

# Who uses public childcare for 2-year-old children? Coherent family policies and usage patterns in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany

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European countries have increased their public childcare provision for children under age 3. However, it is unclear if and how usage patterns differ across countries. This study examined the relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of mothers and the use of childcare for 2-year-old children. Using European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions data for the years 2005–2008, we analysed the characteristics of mothers and usage patterns in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. To single out the effect of maternal employment, working and non-working mothers were investigated separately. Our findings showed that, in Sweden, a country with strong support for dual-earner families, usage was largely independent of mothers' characteristics. However, in Western Germany, where more support is given to male breadwinner families, and in Finland, a country with pluralistic family support, highly educated mothers were found to be more likely to use childcare than were mothers with lower levels of education.

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In recent decades, most Western European welfare states have intensified their public (or publicly subsidised) childcare provision for children under 3 years of age. While the vast majority of children age 3–5 are in some form of non-family childcare, the differences in the enrolment rates of younger children are still pronounced (Multilinks, 2011). Thus, in some countries, only a small share of children under age 3 use childcare services. The selective use of childcare might be cause for concern if children with specific family characteristics were excluded from participation. It has been shown that particularly children from deprived families can profit from childcare as participation in childcare programmes appears to promote their cognitive and social development (Barnett, 2011; Burger, 2010). Thus, children who do not have access to care services might be disadvantaged.

Previous research on this issue focused mainly on the determinants of childcare usage in a single national setting (see Becker, 2007, for a review). The few country comparisons that exist (see e.g., Mamolo, Coppola, & Di Cesare, 2011; van Lancker & Ghysels, 2012) found varying effects of socio-economic characteristics across different nation-states. The results of

these studies imply that institutional aspects might play a role in childcare usage. Similarly, we argue that social differences in childcare usage might be associated with the degree to which government policies support parents' (usually mothers') labour force participation. We suggest that only coherent policy support for dual-earner families results in virtually universal use of childcare services, that is, all children having access to childcare, independent of their family backgrounds. In this environment, most parents will participate in the labour market and make use of daycare services, irrespective of their socio-economic characteristics.

The main research questions in the present study were: Who uses childcare for very young children? How does the pattern of childcare usage differ for working and non-working mothers? Are there national differences based on the prevailing family policies of a country? We compared usage patterns in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. (Ideally, we would have analysed Eastern Germany in a fourth sample. However, as the sample size for Eastern Germany in our data set was too small for meaningful analysis, we excluded respondents from Eastern Germany.) As the three countries support dual-earner families to different

degrees, we investigated whether the composition of childcare users varied across these countries.

In our empirical analyses, we used European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) data for the years 2005–2008 for 2-year-old children. We chose to limit our study to a single year of age, in part because childcare usage varies considerably by children's ages. Previous studies have shown that the timing of childcare start is determined by socio-economic characteristics (Duvander, 2006; Ondrich & Spiess, 1998). In other words, the social structure of children in childcare can vary across age groups. To avoid confounding effects for different ages, we investigated a single age group.

The article is structured as follows. In the next section, we discuss the relationships between maternal employment, policy context and childcare usage. The third section provides a description of childcare usage and family policies in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. In the fourth section, we present our research strategy. In the fifth section, we discuss the data and the variables for our multivariate analyses, while the regression results are presented in the sixth section. The seventh and final section presents the conclusions.

### Policy coherence and childcare usage

To understand the usage of public childcare for very young children, we have to consider maternal employment. For working parents, non-family childcare is usually essential.<sup>1</sup> When women with (young) children decide to work, they face competing demands on their time. The availability of non-parental childcare reduces parental care time and offers mothers the opportunity to combine work and family.

Female labour force participation depends on socio-economic status. At the macro level, more women are employed in countries with higher female educational attainment (Jaumotte, 2004). Given that working mothers in particular make use of childcare, it is possible that the social composition of childcare users simply reflects the social composition of working mothers.

However, institutional factors might mediate the relationship between mothers' employment and childcare usage. The effect of childcare policies also depends on the existence of other policies. Some authors (e.g., Lewis, 2001; Neyer, 2003; Neyer & Andersson, 2008; Thévenon, 2011) have argued that the coherence of family policies plays a crucial role in

their effectiveness. Employing a concept from policy implementation research, policies were deemed coherent if they followed the same set of ideas or had a common purpose (May, Sapotichne, & Workman, 2006). In the present study, we regarded family policies as coherent if they supported the same family model.

To assess the dominant family model, we categorised each country's package of family policies. Korpi (2000) made a distinction between policies that support women's employment (dual-earner support) and those that encourage women to engage in unpaid work at home (general family support). The sum of all the family-relevant policies in a country constitutes its family policy strategy, that is, whether a country generally provides stronger support for dual-earner or male breadwinner families. Most countries support one family model more than the other. However, some countries offer strong support for both models.

As childcare services enable both parents to work, a coherent family policy package that included public childcare provision would consistently support the dual-earner model. In the following, we discuss how childcare usage might vary across different policy contexts.

### Dual-earner support and childcare usage

Policies supporting dual-earner families encourage women to participate in the labour market. One policy element that supports working parents is the availability of affordable and high-quality public childcare for young children (Gornick & Meyers, 2003). In addition, providing short periods of parental leave with high levels of earnings substitution favours dual-earner families as this encourages mothers to re-enter the labour force soon after childbirth (Lewis, 2001). A third policy that favours dual earners is a system of equal taxation in which women's earnings are considered individually. This increases the independence of each partner and encourages female labour force participation (Dingeldey, 2001).

In a country with a coherent family policy strategy that favours dual-earner families, childcare usage might be less affected by socio-economic characteristics as all mothers are encouraged to work. Given that services are provided at a low cost, even parents with lower incomes can afford childcare. As neither mothers who stay home nor male breadwinners are supported for a long period, mothers usually return to their jobs after parental leave.

### Male breadwinner support and childcare usage

Countries that provide more support for male breadwinner families usually offer only a limited number of places in public childcare for children under 3 years.

<sup>1</sup> Other family members, such as grandparents, can also provide daily childcare. However, this is the case only for a limited number of children in the countries under study (see Majamaa, 2010, for Finland; Arpino, Pronzato, & Tavares, 2010, for Germany and Sweden).

Long (unpaid or flat-rate) parental leave reduces female labour force participation (Gornick, Meyers, & Ross, 1997). Moreover, the joint taxation of spouses favours the male breadwinner family (Dingeldey, 2001; Gustafsson & Bruyn-Hundt, 1991).

