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Working time, gender and work-life balance

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WORKING



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Contents

1	Introduction	7
1.1	Theories and concepts	8
1.2	Quantitative research	9
1.3	Qualitative research on organisations	10
1.4	Qualitative research on individuals	12
1.5	The policy pillar	12
1.6	Thematic focus: working time, gender, work-life balance	13
2	Working times in the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism	15
2.1	Temporal restructuring as a central issue of organisational restructuring	15
2.2	Length, dislocation, variability of working times	22
2.3	Strategies and problems in the organisations: some empirical findings	28
2.4	Gender-related issues of working time	31
2.4.1	Part-time, long-time, flexibility of working time: main gender differences	31
2.4.2	Gender differences in various sectors and business functions	35
2.5	Some conclusive notes	37
3	Balancing work and family in the knowledge-based society	41
3.1	Working time and its effects on work-life balance	41
3.2	Work-life balance or 'gendered' working time?	43
3.3	Institutional settings as framework for work-life balance: country differences across Europe	46
3.3.1	Pattern of temporal flexibility across Europe	46
3.3.2	Flexible working time models	47
3.4	Acceleration and temporal pressures as framework for the balance of work and life: individual strategies of work-life balance	51
3.4.1	Balancing high commitment towards work with the 'rest of life': knowledge-intensive occupations	53
3.4.2	Fixed schedules and high flexibility demands: temporal organisation in production work	58
3.4.3	Need for individual freedom in a regulated environment: customer services in the public sector	61
3.5	Widening the concept of work-life balance towards new perspectives of models of work and life: some conclusions	63
3.5.1	New dimensions of working time organisation: European differences	63
3.5.2	New working time pattern and its implications for work-life balance	64

3.5.3	Towards a new normative model of work?	66
3.5.4	Work-life balance beyond the reconciliation of work and family needs	68
4	Working time, gender and work-life balance: overall conclusions	71
	<i>Bibliography</i>	75

1 Introduction

It is generally agreed that major upheavals are taking place in the organisation of work as corporate structures are transformed in the context of economic globalisation and rapid technological change. But how can these changes be understood? And what are the impacts on social institutions and on workers? The 'Work organisation and restructuring in the knowledge society (WORKS)' project was funded by the European Commission in 2005 under its 6th Framework Programme to investigate these questions. With partners in seventeen different institutions in fourteen EU member states, this ambitious research project has combined theoretical work and a detailed analysis of a wide range of statistics with in-depth case studies to analyse the forces that bring about these changes, including global value chain restructuring and the policy environment.

One of the underlying assumptions of the WORKS project is that the reorganisation of work can only be understood fully in the context of a global restructuring of value chains, entailing a simultaneous decomposition and recomposition of sectors, organisations, labour processes and skills. However, the considerable heterogeneity within Europe of skill supply, levels of employment, welfare systems, and economic sectors makes it especially difficult to disentangle the causes and effects of such processes and to isolate the primary drivers of change. Yet it is particularly important for Europe both to understand the factors that will enable firms to sustain their competitive edge, to ensure a future supply of jobs that is satisfactory both quantitatively and qualitatively and to examine the impact of these changes on the quality of life. At the heart of this is a single issue: how are employment practices adapting to change and with what effect? If we can answer this more effectively on a Europe-wide basis we will be able to propose practical solutions to real problems.

Starting in June 2005, the WORKS consortium, involving partners from seventeen different institutes across fourteen EU member states, carried out an ambitious programme of theoretical and empirical work. These were carried out under five main pillars: 'theories and concepts', 'quantitative research', 'policy', 'qualitative research on organisations' and 'qualitative research on individuals'. The work of these pillars is summarised more fully below.

This is one of eleven thematic reports that brings together the results of all five pillars to deepen our insights into the topic of working time, gender and work-life balance.

The other reports will focus on the topics of: value chain restructuring in Europe in a global economy; changes in work organisation and representation at the workplace; strategies to reach flexibility in the organisation; skills and qualification policies and HRM; new career trajectories and biographies; changing gender and ethnic relations in the workplace; change processes and future perspectives; changes in work in transitional economies; health, safety and the quality of working life; and employers' use of technology and the impact on organisational structure.

The material on which this report draws is summarised below.

1.1 Theories and concepts

In the first stage of its work the WORKS partners collectively carried out a review of the very large body of literature with relevance to the project's research questions, in order to map the field, formulate hypotheses to be tested in the empirical work and develop a clear conceptual framework for the research. This was no easy task. There are many lenses through which one can view the restructuring of work in a global knowledge economy. There are the lenses of different academic disciplines, for instance the sociology of work, economic geography, organisational theory, social psychology, ethnography, gender studies, industrial relations or political science. Then there are the lenses of different social perspectives, for instance those of international development agencies, of national governments in developed and developing countries, of technology providers, of statisticians, of employers, of trade unions, of educators, of civil society, of skilled professional workers who are may be beneficiaries of change, and of those groups that are potential losers. There are also differences deriving from different national research traditions, different ideological approaches and many other variables. In each of these many fields, a body of literature has grown up, trying to make sense of the changes taking place and supplying fragments of evidence. Piecing all this evidence together was a major challenge. The very disparity of the origins of this literature means that it is difficult to find a common frame of reference. Even when the same terms are used, they may be used with different meanings and the lack of commonly-agreed definitions can make the refracted pieces of evidence difficult to compare, often giving them a contradictory and anecdotal character.

Nevertheless, in its first six months, the project managed to bring together in a single report (Huws, 2006) a remarkably comprehensive overview of the available evidence, thanks to the large collective efforts of the interdisciplinary WORKS team. This evidence was carefully sifted with the aim of distilling insights that could help to produce a clear conceptual framework in order to develop hypotheses and research questions to guide the empirical research to be undertaken by the WORKS project. This programme of work was, however, highly ambitious, encompassing the aims of: improving our understanding of the major changes in work in the knowledge-based society, taking account both of global forces and of the regional diversity within Europe; investigating the evolving division of labour within and between companies and the related changes at the workplace; exploring the implications for the use of skills and knowledge, for flexibility and for the quality of working life; and examining the impact on occupational identities; time use and learning; as well as the impact on the social dialogue and the varieties of institutional shaping. Balancing the need to take account of these many dimensions whilst still retaining a focus on clear research questions that could be addressed feasibly within a coherent research design in a relatively short space of time was a major challenge, and we begin by presenting the methodology that was adopted to achieve this.

The first task was to achieve a division of labour that on the one hand took full advantage of the specialist subject expertise of partners whilst also recognising the diversity of national research traditions across Europe and the need to take account of the literature in all major European languages. Once topics had been assigned to partners, in a second stage, these partners were asked to produce a list of 'key concepts' for inclusion in a glos-

sary.¹ The purpose of the glossary was to ensure that all partners could share a common understanding and make visible any differences of interpretation or definition of key terms so that they could be discussed and agreed, in a process whereby, in its contribution to the cohesion of the whole group, the dialogue involved in producing the entries was as valuable as the end result. The next stage involved the production of draft reports covering the main concepts and the associated literature. Despite the authors' broad knowledge of their chosen topics, and the fact that each report included inputs from institutes in more than one country, it was felt that the only way to ensure that each report covered the full range of relevant European scholarship was to add a further, vital stage in the work. This involved circulating each draft report as it was completed to all the other WORKS partners, including those who had not been involved in the actual process of report-writing. In this stage, partners were asked to draw on their knowledge of the literature in their own language or national setting, as well as their specific subject knowledge, to comment on the reports, point to issues that might be regarded as contentious and add references to relevant sources. This process of peer review enriched and refined the report which was then used by all partners as an input to the development of research questions, methodologies and research instruments for the empirical research.

1.2 Quantitative research

The 'quantitative research' pillar of the WORKS project studied the changes in work in Europe on the basis of comparative analyses of data from existing organisation and individual surveys. In a first step, major European organisation surveys and individual and household surveys relevant for changes in work were mapped and benchmarked in order to assess their relevance and their strengths and weaknesses for comparative analyses on changes in work. Next, and more important for the thematic reports, the research focused on the secondary analysis of the results of the organisation and individual/household surveys. For the organisation surveys, a thematic analysis of thirteen major national and international organisation surveys, focusing on the major results with respect to the key issues of the WORKS project, resulted in an overview report 'Comparative analysis of organisation surveys in Europe' (Ramioul & Huys, 2007). The key issues addressed in this report are:

- new forms of work organisation, organisational and technological innovation, changes in work. Here in particular some findings with respect to skill-biased organisational change and the role of employee involvement and participation are relevant;
- changes in skills and qualification and vocational training policies at establishment level;
- work-life balance and working time arrangements. Here conclusions from EU wide research on working time arrangements and flexibility policies are of particular interest;
- quality of the working life as measured in organisation surveys.

¹ Available on-line on http://www.worksproject.be/Glos_and_defint.htm.

For each of these issues, the most relevant conclusions from the organisation surveys were summarised, thus leading to a comprehensive overview of organisational changes in Europe based on this particular data source.

For individual surveys, three major sources of individual and household data made it possible to carry out longitudinal and EU comparative analysis on the issues relevant for the WORKS project: the Community Labour Force Survey (CLFS); the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) and the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). Based on these three key data sources, four different reports were published, each focusing on the EU comparative analysis and on the identification of trends with respect to key WORKS issues. The reports focused on the following issues:

- tracing employment in business functions: a sectoral and occupational approach: in this report an innovative method was used to measure changes in employment related to value chain restructuring (Geurts, Coppin & Ramioul, 2007);
- trends in work organisation and working conditions. For this report, three waves of the EWCS were analysed in a longitudinal and EU comparative perspective, shedding light on changes in task complexity, autonomy, working time independency, health and safety issues and working conditions (Greenan, Kalugina & Walkowiak, 2007);
- work flexibility in Europe: a sectoral and occupational description of trends in work-hours, part-time work, temporary work, and self-employment was carried out based on this important European data source (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007);
- occupational change in Europe: based on longitudinal data, aspects of work satisfaction, occupational mobility and overqualification were investigated (Brynin & Longhi, 2007).

