (2010) have analyzed how countries allocate intergenerational responsibilities between families and the state, also paying attention to their gender specificity (on this latter aspect, see also Keck and Saraceno 2010). The study includes all 27 EU countries plus Norway and for the first time offers a comparative overview of a diversified set of policies with regard to both children and the old. Two main results may be highlighted.

First, this study offers an important contribution to the critique of the typologizing approach in comparative welfare state research. When a complex set of indicators is used, no statistical analysis yields any statistically meaningful typology. Furthermore, even the only cluster which does emerge as statistically robust, that comprising the Scandinavian countries, hides important internal dissimilarities. This result is partly due to the different approaches which within each single country may be implemented with regard to upward and downward obligations, as well as with regard to financial and care obligations. Partly, however, is also due to the fact that, contrary to what is argued in the literature, supported familialism and de-familialisation are not always contrasting policy approaches. In some countries, they actually represent part of an integrated approach to public support of intergenerational obligations. This is clearly the case for obligations towards children, where public policies may, on the one hand, support, through well paid parental leaves, parental care, with or without specific incentives for father's care. They may also support parental financial responsibility through child related income transfers. At the same time, above a certain child's age, they may also transfer some of the care obligations to the state, through the provision of publicly financed services.



This finding suggests that in comparative research, at least in the field of family policies, one should avoid two opposite risks: that of focusing on only one set of policies (e.g. leaves rather than services or transfers) and that of pushing the ideal of parsimony so far as to arrive to simplifications which fail to offer a thick enough contextual description to allow it to be meaningful. Instead of looking for typologies, it is analytically more useful to look at the way policies with regard to a specific field (in our case intergenerational obligations) are packaged and how they interact with each other, as well as to use indicators not as markers of internally homogeneous overall policy approaches, but as specific, and circumscribed, contextual information, to be integrated by information of a different kind (e.g. cultural attitudes, patterns of family formation, labour market characteristics and so forth). In this perspective, the indicators collected in the data base offer the background policy information for more in depth cross studies, on a reduced number of countries.

A second result of Saraceno and Keck's analysis is that countries differ not only in the degree to which the state shoulders parts of intergenerational responsibilities, via supported familisation and via defamilisation, but in the way it packages this support, emphasising more or less one of the two approaches with regard to one or the other dimension of obligations. This finding confirms the validity of using policy and not expenditure indicators. Countries with similar levels of expenditure in a particular field may, in fact, offer quite different options to individuals and families.

Both these aspects, degree of state support and form it takes, delineate specific expectations with regard to the behaviour of generations in families and also to its gender specificity (Keck and Saraceno 2010, Saraceno 2011). They also have an impact on social class inequalities, in so far individuals and families with modest, or scarce, economic means do not have the option to recourse to the market when de-familization through publicly supported services is not available, nor may afford to take long leaves, if these are not sufficiently paid. At the same time, they may use payments for care to supplement a tight budget instead of using them to pay for services. Saraceno (2010) has

discussed this particular issue, that is the impact of public policies on social class inequalities with regard to frail elderly care.

## **5.2 The determinants of ageism among the young and the old and of well being among the elderly**

Pearl Dykstra and Niels Schenk (2010) have started exploring cross-age interaction and (downward and upward) ageism in 16 European countries, based on data from a special module of the European Social Survey. Distinguishing between individual level dispositions and opportunities and country level characteristics, they find that ageism is a limited phenomenon and that, contrary to what found in previous literature, it is directed more towards the young than towards the old. Individual-level dispositions and opportunities are good predictors of the likelihood of having cross-age friendships; policies are good predictors of ageism. Yet, it is not easy to separate the causal links between policies and attitudes.

Nienke Moor, Aafke Komter and Paul de Graaf (2011), based on data of the European Value survey for 25 countries as well as on a selected group of the Multilinks indicators, have analyzed differences in well-being among the elderly across Europe, looking at individual and contextual (policy related) characteristics. Testing different (resource, set point and vulnerability on the one hand, substitution vs. complementarity on the other hand) hypotheses concerning the impact of both individual and context characteristics, they have found comparative empirical support for the resource, against the set point hypothesis and for the complementarity, against the substitution hypothesis. In other words, well being in old age is better promoted by having a partner and children and by living in a generous welfare state, in so far the latter does not crowd out, but integrates family support.