In male breadwinner societies, maternal employment seems to be related to women's characteristics. For Western Germany, for instance, it has been shown that mothers with higher levels of education are more likely to work (Konietzka & Kreyenfeld, 2010). Given that working mothers use childcare more often than non-working mothers, childcare usage might also vary with education in a male breadwinner context. The higher the educational attainment of the mother, the more likely she is to participate in the labour market and to rely on public childcare.

### Pluralistic family support and childcare usage

The dual-earner and the male breadwinner models are two ideal types. However, in some countries, family policies support not just one family model, but have some elements that favour both. This 'pluralistic' family support (Mischke, 2011) results in diverse family arrangements. Sometimes policies compete with each other, for example, in some countries, parents receive a home care allowance only if they do not use public childcare. In other words, parents have to choose which type of policy they want to take advantage of.

In a country offering both male breadwinner and dual-earner support, socio-economic characteristics might affect childcare usage, at least to some extent. On the one hand, mothers who prefer to participate in the labour market profit from support for dual-earner families. On the other hand, mothers can choose to take advantage of homemaker support, and thus stay out of the labour market. As has been shown, women with lower levels of income and educational attainment are more likely to opt for homemaking in countries offering a cash-for-care programme than are those with higher incomes or educational levels (Aassve & Lappegård, 2009; Morgan & Zippel, 2003; Salmi, 2006). Applying these results to childcare usage, we would expect to find that mothers with high levels of education use childcare more often, although this relationship should be less pronounced than in the male breadwinner setting.

### Family policy strategies in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany

For our country comparison of childcare usage patterns, we chose Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. The childcare systems in these countries are comparable in terms of price and quality, while access to childcare and leave policies differs considerably.

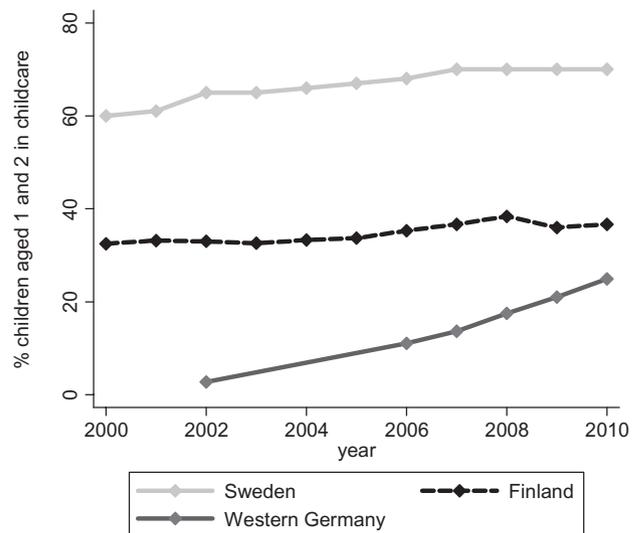


Figure 1. Public child care. Enrolment rates of 1- and 2-year-old children as percentages of the total population in this age group.

Note: Author's own calculations. Enrolment rates include public or publicly funded full- and part-time care arrangements in institutions or family daycare. For Finland, we excluded the share of families receiving a private child care allowance (provided to less than 4 per cent of 1- and 2-year-old children in 2007–2009) as these numbers were not available for all years. For the year 2002 (0- to 2-year-olds), the official statistics in Germany measured provision rates, that is, the share of children in a specific age group that were offered a slot in public childcare.

Sources: Sweden SCB (2010a). Finland: National Institute for Health and Welfare (2012). Western Germany: for years 2006–2010: DESTATIS (2011), author's own calculations. For 2002, DESTATIS (2004).

Figure 1 shows the development of the official enrolment rates of 1- and 2-year-old children over time. As a majority of parents care for their infant children at home, we excluded children under 1 year of age. In Sweden, the share of children enrolled in childcare reached a level of around 70 per cent. Finland remained at a level of under 40 per cent. Data on the German situation were collected only for recent years, and the indicator on childcare provision changed in 2005 (cf. Kolvenbach & Taubmann, 2006). For Western Germany, we found a considerable increase over the observed period, with enrolment reaching a level of 25 per cent in 2010. This shows that the share of parents who do not make use of childcare services varies across the three countries.

Both Sweden and Finland offer universal childcare, and are usually categorised as Scandinavian or social democratic welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 2000). Western Germany has traditionally been seen as a conservative welfare state. Although reforms are underway, childcare for children under age 3 is still rationed. It is striking that by 2010, childcare usage levels for children under age 3 in Finland were more similar to those of Western Germany than of Sweden.

Table 1. Family policy system in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany.

	Sweden	Finland	Western Germany
Female labour force participation rate 2011 (age 25–49 years) <sup>a</sup>	87%	84%	82% (including Eastern Germany)
Part-time employment rate (<35 hours/week) among women in the age group 25–49 (2011) <sup>b</sup>	35%	14%	46% (including Eastern Germany)
Income taxation <sup>c</sup>	Individual	Individual	Joint
Childcare quality: average staff–child ratio	Preschool: 1:5.1 <sup>d</sup>	0- to 3-year-olds: 1:4 <sup>d</sup>	0- to 2-year-olds: 1:4.8 <sup>e</sup>
Childcare fees (in 2001) <sup>f</sup>	7% of family net income	7% of family net income	6% of family net income
Childcare access	Universal for 1- to 12-year-old children	Universal from birth to 6-year-old children	Ages 3 to school entry: universal; under age 3: rationed
Enrolment rate 1- and 2-year-olds (2010) <sup>g</sup>	70%	37%	25%
Job protection after childbirth	18 months	3 years	3 years
Duration and level of earnings substitution	13 months (80–90% earnings substitution up to a ceiling)	About 10 months (60–70% earnings substitution) <sup>h</sup>	14 months (first 14 weeks: maternity leave, 100% earnings substitution; afterwards: 65–67% earnings substitution up to a ceiling); introduced in 2007
After parental leave with wage substitution: cash for care	Flat rate benefit until the child is 18 months old; since July 2008, some municipalities offer cash for care after parental leave for children between 1 and 3 years old; €320/month max	Since the early 1980s; for children up to 3 years old; varies between €294–500/month <sup>i</sup>	In four federal states; varies between €75 and €300/month; different durations
Reserved for one parent (“use or lose”)	2 months	about 1 month	2 months

**Notes:**

<sup>a</sup> Eurostat 2012: Labour force participation rates for a given sex and age group (%), variable *fsa\_argaed*.

<sup>b</sup> Eurostat 2012: Part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment for a given sex and age group (%), variable *lfsa\_eggpa*.

<sup>c</sup> For information about taxation systems, see Daly (2000), Dingeldey (2001) and Immervoll, Kleven, Kreiner, and Verdellin (2009).

<sup>d</sup> Information taken from European Commission’s Expert Group on Gender and Employment (2009).

<sup>e</sup> Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2010).

