

BARBARA HOBSON, SUSANNE FAHLÉN,
AND JUDIT TAKÁCS

Agency and Capabilities to Achieve a Work–Life Balance: A Comparison of Sweden and Hungary

Abstract

This study develops a conceptual framework with a capabilities and agency approach for analyzing work–life balance (WLB) applied in two societies (Hungary and Sweden), which have different working time regimes, levels of precarious employment, and gender equality discourses and norms. Inspired by Amartya Sen, we present a model illustrating how agency freedom for WLB depends on multiple resources at the individual, work organizational, institutional, and normative/societal levels. Using a unique qualitative survey conducted in two cities, Budapest and Stockholm, we analyze how mothers and fathers subjectively experience the tensions between family and work demands, and their possibilities for alternative choices (agency freedom). We find similarities in these tensions involving time pressure and time poverty, cutting across gender and education. Our Hungarian parents, nevertheless, experience greater agency inequalities for WLB, which reflect weaker institutional resources (conversion factors) as

well as cultural/societal norms that act as constraints for WLB claims in the workplace and household. Our study reveals that Swedish parents, both men and women, express a strong sense of entitlement to exercise rights to care.

Introduction

Over the last decades, we have witnessed the emergence of new policies and norms at the EU and national levels promoting work–life balance (hereafter referred to as WLB), including flexibility in the organization's working times, hours of work, and leaves for taking care of children, the disabled, and the elderly. Innovative policies have been introduced in some countries, such as working time accounts, which allow workers to build up time credits during periods in the life course when they have few responsibilities for care. The discourse on gender equality in care has set in motion policies aimed at increasing father's capabilities for WLB. At the same time, undercutting these measures are the pressures for increased productivity and competitiveness in the global economy. These pressures translate into greater work intensification, precarious work situations, and unstable futures for individual workers and their families (Perrons et al. 2006). We know that there is the gap between rights and the ability to exercise them (Hobson and Fahlén 2009a, 2009b). In this study, we reveal how these tensions are subjectively experienced—tensions between rising expectations for women and men to be both carers and earners and the constraints preventing them from achieving WLB. The core question in this study is inspired by Amartya Sen's influential work on capabilities and agency: to what extent do institutional contexts enhance or weaken agency for WLB (i) by reducing structural inequalities that do not allow an individual to convert entitlements into a sense of entitlement and (ii) by creating policies and discursive space to confront gendered norms and practices that deny women and men the real freedoms to achieve WLB and better life quality?

The capabilities approach offers a dynamic agency-centered framework for analyzing the social politics of WLB, in which institutions are at the very heart of whether an individual has the substantive freedoms to choose a life that she/he values. Moreover, the capabilities paradigm recognizes that institutional context shapes not only what one does, but also the opportunities to be and do. Institutions, rules, and informal norms held by others hence not only affect access to resources, but also agency and subjective states of efficacy, the real freedom to make choices or imagine alternatives (Sen 1992, 2003). This is a crucial analytical dimension for

understanding gendered agency in WLB, since gendered norms and values are legitimated and reproduced in policy and discourse, and can either inhibit or enable a sense of entitlement to make a claim for WLB.

Our purpose in this article is twofold. First, we develop an analytical model that builds upon our more generalized model of a capability set adapted to the European context (Hobson and Fahlén 2009b and Introduction of this volume): see figure 1. The analytical model we develop in this paper focuses on the processes by which individual means and resources are converted into capabilities to make claims for WLB, challenging gendered norms in the home and workplace (see figure 2). Secondly, we operationalize a capabilities and agency framework for WLB using a specifically designed qualitative survey and apply this framework to an analysis of agency inequalities of mothers and fathers with young children in two institutional contexts (Hungary and Sweden) with differences in working time regimes and divergent gendered discourses around parenting norms. These differences shape expectations and perceptions of the constraints and possibilities to make claims for WLB and their capabilities for making alternative choices for a better quality of life.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Models

In our study we employ WLB as an evaluative space to achieve ways of living that are valued—functionings, in Sen's terminology (Sen 1992, 2003). Functionings can include basic forms of well-being, such as shelter, access to health care and education, employment, and other measures of welfare and wellbeing beyond public expenditures. They can also embrace other broader areas social life (Sen 1992, 2006; see introduction). We maintain that WLB can be seen as a functioning as it can affect one's health and well-being; it is viewed as something of value and, if achieved, will enhance general quality of life. WLB intersects with many areas of quality of life involving the work: quality of one's job, which includes economic security, as well as the possibilities to use one's skills and experience. On the life/time side, WLB embraces time to care and be engaged in family life and leisure time for oneself. There are gendered dimensions and consequences in agency inequalities for WLB. For women/mothers, these agency inequalities translate into disruptions in employment after having children or being forced to downgrade job status (Lee and McCann 2006; Sjöberg 2004). They also encompass the long working days in women's double shift of paid and unpaid work. Agency inequalities for WLB can result in having to postpone or forgo having a family (Hobson and Oláh 2006). For

fathers, long working time regimes reduce their possibilities for active fathering and, in some extreme cases, result even in a lack of knowledge of and intimacy with their children.¹

Within our framework of WLB, we do not formulate an optimal WLB for men or women. To do so would be to undercut the basic tenet in the capabilities paradigm: to be able to choose a life one values. Rather, we are interested in the possibilities for converting resources into substantive freedoms to make choices and the constraints (institutional and societal/normative) that lead toward work–life imbalance and its consequences. Figure 1 illustrates the multi-layered conversion factors that shape agency for WLB: individual, institutional, and societal/cultural resources (for a more detailed discussion of the model, see Hobson and Fahlén 2009a; and the Introduction to this volume).

In this study we introduce the cognitive level of agency and capabilities (figure 2). Much of the literature on WLB focuses on measures of competing claims of family and work; how demands of work impinge on perceptions of family needs or create stress within the family (Drobnic and Guillén in this volume). Our second analytical model with agency at its core seeks to capture another dimension (figure 2): how conversion factors affect the subjective experiential

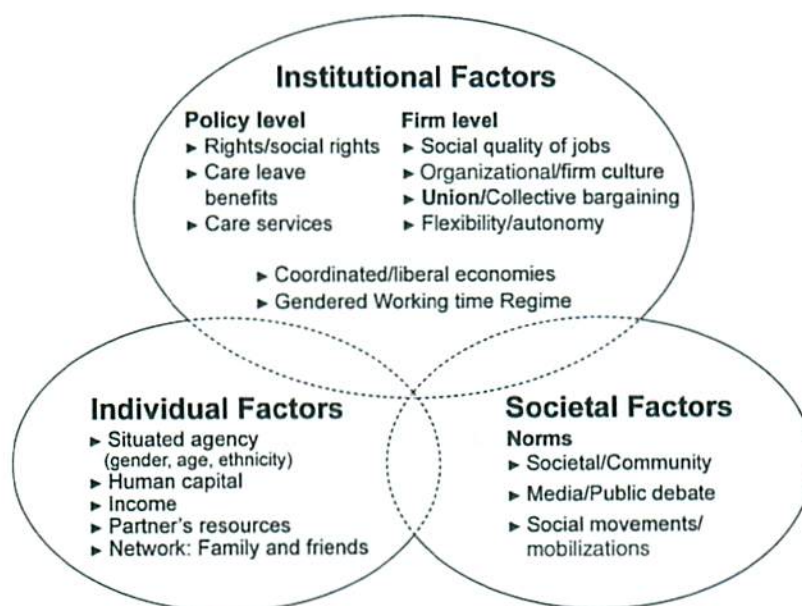


Figure 1. Multi-Layered Factors for Capabilities and Agency for WLB (Capability Set).

level of claims for WLB, the agency space that links entitlements to the sense of entitlement.