### **5.3 Grandparenthood: a turning point for grandparents, a resource for children and grandchildren?**

Arnstein Aassve, Bruno Arpino and Valeria Bordone (2011), based on Share data and using selected indicators from the Multilinks data base (parental leave, childcare coverage for children 0-2 and financial legal obligations towards adult children) have studied the impact of policies on the availability and intensity of grandparental care in Europe. They found that, although individual characteristics, particularly age, of grandparents count, policies do play an important role. In particular, while in the Scandinavian countries grandparents have the role of a “reserve army”, intervening in emergencies, in the Mediterranean countries, where child care coverage is lower, grandparents are a more systematic presence in the caring arrangements for their grandchildren.

Jaan van Bavel and Tom de Winter (2011) looked at the impact of policies on grandparenthood from a different perspective. Starting from the thesis that age at retirement involves multiple linkages - between older and younger family members, across time in individual and family life cycles, between national/regional contexts and individual behaviour - their research question concerns whether becoming a grandparent affects the decision to retire (early) and whether and to what degree this decision is mediated by policies. Using Data from the European Social Survey in the context of the different policy frameworks with regard to child care coverage, they found that becoming a grandparent speeds up the exit from the labour market, notably for women; retirement is earlier in post-communist countries, but there is no clear pattern in the country differences in the effect of grandparenthood; high childcare coverage is associated with later retirement, but irrespective of grandparenthood status. These preliminary finds suggest that policies aiming at raising the pension age are too one sided in their argumentation and overlook the dynamics and relationships within which the decision to retire is taken.

#### **5.4 The impact of policies on mothers' labour market participation**

Mara Yerkes, Niels Schenk and Pearl Dykstra (2011), using the 2<sup>nd</sup> round (2004) of the European Social Survey for 19 European countries and the indicators concerning child care coverage for 0-2 and 3-to school age children and effective parental leave (i.e. duration of leave weighted by level of compensation), controlling for values concerning mothers' employment, have analyzed to what degree gendered differences in employment are attributable to variations in national level policies and to differences at the individual level. Their preliminary findings show that policies have an impact on women, not on men, given the still prevalent division of labour in the household. In particular, effective leave plays an important role in reducing part time work among women, that is, the longer the effective leave the less likely that women work part time, while it has no effect on men. This important finding, however, must be read in the light of the fact that the longest effective leaves are found in the former communist countries, where part time is almost non-existent. Child care coverage for children under 3 has no effect, while that for children 3-to school age has a positive effect on part time, not only for mothers, but for women in general, although this effect is driven mainly by the Netherlands, with its high rate of part time work among women.

Saraceno and Keck (2011) have specifically focused on the impact of policies on social class inequalities in mothers' labour market participation. Based on Eu-Silc data and controlling for overall cross country and cross class differences in women labour market participation, they found that not in all EU countries, mothers with a low education experience an additional penalty, with regard to being in employment, to that experienced by women in general. The penalty linked to education seems to operate irrespective of motherhood, selecting which women enter in employment. Only in a very small number of countries, Cyprus and the Netherlands, and to a lower degree in Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden, low education has an additional negative effect for mothers. Consequently, the specific impact of policies on mothers with a differential level of education occurs, when it does, in a situation where women working have been already pre-selected and differences are largely pre-existent –or existing outside – motherhood. The policy having most the positive effect, both on mothers in general and on those with

lower education is (publicly supported) child care coverage for the under three, while, puzzlingly, childcare coverage for those 3-to school age seems to have a negative effect. But, as in Yerkes et al., also fairly long leaves seem to have a positive effect, contrary to prevalent assumptions. If they are well compensated, the effect is particularly positive for mothers with low education. Thus both defamilization and supported familization of early child care play a positive role. Saraceno and Keck conclude that, in order to account for some puzzling results, however, further analyses are needed, on the policy side, but also with regard to the operation of the labour market (working time regimes, varieties of capitalism, and so forth) and to cultural dimensions.

## **5.5 Indications for further research developments**

These preliminary findings from various studies, while showing the value of the Multilinks indicators, also point to the importance to select them from a clear theoretical perspective. Furthermore, they cannot substitute for other indicators/domains, depending on the research question: e.g. demographic context, patterns of family formation, labour market characteristics and so forth. These findings also indicate the need to have a dynamic perspective, which takes into account the past individual, but also politically and socially situated experience of the present adult and older generations. This perspective is particularly crucial in the case of the former communist countries, given the large contextual changes they have experienced, at the political, demographic, economic and cultural level.

## **References**

(In bold, work using the Multilinks data base)

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