<sup>f</sup> See the comparison of child care fees of Immervoll and Barber (2006). Data refers to two-earner families with full-time earnings of 167% (100 + 67) of average earnings. Note that the authors base their analyses on fees in Germany on data for the German federal state North Rhine-Westphalia. In Sweden, a maximum fee system was introduced in 2002. Today, fees amount to 3 per cent of parents’ gross income or less (Skolverket 2007).

<sup>g</sup> Source: see Figure 1.

<sup>h</sup> Haataja (2009).

<sup>i</sup> The exact amount depends on the number and the ages of the children until the youngest child turns three or enters childcare. Moreover, some municipalities pay an additional benefit (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2006).

The three countries followed different paths in formulating their general family policy strategies. Table 1 provides an overview of the three family systems under consideration.

One of the central aims of Swedish family policy is to offer mothers and fathers the opportunity to share paid and care work. The various policy measures implemented in Sweden mainly favour the dual-earner model (Björnberg, 2002; Nyberg, 2004).<sup>2</sup> For working

parents, Swedish parental leave offers the option to exit the labour market after childbirth at a relatively high level of compensation (80–90 per cent earnings substitution up to a ceiling). Leave can be taken for 480 days, of which 60 days of parental leave are reserved for each parent (Duvander, 2008). After the leave, children usually attend public childcare or publicly subsidised daycare. Today, each municipality is responsible for providing childcare, that is, a child between the ages of 1 and 12 will be offered a publicly or privately organised childcare arrangement within 3–4 months after application (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2003). Childcare fees in Sweden are relatively low, at a level of 7 per cent of net family income (Immervoll & Barber, 2006; see also Table 1). In 2008, 77 per cent of women (aged 15–64 years) participated in the labour

<sup>2</sup> A new development in Swedish family policy is the child home care allowance, implemented in 2008 (Ferrarini & Duvander, 2010). This new policy supposedly supports the male breadwinner model. However, for the period considered in our study, we categorised Swedish family policies as supporting dual-earner families.

market (see Table 1). Of the working mothers with 1- and 2-year-olds, 40 per cent were in part-time employment (SCB, 2010b)

In Western Germany,<sup>3</sup> the level of support for male breadwinner families has traditionally been high. The joint income taxation has been an incentive for women to exit the labour market after childbirth (Gustafsson & Bruyn-Hundt, 1991). In addition, because kindergarten (which since 1996 has been universally provided to children from the age of 3 to the age of school entry) is mainly part-time, and because there are few childcare options for children under age 3, it is difficult for women to combine work and family while their children are still young. In 2008, one-third of German mothers with children under age 3 were employed (DESTATIS, 2010a), many of them part-time (see Table 1). In 2010, 25 per cent of 1- and 2-year-old children were enrolled in public daycare (DESTATIS, 2011). Childcare costs in Germany vary across federal states and are usually a responsibility of municipalities. Based on data on an exemplary region, Immervoll and Barber (2006, cf. Table 1) reported that in Germany, costs amounted to 6 per cent of the net family income. However, reforms of the family policy system are underway, and these changes represent a paradigm shift away from support for male breadwinner families and towards support for dual-earner families (Henninger, Wimbauer, & Dombrowski, 2008). The new parental leave introduced in 2007 is similar to Sweden's (Erler, 2009). By June 2013, childcare access for children between the age of 1 and the age of school entry should be guaranteed. Before this legal entitlement goes into effect, access in Western Germany will still be rationed. In regions with a shortage of childcare, certain groups, such as single parents who work, have priority access. In this study, we focus on the time frame of 2005–2008, and thus do not take into account the recent reforms that provide enhanced support for dual-earner families.

Finland offers support for both dual-earner and male breadwinner families, and thus promotes free choice for parents. Parents have 10 months of parental leave, with a wage substitution of approximately two-thirds of earnings. For children in the age group newborn to 6, public childcare provision in Finland is universal, that is, all children whose parents want to use childcare services can attend preschool (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2006). Moreover, municipalities can offer an allowance to pay private care providers. At 7 per cent of the average net family income, the costs of childcare in Finland are similar to those in Sweden and

Germany (Immervoll & Barber, 2006; see Table 1). However, childcare usage is considerably lower in Finland than in Sweden. In 2010, 37 per cent of 1- and 2-year-olds were enrolled in public or publicly funded childcare (National Institute for Health and Welfare, 2012). This comparatively low enrolment rate might be related to the introduction of a home care allowance in the 1980s. After parental leave, parents who do not use childcare services and who do not receive a private care allowance are entitled to receive a so-called 'home care allowance' until the child is 3 years old. At the end of 2005, 41.5 per cent of parents with children under age 3 were making use of this allowance (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2006). Moreover, the low availability of part-time work in Finland (cf. Table 1) suggests that the labour market offers a low degree of flexibility in accommodating family needs (Repo, 2010), especially when children are very young.

### Aim of the study

The aim of our analyses was to identify differences and similarities in patterns of childcare usage in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. The main questions were as follows: (i) Which characteristics of the mother and of the children are related to childcare usage for 2-year-old children?; (ii) Does the relevance of these characteristics persist for both working and non-working mothers?; and (iii) Do the patterns differ according to the general family policy strategy in a country?

As discussed previously, maternal labour force participation is closely related to childcare usage for children under age 3. Accordingly, some studies model the labour force participation of mothers and childcare use as joint decisions (Andrén, 2003; Coneus, Goeggel, & Muehler, 2008; Del Boca, Locatelli, & Vuri, 2005; van Gameren & Ooms, 2009). This procedure accounts for the endogenous relationship of the two variables. In such models, the effects of the independent variables on childcare usage are assumed to be the same across working and non-working mothers. In the study at hand, we modelled employment as exogenous to childcare usage. We argue that the decisions to use childcare and to work are not necessarily taken together but that different mechanisms determine childcare usage among working and non-working mothers. For example, for employed women, flexibility of the care arrangement might be the most important aspect leading to the use of informal childcare providers. In contrast, non-working mothers might appreciate the beneficial effects of childcare for children's education and social development, and thus rely on formal childcare (see Davis & Connelly, 2005). In order to analyse whether the characteristics of users persist for working and non-working mothers, for each country we analysed the full sample, including all mothers, and two separate samples for working and

<sup>3</sup> Note that childcare enrolment rates in Eastern Germany are substantially higher than in Western Germany (DESTATIS, 2011). This might be due to the fact that in the GDR era, the provision of childcare for children under age 3 was well established (Frerich & Frey, 1996).

non-working mothers. Although the sample sizes were small for the subsamples, we argue that a comparison of working and non-working mothers helps one to understand different mechanisms leading to childcare usage in the two groups.