1.3 Qualitative research on organisations

The organisational case studies within the WORKS project covered a number of generic business functions that represent a wide variety of activities and labour processes in the 'knowledge society' ranging from highly-skilled 'knowledge work' to semi-skilled manual tasks. The research also aimed to focus on those business functions that feature prominently in the external restructuring of companies and thus in the restructuring of global value chains. The selected business functions were: research and development; production; logistics; customer service; and information technology.

To study the restructuring of value chains these business functions need to be located in specific sectors. The selection of sectors reflected the emergence of global value chains in different historical stages: sectors where vertical disintegration and internationalisation is already a rather old fact, and sectors where these have developed only very recently. The sectors under study were:

The *clothing industry* is an example of an 'old' industry where restructuring of global commodity chains was already an issue in the 1970s. Recently, the integration of Central and Eastern Europe in pan-European production networks and the phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement and the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing considerably changed the trade regimes and resulted in a new wave of restructuring mainly affecting production in Southern Europe and the CEE countries. This sector also provides interesting examples of 'head and tail' companies which concentrate high-skilled work within Europe but carry out the rest elsewhere.

The *food industry* is the largest manufacturing sector in terms of employment in the EU. It was subject to major restructuring after the completion of the single market in the European Union in the early 1990s which allowed companies to replace their country-by-country organisation with a pan-European structure. In contrast with parts of the clothing industry, food production is by and large highly-automated. Both industries are interesting as examples of buyer-centred value chains in which the demands of the retail trade play a pivotal role.

The *IT industry* is a growing industry that saw a major wave of restructuring during and after the boom years in the late 1990s and around 2000, partly associated with off-shoring. Internationally, this has contributed to the emergence of a 'new breed of TNCs', global companies that supply services to other companies. To a large extent the IT service provider companies have grown through large outsourcing contracts that include the transfer of personnel from their public or private sector client organisations, a tendency highly relevant for the research questions of WORKS.

Public sector organisations and *services of general interest* are currently subject to far-reaching restructuring because of liberalisation and privatisation policies and budgetary constraints. In these sectors the lengthening of value chains through large scale outsourcing is a very recent phenomenon. The consequences for the quality of work are highly-influenced by traditional differences in the regulation of work between the public and private sectors.

Each business function located in a particular sector was studied in a range of countries with diverse employment and welfare regimes (liberal, conservative, socio-democratic *etc.*). This made it possible to analyse the influence of institutional frameworks on the consequences of restructuring. Overall, 58 case studies were conducted in fourteen countries. The following overview shows the distribution of case studies.

Table 1.1 Sample of case studies

	R&D design	Production	Logistics	Customer service	IT
Clothing	BE; FR; DE; IT; PT	BE; HU; IT; PT; GR	FR; DE; NL; HU; PT		
Food		IT; GR; DE; BU; NO; UK	BE; BU; GR; UK; NO		
IT	AU; FR; DE; UK; NO; BE	AU; BU; DE; HU; SE			
Public sector administration				AU; BE; BU; HU; IT; SE; UK	NL; UK
Services of general interest: post and rail				AU; NL; SE; GR; DE	BE; FR; NO; DE; PT; SE

For each case study, eight to ten interviews with management, key employees, and shop stewards (in the selected business functions) were conducted. The interviews were complemented by company documents and other material that made it possible to produce a comprehensive picture. Researchers in the respective countries synthesised the individual

case studies from the interview data. On the basis of the individual case study reports, comprehensive comparative analyses were carried out to compose this report. The authors of the report are deeply indebted to the researchers who carried out the case studies in the various countries and to the respondents who devoted their time to our research and helped us to understand the developments in their companies and sectors. For the presentation in this report, all company names have been changed to assure anonymity (cf. Flecker, Holtgrewe, Schönauer, Dunkel & Meil, 2008).

1.4 Qualitative research on individuals

The organisational case studies were complemented by case studies designed to investigate the impacts of changes at work on individuals and their households. Thirty of these occupational case studies were achieved in fourteen countries, between June 2006 and May 2007; in total 246 in-depth individual interviews were carried out, according to common interview guidelines elaborated in May 2006.

These occupational case studies are closely related to the organisational case studies that were carried out in a selected number of business functions, during the same time span. In the WORKS project, the concept of the 'business function' lies at the core of the qualitative empirical research, since these business functions provide the most useful unit of analysis for studying value chain restructuring and changes in work. In order to study changes in work at the individual level, individual workers were selected within specific occupational groups linked to key business functions.

Six occupational groups were selected: designers in the clothing industry; researchers in information and communication technology; IT professionals in software services; production workers in food or clothing; logistics workers in food or clothing; front office employees in customer relationships in public services. In each occupational group, three to seven case studies were conducted in different countries, covering a variety of socio-economic and institutional contexts. Each case study relied on seven to nine in-depth individual interviews, including a biographical dimension.

The analysis of the interviews was structured around five themes that grouped together the WORKS research questions. These were: career trajectory, occupational identity, quality of work, knowledge and learning, and work-life balance.

Particular attention was paid to gender issues. Gender was treated as a transversal theme in the analysis of changes in work at the individual level. The principle of gender mainstreaming (*i.e.* taking systematically into account the differentiated experiences of men and women in all items of data collection and analysis), formed one of the basic guidelines for the individual interviews (Valenduc, Vendramin, Krings & Nierling, 2008).

1.5 The policy pillar

A central task in WORKS is to examine what effect policy initiatives and regulation at various levels - international, European, national, regional, sectoral and company - actually have on work life and work experience. Especially relevant in this regard is the role of institutions in the determination, implementation and enforcement of policy. We began with the question: can we expect divergences in the ability to regulate changes in work

due to restructuring according to different types of production or employment regimes, different types of industrial relations models, diverse institutional frameworks? Toward this end, all of the organisational case studies included a section on industrial relations and regulation of work. Within each company that was investigated, data was collected on the forms that worker representation took, which issues were negotiated, the role of workplace representation in restructuring (information, consultation, active intervention), the impact of European or national regulations, and the pressures on regulations and institutions due to restructuring. Additional interviews with trade union representatives and works councillors were carried out where possible.

The research agenda motivating this line of inquiry was to examine what role the institutions and actors of industrial relations play in restructuring across value chain in diverse settings and across diverse institutional contexts. A further issue is what role workers' representatives have in tempering the effects at the workplace that result from this restructuring, including the terms and conditions of employment, fragmentation and segmentation, gender equality, training and skilling, and quality of work life. Existing studies have shown that there are major challenges for existing institutions and forms of social dialogue to deal with current trends in restructuring and changes at work. Therefore, the case studies also investigated the impact of restructuring on the strategies or effectiveness of workers' representation and workers' voice.

1.6 Thematic focus: working time, gender, work-life balance²

The following thematic report 'working time, gender, work-life balance' basically deals with the question how time issues at the workplace are interconnected with work-life balance in a changing environment. Historically, changes of the temporal structure of the workplace have always been a central reference point of bargaining processes. Therefore, since decades the organisation of time at the workplace is an important issue of political as well as academic debates when reflecting the working conditions in different branches and sectors.

In these debates the creation of a certain form of work-life balance for workers has been implicitly negotiated although the focus lied much more on the necessity of reducing working time. Thus, since industrialisation the amount of working hours has been continuously reduced in Europe.

Coming from the perspective of the organisation of households, work-life balance issues became relevant since mid of the last century. With the steady integration of female workers into the labour markets the reconciliation of family needs with working demands became an important topic not only on the political agenda but also as organisational strategy. Interestingly, these organisational strategies basically offered a variety of working time pattern like part-time work, flexible or reduced working hours which had an enormous impact on the specific male and female working culture in European countries.

² The authors would like to thank Ursula Huws and Jörg Flecker for their critical constructive and fruitful comments on the thematic report.

Besides these different working time pattern it still seems that work and life is highly-connected by the variable 'gender' which defines how the balance is organised by the state, by organisations as well as by individual gender contracts.

The analysis of current global restructuring processes shows that these processes have a remarkable impact on time issues. The findings of the quantitative and qualitative research of the WORKS project focus on changes within organisations and their consequences for the individuals. Reflecting the frame of working time in a changing environment, again, the gender approach opens the fields for two different perspectives: on the one side increasing demands of flexible time pattern on-the-job level offer better possibilities for the reconciliation between employment and care work. On the other side more and more the temporal disposability for households, childcare or civil societal activities in general seem restricted in many branches under review.

Based on the WORKS findings the report offers a broad picture how men and women cope with changing temporal demands in different sectors and branches due to global restructuring processes. Hereby, it becomes obvious that temporal changes at workplace influence the balance between work and life to a high extent. The findings do not provide clear trends about changes of working conditions in general; however, they strengthen very much the necessity to integrate the household perspective much more into the academic as well as into political debates when reflecting future scenarios of work.

The following report is divided into two parts. From a more theoretical perspective the first part deals with working times in Fordistic and post-Fordistic societies and offers basically quantitative material in order to present different working time models in a changing environment. On the basis of these considerations as well as on the basis of the qualitative material the second part provides national and sectoral differences with regard to working time models. Furthermore, individual strategies of work-life balance will be identified in a further step. These strategies also focus very much on both differences between the sectors and branches. Furthermore, they highlight the high degree of gender-related issues within the individual efforts in order to maintain a certain work-life balance.

2 Working times in the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism

2.1 Temporal restructuring as a central issue of organisational restructuring

Underway since at least a couple of decades, the academic debate about the transformation and changes in the way production and work is carried out (changes that accompany the demise of the Fordist-Taylorist model and the rise of new technical-organisational paradigms) continues to be characterised by a double polarisation of positions. On the one hand there is the clash between those who believe that current organisational paradigms are in continuity, albeit relative, with the Fordist-Taylorist frame and those who do not believe such a continuity exists but theorise a break - an 'epochal' break or anyway a clean break. On the other hand, the contrast is between the apologists of a new mode of production assuming an extraordinary potential in terms of emancipation and freedom and its critics, the latter focusing more on the loss of control, power, identity on the part of the workers.