As the model below shows, conversion factors bracket both situated agency and workplace organizational cultures. How institutional resources are converted into agency is a crucial dimension in Sen's capabilities framework (Sen 1992). We know that a law in itself may not lead to changes in practices. In our survey, these conversion factors involve specific policies at the state and firm level that legitimate a sense of entitlement to make a claim for care needs and, more broadly, family time. Variations in conversion processes can be found in the legal formulation of policies. For example, are flexible work arrangements regulated by law, collective agreements, or negotiated at the workplace? Another example is the indisputable right to reduce hours when children are small in Sweden versus the more generalized EU right to request to reduce hours (Eklund 2001). Furthermore, whether a right can be converted into agency for WLB often depends on whether it is a social right (Deakin 2003). Here, differences in how parental leaves are compensated often shape the possibilities to exercise them. This is particularly true for men's use of parental leave (Hobson et al. 2006).

Those with more individual resources (situated agency) are more likely to have greater capabilities for making claims in institutional settings with laws and rights for WLB and where gender equality ideologies have been embedded in policy and practice over time (conversion factors in the model). Those with less education and

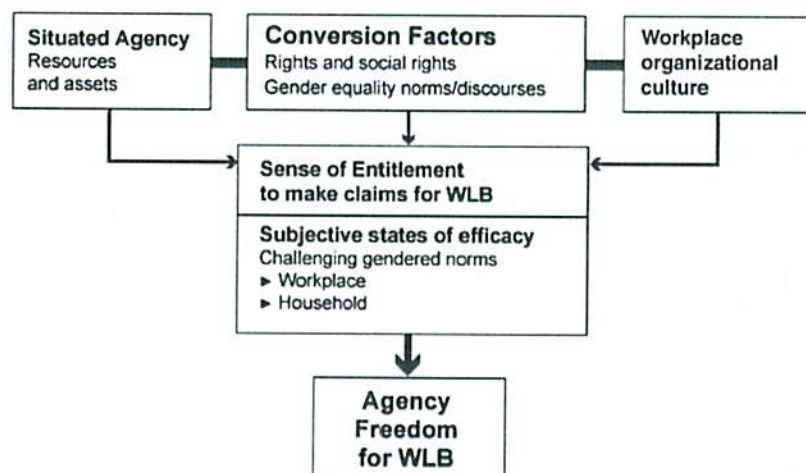


Figure 2. Converting Entitlements into Sense of Entitlement.

skills and those most vulnerable to discrimination often have weak capabilities to make claims for WLB: they are most dependent on conversion factors. In our earlier study, we found that these groups have the strongest perceptions of insecurity and risk in their economies and job situation (Hobson and Fahlén 2009a, 2009b).

Finally, conversion factors operate within the implementation phase. The workplace firm level is the site where claims for WLB are made and granted or denied. As Den Dulk et al. (in this volume) reveal, a workplace organizational culture that reflects a sensitivity to WLB can be seen as a site for converting rights/policies into WLB claims. Workplace organizational culture at a firm, however, can be a site in which penalties and risk for claims for WLB, including job loss and discriminatory treatment in pay and promotion, are understood by the employees.

The discursive policy level can be seen as a key dimension in the conversion of rights into claims. Public debates and media campaigns have been important arenas for challenging gendered norms in care at the workplace and in the family. Men's carework has been the subject of government campaigns and media coverage, promoting active fatherhood. In Sweden, men's increased proportion of parental leave is front-page news. Hence, how policies are framed affects the cognitive level of agency, so that if care leaves are anchored in a discourse of gender equality and of father's rights to care, it makes it easier to challenge gendered norms in the workplace and household. Alternatively, if care leaves are cast only in terms of activating mother's labor force or child well-being, the father's sense of entitlement is weakened, particularly in societies in which care is considered to be the primary responsibility of mothers and breadwinning the obligation of men.

Though not explicit in Sen's capabilities framework, the sense of entitlement to make a claim itself is the conceptual lynchpin connecting functionings and agency. We introduce this innovation into the capabilities framework, thereby acknowledging that the cognitive level of agency precedes the ability to exercise rights and strengthens the self-efficacy to make claims for WLB. The agency space between rights and a sense of entitlement is especially important in analyses of WLB with a gender focus, as it encompasses how gendered norms in the household, workplace, community, and society may inhibit agency freedom.

Barnard et al. (2001), Browne et al. (2004), and Deakin (2003) confront the question of how entitlements are converted into agency achievement. They recognize that the existence of laws and policies can indirectly lead toward a "different ethos" or "seed" new norms that can destabilize gendered norms and practices. In our analysis of

capabilities within specific institutional contexts, we show how this seeding mechanism operates, when laws become legitimized in a society and institutionally embedded so that they have an impact on norms in the workplace and household. Our comparative analysis of Hungary and Sweden allow us to consider the ways in which agency inequalities are institutionally embedded.

The cognitive dimension in capabilities is important for understanding not only what one does or would like to do, but also the ability to imagine alternatives. Within the context of WLB, we assume that agency freedom allows one to make choices that lead toward a better of quality of life, reflecting greater control over one's time, less daily stress and overwork, and a greater sense of security and well-being. These aspects of capabilities emerge from the questions in our survey that allow us to reach into the subjective experiential level of capabilities.

Two Institutional Contexts

We chose Sweden and Hungary for several reasons. Both countries have institutionalized a dual-earner family model. In gender welfare regime typologies Sweden exemplifies the weak male breadwinner model (Lewis 1997) and is the paradigm of the dual-earner institutional support in Korpi's typology of family models (Korpi 2000). During the Soviet era, Hungary, like other Central Eastern European societies, formulated a dual-earner family model and has continued generous state support for parental leave and daycare, which is not the case in many other Central Eastern European countries. However, the two societies differ in the gendered norms and gender equality policies for WLB, particularly the responsibilities for carework and housework in the family (Oláh 2003; Oláh et al. 2002).