Based on our country selection, we sought to account for the variation of usage patterns in different family policy settings. As EU-SILC does not include questions on individuals' views on childcare and working mothers, we were unable to test explicitly for country differences in attitudes. However, we expected to find that family characteristics are least important for childcare usage in Sweden. There, childcare is embedded in a comprehensive system of family policy measures supporting the dual-earner family. Working mothers are widely accepted, and childcare is used by all societal groups. In Western Germany, where the male breadwinner family has long been dominant, we expected to find that socio-economic factors affect childcare usage. Studies have shown that a considerable share of the Western German population believes that preschool children suffer if their mother works (see DiPrete, Morgan, Engelhardt, & Pacalova, 2003), and childcare is seen as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, maternal care. As childcare attitudes seem to be related to socio-economic characteristics such as education and working status (Geier & Riedel, 2008), these factors are correlated with childcare use. In Finland, family policies support both the dual-earner and the male breadwinner models, giving parents the freedom to choose the arrangement they prefer. However, as has been shown for the home care allowance (Morgan & Zippel, 2003; Salmi, 2006; Salmi & Lammi-Taskula, 2012), the behaviour of parents is determined by their socio-economic backgrounds. Concerning income, women with lower earnings seem to be more likely to make use of long care leaves than women with higher earnings (e.g., Morgan & Zippel, 2003). Thus, we expected to find that the effects of mothers' characteristics are less strong in Finland than in Western Germany, but are stronger than in Sweden.

It has been argued that the characteristics of a childcare system might affect childcare usage (Davis & Connelly, 2005). In particular, availability, prices and quality are factors that might influence parents' decisions concerning childcare. To determine whether availability affects usage patterns, we compared Sweden and Finland (universal childcare) with Western Germany (rationed access). We argue that if the presence of universal childcare alone determines usage, socio-economic characteristics should be irrelevant in Sweden and Finland, but crucial in Western Germany. Concerning price and quality, the data are limited. However, as discussed previously, these two characteristics are, on average, similar in the three countries (see Table 1), and thus should not affect the country comparison.

## Data and methods

We conducted analyses based on four cross-sectional survey waves of the EU-SILC, including the years 2005–2008. EU-SILC is a yearly survey by Eurostat, and it has been conducted since 2004 by the national statistical offices of most of the EU-27 countries. The general aim is to collect cross-sectional and longitudinal micro-data on the income and living conditions of different types of households. Although this is not the focus of the survey, the cross-sectional questionnaire also includes several items concerning the usage of childcare arrangements that allow for country comparisons.

The data for Sweden and Finland were provided by Eurostat.<sup>4</sup> For Germany, due to confidentiality issues, not all of the variables were included in this data set. However, the complete German data set was available from the German Statistical Office via remote data analyses based on the German EU-SILC data 2005–2008. The analyses were conducted by the research data centres of the Federal Statistical Office and the statistical offices of the *Länder*. The drawback of using this procedure was that we could not create a pooled data set controlling for country effects, but had to analyse the three countries in separate samples.

The main parts of the questionnaire were harmonised across countries, but there were several differences, particularly in the sampling design and data collection methods (for details, see Eurostat, 2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2010b). In Germany, households filled in a postal questionnaire. In Sweden and Finland, phone interviews were supplemented by information from administrative registers. Eurostat demands that all countries collect a stratified random sample for EU-SILC. By derogation until EU-SILC 2008 in Germany, the sampling procedure was a combination of quota sampling and random sampling of households based on a sample of respondents generally willing to participate in social surveys identified in the German Microcensus (DESTATIS, 2010b).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The data are based on the following versions: EU-SILC User Data Base (UDP) 2005 (version August 2009), 2006 (version 4 of March 2010), 2007 (version 4 of August 2010) and 2008 (version 2 of August 2010) provided by Eurostat. For a discussion of the methodological issues, see Eurostat (2008, 2009a, 2010a, 2010b) and the Ministry of Finance (2010).

<sup>5</sup> For problems arising due to systematic under-representation of migrants, large families and individuals with low levels of education in the German sample, please see Hauser (2008) and Schneider and Müller (2009). This is of concern for the creation of aggregate level indicators that depend on the socio-economic composition of the sample. In our analysis, however, we were interested in the individual level usage of childcare arrangements, and did not focus on aggregate measures.

Childcare measurement and patterns of care usage

The childcare data in EU-SILC are provided as the number of weekly hours spent in the respective arrangements (Eurostat, 2009b). The weekly hours refer to a usual week, and information is given for each child under age 13 currently living in the household. We analysed whether parents were using some form of public childcare for their 2-year-old children. In EU-SILC, the use of institutional care is reflected in variable RL040, that is, ‘childcare provided at daycare centres, including all kinds of care organised or controlled by a public or private structure’ (cf., e.g., Eurostat, 2009b).<sup>6</sup> In Sweden, Finland and Germany, family daycare is publicly funded or subsidised. We consider this to be also part of public childcare provision, thus we included family care, which was measured in variable RL050. (In some other countries, variable RL050 includes also private childcare arrangements, such as babysitters and au pairs. However, in the questionnaires in Sweden, Finland and Germany, it refers to family daycare.) Moreover, for the sake of completeness, we included three German children who were using preschool (variable RL010).

The childcare variable in this study is coded ‘1’ if a child was attending childcare for 1 hour a week or more, and ‘0’ otherwise. The daily duration of childcare usage would be an interesting phenomenon to study, as it would show to what extent the provision of childcare services allows for the reconciliation of family and work. However, there are serious shortcomings in the measurement quality in the German data. As discussed by Keck and Saraceno (2011), the distribution of childcare hours indicates that a considerable number of German respondents reported the number of weekly instead of daily hours. This measurement error makes a comparison of national hourly data difficult. Thus, we relied on the dichotomous variable as the measure for childcare usage.

In Figure 2, we present the share of children of different age groups attending some form of publicly funded childcare, based on EU-SILC data. We found that Sweden had the highest enrolment rates for children in each age group under age 4. For 1- and 2-year-old children, enrolment was found to be lowest among German children. Finland had the lowest enrolment rate for children under 1 year old (<1%), but

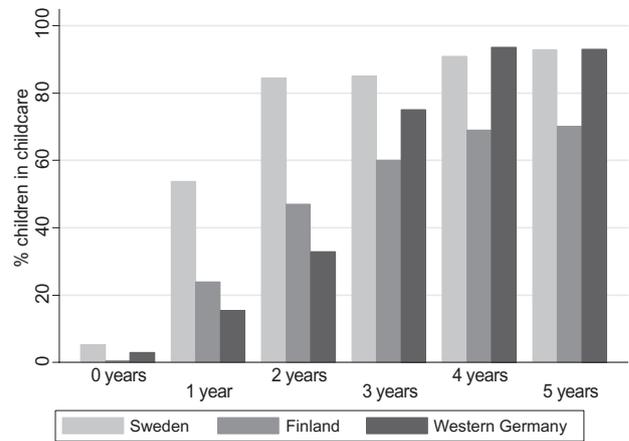


Figure 2. Children in non-family care. Percentages of the respective age groups. Source: EU-SILC data, 2005–2008. Unweighted data. Author’s own calculations.

enrolment for 1- and 2-year-olds was between the Swedish and Western German levels. For the older age groups, the picture was reversed, with Western Germany showing the highest enrolment rates.