If the schematic and rigid disposition constituent in these polarisations is avoided, one would not fail to notice that a discontinuity has occurred in the world of production and work: the changes within the 'strategic' category of time (strictly interconnected to those within the category of space, *i.e.* of the places of production and work). The discourse must unavoidably start by observing that the conception of time in Fordistic and Tayloristic terms - of time measured by mechanical deadlines, calculated 'a priori', standardised, unrelated to events, artificially constructed - has been superseded. Time has become punctiform, instantaneous, fragmented, and non-sequential; it is often non-measurable, less accountable in new terms and bounds of the working day. And these changes are indeed central in the current phase of transition in modern societies.

Numerous studies - especially in the area of sociology - and empirical surveys have observed as well as recorded the changes occurring in modes of production and working times (intended broadly as to include the duration of working relationship, effective working hours during the day, week, *etc.*; see also Huws, 2008), changes that bear a significant impact on personal and collective times. What frequently emerges is the pluralisation and differentiation of temporal regimes. A number of often interacting phenomena has been observed behind these changes. In the following pages we will briefly illustrate some of the explicative models that recur most frequently in academic literature.

In many studies changes in the conception of time are considered as a key feature of the ongoing organisational restructuring. These changes are brought in relation with the spreading of flexible productive models in many sectors. Within explanation models, this diffusion is basically caused by: changes in the structure of market demands; the satura-

tion in the demand for durable and standardised goods; the differentiation of consumer taste; the increased limitations of markets, which have become an open space for competitive conflicts among the producers of all over the world (a space of global competition) (Revelli, 1995) and last but not least the high degree of industrial conflict.³

Together these changes remove the conditions of predictability and of stability in the control of the market; conditions that were essential for the Fordist-Taylorist model and its massive investments. These changes have undermined the mechanisms through which such a model generated wealth and profits and has very much influenced the conviction that accumulation requires new configurations and modes of integration of the productive factors. Therefore, new organisational paradigms have arisen, whose guiding principle is an even more drastic reduction of costs,⁴ through a reduction of traditional rigidity (*vis-à-vis* work force, the market, the territory, *etc.*) and of the extension of vertical structures and integrations. Herein lays the reason for the 'obsession' of the just-in-time: everything must occur at the right moment (Accornero, 1997 & 2001); all productive factors must be acquired at the exact moment they are needed and in the required quantity (Ohno, 1978; Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990). In other words, everything must be calibrated to the orders that have been actually received.

The enterprise must become an 'elastic' entity, morphologically variable. The aim is to achieve continuous movements, capable of changing rapidly (in its size, its components, its relationships and its transactions). It is widely observed that, in such a context, transformation must start and finish within a very short lapse of time. This lapse of time is the period within corporations is operating. Each configuration of productive factors is intended as being transitory, transient, temporary or even instantaneous, susceptible to sudden change in order to adapt to the circumstances of markets. The enterprise must be equipped to cater on an 'occasional basis' (and act according to an 'occasional rationale') at a short and very short notice, so as to allow it to ride each wave produced by the market (Revelli, 2001).

These aspirations are reflected in a push towards new technologies and a stronger 'flexibilisation of the work force'. Applied to the work force, as well as to other factors of production - to times to an even greater degree - is the principle of the just-in-time. Work force, too, is measured - both in terms of quantity and quality - to the fluctuations of demand, while avoiding *stocks* if there is no immediate utility (Gorz, 1988). Against this backdrop, working time became an 'adjustable variable' (Castel, 1995). Working time - broadly intended as the duration of the working relationship,⁵ as effective working hours during the day, week, *etc.*, as the disposition of such hours within the day, the

³ It should be recalled that between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, all capitalist countries witnessed years of bitter and 'permanent' industrial conflict - years of all-out struggle conducted with a range of different methods and aimed at achieving a radical change in the areas of production and social organisation (Accornero, 1992). While the struggle reflected a condition of strength of the working class movement in a phase of full occupation, it was also a reaction against the Taylorist organisation of work which had led to intensified exploitation in factories and to rising levels of authoritarianism and alienation.

⁴ This principle combines with the principles of market suitability and promptness. It is necessary to be able to produce in the time, place and way required and, crucially, before anyone else. These aspects too are a measure of the efficacy and efficiency of a company.

⁵ On this matter Harvey (1999: 22) has referred to the idea of 'changing temporalities': 'the restructuring of employment relations can be viewed as a restructuring of the temporalities of work'.

week, *etc.* - must be variable, easily changeable at a very short notice. Working time, as a quantitative matter (but also as a qualitative aspect especially in knowledge-based work) of purchased work force, must be synchronised to demand fluctuation and therefore to production requirements. In this light, changes in the category of time come under the sign of flexibility, making temporal flexibility a central issue in the ongoing organisational restructuring.

Specifically from the organisational point of view, several studies observe that restructuring has led to the application of an even broader range of job flexibility typologies, *i.e.* in the implementation of composite strategies envisaging *downsizing*, *outsourcing*, closed-ended contracts with limited protections in order to gain more internal flexibility (Flecker, 2005a; Reyneri, 2002; Flecker *et al.*, 2008). Thus, both public and private organisations become leaner. Depending on the local context and on regulations, the process of downsizing has occurred through layoffs, through the transfer of personnel to other organisations or through early retirement or other forms of early exits. Outsourcing is on the rise. Functions (or even parts of them) are parcelled out and outsourced to third parties, to subcontractors, who in turn decentralise the simpler components even further, to second-tier subcontractors. Companies specialise in what they are capable of doing best or in what is more lucrative (for example, project planning and implementation, marketing, financial management, *etc.*). The outcome is the creation of broad networks of enterprises and workers which are highly-interconnected (Castells, 1996; Butera, 1990; Bonazzi & Negrelli, 2003).

Therefore, the *network* is the metaphor that is often utilised to describe the current phase in the evolution of production modes and of capitalism itself. It is again within this context that another important change is viewed: the development of a transnational vocation on the part of enterprises. Organisations parcel and distribute their value chain over a variety of territories and productive units of differing sizes, characteristics and quality. At times the unit is located in specialised areas of production (where firms and workers display important know-how and skills and have a significant capacity of innovation), at times the unit is located in the 'peripheral areas of the world', where poor levels of workers' protection allow for bigger savings (Froebel, Heinrichs & Krey, 1980).

With downsizing, outsourcing, offshoring, there is also an increasing reliance on non-standard, non-permanent work (*fixed-term contract*, *temporary work agency*, *job-on-call/stand-by-work*); and on consultants/collaborators, workers formally independent but subordinated to the enterprise and economically dependent on it. By turning to a model that is well-documented in the specialised literature (Atkinson, 1984 & 1987, see also Flecker *et al.*, 2008), it has been observed that enterprises segment their work force: create a central group and several peripheral or marginal groups. The central, more stable, group is made up of those workers who are hired on traditional contracts. Enterprises generally consider these workers 'strategic'; but this is not always true as many different cases have been reported.⁶ Hinging around the core group of stable workers is an often consistent number of temporary workers, holding non-standard contracts. The latter constitute the group of variable and flexible workers - that varying size group of workers that must adapt to

⁶ Not all studies corroborate Atkinson's dual theory. The internal nucleus of a company is not always the professional 'heart' of a company. Rapidly spreading are those organisational models where higher profile staff - to whom core activities are entrusted - is external (Purcell & Purcell, 1999).

changing productive requirements. Finally, around this second 'ring' there are those workers who, although they are in the service of the enterprise have no working relationship whatsoever with it, neither standard nor non-standard. Belonging to this group are those working for the subcontractors. A high degree of flexibility in terms of working hours is demanded from all with regard to duration, contractual arrangements, *etc.* This configuration allows the enterprise to synchronise the quantity - but also the quality - of available work force to the orders it has received.

Strictly connected to this restructuring process - as a cause of changes in the conception of time - is the lengthening of production time, with an increasing dissociation between the working time of the worker and the functioning time of the facility. In the literature on this phenomenon is explained with two types of motivations. The first concerns the need to reduce costs per product unit by optimising facilities to the full. This occurs very frequently where fixed capital investments have been carried out, for example in automation or new technology (European Foundation, 2006). The second is connected with the need to produce and to provide services 24/7. This motivation is in line with the way society and demands have generally evolved. It corresponds to that project of a 'permanently active society', where - as Luciano Gallino (2002: 2) writes - 'there is the possibility to do the activity one desires, finding individuals who carry it out and places where it can be carried out.'⁷ Work and consumption, culture and entertainment, sport and relations with the public administration - everything can be done 24 hours a day and 7 days a week'. Clearly all this bears an impact on working time. If a call centre must stay open 24/7 notwithstanding the fact that the number of calls may vary significantly during the day or the week, the company must have at its disposal a flexible work force. It ensues, in other terms, the multiplication of often unusual shifts in antisocial hours and the diffusion of non-standard contracts and non-standard very short working hours (especially during weekends).⁸

In other studies the changes in the conception of time are brought into relation with the expansion of the service industry with increasing immaterial, creative and information processing work involving an ever larger number of the so-called 'knowledge worker'. These knowledge workers have, according to the definition set out in the WORKS project, 'access to, learns and is qualified to practice, a body of knowledge that is formal, complex or abstract' (Thompson, 2004: 21). It is observed that working times for most of these workers become more complex. For them working time more and more include further training, knowledge updating or even creating social relationships. This means a complexity that rises even more when dealing with boundaryless careers, with autonomous (or quasi-autonomous) professionals working for more than one organisation. In some occupations the working-time of knowledge workers is even less structured and linear; often permeating other spheres away from the 'workplace' where one is formally not

⁷ This phenomenon has also been driven by globalisation, *i.e.* by the growing interdependence, intersection, transnational contamination of economies, activities and occupations; to maintain connectivity between the various nodes of the network, with collaborators, clients, consumers across the globe and across time zones, it is necessary to be operative 24/24. This possibility has been sustained by the possibilities offered by new ICT.