These countries also differ along other dimensions, including labor force, unemployment, working times, and fertility (see table 1 below for the comparative statistics). Swedish women have higher labor force participation and more mothers of small children are employed compared with Hungarian, though more Swedish mothers work part-time. Though there is a small gap in the working hours set by collective agreements in the two countries, the average actual weekly working time is significantly longer among Hungarian men and women with small children than Swedish parents (Hobson and Fahlén 2009b). Levels of unemployment rates should affect agency and capabilities to make claims for WLB, as joblessness generates a sense of risk and insecurity among working parents. In the year we conducted our survey, unemployment among Hungarian men and women between 25 and 59 years of age was two to three percentage-

Table 1. Contextual Indicators for Hungary and Sweden

	Hungary	Sweden
Total fertility rate 2008 (1)	1.35	1.91
Female employment ratio, 25–49 years (2)	64.1	79.8
Maternal employment ratio, child 3–5 years (2)	53.0	81.3
Part-time as % of total female employment, 25–59 years (3)	5.1	37.1
Male unemployment (%), age 25–59 years (3)	6.8	4.0
Female unemployment (%), age 25–59 years (3)	7.2	4.5

Source: (1) Statistics Sweden (2009a) and KSH (2009). (2) OECD Family database (2007). (3) Eurostat (2008).

points higher than that in Sweden. Finally, there are striking differences in the fertility rates in these two countries—Hungary with one of the lowest fertility levels in Europe and Sweden among the highest. Hobson and Oláh (2006) interpret the low fertility rate in Central Eastern European countries as a reflection of uncertain economic futures, as well as long working time regimes.

Three Policy Areas

Our analysis of capabilities focuses on three core policy areas that have emerged across Europe to support WLB: flexibility, rights to reduce hours, and parental leave.² These policy areas revolve around time as a redistributive resource: how states compensate caring time after childbirth; how states regulate working times (working time regimes); and how policies to promote flexibility for working parents can offer opportunities to restructure working times that facilitate reconciling employment with family needs and responsibilities.

Our qualitative survey was conducted in two capital cities, Budapest and Stockholm,³ which are fairly similar in population size. We used three main selection criteria for participants: one had to be parent of at least one child aged younger than seven, living as a couple, and have been employment during the previous year.⁴ The sample of 100 respondents in each city was stratified by firm size and firm sector (public and private sectors), with equal proportions within each category for both cities. In our sample, we also sought to approximate the educational attainment levels in each city. Given the contextual differences in our two cities, there are variations in educational attainment, size of public and private work sectors, and the proportions of small, medium, and large firms. The Budapest sample has a larger proportion with low education, whereas the

Stockholm sample has a larger proportion with high education. The public sector is much smaller in Budapest than in Stockholm, and there are fewer small firms in Sweden than in Hungary, which was also reflected in our samples.⁵

The survey we developed has a semi-structured design. We obtained socio-demographic material from a questionnaire sent prior to the face-to-face interviews, which ranged from one to two hours in length. Specifically designed for a capabilities and agency approach, the survey considered many aspects of WLB, though in this article we focus on *Employment* and *Working Time*, *Parental leave*, *Work Environment* and *Work Culture*.⁶ We analyze the responses of parents concerning their use of parental leave and flexible working times. We also consider the respondents' assessments of their work organizational culture and family-friendly work environments, which reflect perceptions of capabilities and agency. Finally, we posed questions that directly address agency inequalities: what our respondents could ask for or refuse to do regarding working times and what they would change.

Parental Leave. We begin our analysis with parental leave, as it is a crucial policy for enabling parents (particularly mothers) to combine employment with family, the capabilities to have and care for children. Moreover, it has been framed as a policy measure that has the potential to reduce inequalities in the family and labor market (Hobson et al. 2006), most notably, the proactive measures for daddy leaves. How the policy is structured affects the capabilities of mothers and fathers to use it. This differs within and across the two societies.

Whether this right is exercised is dependent on conversion factors, particularly whether it is well compensated (a social right). Also, the media and policy debates play an important role in fathers' sense of entitlement to make a claim for parental leave, for example, whether they present gender equality or increasing fertility as the driving force (Hobson and Fahlén 2009a). Finally, work organizational cultures are critical sites for making this claim for their care rights, as employees request parental leave from their bosses or managers.

Sweden and Hungary have relatively generous parental leave benefits, though Sweden has a much higher level of compensation because incomes are higher and the capped ceiling for the benefit is also high. The most obvious differences in the policy frameworks for parental leave in the two societies are the incentives and disincentives for women to re-enter the labor market as well as the proactive policy for fathers to use their parental leave rights. These differences reflect and shape gendered norms in parenting and care.

In both societies, the generous benefits are linked to time in employment: in Sweden, eligibility requires employment eight months before the child is born; in Hungary, 180 days within two years prior to the birth. However, in Hungary, the national policy provisions on child care leaves allow for an exceptionally long period of three years, an income-related two-year benefit at 70 percent of income and a low flat-rate benefit that functions as a disincentive for the continuous participation of women in the labor market. The three-year benefit reinforces gender role expectations, as it assumes that mothers will be taking the leave, reproducing the gender divide in care (Neményi and Takács 2006). In one of our cases, a Hungarian woman was on leave for nine years (three consecutive children). The most common pattern is that women take the entire three years of benefit, although there is a wide gap between the highly and less skilled. Highly skilled professional women take very short leaves (three to nine months) compared with those working in routine administrative jobs or blue-collar occupations, who most often utilize the full leave period of three years (Plantenga and Remery 2005).

Returning to the labor market after a long period of parental leave can be quite problematic, especially for mothers with lower education and those living in smaller communities. According to one EU study, more than 75 percent of Hungarian parents on parental leave (mainly mothers) said that they planned to continue working after their leave was over. However, the actual return rate is less than 45 percent (KSH 2006; Plantenga and Remery 2005). There are various reasons for this, including firm closure or the termination of the old position and the creation of a new position that is unsuitable for the returning employee's skills (Spéder and Kamarás 2008). This outcome suggests that while EU case law includes strong protections against firing women who take maternity leave, these have little force in Hungary.

Given the precariousness in the Hungarian labor market, women in the Budapest sample actually used the flat-rate benefit as a quasi-unemployment benefit. This reflects a broader pattern observed between 1993 and 2005 in Hungary, regarding the rapidly increasing proportion of women taking the flat-rate childcare allowance with no previous employment. The data show that these tend to be mothers with lowest levels of education (Bálint and Köllő 2008).

Sweden has one of the most generous parental leave systems in Europe (see Gornick and Meyers 2003; Plantenga and Remery 2005), providing 390 days at 80 percent of previous earnings, with an income ceiling. It is also highly flexible: one can choose to take some days per week or even divide the days into half days. The

flexibility facilitates fathers' use as they can organize the leave without prolonged periods away from their work routines. For mothers, the flexibility is most often a strategy for extending their leave time, taking a much lower benefit level and using it for part of the time. As in Hungary, the less educated are more likely take a longer leave. Although, in Sweden, jobs are protected for those on parental leave, longer leaves can affect pay and promotion possibilities in jobs (Hobson et al. 2006; Statistics Sweden 2007). Nevertheless, the leave policy facilitates return to the labor market even when women have children close together as mothers can keep the higher level of benefit and return to work for a short period, maintaining their connection to the workplace.⁷ Compared with Hungarian mothers, the differences in the length of leave and reintegration into employment between Swedish mothers with high and low education and skills were less pronounced.