In our multivariate analysis, we focused on 2-year-old children. There are several reasons why we took this approach. We decided against a joint analysis of different age groups because in the three countries under study, considerable differences were found in childcare usage depending on the children’s ages (see Figure 2). Less than 2 per cent of children under age 1 were found to be in daycare. For the age group of 1-year-old children, only 15 per cent of households in Western Germany and 23 per cent of households in Finland were shown to use childcare. It is unclear whether parents with a 1-year-old child have the same reasons for using childcare as parents with a 2-year-old child. Moreover, a pooled sample produces a methodological problem. As the cross-sectional EU-SILC data sets are not linked over years, it is impossible to identify the same child in different survey years. In order to prevent clustering of individuals, we analysed a single age group. An additional analysis of 1-year-old children was not an option, as we performed separate analyses of working and non-working mothers. In these subsamples, the number of children in care was too small for meaningful analysis.

Multivariate analyses: model and variables

We used logistic regression models (cf. Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000) to identify the relevant socioeconomic characteristics related to the use of childcare services in the three countries under study. In the analyses, we focused on mothers’ characteristics. Although we believe that childcare decisions are made together with the partner, we were also interested in single

<sup>6</sup> Focusing on the difficulty of aggregating enrolment rates at the national level, Saraceno and Keck (2008, 2011) discussed a number of critical issues concerning the childcare items in EU-SILC. For the assessment of national enrolment levels among children under age 3, a problem arises due to the possibility that siblings contribute as single observations. This, however, contradicts the assumption of independent observations. As in our study, we analysed the use of childcare for a single child, we could assume independence.

mothers. Thus, we refrained from reducing our sample to mothers who are in a relationship. Children who did not live with their mothers were excluded from the samples.

Choosing the variables in our analyses, we started from variables identified as important for childcare usage in other studies. The descriptive statistics of variables are shown in the Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix. Our first control variable was the number of children under age 6 living in the household. It is assumed that women with a larger number of children might decide to stay out of the labour market completely, thus reducing the demand for external childcare (Geier & Riedel, 2008; Huston, Chang, & Gennetian, 2002). However, preliminary analyses of the Finnish and the Western German sample indicated that having two children was positively related to childcare usage, while having three or more children yielded a negative coefficient (results not shown here). This non-linear relationship of number of children and childcare usage prevented us from grouping families with two and more children in one category. Because only a few children had more than one sibling under age 6, we excluded these from the analyses.

Concerning the age of children, it has been shown that children become more likely to attend childcare services the older they are (Hirshberg, Huang, & Fuller, 2005; Huston et al., 2002). Within the age group of 2-year-olds, we controlled for the child's age in months, based on the assumption that a child who has just turned 2 years old has a lower probability of being in childcare than a child on the verge of his or her third birthday. While the German data set provided these data, they were not included in the harmonised data set for Sweden and Finland. Indeed, other than the year of birth, the only data included in the data set were the quarter of the year in which the child was born and the quarter of the year in which the respondent was interviewed. On this basis, we randomly assigned 1 month of the respective quarter to each Finnish and Swedish child, and created an age variable for the two samples.

Studies have found that mothers with migration backgrounds (Becker, 2007; Kahn & Greenberg, 2010) or of minority ethnicities (Fram & Kim, 2008; Radey & Brewster, 2007) use childcare less often than mothers with the prevalent ethnic background of the country where they live. The reasons for this gap might include language problems and different attitudes towards childcare and mothering. To account for this, we controlled for the citizenship of the mother. Unfortunately, we faced some sample size problems in the subsamples of working and non-working mothers. Thus, we excluded respondents with foreign citizenship from the analyses of non-working mothers in Sweden and in the samples of working mothers in Finland and Western Germany.

Several studies have shown that mothers' education is positively associated with childcare use (Greenberg, 2011; Kim & Fram, 2009; Kreyenfeld & Krapf, 2010). There are two mechanisms through which education might affect childcare use. (i) The higher the level of education the mother has, the higher are her opportunity costs when she leaves the labour market. Thus, highly educated mothers are more likely to work and to use childcare. (ii) Highly educated mothers might also make use of childcare because they appreciate the developmental effects of childcare (Mamolo et al., 2011). In EU-SILC, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97) is used to measure each respondent's educational attainment. Based on this classification, we created the variables 'lower secondary or lower education' (ISCED levels 0, 1 and 2); 'upper secondary', including post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED levels 3 and 4); and 'tertiary education' (ISCED levels 5 and 6). In the sample of working mothers in Western Germany, the number of women with lower secondary (or lower) education was very small. In line with other results for Germany (Konietzka & Kreyenfeld, 2010), this indicates that the groups of working and non-working mothers differ systematically in their educational levels. In the German sample of working mothers, we combined the 'low education' group with the 'upper secondary education' group.

The employment status of the mother is also closely related to childcare usage. As discussed previously, others have modelled employment of mothers and childcare usage as joint decisions accounting for the endogenous relationship of the two variables. However, it has been shown that the socio-economic characteristics that are related to childcare usage differ between working and non-working mothers (Davis & Connelly, 2005). This implies that the decision to work is exogenous to childcare usage. To identify different usage patterns according to mothers' employment status, we ran separate analyses for working and non-working women. According to several studies, children with mothers in full-time employment use childcare services more frequently than those whose mothers are in part-time employment or are inactive (Geier & Riedel, 2008; Huston et al., 2002). In our analyses, the information on employment status is based on the current employment situation, as defined by the respondent. We distinguished between the full-time employed, the part-time employed, the unemployed and homemakers (including others who were inactive, such as retired or disabled respondents). As there are differences in the national definitions of full- and part-time jobs, we used the information on respondents' working hours. Mothers who reported working less than 30 hours a week on average were classified as part-time employed, while those who said they worked 30 or more hours a week were coded as full-time employed. Because in the

Western German sample the number of students with a 2-year-old child was too small for meaningful analysis, we excluded respondents who were enrolled in education. Concerning maternity leave, in the EU-SILC data set, employed mothers on leave were usually classified as working. In the context of our study, women who were on leave with a younger child did not face competing time demands at work and thus might also have been taking care of older siblings. Thus, taking into consideration the age of the youngest child living in the household, we decided to categorise all mothers with very young children as homemakers. Accounting for differences in minimum legal entitlements for maternal or parental leave, we based the classification on different ages of the youngest child (Finland: youngest child under 9 months; Sweden: youngest child under 11 months; Germany: youngest child under 3 months old).<sup>7</sup> In a second step, based on the information on employment, we separated the samples of working and non-working women. These subsamples differed considerably in size and composition over the three countries (see Table A2 in the Appendix).