⁸ As for call centres, empirical research confirms this dynamic. See, for example, the results of the survey conducted within the framework of TOSCA project (Social Observation Table of Call Centres); see also Altieri (2002).

working. In this light work also tends to 'colonise' the other spheres of an individual's life.⁹

This phenomenon is also observed in connection with the changes occurring in the workplaces and environments. In some countries these changes seem so profound that some scholars speak of '*placeless society*' (Gallino, 2002). With the organisational decentralisation and the spread of new information and communication technology work has become more distributed: distributed work involves 'co-operation or interaction of delivery of a product or service that entails a non-proximate or non-physical dimension' (Meil, 2004). Workers can work from home or in remote back-offices - what in general is usually referred to as eWork (Huws & O'Regan, 2001) - but they can also work at the customer's premises (Eichmann, Flecker, Hermann, Krenn & Papouschek, 2004). Often, distributed work is equated with virtual teams, *i.e.* teams of people 'who work together without necessarily being in the same location, using information and communications technologies for communication' (Huws, 2008). Some workers may thus be faced by a diverse division of the personal sphere/places. This mostly concerns workers with specialist skills operating in the services sector, namely communication, IT, research and finance intermediation.¹⁰ The situation, on the contrary, appears to be more static not only for industrial workers but also for those employed in the public sector, in family support services, in social services. For the workers involved the border separating the territory of work and the territory of private life, of home, of family tend to become more porous, less clear.

As academic literature shows the main consequence of these different processes underway is the differentiation of temporal models, working-times and how these models combine with the other time spheres. There has been a differentiation in the duration of the working relations. Short and very short contracts have multiplied, as have discontinuous relations consisting of several short contracts during a short period of time (such as for example during one year). These work relations, of course, coexist with the 'traditional' ones, those that last a lifetime or at least for a long portion of an individual's working trajectory. Working hours and schedules also change daily, weekly, annually as they are becoming more de-standardised and 'de-synchronised' (Chiesi, 1989). Working hours differ not only in terms of length but also in terms of dislocation and variability (working hours that differ because of the degree and form with which some aspect of their structure). Short working hours are on the rise, as are part-time jobs; but, at the same time, full-timers work longer hours as overtime or supplementary work increases. Atypical working schedules are spreading, as working hours are concentrated during the weekends or at unusual times, namely during the evening, at nights or during holidays, *etc.* Also on the rise are flexi-time schemes with high variability content, some managed

⁹ See Fagan (2001) and Clark-Campbell (2000). Moreover this phenomenon is confirmed by the results of organisational case studies; see, for example, those of Rubery, Ward, Grimshaw and Beynon (2005) on organisations of public sector, food supermarket chain, banks, and media companies.

¹⁰ And this occurs more frequently with the self-employed or the quasi-autonomous worker. Also on the rise is '*domestication*' (Bologna & Fumagalli, 1997), as work increasingly makes its way into homes.

by the workers themselves ('self-governed variability') but most imposed from above ('hetero-direct variability').¹¹

In analysing the differentiation of time models, it is not possible to ignore the changes occurring on-the-job offer side - changes partly due to individualisation processes underway in capitalist societies. Many studies underline the emerging among many workers - especially those with higher education and professional profiles - of a change in the preference for and expectations of specific working hours. These workers show a need of a greater freedom in organising their own time (Paci, 2005). There is, for example, a quest for non-conventional, non-standard, atypical, de-synchronised working hours as workers seek to balance their commitment within other social sub-systems (work, family, friends, activities in the areas of politics, culture and study, and recreational activities, *etc.*) in a bid to meet the demands for a 'multiple appurtenance'.¹² And it is within this sphere that the growing participation of female workers in the paid work sector should be considered. A participation that is behind the need for more flexible and personalised working hours, which are of course quite different between men and women (Saraceno, 1983). All these phenomena contribute to the development of a differentiation of time models.

The key question, here, continues to be the 'control of time', the effective autonomy workers have in deciding and managing working time and how this can combine with the time dedicated to the other spheres of life. In this regard, there is no doubt that while temporal flexibility should be seen as an opportunity for increase the degree of workers' freedom, more frequently it coincides with an increase in the degree of corporate freedom, in view of the way organisations define and use it.

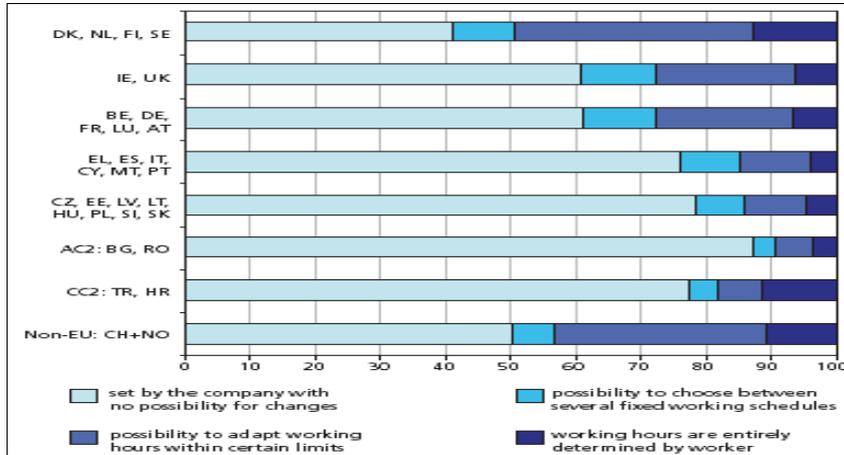
Figures emerging from the fourth EWCS conducted by the European Foundation confirm this, while showing the significant differences between countries by highlighting the presence of different models in Europe concerning the worker's ability to decide on the organisation of working time. 'In Northern European countries, workers can choose to adapt working time to their needs to a large extent (around half of employees say they can do so, with or without certain limits), which is in sharp contrast to Southern and Eastern European countries, where more than 75 *per cent* of employees have no possibility what-

¹¹ The first type is predominant among the self employed, among freelance workers. Among subordinate workers, chosen or self-governed flexibility is less frequent albeit with varying degrees among different countries. A recent survey (European Foundation, 2006) examined initiatives that could be included within this time of flexi-scheme. Among these, the lowest degree of flexibility is offered by schemes which only allow the start/finish time to be varied on the same day, without the possibility to accumulate credit or debit hours. In this scheme, only the time of the beginning or the end of work is flexible, but not the number of hours actually worked per day. Other schemes allow the accumulation of credit or debit hours within certain limits over a longer period of time (*e.g.* a week or a month), but do not allow credit hours to be compensated by full days off. This means that longer working hours on one day can be compensated only by working fewer hours on other days. In more advanced flexi-time schemes employees are permitted to take full days off as compensation for accumulated credit hours. The highest degree of flexibility with regard to the compensation of hours is offered by schemes which allow credit hours to be compensated by longer periods off.

¹² Consider for example, the interests of young people may have towards reduced working hours or flexible working hours with a view to reconciling work with studies, or a job with another. Considering the interests elder workers may have for a 'soft' exit from the labour market. Consider also the interest some may have to change the duration or dislocation of working hours in order to comply with the need to find a new job or to realise reprofessionalisation choices.

soever of adapting their work schedules, as they are set by the company' (European Foundation, 2007c: 23).

Figure 2.1 Autonomy over working time by group of countries



Source: European Foundation

A consequence of the processes outlined above is that less visible and manifest dimension of working time - often defined as 'internal time' (Gasparini, 2001) - indicates the deadlines and intensity of work within a specific period of time. This leads principally to a saturation of time, to a speeding up of pace and rhythm. As mentioned earlier, the structure of production is impacted by the 'despotism' of the market, of the volatility of demand, which bear immediate consequences on the organisation of work, with tighter deadlines, higher pressure, *etc.* (Revelli, 2001). More frequent in project-based organisations, this phenomenon is accompanied by a higher degree of responsibilities for both the single worker and the team of workers (Kratzer, 2003; Kalkowski & Mickler, 2002; Pekruhl, 2001). In certain sectors - especially in the services sector - the project has become the dominant form of work organisation. Here working teams enjoy a high degree of autonomy and of self-regulation, but when the necessary resources are cut, as a result of rationalisation processes and of pressures to reduce costs, there can be observed a relevant increasing of pressure and stress (Gerlmaier, 2005).

Working hours, thus, tend to become longer including non-paid work as well. This similarly occurs with the self-employed or quasi-autonomous workers and with freelancers. In these cases, organisations acquire the result of the work and not the work already done. This seems crucial because the workers have to purchase the time individually in order to produce these defined results. In other words, organisations are no longer concerned and have no responsibility for the multiple concrete aspects connected to the service. As confirmed by a number of empirical findings, this has led to an increase in the number of working hours, to a faster pace of work, to tighter deadlines and to higher pressure for the individuals. These changes in working hours along side those outlined previously are a measure of a process leading to a growing intensification of work.

2.2 Length, dislocation, variability of working times

Differentiation of temporal regimes and intensification of work are the basic assumptions of this report. Quantitative and qualitative data gathered within the WORKS project confirm this hypothesis. This paragraph will focus on the results emerging from the quantitative pillar of the WORKS project, while the next on those from case studies. In both, though, we will concentrate exclusively on data concerning working time: quantity as well as working time flexibility. Before examining data, it is however important to give a definition of working time flexibility, which, according to a well known scheme, is a form of numerical-internal flexibility (Atkinson & Meager, 1986). Recent definitions specify that working time flexibility includes both options favourable for (and required from) companies and options favourable for (and required from) workers (European Foundation, 2007d). These various options are categorised in different type of schemes, as shown in Table 2.1. Flexibility of working hours includes, variable hours or annualised hours¹³ and a broad range of flexi-time schemes,¹⁴ some more favourable for companies and some more favourable for workers.

Table 2.1 Options of numerical internal flexibility

Option for workers	Options for companies
Variation in working time	Working time flexibility
Flexible working hours/schedule	Flexible working hours/shifts (variable hours)
Working time accounts	Part-time (reduce/increased) working hours
Part-time (reduce/increased) working hours	Unusual working hours (nights, weekends)
Leave schemes	Overtime
Parental leave (maternity/paternity/adoption)	
Care leave (for family)	
Sabbatical/career breaks	
Educational/training leave	

Source: European Foundation, 2007d

Data obtained from the principal surveys on working conditions in Europe confirm the changes outlined above. There is an increasing differentiation of temporal models, highlighted by the increase of atypical working schedules, increase of part-time and of short or very short working time on the one hand, increase of overtime, of working hours on the other hand. On this matter, as several studies have showed the historical and general

¹³ The annual quantum of hours is worked flexibly; employees work longer hours during peak times and accrue time off work for quieter times.