The most significant feature in the Swedish parental leave policy in the European context is the incentive structure for fathers to take the leave. Well known are the two daddy months in parental leave policy, known as the "use it or lose it" policy. Each parent has to take two months of the leave or one loses the entitlement for the higher income-related benefit. Figures for 2005 show that 84 percent of fathers took some of the leave before their child's eighth birthday (Swedish Social Insurance Agency 2005). Father's proportion share of the leave in 2008 reached 21.5 percent (Swedish Social Insurance Agency 2011).⁸

The Stockholm sample shows a slightly higher proportion of fathers who use more of the leave than the national average. Fifteen percent of the fathers shared the leave fairly equally, defined here as 40–60%. These tended to be highly educated fathers, a result that is confirmed by other Swedish studies on parental leave (Hobson et al. 2006; National Social Insurance Board 2003).

Although the majority of fathers in the Stockholm sample said that they agreed with the division of the parental leave, about one-third said that they would like to have taken more leave. This figure is higher than the 20 percent reported in a study by the Swedish Insurance Board five years earlier (Hobson et al. 2006). In our survey, fathers said that the family economy was the main reason for not taking more daddy leave, as the household income is reduced when the mother most often earning less than the father stays at home.

Workplace cultures and career goals also played a role in father's decisions concerning when and how much leave to take, particularly among the highly educated fathers. Consider this example of a father who took his "daddy months" during the summer holiday to

prolong the family vacation. He would have like to have taken more leave, but felt constrained by his work situation: *“I would absolutely have wanted to do that [take more parental leave], but if you look at a lot of jobs, many on parental leave are badly treated and overlooked at work. If I’d been away for 6 months with both children then I don’t know if I would be here now.”* His ideal would have been to work two days a week at least during parental leave to have some continuity at work. When asked why he did not do this he said: *“When we had our child I had just changed jobs and saw a career for myself. So I don’t know if I’d wanted to step aside and take 6 months just then.”* Then he added *“my partner didn’t have regular work”* (father, 44, 2 child, high ed, manager in state administration).

As this example suggests, it is difficult to unpack the different layers in capabilities. Though many of the explanations have an economic rationale, gendered attitudes and norms in the workplace also are in force. As some earlier studies have shown (Albrecht et al. 1999), men faced greater risk in careers when exercising their parental leave rights than women. A more favorable climate for daddy leave is suggested in our study. In our sample, the Stockholm fathers reveal how legitimated a parental leave claim has become for both mothers and fathers. The public debate and discourse have given fathers a sense of entitlement to take up their parental leave rights.

Comparing capabilities and agency of fathers to take parental leave, we found striking differences between Hungarian and Swedish fathers. In line with national figures, we find a virtually “women only” use of parental leave in our Budapest sample. This reflects strong gendered norms in the workplace, family, and wider society that weaken Hungarian men’s capabilities to use their parental rights. About one-third of the parents claimed that this was not considered an option. Out of one hundred interviewees, we found only four fathers who took any leave. These are exceptional fathers who tend to have a partner who earns more than they do. Also, this group includes highly educated fathers with strong convictions regarding a father’s active role in caring (Takács 2008).

Clearly, the level of payment and economic loss that would have resulted from the father’s taking the leave is a factor for most Hungarian families. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the undeniably powerful role of cultural gendered assumptions in determining why so few men take any parental leave beyond the targeted father days after the birth. Irrespective of their education level, the survey respondents (both men and women) interpreted the organization of care and the gender divide in parental leave practices as natural. For

example, breastfeeding was most often given as a reason why men should not take any of the leave.

The gendered normative expectations at the workplace in Hungary were taken for granted so that the idea of making a claim for parental leave appeared untenable. This was true even in the account of one father who said he and his wife discussed the possibility. *"We had doubts considering the potential reactions at my workplace. For example, if I accepted a grant to do research abroad for a year, it would make sense at my workplace even if it would cause some problems, but surely it would be accepted. But going on childcare leave! I think they can't comprehend even the fact that my family and childcare duties limit my working capacities to some extent."* (father 39, 1 child, high ed, lecturer).

Both countries have fairly generous parental leaves for the first year after the birth; however, there is a fundamental difference in how gender is embedded in the Hungarian and Swedish parental leave policies. These different policy formulas mirror gendered assumptions and rationales. Long parental leave in Hungary presumes discontinuous female employment; the shorter flexible leave policy in Sweden aims toward reintegration into employment. Among the Hungarian respondents, both men and women, the idea of naturalized gender difference is invoked in rationales regarding why women should be home during the entire period. Among the parents in the Stockholm survey, we did not find this essentialized view of motherhood. Even among the unusual fathers who did not take any leave, their reasons were related to their job situation, family economy, or other economic factors, rather than the mother's natural role. Moreover, many of our Swedish fathers who took only short leave appeared to be apologetic and defensive in their explanations as to why they did not take more leave. This cognitive shift in Swedish father's responsibilities for care has been in the making for several decades, with campaigns and media debates that culminated in the use or loss of policy. It is important to underscore that this policy is not seen as coercive in Sweden (Hobson et al. 2006); instead, it is a policy that is viewed as increasing men's agency to make a claim for parental leave. As Bygren and Duvander (2006) show, in their study of Stockholm firms, that a snow-ball effect operates in workplaces; the take up and proportion of father's leave is dependent on other men's previous parental leave practices in that firm.

Parental leave in the two societies also reveals differences in mother's capabilities for WLB beyond the gendered division of parental leave, which reflect broader labor market conditions and regulations in employment protections and security. For Swedish

women, the parental leave system not only facilitates continuous labor force attachment, but also reintegration into the work organization. This interacts with other capabilities in the welfare regime, such as high levels of employment and secure jobs. In contrast, parental leave in Hungary does not necessarily lead toward work reintegration because there are weaker protections for retaining one's job.

Working parents in our surveys have different starting points in terms of individual means and resources; those living in Stockholm tend to have more education and higher incomes, the result of a more egalitarian educational system and compressed wage structure (Le Grand 1991). Yet even among Swedish parents with lower education levels, we still find the sense of entitlement to make claims for parental leave and for care responsibilities more generally. They are aware of their rights and feel entitled to exercise them.

WLB and Flexibility

Flexible work hours (other than the right to work part-time) in terms of organizing one's schedule for family needs is not inscribed in EU Law, but it is rather put forward as an example of good practice to promote WLB (EC 2005, 2008). It is part of the Post-Lisbon era to promote productivity and growth and social cohesion. Flexibility in working time is also a strategy that offers employers the opportunity to adjust workers hours to productivity (Perrons et al. 2006). One can distinguish between two dimensions in the EU policy framework: (i) external flexibility, in which the aim is to make workplaces more "adaptable," by offering more flexible contract arrangements; and (ii) internal flexibility, those that are geared toward achieving more flexible patterns within the work organization⁹ (Lewis and Plomien 2009; Viebrock and Clasen 2009). We focus only on internal flexibility (part-time, overtime, schedule, flexi time). Beyond their actual contractual times, many European workers are expected to work evening/weekends and extra hours. In this analysis, we are interested in the ability of workers to refuse to work extra hours because of family responsibilities.