We also took into consideration the partnership status of the mother, comparing single, married and cohabiting mothers. It has been shown that in the USA, unmarried mothers are more likely to use childcare than married mothers (Hirshberg et al., 2005). The frequencies in our samples (see Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix) indicate that singles are the smallest group in all three countries (less than 10%). The majority of mothers in our samples were married (55% in Sweden, 72% in Finland and 88% in Germany). In the Swedish subsample of working mothers, all respondents were in a partnership, that is, the category of single mothers was empty. Despite the small sample sizes, we decided to consider single mothers. This group is of specific interest especially for Germany because single parents who work have priority access when childcare services are limited (Heimer, Knittel, & Steidle, 2009). Therefore, we expected to find that German single mothers were more likely to have been using childcare than were mothers with a partner.

<sup>7</sup> The procedure differs across the three countries. In Sweden and Finland, we are referring to the parental leave period as the question on employment status refers to last December. However, we are interested in the employment status at the time of interview. As virtually all mothers take the full maternity and parental leave period (Moss, 2010), we used the age of the youngest child as indicator for being on leave. In Germany, respondents were asked about their employment at the time of the interview; thus we used the shorter maternity leave period to identify all women staying at home with their infants. In 2007, a new parental leave law was introduced in Germany; thus for younger siblings born in 2007 and 2008, we considered the first year after childbirth as the leave period.

## Regression results

The results of our logistic regression models on childcare usage in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany for 2-year-old children are shown in Table 2, and the separate analyses for working and non-working mothers are displayed in Table 3. The effects are displayed as odds ratios.<sup>8</sup>

Table 2 shows that in Sweden and Western Germany, the year of the interview had a positive effect on childcare use, implying that childcare usage in these countries has increased over time. The exact age of the child was important only in Western Germany. There, the odds ratio of 3.10 indicates, as expected, that older children were more likely to be in childcare than younger children. We did not find a significant effect for the number of children living in the household in the three countries. Also the coefficients of citizenship were shown to be insignificant. Partnership status of the mother was important in Finland where married and cohabiting mothers had significantly lower odds to use childcare than singles. In Sweden, education was not shown to significantly influence childcare usage. In contrast, for both Finland and Western Germany, children whose mother had tertiary education had higher odds of childcare usage compared with children whose mother had secondary education (Finland: odds ratio = 2.09; Western Germany: odds ratio = 1.51). Our findings further indicated that childcare usage did not differ significantly for mothers with lower secondary education.

Concerning employment status, with significant odds ratios of 0.19 in Finland and 0.42 in Western Germany, our results showed that children with part-time employed mothers had lower odds of being in childcare than those with full-time employed mothers. The difference was insignificant in Sweden. Children of both unemployed and homemaker mothers were found to be less likely to be in childcare than those with full-time employed mothers in all three countries. One exception were children of unemployed women in Western Germany, who did not significantly differ from full-time working mothers.

The results for the separate samples of working and non-working mothers are displayed in Table 3. For Sweden and Finland, the results for the subsamples generally confirmed the findings for the full sample. In the Swedish sample of working mothers (model 4), none of the household characteristics had a significant impact. Moreover, the likelihood ratio test was insignificant, which indicates that considering the variables

<sup>8</sup> It has been discussed in the literature that the interpretation of odds ratios might be problematic because of unobserved heterogeneity (Mood, 2010). Calculating average marginal effects as alternative measure (results not shown here) did not indicate substantial differences concerning our conclusions.

Table 2. Logistic regression results for childcare usage; 2-year-old children; odds ratios; all mothers.

	Sweden Model 1	Finland Model 2	Western Germany Model 3
Year of survey	1.25**	1.13	1.19**
Age of child	1.61	1.11	3.10***
Number of children in the household (under age 6)			
One child	1	1	1
Two children	0.69	0.93	0.94
Citizenship of mother			
Local	1	1	1
Foreign	0.82	1.42	0.75
Partnership status of mother			
Single	1	1	1
Married	1.37	0.35**	0.65
Cohabiting	1.32	0.38**	0.62
Education of mother			
Lower secondary or lower	0.97	0.71	0.75
Upper secondary	1	1	1
Tertiary	0.86	2.09***	1.51**
Employment status of mother			
Full-time	1	1	1
Part-time	0.64	0.19***	0.42**
Unemployed	0.30**	0.09***	0.68
Homemaker or other inactive	0.19***	0.02***	0.11***
Number of children in the sample	697	1,025	676
Likelihood ratio $\chi^2$	64.33***	586.73***	123.42***
McFadden's pseudo $R^2$	0.11	0.41	0.14

Source: EU-SILC 2005–2008 data. Author's own calculations.

\*  $p = 0.10$ ; \*\*  $p = 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p = 0.01$ .

in our model did not improve the model fit. In other words, Swedish children with working mothers were in childcare irrespective of their mother's education and their family situation. Among non-workers (model 5), both the year of the survey and the age of the child had a significant effect on childcare. For all other characteristics, the odds ratios and also the likelihood ratio test remained insignificant. However, it is important to note that this subsample was rather small as relatively few of the Swedish mothers with 2-year-old children did not work.

In the Finnish sample of working mothers (model 6), the significant odds ratio of 1.20 shows that childcare usage increased over time. We did not find significant effects of the age of the child, the number of children and partnership status of the mother on childcare enrolment. In the sample of non-working mothers, married and cohabiting mothers were significantly more likely to use childcare than single mothers. Among both Finnish subsamples, we found higher odds of participation in childcare among children whose mothers had tertiary education (working mothers: odds ratio = 2.25; non-working mothers: odds ratio = 1.76) compared with the reference category of mothers with upper secondary education. Obviously, the educational level of mothers was related to childcare use, irrespective of their labour force participation. We attribute this to a positive relationship between the socio-economic status of parents

and their childcare values (Stefansen & Farstad, 2010). Mothers with high levels of educational attainment appreciate the positive effects of non-family childcare on their child's development, and thus use childcare more often than mothers with lower educational attainment. In model 7 of our analyses, the odds ratio of 0.19 for homemaker mothers showed that their children were less likely to participate in childcare than children whose mothers were unemployed. The negative relationship between homemaking and childcare usage in Finland is in line with the fact that parents have to make a decision – either to receive the home care allowance or to use public childcare services.