¹⁴ The lowest degree of flexibility is offered by schemes which only allow the start/finish time to be varied on the same day; anyway they provide a core working hours each day. Other schemes allow the accumulation of credit or debit hours within certain limits over a longer period of time (*e.g.* a week or a month). In more advanced flexi-time schemes employees are permitted to take full days off as compensation for accumulated credit hours. And, finally, some schemes allow credit hours to be compensated by longer periods off - often with the whole year (or even more) as reference period within which the time account has to be settled. Such schemes are often referred to as 'working time accounts'. See Ramioul and Huys (2007).

trend of diminishing working hours has come to a halt or slowed down considerably, albeit according to differing partners depending on the countries concerned. In EU-15 average usual weekly working hours fell from 37.6 to 37.3, while in the New Member States (NMS) it fell from 41.1 to 40.9. But when carrying out the analysis of working hours it is convenient to distinguish among full-time and part-time workers. In fact, if we maintain the separation between part-time and full-time workers, we would notice an increase in effective working hours. Figure 2.2 outlines the working hour's trend of full-time workers. In the 1990s, in EU-15, average usual weekly working hours were about 42 (42.1 from 1996 to 1998) then they began to decline until 2002, when they reached 41.4; after this year (and this historical minimum) average usual working hours increased.¹⁵

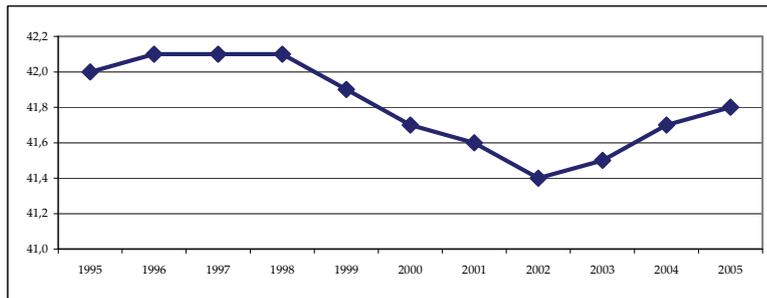
As previously announced, at the same time there has been an increase in the number of part-timers or workers with short working hours, and in the amount of flexible or irregular work schedules. Figure 2.3 shows the ascending trend of part-time workers on total employment, especially in EU-15 countries.¹⁶ In EU-15 the percentage of part-timers increases from 16.0 *per cent* in 1995 to 20.4 *per cent* in 2005. In this period part-time grew almost everywhere; the only exceptions are represented by Denmark, Sweden, United Kingdom where, however, part-time incidence is above EU-15 average, and by Greece the country with the by far lowest part-time incidence. As broadly reckoned, women activity rate is one of the main determinants of part-time diffusion - and therefore of cross-country differences.¹⁷ On the contrary, in NMS part-time incidence is generally stable and it is lower than in EU-15 countries: part-time workers represents about the 10 *per cent* of total employment; in these countries there was moreover a full-time employment grew.

About the diffusion of flexible or irregular work schedules, in 1999 65 *per cent* of European workers had a fixed work schedule, in 2005 this percentage fell to around 50 *per cent* (European Foundation, 2007c). The Figures 2.4 and 2.5 report the average weekly working hours for each country. It is worth noting that while average weekly working hours of full-time workers is quite uniform all over EU-15 countries, a more volatile indicator is provided by part-time workers' working time. In NMS, weekly working hours are on average higher than in EU-15. For what concerns part-time work, the highest average weekly working hours value is found in Romania (26.2), the lowest in Slovenia (18.6).

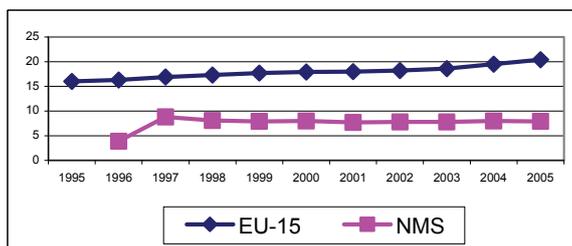
¹⁵ This trend is common to the majority of the Old Member States; obviously each curve (of each country) presents some peculiarities. Particular cases are represented by Austria and Italy, where from 1995 to 2005 the average usual weekly working hours are increased much more (in Austria from 41.3 to 44.3, in Italy from 40.4 to 41.2). But a particular case is also represented by France, where average usual weekly working hours declined from 41.3 in 1995 to 38.9 in 2002 but then they increased until 41.2 in 2005. Exceptions are, instead, represented by United Kingdom, Ireland and Portugal; in these countries we can observe a descending trend for the whole period; the exception is partly explained by the higher number of working hours in 1995 (43.7 in Portugal, 43.8 in Ireland and 44.9 in United Kingdom).

¹⁶ Part-time remarkably developed in EU-15 countries. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of part-time workers increased from 23.8 millions to 33.8 millions. It is of note that more than the half of the 18.6 millions of new jobs created in Europe in the same time was part-time jobs.

¹⁷ As a consequence, the countries characterised by lower female activity rates - *e.g.* Southern Europe countries - show the lower part-time incidence in the labour market. The causal nexus between female participation and part-time diffusion may be obviously twofold: on one hand, as part-time is more spread among female workers, the more women participate in the labour market the higher the percentage of total part-time contracts; on the other hand, the more employers demand part-time job the higher the participation rate of women willing to work part-time (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007).

Figure 2.2 Average usual weekly working hours - salaried full-time, EU-15 - 1995-2005

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Figure 2.3 Part-time workers as percentage of total employment - EU-15 and NMS - 1995-2005

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

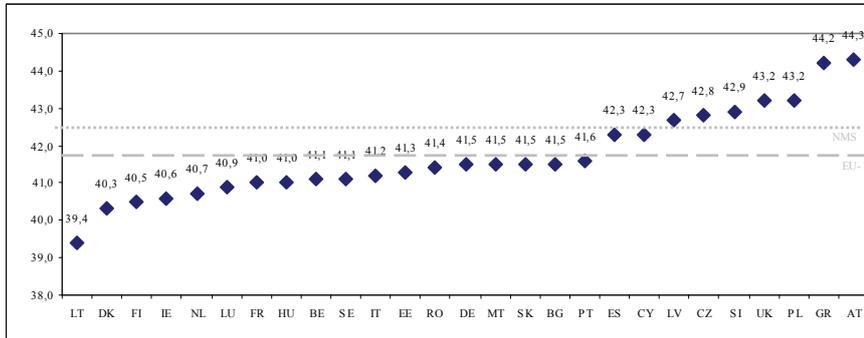
Disaggregated data by sector show that between 2001 and 2005, weekly working hours of full-timers increased almost in every sector with few exceptions.¹⁸ The same trend we can observe about occupations;¹⁹ in spite of working hours are quite variable across different occupations, average weekly working hours of full-timers did not decrease or increased in the majority of occupations. For what concern part-time, it grew almost in every sector,

¹⁸ The exceptions concern of other community, social and personal services and private household activities. In EU-15, for what concern full-timers, in 2005, working hours are very high in hotel and restaurants (47.7), agriculture (49.5), mining and quarrying (43.9) and, on the average, do not exceed 40 only in electricity, gas and water supply (39.9), public administration and defense (39.4), education (37.1) and health and social work (39.9). In NMS full-timers average working hours is high in agriculture (46.9), construction (44.9), hotel and restaurants (44.0), transport, storage and communications (44.0). For what concern part-timers the highest values can be found in transport, storage and communications (24.3) and manufacturing (23.9) (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007).

¹⁹ In EU-15, for what concern full-timers, the highest value are reported by legislators, senior officials and managers (48.0) and skilled agricultural and fishery workers (50.1); whereas clerks work on average 38.9 hours per week and technicians and associate professionals work 40.2 hours. Also in NMS, among full-timers, legislators, senior officials and managers (45.6) and skilled agricultural and fishery workers (48.0) state the higher average weekly working time, whereas professionals work on average 38.6 hours per week.

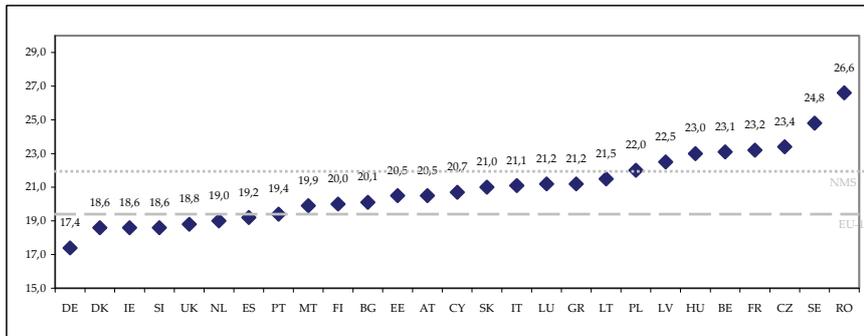
especially in EU-15 countries. Its incidence on total employment is particularly high in services sector and in service occupations.²⁰

Figure 2.4 Average usual weekly working hours - salaried full-time, EU-15 and NMS - 2005



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Figure 2.5 Average usual weekly working hours - salaried part-time, EU-15 and NMS - 2005



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

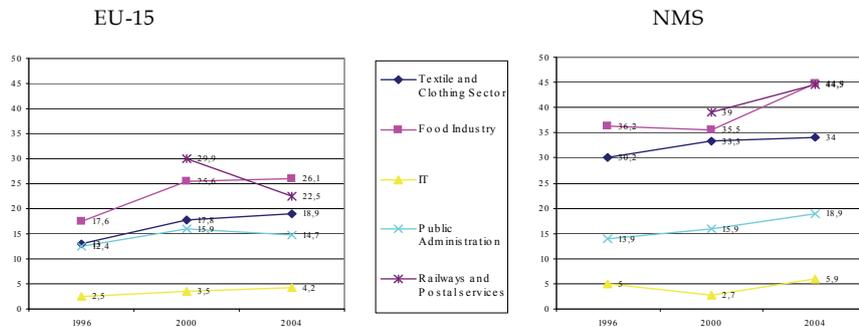
In addition to rising average working hours, there has also been an increasing reliance on shift work in most sectors and on unusual/asocial working hours. More specifically, in the last decade, on the average, the proportion of employees working on shift work has increased in EU-15 (15.0 per cent in 2005 versus 12.2 per cent in 1995) but has decreased in

²⁰ In EU-15 part-time workers in elementary occupations work 16.6 hours per week, workers of services, shop and market sales work 19.3 hours per week; the other occupational group show higher value (from 20.4 to 21.3 of the technicians and associate professionals and 21.4 of the legislators, senior officials and managers). In NMS the average weekly working hours is normally higher for all the occupational groups; it remains high especially among plant and machine operators and assemblers, craft and related trade workers (24.0) and service and shop and market sales workers (23.9).