Flexibility is interwoven in the web of WLB claims, including flexible working hours; work shifts and schedules; and possibilities to work at home or leave the workplace early to respond to unexpected family situations. Flexibility in the survey is operationalized as employee-driven flexibility (Fagan 2004), whether individuals are able to organize their working time and/or rearrange their workday schedule to suit their family's needs in contrast to employer's needs for efficiency. In the survey, we asked a series of questions, concerning the perceptions of flexibility at the workplace as well as specific

questions on the right to refuse extra work hours. In addition, we asked our respondents whether they had personal experience or knowledge of particular instances of mistreatment at the workplace for those prioritizing family (what we refer to as narratives of risk). These questions allowed us to capture the extent to which workplace organizational cultures hinder agency and capabilities for WLB, operationalized in figure 2, as the sense of entitlement to make a claim involving care and family needs.

Considering our direct question on the *perceptions* of flexibility at the workplace for organizing time to fit family needs, we found very little difference between our Stockholm and Budapest parents: 77 percent of Stockholm parents and 75 percent of Budapest parents said that they were able to organize their time and workday according to their family's needs. We found gender differences in working time flexibility in both samples. More Hungarian men than women said that their work situation was not flexible (18 and 32 percent, respectively). Men working in the public sector were the most dissatisfied, while both male and female respondents working in the private sector were satisfied with their work flexibility. This reflects the high proportion of self-employed Hungarians, both those working in micro-enterprises and the significant levels of outsourced home-based work (more men than women in our sample were self-employed).¹⁰ Among the Swedish parents, there was less gender difference in work flexibility. Eighteen percent of the women and 26 percent of the men claimed that they lacked flexibility. When comparing men and women in different work sectors in our Swedish sample, we found the same pattern as in the Hungarian: men in the public sector have less flexibility than women; and women in the private sector have less flexibility than men.

Swedish working parents who said that there were unable to reorganize their schedule tended to have jobs that did not allow for any flexibility. For example, one woman working in the private sector characterized her work situation as inflexible as she was responsible for someone's care; she had a specified time shift and had to remain with her client until her replacement arrived. A policeman in our survey also claimed that his work demands allowed for little or no flexibility in rearranging his work schedule. *"Everything is controlled by external events. The jobs that come in we have to do. All the time in between we have open cases and assignments that we plan out together and do, But when something happens we have to drop all that and leave to do those jobs. So it is very free, but sometimes very controlled"* (father, 38, 3 child, high ed).

Nevertheless, this same man had reduced his hours to 75 percent and maintained that he could leave work if there were family

responsibilities that he had to attend to; hence, he did not see his workplace as family unfriendly. *“It is never a problem; the social things come first, and then work. [...] No one ever complains. There are never any angry glances in the workplace because you are leaving.”*

If we consider specific facets of flexibility and workplace organizational culture, we find more variation within and across our Stockholm and Budapest parents. Take for example, the questions on whether parents could leave their work for family reasons and if they had to ask permission. In Stockholm, those working in the public sector said that they had to inform, but they did not feel hesitant to request time off to care for a sick child, as the example below illustrates. *“If they call from daycare and say that my child is sick, then they [the colleagues] say: ‘go, we can take care of this for you’* (mother 34, 1 child, medium ed, sales assistant in the public sector).

In Hungary, the degree of flexibility also depends on job sector (20 percent of our Budapest sample listed themselves as self-employed). The self-employed private entrepreneurs had the most opportunity to organize work schedules and had flex time, as these two examples suggest. One, a self-employed mother, stated that *“as an entrepreneur I am family-friendly. However, conditions are determined by the clients – although it is not like you must comply with them. You may decide not to work for them next time”* (mother, 40, 2 child, medium ed, decorator). The other, a father, a self-employed carpenter, declared: *“I think entrepreneurship is family-friendly because I decide on my schedule and nobody tells me what to do and when, though financially it is not profitable”* (father, 2 child, medium ed). It is important to keep in mind that the category of self-employed covers a range of employment situations, from the small business entrepreneurs to irregular workers who depend on contract work from both private and public sector employers and may lack social benefits. For the latter group, particularly among women, what appears to be a trade-off between security and flexibility does not reflect choice, but rather is the result of weak capabilities, as many are precarious workers who cannot be assured employment contracts. This is supported by our finding, showing that most would prefer to work more hours if it meant a gain in hourly pay.¹¹

We asked our respondents whether they could refuse to work extra hours, weekend nights, and evenings, questions that directly show capabilities and agency for WLB. Here we found some variation in our two cases. The vast majority of Swedish mothers and fathers (sixty-two out of eighty-seven) said that could refuse to work

evenings, weekends, and overtime and claimed family reasons are nearly always considered a valid reason for refusal at their workplace. Family responsibilities and family time are given special status in Sweden. Several of our respondents said that they were not even asked to work extra hours (evenings or weekends), as it was known that they had small children. As expected, we found examples of men and women who said that they were not asked to work extra hours but often did since they had to finish the task at hand. Take for instance an executive in an electronics firm, who asserted that the right to refuse extra hours was an irrelevant question. *"I am my own boss, so I am responsible for making sure the work gets done. And if it isn't, I get shit for it, so then I have to work extra myself. But no one really tells me to"* (father, 35, 2 child, high ed, energy market executive).

Not including those 20 percent self-employed in the Budapest sample, forty out of sixty-nine parents said that they could refuse to work extra hours. One mother with three children emphasized that, at her workplace, family is the "most acceptable motivation" to refuse overtime work (mother, 3 child, medium ed, sales representative, private sector). Yet, the intense working time regimes and expectations of commitment to the firm are mirrored in the responses of Budapest parents, mainly fathers. Typical of this group are the highly qualified fathers working for private companies of which they were partial owners. Consider this terse response of one such father: *"There is no such thing as overwork – there are only tasks to be completed"* (father, 44, 1 child, high ed, sales engineer). Compare his response with that of a Swedish father who claimed that he felt that overtime was often part of the job, although he received generous overtime pay. *"I have never, in the 20 years that I have been here, had someone tell me that I need to work overtime. However you know what needs to be done and you take your responsibility. [...] Then I get overtime compensation"* (father, 40, 2 child medium ed, engineer in the private sector).

Other Budapest respondents emphasized that they did not want to refuse extra work on weekends or evenings, regardless of whether they could refuse. These included fathers with large families and partners with lower education, typically working in the private sector. The primary concern was their economy; more work meant more money. This was the case for this father of three children with low education: *"I could say no but I rarely would, as extra money is always welcome"* (father, 3 child, low ed, security guard). In contrast, a mother with high education working as an advisor in the public sector appeared to have more choice. She asserted that time was more important for her than money: *"I am not getting paid for*

the extra hours. Extra work should mean extra money. If I would get extra money, and I still would not want to do it, I would bring up family reasons. It is already so little the time I spend with my child" (mother, 41, 1 child, high ed).