In Western Germany, among working mothers, the coefficients for the child's age and the number of children were found to be insignificant (see model 8). The significant odds ratio of 0.35 indicated that married mothers were less likely than single mothers to use childcare. This might reflect that by law, single working mothers have priority access to childcare. However, this effect was not significant for cohabiting mothers. Concerning education among working mothers, women with tertiary education had a significantly higher chance to use childcare (odds ratio = 1.58) than the combined group of those with lower and upper secondary education. In other words, the likelihood that a working mother would use childcare services was positively related to mothers' education. Children whose mothers were part-time employed had lower odds of childcare

Table 3. Logistic regression results for child care usage; 2-year-old children; odds ratios; samples separated into working and non-working mothers.

	Sweden		Finland		Western Germany	
	Working Model 4	Non-working Model 5	Working Model 6	Non-working Model 7	Working Model 8	Non-working Model 9
Year of survey	1.10	1.43**	1.20*	0.99	1.25*	1.12
Age of child	0.94	3.15*	1.09	1.16	1.86	5.08***
Number of children in the household (under age 6)						
One child	1	1	1	1	1	1
Two children	0.60	0.76	0.81	1.25	0.66	1.31
Citizenship of mother						
Local	1	–	–	1	–	1
Foreign	1.54	–	–	1.04	–	0.75
Partnership status of mother						
Single	–	1	1	1	1	1
Married	1	2.16	0.27	0.41*	0.35*	0.86
Cohabiting	1.04	1.50	0.32	0.38*	0.40	0.62
Education of mother						
Lower secondary or lower	1.03	0.78	0.65	0.80	–	0.44
Upper secondary	1	1	1	1	1 <sup>b</sup>	1
Tertiary	1.31	0.57	2.25***	1.76*	1.58*	1.34
Employment status of mother						
Full-time	1	–	1	–	1	–
Part-time	0.72	–	0.19***	–	0.51**	–
Unemployed	–	1	–	1	–	1
Homemaker or other inactive	–	1.67	–	0.19***	–	0.11***
Number of children in the sample <sup>a</sup>	522	155	559	460	238	426
Likelihood ratio $\chi^2$	4.68	12.77	56.45***	19.63**	19.94***	38.71***
McFadden's pseudo $R^2$	0.02	0.07	0.10	0.06	0.06	0.09

Source: EU-SILC 2005–2008 data. Author's own calculations.

<sup>a</sup> The numbers of children in the samples of working and non-working mothers do not sum up to the number in the full sample as the group of respondents with foreign citizenship was excluded from some subsamples.

<sup>b</sup> In the Western German sample of working mothers, the number of respondents with lower secondary education was smaller than 10; thus, we placed this group into the upper secondary education category.

\*  $p = 0.10$ ; \*\*  $p = 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p = 0.01$ .

usage than those with full-time working mothers (odds ratio = 0.51). In the sample of non-working mothers (model 9), the odds ratio of 5.08 indicates a strong effect of children's age on childcare usage. All of the other demographic characteristics did not show significant effects in the sample of non-working German mothers. The children of homemaker mothers, with an odds ratio of 0.11, had significantly lower chances of being in childcare than children with unemployed mothers.

In both Finland and Germany (except among non-working mothers), we found a positive effect of mothers' tertiary education on childcare usage. This is in line with Geier and Riedel (2008) who found that educational attainment is correlated with childcare values. According to these authors, highly educated mothers use childcare more often because they have positive attitudes regarding the effects of childcare on children's development.

In Sweden, both working mothers and childcare usage for very young children are widespread; thus, we did not find the education effect among Swedish mothers. This finding contradicts the results of other studies which found that childcare usage in Sweden is affected by socio-economic characteristics (e.g.,

Östberg, 2000). Such effects may have diminished over time, in part because several policies were introduced in the early 2000s that enhanced childcare access (for a summary of these reforms, see Skolverket, 2005).

Among non-working mothers in Finland and Western Germany, unemployed mothers were found to be more likely to use childcare than were homemaker mothers in all three countries. We suggest that this is related to the fact that unemployed mothers might need some time to search for a new job, and may thus use childcare to reduce the amount of time they spend on childcare duties (cf. Vikman, 2010). Moreover, unemployed mothers expect to start working in the near future, and they might therefore see childcare usage during unemployment as preparation for the time when they have a job (Vikman, 2010). In contrast, homemaker mothers do not plan to (re-)enter the labour market. They might have a preference for caring for their very young children themselves, and are thus intentionally not using childcare.

Some of the findings were unexpected. For example, according to our analyses, the citizenship of mothers was not significantly related to childcare usage in any of the three countries. This contradicts other studies that showed that children of mothers who are not citizens of

the country where they reside use childcare less frequently than citizens do. A recent US study found that the immigrant effect vanishes when controlling for other socio-economic characteristics of the mother (Kahn & Greenberg, 2010). This could also be the case in our samples. Another reason for this finding could be that our sample sizes were simply too small to robustly identify the effect of citizenship.

Moreover, the effects of the partnership status of mothers were found to remain insignificant in Sweden and largely so in Western Germany. This might be related to the fact that the sample sizes on which the analyses were based were small. In Finland, singles were more likely to make use of childcare than were partnered women. This effect was significant also in the group of Finnish non-working respondents. While other studies (e.g., Hirshberg et al., 2005, for the USA) found that married women were less likely than cohabiting women to make use of childcare, our results indicated similar effects for both groups of partnered mothers.

## Conclusions

The aim of this study was to compare the socio-economic composition of childcare users in different family policy settings. We compared usage patterns among 2-year-old children separately in Sweden, Finland and Western Germany. We chose three countries with similarities in childcare prices and quality, but which vary in terms of childcare access and other family policy measures.

The results of our logistic regression models on the basis of EU-SILC data for 2005–2008 generally show that the relationship between family factors and childcare usage differ across the three countries. Although childcare services for 2-year-old children in Sweden and Finland are similar in that both countries provide high-quality, universal, public (or publicly subsidised) childcare, we found considerable differences in the usage patterns between the two countries. For the Swedish sample, the only important factor affecting childcare usage was whether the mother worked. However, the group of non-working mothers was small, making up only about one-quarter of the sample. Within this group, children with homemaker mothers were found to be less likely to attend childcare than children whose mothers were unemployed. Other family characteristics such as the child's age and the mother's partnership status or education did not significantly affect childcare usage.

In Finland, in contrast, we found an effect for maternal education. Children whose mothers were highly educated had a greater chance of being in non-family childcare than children of mothers with lower levels of education. This was also found for the full sample and the working-mother sample of Western Germany. The coefficient for tertiary education remained insignificant

in the sample of non-working German mothers. However, taking a look at the composition concerning mother's education indicates that highly educated women are more likely to be working mothers.