NMS (28.9 per cent in 2005 versus 31.6 per cent in 2001). An interesting trend is the increasing focus on shift work in the services sector. Similar trends also emerged for the types of different occupations. Shift working is by far more frequent among blue-collar, but it is increasing also in white-collar, especially in clerks and in service workers and shop and market sales workers.

If we consider the sectors and the business functions the WORKS project has studied in-depth, in textile and clothing sector shift work is increasing and involves especially production functions: in EU-15 the proportion of shift workers grew from 15.5 per cent in 1996 to 22.8 per cent in 2004, in NMS from 33.1 per cent to 37.1 per cent. The same trend we can observe in food industry where a massive resort to shift work is registered; also in this sector, it is more widespread in production; it involves almost 60 per cent workers in NMS and 35.0 per cent in EU-15. The resort to shift work is also high in railway and postal service; even if the percentage of employees working on shift work is increasing in NMS (from 39.5 per cent in 2000 to 44.5 per cent in 2004) and decreasing in EU-15 (from 29.9 per cent to 22.5 per cent). As far as only the activities connected to direct contact with customers are taken into account, it emerges that shift works involves 23.4 per cent of employees in EU-15 and 54.9 per cent in NMS. On the contrary shift work is quasi-nonexistent in IT sector; and it has a moderate use in public administration (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007).

Figure 2.6 Employees working on shift work as a percentage of the total of employees - 1996-2004



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Looking at social working hours in EU-15, it is first of all interesting to note that night work has grown in every occupation, and is especially widespread among plant and machine operators and assemblers and service workers and shop and market sales workers. Saturday work incidence has decreased among white-collar, but remains very high among service workers and shop and market sales workers and legislators, senior officials and managers. On the contrary, among blue-collar, Saturday workers are increasing, especially among elementary occupations and, obviously, among skilled agricultural and fishery works. Among the latter, a noticeable proportion of workers work on Sunday; a working arrangement that involve also 28.5 per cent of service workers and shop and market sales workers and 14.8 per cent of legislators, senior officials and managers. In NMS

asocial work arrangements frequency has slightly increased between 2000 and 2004. Contrary to EU-15, asocial workhours are more spread among blue-collars and no noticeable convergence process is going on.

Table 2.2 Employees working on shift work as a percentage of the total of employees, WORKS selected business functions - 1996-2004

		1996	2000	2004
EU-15	Textile and clothing sector: production	15.5	20.8	22.8
	Textile and clothing sector: R&D	9.4	11.2	14.4
	Textile and clothing sector: logistics	8.8	14.2	12.9
	Food industry: production	23.0	33.8	35.0
	Food industry: logistics	21.0	29.2	27.8
	IT: core activities	2.1	2.7	4.1
	Public administration: customer services	8.7	14.2	15.3
	Railways and postal services: core activities connected to direct contact with customers	-	31.4	23.4
NMS	Textile and clothing sector: production	33.1	36.6	37.1
	Textile and clothing sector: R&D	24.4	26.1	20.8
	Textile and clothing sector: logistics	14.2	28.2	32.2
	Food industry: production	51.2	48.3	59.2
	Food industry: logistics	27.4	29.9	37.7
	IT: core activities	3.4	1.6	6.2
	Public administration: customer services	18.1	8.8	11.0
	Railways and postal services: core activities connected to direct contact with customers	-	45.4	54.9

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

In the specific of the sectors and the business functions the WORKS project has studied in-depth, textile and clothing sector is characterised by an important incidence of asocial working hours arrangements, but lower than the incidence in the manufacturing sector as a whole. Instead, in food industry there is a massive resort to asocial working hours arrangements (higher than the incidence in manufacturing sector as a whole). In 2004, in EU-15, the percentage of employed working on night, Saturday and Sunday amounted to 18.8 per cent, 33.0 per cent and 17.1 per cent respectively; in NMS the analogous figures reached 13.8 per cent, 17.2 per cent and 10.7 per cent. In IT sector the resort of asocial working hours arrangements is low. While it is important in the public administration, above all working hours on Saturday, and in railways and post service. In the latter there are great differences among Old and New Member States: Saturday work is by far more common in EU-15, whereas percentages of night and Sunday workers are almost similar among the two areas (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007).

Table 2.3 Population in employment usually working on night, Saturday and Sunday as a percentage of the total employment - 2004

	EU-15			NMS		
	Night work	Saturday work	Sunday work	Night work	Saturday work	Sunday work
Textile and clothing sector	6.1	13.4	3.1	4.3	10.3	3.0
Textile and clothing sector: production	7.8	12.3	3.3	4.4	10.6	2.9
Textile and clothing sector: R&D	5.0	15.0	3.0	1.6	3.4	0.6
Textile and clothing sector: logistics	3.8	7.4	2.6	5.9	4.9	3.3
Food industry	18.8	33.0	17.1	13.8	17.2	10.7
Food industry: production	26.9	37.3	20.4	18.5	17.7	13.7
Food industry: logistics	16.9	24.4	10.5	13.2	22.1	7.3
IT	3.6	7.5	3.3	2.5	5.5	2.7
IT: core activities	3.5	6.5	3.1	2.4	6.3	2.5
Public administration	9.5	17.5	10.8	6.9	8.4	7.3
Public administration: customer services	8.2	13.4	6.8	3.5	6.1	6.1
Railways and postal services	14.9	46.1	13.9	14.3	18.9	13.9
Railways and postal services: core activities connected to direct contact with customers	16.1	59.5	13.8	17.2	23.7	16.4

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

2.3 Strategies and problems in the organisations: some empirical findings

The importance of time and of temporal flexibility in the process leading to the restructuring of the value chain and of production models is also confirmed by the findings emerging within the framework of organisational case studies. The trend emerging from these corporate 'tales' is one of a progressive 'variability' of working time, which in the corporate world takes up various forms, from the application of fixed-term or non-standard work contracts to an increase in part-time work and atypical working hours, short and very short working hours, to annualised working hours. It should be observed that under these circumstances workers know an increasing differentiation of working time models and have often faced a progressive intensification of work. This is principally intended as the extension of hours effectively worked, through increased overtime and work carried out at home or away from the workplace. However, intensification of work should also be intended as ever faster rhythms, closer deadlines, and shorter breaks. While no doubt there are - often significant - differences between sectors, business functions and occupational groups, a general trend can clearly be defined (Dore, 2005).

As companies break-up, grow leaner, organise themselves in networks, temporal flexibility involves all workers along the entire value chain: those operating within the central as well as peripheral nodes. In some cases, the constant reduction in the number stable workers generates staff shortages or understaffed work force. And for the 'core group' (for the 'survivors' of the restructuring process) this entails increased tasks, heavier workload and, in terms of working time, longer working hours, especially in the form of overtime. Naturally, this all depends on the labour legislation that is enforced in each country, on the effective possibility (and convenience) employers have in increasing daily,

weekly, etc., working time through overtime.²¹ As we mentioned earlier, while temporal flexibility involves all workers along the value chain, some case studies revealed significant differences depending on the position within the value chain, becoming more flexible the further one moves away from the central node of the network company (normally the brand name owner, the source of the outsourcing process, the company that is in a position to wield a heavier clout in terms of control/domination) towards the periphery, represented by subcontractors, second-tier subcontractors, single freelance workers, outworkers.²² Good examples are offered by the studies on the value chain of two companies of the clothing industry, two 'branded marketers' (Lane & Probert, 2006; Faust, 2005), the Belgian *Wonderwear* and the Italian *Green*. In the latter, both the principal company and the subcontractors rely on flexible working hours and overtime. Nevertheless in subcontractors 'working hours are often very long making up most of the workers' day [...] Working hours are hardly regulated. Changes or distribution of working hours are decided by management in an arbitrary way. In other words, workers hardly have any say as far as working hours are concerned' (Pedaci, 2007a: 12). Subcontractors, as well as external collaborators and outworkers, represent the nodes where much of the market pressure are unloaded, taking most of the responsibilities of the shortcomings and delays of the central node. It is, therefore, the periphery that is forced to deliver at a short or very short notice, with an immediate impact on the quality and conditions of work.²³

As shown by case studies, pressure in terms of delivery time is determined by the strategies companies implement to meet variable demand, characterised by peaks and slumps that are not easily predictable. During peak periods management demands extra work on weekends; and the workers are sometimes told at the last minute. In other cases, the introduction of heavier shifts and/or the request for overtime derive from the need to produce/provide goods/services 24/7 and thus meet client/consumer demands. This is above all a feature of customer-driven services, especially if the service is handled by private call centres, and of general interest services. On the matter, an interesting example is the case study on the *Greek Post* and on its subsidiary for courier services. Here, 'given the customer-driven nature of the service and the inherent race for timely delivery, there are sharp variations in the volume of work and a need for extended opening hours; this leads to shift work as well as extensive use of overtime' (Gavroglou, 2007: 7). The workers of this company work regularly alternating shifts (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and on Saturday they work overtime. The need to provide service throughout or most of the day, seven days a week, was also recorded in the IT sector, both within software development and production. Case studies have showed that companies involved in customer support, help desk or software maintenance must ensure that service is provided during the operating hours of the customer company or organisation; extended working hours are then organised on the basis of shift work.

²¹ In spite of most of the organisational case studies register an increase of overtime. Overtime is very frequent in several countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, Netherlands, UK), sometimes paid, otherwise unpaid (Flecker *et al.*, 2008).

²² This phenomenon is more evident in the case studies concerning the business functions of production - especially in clothing and food industry - and the business function of customer care. Obviously, it emerges in a significant way in the cases regarding outsourcing process.