Considering flexibility in terms of rights to reduce hours, we find significant differences between our Budapest and Stockholm parents in terms of their sense of entitlement to exercise this right. Every parent in Sweden has had the right to reduce working hours until the child is eight years for several decades. About half (46.3 percent) of the Swedish mothers with a child younger than seven years exercise this right (Statistics Sweden 2009b), about the same proportion found in our Stockholm sample. In Hungary, there is no statutory right for parents of young children to reduce hours. The Budapest parents considered the opportunity to reduce hours as a sign of a family-friendly workplace. The Hungarian labor market is characterized by a very low level of part-time employment (see Table 1 in *Two Institutional Contexts*). A woman in our sample who was an office worker claimed that it took six months to find a job that would allow her to work six hours a day. *"When they learned at the job interviews that I had a child, I was immediately dismissed. Working only six hours was out of the question"* (mother, 33, 1 child, low ed). Similarly, a father working full-time as a journalist in a big private company revealed the difficulties in making claims for part-time work: *"You are not given a hard time if you have children. However, there is no opportunity to get transferred for a part-time job"* (father, 42, 1 child, medium ed).

Work–Family Non-Friendly Environment. In order to capture the penalties and risks in putting family first, we asked our respondents about their own experiences of mistreatment at the workplace, or whether they knew or heard about others who faced discrimination in pay, job task, or promotion because of prioritizing family. These *narratives of risk* travel through organizations. Less than one-fifth (fourteen of sixty-eight) of Budapest respondents brought up cases of mistreatment, including both women and men with various forms of employment at different types of workplaces. Though relatively few in number, these cases of overt mistreatment allow us to see how gendered norms operate in the workplace. For example, a mother working as a clerk for a multi-national company in Hungary described the situation at her workplace: *"One of my colleagues had a sickly child. That multinational [company] would not stand for that. She was continually being called in. She wasn't sacked, but left. It was completely unfair. She did not know that she would bear a sick child. I have yet to see a man take a lot of time off for family*

reasons. It is always lumped on the woman" (mother, 33, 1 child, low ed). This blatant case of mistreatment toward a mother with family responsibilities involved a multi-national corporation; more subtle forms of mistreatment were more commonplace.

For the most part, there seemed to be more tolerance for women in Hungary to prioritize family needs, as care for children is still viewed as mainly women's responsibility. In this context, fathers' WLB claims at the workplace entailed greater risks, as this sales representative working in the public sector confided to her male colleague: "*They [i.e. other colleagues] thought that he was not telling the truth when he said that he needed time off for his family.*" Another related the story of her husband who *was not told not to come back work after he had taken one day off because our child was ill. It was unfair and inhumane*".

In contrast to our Budapest parents, we found different patterns of mistreatment and discrimination among our Stockholm parents. First, there were fewer cases of mistreatment; only about one out of ten cited their own experiences of being mistreated or had heard about others. Secondly, we did not find major differences between men and women or between work sectors in either personal experiences of mistreatment or knowledge about penalties for those prioritizing family.

There were slightly more cases of women being treated unfairly. This reflects the fact that in the majority of cases the reason for mistreatment involved parental leave. Mothers tend to take much more of the leave than fathers and firms have difficulty finding temporary replacement for parents on leave. The discriminatory processes that result from the gendered patterns of leave were made visible in the narrative from a male senior project leader working in a private company in our Stockholm sample. He claimed that he himself had taken parental leave and was actually sympathetic to the push and pull of family and job responsibilities. Yet, he revealed that at this workplace a women's job was phased out while she was on parental leave, so she could not return to same job. Though she was offered another position, this recent mother refused because of the travel it would have involved. He admitted that in the company, there is a different attitude toward men and women in job recruitment. "*If a 32 or 28 year old girl walks in on the verge of pregnancy I know that there will be trouble involved in hiring a person like that. [. . .] The company probably has an official policy that it isn't a problem at all, but in a hiring situation I know that young women are mistreated*" (father, 35, 2 ch, high ed). His response is a classic example of how statistical discrimination operates in male-dominated workplace

cultures, in societies with generous parental leave policies and high take-up rates by female workers (Mandel and Shalev 2009). The same respondent claimed that although this is not official policy, he felt that it was not sustainable to hire women who will have kids “*with travel and overtime project work, women with small children fail to deliver or quit*”.

In many instances, the discriminatory patterns are covert or understood, but never spoken about, as exemplified by this Swedish father who felt his family involvement put him in a vulnerable position in the firm. “*There’s a lot of talk behind the back. Partly it’s been suggested that some people think that you’re lying if you’re home with sick children, or that there are some mean-spirited rumours. [...] An employer cannot treat some differently because of their family circumstances, that’s against the law. But behind one’s back talk goes on*” (father, 28, 3 child medium ed working in a public warehouse). He also said that “*you’re not in a great position when it’s time for salary negotiations.*” Still, this man did not fear losing his job, but was in a weak position when negotiating for a wage increase.

As the example above suggests, overt cases of mistreatment are the tip of the iceberg in terms of work organizational cultures and gendered norms in work organizations. Nonetheless, they can tell us something about what is interpreted as mistreatment in the two societies and the contextual differences in perceptions of rights, as well as the importance of legal rights and protections for assessing capabilities. One difference that we found in these narratives of mistreatment for prioritizing family is that in Hungary, the outcome most often resulted in losing one’s job or not being called back. For the most part, the accounts of discriminatory treatment in our Stockholm survey related to parental leave and pay rises. In these exceptional cases, the parents, two men and one woman, maintained that they were disadvantaged during wage negotiations since they were not at the workplace. The Parental Leave Act (SFS 1995: 584) should protect parents from wage discrimination during parental leave, as well as guaranteeing them the right to return to a similar position. Both men and women in our sample cited this law as giving them a sense of entitlement to make a claim for family, yet in some workplaces the informal norms and expectations override. We found only one instance in which taking up parental leave rights resulted in the loss of a job in the Swedish sample. This involved a father at a multi-national corporation, employed on a project basis, who had to resign when he started his parental leave. In another case, a mother was placed in a different organization after her leave period ended.

We posed a general question about whether the respondents considered their workplace family-friendly, which in itself reveals contextual differences in terms of the salience of this debate in the two societies as well as working parents' expectations around what a work-family workplace might provide for its employees, what is imaginable. The latter is a crucial dimension for understanding agency for WLB and the sense of entitlement to make claims at the workplace for family needs.