Overall, the education effect implies that children had access to, or were excluded from, childcare based on their mothers' education levels. Other factors of social structure, such as number of children under 6 years in the household and citizenship, did not yield significant results in the countries analysed here. As this may be related to our small sample sizes, we were unable to draw final conclusions on the effect of these variables on childcare usage based on EU-SILC. Moreover, other factors may affect childcare choices; larger sample sizes would make it possible to analyse information on partners and the income situation of the family.

Although we did not explicitly account for the institutional peculiarities of the countries in our analyses, we suggest that the observed differences in childcare usage patterns are related to family policies. In Sweden, dual-earner support is very pronounced, and there are virtually no incentives for maternal homemaking. Thus, mothers' employment is widespread even when children are very young, which results in childcare usage independent of mothers' educational attainment. Finnish policies, in contrast, support not only dual earner, but also male breadwinner families. This policy mix is often promoted as a 'free choice' for parents. However, it has been shown that less-educated parents are more likely to use home care, while highly educated parents tend to use non-family childcare (e.g., Morgan & Zippel, 2003), which results in a selective use of daycare. Also in Western Germany, where policies traditionally support male breadwinners, mothers with tertiary education were more likely to use childcare in the full sample and in the working-mother sample.

Our results might be relevant for the design of family policies in a country. Both in Germany and Sweden, it will be interesting to observe the effects of cash-for-childcare programmes for children under age 3. In Germany, by August 2013, the government will have introduced some form of home care allowance for parents who stay home to take care of their children. This policy reform supports the male breadwinner model and contradicts somewhat the reforms introduced in the mid-2000s that provided additional support for dual-earner families. Meanwhile, in Sweden, cash for care has been introduced by a considerable number of municipalities since 2008. Our findings for Finland, however, implied that children of mothers with lower levels of education might be more likely than other children to be excluded from early education. This is of concern, as children from disadvantaged backgrounds have been found to benefit the most from childcare services (Barnett, 2011). In Sweden, the stable childcare enrolment rates indicate

that since its introduction, only a minority of Swedish parents are making use of the allowance. But initial observations show a higher up-take of the benefit among immigrant parents (Ellingsæter, 2012). In Germany in 2013, a lively debate about the usefulness of a home care allowance continues. When considering the issue, policy makers should keep in mind that parents' freedom to choose might result in a polarisation of employment and segregated childcare usage.

With our approach, we were unable to completely rule out other factors that might be of importance for the national differences in childcare usage. In Finland, for instance, the limited availability of part-time work leaves women with only two options: either work full-time or stay home full-time (Repo, 2003). Mothers who would prefer to work part-time might decide to stay out of the labour market, resulting in a smaller share of children in childcare. Another factor influencing the acceptance of childcare policies is the prevailing idea of appropriate childcare in a country (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, & Allred, 2004; Kremer, 2007; Saraceno, 2011). It is important that non-family childcare (for young children) is positively evaluated. Parents who believe that a child in public care suffers (or that others think so) are less likely to make use of it. If, however, childcare is perceived as positive for children's development, a majority of children will participate. So far, it seems difficult to test such normative effects across countries; in the EU-SILC data, for example, there are no normative questions included. However, as research has shown, family policies are often in line with attitudes towards the family in the population (Ferrarini, 2006; Sjöberg, 2004), and might thus reflect normative differences across the countries in our study.

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Appendix

Table A1. Descriptive statistics. All mothers. Column per cent.

	Sweden	Finland	Western Germany
Year of survey			
2005	21%	23%	29%
2006	24%	24%	25%
2007	26%	29%	23%
2008	30%	24%	23%
Age of child	2.52 years	2.54 years	2.48 years
Mean, standard deviation in parentheses	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.29)
Number of children in the household (under age 6)			
One child	53%	50%	51%
Two children	47%	50%	49%
Citizenship of mother			
Local	95%	98%	95%
Foreign	5%	2%	5%
Partnership status of mother			
Single	2%	6%	7%
Married	55%	72%	88%
Cohabiting	43%	22%	5%
Education of mother			
Lower secondary or lower	6%	8%	7%
Upper secondary	48%	38%	58%
Tertiary	46%	53%	36%
Employment status of mother			
Full-time	54%	48%	8%
Part-time	22%	7%	29%
Unemployed	4%	3%	4%
Homemaker or other inactive	21%	41%	59%
Number of children (total)	697	1,025	676
Number of children in care	598	505	220
% of children in care	86%	49%	33%

Source: EU-SILC 2005–2008 data. Unweighted frequencies. Author's own calculations.

Table A2. Separate samples for working and non-working mothers. Column percent.

	Sweden		Finland		Western Germany	
	Working	Non-working	Working	Non-working	Working	Non-working
Year of survey						
2005	19%	27%	24%	23%	24%	33%
2006	23%	25%	24%	25%	32%	21%
2007	26%	24%	28%	29%	24%	22%
2008	32%	24%	24%	23%	21%	24%
Age of child	2.52 years	2.52 years	2.56 years	2.52 years	2.51 years	2.46 years
Mean, standard deviation in parentheses	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.29)
Number of children in the household (under age 6)						
One child	64%	16%	60%	37%	62%	45%
Two children	36%	84%	40%	63%	38%	55%
Citizenship of mother						
Local	97%	–	–	97%	–	93%
Foreign	3%	–	–	3%	–	7%
Partnership status of mother						
Single	–	4%	4%	8%	7%	7%
Married	56%	55%	74%	69%	87%	89%
Cohabiting	44%	41%	22%	23%	6%	4%
Education of mother						
Lower secondary or lower	4%	11%	6%	12%	–	9%
Upper secondary	49%	44%	35%	42%	55% <sup>b</sup>	61%
Tertiary	47%	45%	59%	46%	45%	31%
Employment status of mother						
Full-time	72%	–	87%	–	23%	–
Part-time	28%	–	13%	–	77%	–
Unemployed	–	15%	–	8%	–	7%
Homemaker or other inactive	–	85%	–	92%	–	93%
Number of children (total) <sup>a</sup>	522	155	559	460	238	426
Number of children in care	478	105	444	55	125	88
% of children in care	92%	68%	79%	12%	53%	21%

Source: EU-SILC 2005–2008 data. Unweighted frequencies. Author's own calculations.

<sup>a</sup> The numbers of children in the samples of working and non-working mothers do not sum up to the total number as the group of respondents with foreign citizenship was excluded from some subsamples.

<sup>b</sup> In the Western German sample of working mothers, the number of respondents with lower secondary education was smaller than 10; thus, we placed this group into the upper secondary education category.