²³ This is evident in some cases of restructuring that have entailed a transfer of personal. The organisational mobility coincides with a change in the organisation of working time and especially with a greater temporal flexibility and an increase of working hours.

The introduction of extended working hours and the demand for overtime may also arise as a consequence of the need to extend communication time with subcontractors, considering that various segments of the value chain may be located across the globe. A very interesting case is represented by *WW-DK*, a Portuguese wholesale company operating the clothing industry which supplied garments to retailers and brand owner companies. As the case study revealed, the company 'has also business partners in Brazil (five hours behind Portugal) and India (five hours ahead of Portugal). This requires a more flexible working time concept. And if production partners in these countries become more important, *WW-DK* needs employees that work from permanent 5:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and employees that work from 12:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Currently, some employees also do the correspondence with business partners from home to guarantee answers to customer demands within 24 hours. For instance, these persons leave the office at 5:00 p.m. and communicate with Brazil between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. ('part-time telework')' (Woll, Vasconcelos da Silva & Moniz, 2007: 12). Other interesting cases also emerged in the services and IT sectors. The study on a Swedish IT software production company reports that the need for co-ordination with Asia partner in the early morning and US partner in the late afternoon practically extends the working hours or, at least, the need for availability of employees (Tengblad & Sternälv, 2007a).

The intensification of work mostly happens where work is predominantly project-oriented, which occurs ever more frequently in the business functions of R&D, information technologies, production, in particular in services sector²⁴ and occurs more frequently in service and knowledge-based occupations. Working time depends on the way the project is developing, in the sense that work must be extended in one way or the other in order to meet deadlines. Case studies show that in some companies there appears to be a tacit accord between workers and management according to which the concept of 'work done' is the principle regulating the organisation of work. You work, in other words, until the project (or part of it) is done: 'if a project has been formally planned to be finished at that moment, the work has to be completed' (Vandenbussche, 2007: 17). In these cases, control by the management may be less direct though by no means weaker, tending to be exercised by enhancing workers' responsibility. The single worker, or team, is held liable for the timely delivery as well as quality of the work and is, therefore, in charge of organising work schedules. The choice of extending or shortening working hours ultimately rests on the single worker or team of workers. What generally occurs is that working hours are almost invariably extended. Many believe that this kind of organisation provides an opportunity for increasing workers' autonomy. However, empirical findings show that for most workers autonomy continues to be very limited if not altogether imposed, being more of a theoretical rather than concrete possibility. Benefiting from a real autonomy are mostly those workers with higher professional profiles, those who carry out knowledge-based occupations, who mostly operate in such business functions as R&D and IT.²⁵

²⁴ This is in relation with the productive cycle and organisation of work. For this reason, it is less frequent in the industrial sectors and in public administration, where project-oriented work is rare. Similarly, the same applies for some business functions, such as logistics, where the organisational practice appears unsuitable.

²⁵ Considering the influence of organisation and autonomy regarding working time on the other times, some scholars speak about a new kind of social stratification. This stratification is based on the difference

The binding demand clients/projects impose on the definition of working time leave practically no room for discretionary decisions. It should also be observed that in many cases there occurs a 'colonisation' of the sphere of private life on the part of work. In some occupations the blurring of work and life is sometimes perceived as 'natural', as something 'normal' (Bechmann, Krings & Nierling, 2007). Interesting to this end are the findings of not only organisational case studies, but also of occupational case studies focusing on researchers, dress designers, software professionals. The emerging trend in such knowledge-based areas is that work requires an involvement that is nothing short than total.

Many of the organisations surveyed showed that as deadlines increasingly tightened, stress level rose accordingly. This trend was present in both industrial and services companies and involved both production and logistics as well as the creative and R&D segments - a trend, therefore, present across the occupational footprint. Thus, for example, studies focusing on the restructuring of R&D in the clothing industry all insisted on the speeding up of the work process, which arises from the need to synchronise activity with a rapidly mutating demand, leading, in turn, to the production of constantly changing collections. The consequence of this development is a dramatic reduction of the time required for production and of the time available for inspiration, creation and innovation. Call centres are a case in point. In all organisations, working time is practically identical and is characterised by Taylorist models, with working pace being dictated by the *call distributions system*. Against this backdrop, workers have little or no discretion and are placed under an even stricter control, not only by their supervisors but rather by the IT apparatus, by the 'new assembly lines' (Altieri, 2002).

2.4 Gender-related issues of working time

2.4.1 Part-time, long-time, flexibility of working time: main gender differences

In this section some features of working time will be addressed by focussing on the analysis of gender-related issues. After analysing the results of the quantitative pillar and of organisational case studies, the main differences between a female and a male working time pattern will be stressed. Indeed, part-time work is at the core of the debate on work flexibility in Europe as it is considered a tool to increase employment rates, female rates in particular.²⁶ In a country where family care is still mostly provided by women, work-life balance is an increasing need (Samek Lodovici & Semenza, 2005). Part-time work, when its regulation is favourable both to businesses and workers, can be considered as an opportunity to increase job offer and also a way to meet the needs of male and female workers to reconcile work and private life (Saraceno, 2003; Altieri, 2007).

As shown by a survey on the living and working conditions of employees carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions at

between those who are completely autonomous with regard to their time, even in work sphere, and those who are not, not even for their non-working time (Negri, 2007; Schizzerotto, 2002; Saraceno, 1983).

²⁶ See Paragraph 3.3.2 where the issue of part-time work is elaborated in more details.

the end of the 1990s (1998), those who choose more flexible and shorter working hours give as main reasons the opportunity to 'have more time for themselves and their activities', 'reduce stress of full-time work' and devote 'more time to their children'. The latter was stressed in particular by women.²⁷

The European data show that long working hours are a predominantly male phenomenon in Europe and one which affects self-employed workers to a greater extent than employees. The sectors most affected by long working hours are agriculture, hotels and restaurants and construction (all with more than 20 *per cent* of workers in this category); in terms of occupations, it is managers and agricultural workers who most often work more than 48 hours (European Foundation, 2007c).

In recent years, part-time work - largely a female phenomenon - has been increasing in Europe. For example, between 2000 and 2005, 43 *per cent* of newly created jobs have been women's part-time jobs, 15 *per cent* men's part-time jobs, 22 *per cent* men's full-time jobs and 20 *per cent* women's full-time jobs. This development can be categorised as a success as more people, especially women, have been able to re-enter or remain in the labour market due to the availability of part-time work and hence have been better able to reconcile work and outside work responsibilities (European Foundation, 2007c). If we consider the distribution of part-time work in the different sectors, what emerges is that it is most prevalent in other services (30 *per cent*), health (28 *per cent*), hotels and restaurants (27 *per cent*), and in education and the wholesale and retail trade (24 *per cent* and 23 *per cent* respectively) (European Foundation, 2007c). These are sectors where more women are employed and as a consequence the diffusion of shorter working hours is wider, too.

The causal nexus between female participation and part-time diffusion may be obviously twofold: on the one hand, as part-time is more spread among female workers, the more women participate in the labour market the higher the percentage of total part-time contracts; on the other hand, the more employers demand part-time job the higher the participation rate of women willing to work part-time (Villa, 2005). Looking at Table 2.4 infers that both mechanisms are at work: female part-time incidence is everywhere higher than average, nonetheless it remains well higher in Continental and Scandinavian countries. For what concerns working schedule, while in many Northern countries working time arrangements are generally more flexible, Mediterranean countries are characterised by a higher incidence of regular-schedule workers (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007). As for the individual state, the percentage of female part-time though it increased considerably in some countries, for instance Austria and Belgium, in others it was stable, or in the case of Sweden, fell. In the New Member States, part-time work as a percentage of total employment on average fell slightly between 1997 and 2005.

²⁷ The percentage of women in part-time (or in shorter working hours) increases overall with the number of children, which is not the case of men. See Eurostat (2005).

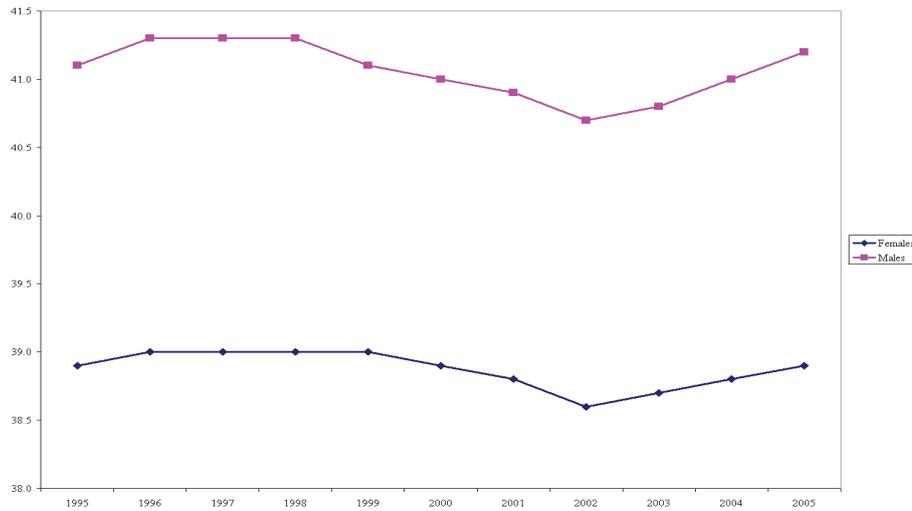
Table 2.4 Female part-time workers as percentage of total female employment - EU-15 countries - 1995-2005