More than half of the Hungarian respondents (fifty-four of ninety-three) viewed their workplace family-friendly, while more than one-fifth of these respondents (twenty-one of ninety-three) said theirs was unfriendly. Three fathers in blue-collar jobs in the private sector, with low education, claimed that they did not know what family friendliness meant. One of them, a semiskilled construction worker, explained: *"Well, I'm at a loss as to interpret this question. Obviously, one must support his/her family so working is a must. You have no choice. Well, I wouldn't mind to leave earlier sometimes. However, we don't have a say in this matter"* (father 26, 1 ch, low ed).

Beyond the inability to interpret the question, low expectations for WLB were revealed in the responses of several manual workers with only a basic education in Hungary. For them, being employed was seen as an asset in itself. Hence, they could not imagine making claims for WLB. This is illustrated in the response of this father with a medium education working as a repairman in a large Hungarian state-owned company. For him WLB was an individual problem to be solved by increasing his wage. Asked if his workplace was family-friendly, he responded; *"Most of the employees are men. This is not an issue here. In fact, I do not know anything about it. I wish I could make the same money in fewer hours so I can spend more time with my family"* (father, 38, 1 child, low ed).

The Swedish parents provide a stark contrast. Regardless of education and skill, they understood the notion of a family-friendly workplace and were aware of their rights.¹² In Sweden, WLB is an idea that has been featured in media and political debate. The vast majority of Swedish respondents (76 percent) perceived their workplace that way, and defined it in terms of specific policies and work organizational practices. Family/work friendliness was associated with flexibility; being able to work from home, having the ability to plan the work day, having flexible work hours, and being able to bring children to work if the childcare center or school were not open. Another example they gave of a family-friendly workplace was scheduling of meetings sensitive to parental needs, which meant no early mornings or late afternoons that would interfere with

taking children to and from daycare or after-school care. In addition, our respondents noted the pro-active family-friendly policy in some private sector firms that top up the parental leave benefit to compensate for the 80 percent wage replacement and the wage ceiling set for replacement that was often below their salary. More generally, parents portrayed a family-friendly work culture as one in which their employers and workmates demonstrated understanding and support for parents on parental leave or those off from work caring for sick children.

In our Swedish sample, gender difference in perceptions of workplace friendliness was primarily related to work sector. The public sector, predominantly female, is acknowledged as a gender-sensitive work environment and many women move from private to public sector jobs after they have children (Hoem 1995). Therefore, it is not surprising that women working in the public sector characterize their workplaces much more positively than those working in the private sector. Conversely, we found several mothers in the private sector who stated that their workplaces were “unfriendly” and both men and women who maintained that that gender-role expectations in male-dominated firms worked against women. Among Swedish men who reported that some aspects of their workplaces were family unfriendly, we found no differences between those working in public and private sector firms.

In the Budapest sample, this pattern is reversed. Respondents, especially women, working in the private sector found their workplace more family-friendly than those working in the public sector. Once again this can be explained by the higher proportion of self-employment and micro-enterprises in Hungary compared with Sweden. The self-employed in our sample did not work long hours or unsocial hours and tended to work less than those as employees. In fact, the majority of self-employed women in our sample showed a working time capabilities deficit (Lee and McCann 2006), that is, they would have liked to work more hours. In this context, work hours may be flexible, but may not reflect greater capabilities for WLB and better quality of life, given the high proportions who have irregular precarious jobs.

Considering workplace organizational cultures in the two societies, we find similarities in the Swedish and Budapest samples. In both our cases, workplace cultures can foster highly competitive environments that undermine capabilities and agency for WLB. What we did not find among the Stockholm respondents, however, was a perception that long hours spent at work are an indication of work commitment (Perrons et al. 2006). Many of our fathers and mothers had the flexibility to take work home, so they could pick up

their children from daycare early. Not to be forgotten is that this flexibility can blur the boundaries between work and home; the spill-over effect may not reduce workload or lead to greater WLB. Still, these highly educated flex workers are in a better position to rearrange schedules for family compared with those with low education who most often have fixed schedules and may be subject to shift work and asocial hours.

Time poverty is not a specific measure in our study (see the Introduction in this volume), but rather a perception of the lack of hours in the day that allow one to finish work tasks and care responsibilities, a sense that there is not enough time for one's family, expressed as work/life conflict or interference (see Drobníć and Guillén in this volume). Time poverty can cut across differences in education, occupation, and social class. Many Swedish parents described themselves as time poor. Nevertheless, in light of the long working time regimes for both Hungarian men and women and their limited opportunities for part-time work, we presume that the time squeeze for parents (most often mothers) is more intense, in light of the absolute number of hours worked during the day. In our Stockholm sample, we found few examples in which time poverty conjoined with economic poverty; one exceptional example was an immigrant African father with poor Swedish skills working long shifts in a low-paid public sector job whose wife was unemployed.

Considering overall agency inequalities in WLB, we find that the majority of Hungarian working parents expressed a greater sense of vulnerability in jobs and economic futures, in contrast to Swedish parents. Financial circumstances were invoked again and again as the main reason standing in the way of the achieving of a better WLB, particularly among the low and medium educated. These accounts of these two fathers are typical "*It is so hard nowadays to earn enough to cover the cost of living*" (father 32, 3 child, low ed, security guard in the private sector). In the same vein, another father makes visible the lack capabilities and agency for WLB that he has: "*There is no choice: both of us must work in order to cover our living costs*" (father, 35, three children, medium ed, courier in the private sector). Seen from the capabilities framework, the Hungarian case illustrates that the possibilities for effective choice are diminished when individuals lack a sense of well-being (well being freedom in Sen's terms (Sen 1992)).

Discussion

Our model of capabilities in a European context highlights marked differences in the ability of Hungarian and Swedish parents

to convert resources into agency for WLB. Despite the grounding of WLB in European law, Hungarian men and women experience limited entitlement to exercise these. Underlying these agency inequalities are structural features of the economy and labor markets, including insecure employment, long working time regimes, and low wages that force mothers and fathers to take extra jobs.

Overall levels of job security indirectly affect individual agency to make claims for care at the workplace. Here, we find dramatic differences between our two societies. In Sweden, there are much stronger collective agreements and a much higher percentage of employees covered by these.¹³ Though both Swedish and Hungarian parents are protected by law against job loss and job discrimination after returning from care leaves, the subjective efficacy to exercise these rights is strengthened with collective agreements that regulate dismissals.

Perceptions of insecurity in jobs and precarious economies are indicators of agency inequalities for WLB. We found profound differences in our two cases. This is supported by our previous analyses of the European Social Survey (Hobson and Fahlén 2008) in which we found that over a third of Hungarian fathers said that they have difficulties living on their present income, six times more than Swedish fathers. These data also indicate that a much higher proportion of Hungarian working parents viewed their jobs as insecure. The differences are greatest among mothers: whereas 29 percent of Swedish mothers saw their work situation as insecure more than 46 percent of Hungarian mothers perceived their situations as insecure. The reality for Hungarian fathers with low education was one in which just having a job and wage trumped all other concerns. The existence of family-friendly policies, such as the ability to reduce hours, the rights to refuse hours, or claims for more flexible hours, was beyond their grasp. The agency gap between rights and the capabilities to exercise them is most strongly felt by low-educated Hungarian women who encounter difficulties in re-entering the labor market after having children. Though rights to return to one's job after parental leave exist in EU and national law, the insecurity in the labor market and high unemployment weaken women's agency to return to their jobs.

Workplace organizational cultures in both societies inhibit capabilities to achieve a WLB as seen in the competitive work environments that assume a disembodied worker without family ties. Among the Hungarian men in our sample, this was business as usual, which is why so few fathers would even consider making a claim for their parental leave rights. In the Swedish case, the

discriminatory treatment toward the family-oriented worker was confined to the private sector and felt more acutely by Swedish mothers than fathers.

Returning to our model in which conversion factors underpin a sense of entitlement to make a claim for WFB, we find that subjective efficacy to challenge gendered norms at the workplace is much stronger among Swedish parents than Hungarian. Swedish fathers and mothers knew about their rights and in the interviews would invoke the anti-discrimination law and policy norms to support them, as seen in the claims for parental leave among both mothers and fathers and the sense of indignation when discriminatory practices were reported. It is also apparent in the sense of entitlement that both men and women expressed to make claims for family needs. The rights to reduce hours in Sweden predated the EU Directive by decades and women have a strong sense of entitlement to exercise this right during early childrearing years. This example illustrates how the seeding process operates, in which rights become embedded in institutions and daily practices. They affect norms and expectations, as seen in the Swedish respondents' assertions that they were rarely even asked to do overtime or weekend work because their workmates and employers knew that they had small children. Underlying this sense of entitlement are the strong conversion factors discussed above: rights supported by union organization and collective bargaining, as well as public discourse and debate on the importance of family-friendly workplaces.

Certainly, there are agency inequalities for WLB in Sweden. We found an agency gap for WLB in both women's and men's capabilities for claiming care rights and the care penalties that they experienced at the workplace. Organizational cultures were impediments for those fathers who would have liked to have taken more leave. The gender role expectations in the private sector limited women's possibilities to find jobs in that sector and to retain them after starting a family. However, for our Hungarian parents, the agency inequalities for challenging gendered norms at the workplace and in the home appear daunting. Traditional norms around women's responsibilities for home and childrearing appear even more deeply imprinted in the Hungarian landscape than in the past. This is evident in Hungarian fathers' perceptions of making claims for WLB at the workplace; exercising their rights to care leave was beyond the realm of the possible.

This study of capabilities in two institutional contexts addresses two basic questions in Sen's theory: How does one convert resources into agency for a WLB, and what are the substantive freedoms to do so? Considering our Hungarian parents, we find weak capabilities

for WLB can result in poor quality of life, with time poverty, on the one side, and weak economy on the other side. Hungarian mothers experience agency inequalities for WLB most acutely, as they take the lion's share of unpaid care and domestic work in the family and have few possibilities for part-time work. The very low fertility in Hungary can be understood in terms of this no win situation in WLB.

Representing two ends of the spectrum of WLB, our comparative cases, Hungary and Sweden, underscore the importance of evaluating policies for WLB in terms of agency freedoms for exercising them. This cognitive dimension is essential for analyzing gender agency inequalities in WLB: (i) how norms are reproduced in multiple sites: in policies, in workplaces, and in families and (ii) how conversion facts (rights and social rights and new policies and discourses) can create capabilities for challenging them.

The capabilities approach is highly relevant to our era of post-global economic crises, as it offers the theoretical space to confront the contradictions and tensions in the new norms and rights for parenting and the risks and vulnerabilities that families face in global economies in which jobs are less insecure and in which welfare states are under pressure to reduce social costs. Will we see a growing divide within and across European societies in the capabilities for WLB?

NOTES

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Barbara Hobson holds a professor's chair in Sociology at Stockholm University. She has published widely on gender and welfare states concerning themes of gender and citizenship, men and social politics, and social movements and gender diversity in welfare states: publications can be found at <http://people.su.se/bhobson/>. She is a Strand Coordinator for the EU Network of Excellence, Reconciling Work and Welfare (RECOWE) and is project leader for the capabilities and agency and Work Life Balance project featured in this special issue.

Susanne Fahlén is an advanced doctoral student in Sociology at Stockholm University, with a multidisciplinary background in cultural anthropology and demography. Her research and publications address gender and social politics in a European perspective with a special focus on parental work–life balance, childbearing intentions and realized fertility.

Judit Takács is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her research addresses LGBT issues,

AIDS prevention, anti-discrimination and equal treatment policies, work-life balance and practices in families. A list of her publications can be found at <http://www.policy.hu/takacs/publications.php>.

1. The absent father is most pronounced in Japan, where fathers live away from home and are married to the firm.

2. Three EU Directives address time dimensions: Part Time Work (Directive 97/81/EC); The Working-Time Directive (Directive 93/104/EC); the Parental Leave Directive (Directive 96/34/EC).

3. The same survey is now being conducted in Osaka, Japan.

4. The sample in Stockholm was drawn from the Statistical Central Bureau, and in Budapest the personal data of respondents were provided by the Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services for research purposes.

5. In both samples, fifty men and fifty women, aged twenty-five to fifty-seven years old, are included. In the Stockholm sample, 53 percent work in the private sector and 47 percent in the public sector, while 70 percent in the Budapest sample work in the private sector and 30 percent in the public sector. In the Swedish sample, we strived to select equally large groups according to the firm size. In the Hungarian sample, 51 percent work in small firms (less than twenty employees), 24 percent in medium size (20–249 employees) and 25 percent in large companies (250+ employees). The educational level is distributed as follows. Stockholm: compulsory level, 8 percent; secondary level, 40 percent; tertiary level, 52 percent. Budapest: compulsory level, 25 percent; secondary level, 20 percent; and tertiary level, 25 percent. The average number of children is 2.16 in Stockholm sample and 1.68 in Budapest sample.

6. The questionnaire also includes additional sections on the division of household work, a social network component and social policy country-specific module.

7. This is referred to in Swedish policy as the speed premium.

8. The most recent figures show that proportion of men's leave has reached 23.1 percent during 2010 (Swedish Social Insurance Agency 2011).

9. Internal flexibility can be defined as: overtime, flexi time, part-time, temporary work, casual work, or sub-contracting (Viebrock and Clasen 2009).

10. In 2006 there were approximately 700,000 private enterprises officially registered in Hungary, 90 percent of which were micro-enterprises with a maximum of ten employees; 50 percent of all enterprises were noted as self-employed sole proprietors (KSH 2008).

11. In the questionnaire, we used the same question that appears in the 2004 European Social Survey: How many hours one would choose to work if it meant a loss or gain in hourly pay?

12. We found only one exception, a man, who was unaware of his rights for daddy leave. He was a truck driver with long hours and a large family.

13. Differences in trade union density compiled in 2007 are Hungary 16.9 percent; Sweden 68 percent; Collective bargain coverage in 2009 for Hungary is 25.5 percent and for Sweden 91 percent (Eurofound 2009).

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