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
AT	26.9	28.8	29.0	30.3	32.5	33.0	33.6	35.9	35.4	38.6	38.9
BE	29.8	30.5	31.4	33.3	39.9	39.9	36.8	37.7	39.7	41.0	40.7
DE	33.8	33.6	35.1	36.4	37.2	37.9	39.3	39.5	40.8	41.6	44.3
DK	35.5	34.5	34.5	35.8	33.9	35.2	31.6	31.4	32.0	33.9	32.7
ES	16.5	17.0	17.4	17.1	17.6	17.1	17.3	17.1	17.4	18.3	24.9
FI	15.8	15.6	15.6	17.0	17.0	16.9	16.7	17.1	17.8	17.8	18.5
FR	28.9	29.4	30.9	31.5	31.6	31.0	30.4	29.7	29.9	30.0	30.9
GR	8.4	9.0	8.1	10.5	10.2	8.0	7.2	8.0	7.4	8.6	9.1
IE	23.1	22.1	23.2	30.3	30.7	30.9	31.3	30.7	31.3	31.9	-
IT	13.1	13.0	13.9	14.4	15.7	17.4	17.8	16.7	17.2	24.8	25.7
LU	20.3	18.4	20.2	22.5	24.6	26.0	25.6	26.4	30.7	36.3	38.2
NL	67.3	68.5	67.9	67.9	68.6	70.6	71.3	72.8	74.2	74.8	75.3
PT	11.6	13.0	15.0	17.3	16.8	16.5	16.7	16.5	17.3	16.1	16.6
SE	43.4	41.8	41.4	40.7	40.0	36.3	32.7	32.9	35.4	36.4	39.9
UK	44.3	44.8	44.9	44.8	44.3	44.4	44.3	43.9	44.2	44.2	43.1
EU-15	31.3	31.6	32.4	33.0	33.4	33.6	33.6	33.4	34.0	35.2	36.6

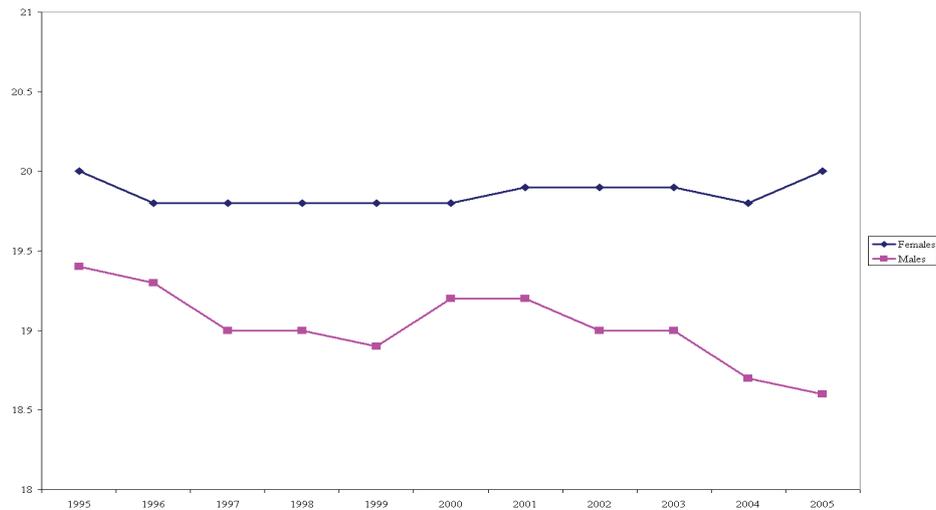
Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Moreover, when analysing working hours trends according to sex it's possible to notice that while no gender differences emerges concerning full-time workers - working hours declined until 2002 and then start to increase again (Figure 2.7); in the last decade working hours of male part-time workers sharply decreased from 19.4 in 1995 to 18.6 in 2005, while female part-time workers working hours average remained around 20.0 (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.7 Average usual weekly working hours according to sex - salaried full-time in EU-15



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

Figure 2.8 Average usual weekly working hours according to sex - salaried part-time in EU-15

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

As Table 2.5 shows, the strong trend towards feminisation of part-time involved most of the European countries. Overall, in EU-15 countries, between 1995 and 2006, the percentage of women working part-time increased of 5.5 *per cent*, compared with 2.9 *per cent* of men. In detail, the higher increase were registered in the Netherlands (+15.9 *per cent*), Italy (+13.4 *per cent*), Austria (+13.3 *per cent*) and Germany (+12 *per cent*). On the contrary, it should be stressed that in some countries there was a reduction of women working part-time: in Sweden (-3.2 *per cent*), United Kingdom (-1.7 *per cent*) and in Denmark (-0.1 *per cent*).

By focussing on some aspects of available literature it can be noticed that there is a fairly optimistic view of temporal flexibility especially to women's benefit. It is said that thanks to the introduction of flexible working time, women have been able to improve their working conditions as for reconciling work and family needs as well as career prospects. Some authors state that flexibility allowed women more than men to identify their professional path: the opportunity to organise one's working time in a more flexible way allowed many women to 'shape' a career without giving up their family life. The individualisation of career paths is presented as a 'win-win' change. It provides employers with flexibility, while giving (female) employees a better chance to shape their own careers in their own interests (Walby, 1990; Witz, 1992).

Furthermore, the critique of bureaucratic organisations assumes that in contemporary 'flexible' organisations the less strictly defined work roles favour more porous gender roles. Therefore individuals are not so tied to their expected positions and women can redefine themselves as equal to men in the world of work. In addition, the new forms of work organisations are associated 'with the feminisation of management qualities and a growth of managerial occupations in which women are better represented' (Hebson & Grugulis, 2004: 218).

Table 2.5 Employment rate, percentage of part-timers, temporary employment by gender - EU-15, 2005

	Employment rate		Part-time - percentage on total employment (age >14 years)		Temporary employment on total employment (age >14 years)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
EU-15	3.2	8.8	2.9	5.5	3.2	2.8
Belgium	1.0	8.6	4.6	11.3	3.0	3.5
Denmark	0.5	6.4	2.9	-0.1	-2.9	-3.5
Germany	-1.1	6.2	5.7	12.0	4.8	3.0
Ireland	11.0	18.0	-	-	-5.8	-8.3
Greece	2.4	9.4	0.1	1.8	-0.4	1.8
Spain	14.1	21.5	1.6	6.7	-1.2	-1.5
France	1.1	5.6	0.7	1.7	1.7	0.7
Italy	4.1	10.8	1.7	13.4	5.2	6.6
Netherlands	5.9	14.5	1.5	15.9	-	-
Luxembourg	-1.7	12.4	6.3	7.4	6.8	3.9
Austria	-0.7	4.3	2.5	13.3	3.4	2.5
Portugal	2.7	7.7	3.2	4.2	10.4	10.6
Finland	10.0	9.2	1.3	3.4	-0.8	0.5
Sweden	3.9	0.9	1.1	-3.2	4.1	4.1
United Kingdom	2.5	4.4	2.9	-1.7	-1.1	-1.4

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey

2.4.2 Gender differences in various sectors and business functions

As mentioned above, a consequence of restructuring is the differentiation of temporal regimes. With the progressive reorganisation of working time, various working hours patterns have emerged: short and flexible working hours, especially for female employees and long shifts and overtime work especially for men. Considering these working time patterns, women participate more in discontinuous work and have fixed-term contracts in order to reconcile work and family responsibilities. Outsourced services are the most flexible part of the value chain and therefore more subject to temporal flexibility; as a consequence, more women enter or re-enter the labour market in this segments. This is what happened in some call centres and other customer care activities analysed in the organisational case studies.

Contrary to the literature mentioned in previous paragraphs, where temporal flexibility was considered as a tool to help women in shaping their career at least in some sectors, the qualitative analysis of the clothing industry led to different empirical results. Family duties more than other variables show the differences between men and women in their careers. Some employees' accounts suggest that men have more opportunities to advance in their career. Many women believe that the reasons for this statement partly lie in different working time conditions, because many women have less professional chances due to part-time contracts. Furthermore, as everybody knows and as literature on gender shows, greater difficulties of women in advancing in their career are linked to the need of reconciling work with family responsibilities, especially children care (Altieri, 2007; European Foundation, 2006).

In this sector it has been noticed that the heavy workload and 'total involvement' in some departments led to negative consequences for women: as a matter of fact, many renounced to specific career paths due to greater responsibility and extended working hours which would lead to an increased involvement and a more constant presence on the workplace. Therefore, if in shaping career paths working time is an important element, the use of part-time work by women is, in part, an obstacle for career advancement. The case study on *Menswearco*, a private label producer in Germany, yielded similar findings regarding the working conditions of designers: 'generally, speed of production, work-hours and stress have increased [...] The high workload also has consequences on the gender dimension. Design thus tends to increasingly become a full-time-plus occupation, and 'flexibility means that we sit and discuss also at night', as a Portuguese fashion designer puts it (Woll *et al.*, 2007: 12). So, in such cases temporal flexibility is considered in terms of 'extending' working time, because time use is determined by the dispersal of various business functions of the value chain in different areas and their working time is different from that of the central organisation. Such organisation of working time does not favour female employees, especially those with children, since sometimes work in these sectors is extended into late night.

Also in IT service outsourcing in the public sector, gender differences are linked to working hours, especially overtime work. However, in terms of gender relations there are big differences between the cases in the different countries. The Norwegian case stands out with a ratio of sixty to forty between men and women employed in the IT service provider IT health, while in the UK and in Germany 70 *per cent* and in Belgium and Portugal 90 *per cent* of the employees are male. The Swedish case is about wage administration and not IT proper; here 90 *per cent* of the employees are female. In the Belgian case, the discrimination against women becomes most obvious. Management does not see women as suited to the company because 'total involvement' and high levels of overtime are requested from employees and it is assumed that this is not possible for women, because of their family and domestic obligations (Flecker, 2007a). In the Portuguese case, the explanation given by management was that it was difficult to find women with adequate qualifications that enabled them to enter in the high-tech field. While there are big differences between the cases in relation to female employment, the changes caused by outsourcing generally seem to be detrimental to women: more pressures for flexibility in the Swedish case (Tengblad & Sternälv, 2007b), weaker equal opportunities and diversity policies in the UK case (Dahlmann, 2007), less part-time work and increasing problems in reconciling employment with care duties in the Dutch case (Bannink, Hoogenboom & Trommel, 2007), and some wage discrimination because of differences between men and women in formal education in the Norwegian case (Dahl-Jørgensen & Torvatn, 2007).

In an IT R&D there is the severe under representation of women as R&D IT researchers in the labs or companies. However, in terms of work-life balance it must also be said that a fair amount of flexibility exists in arranging working schedules which may help both women and men to arrange family responsibilities. In several cases there was also the possibility to work at home without necessarily meaning high levels of work intensification. However, researchers especially tend to use working-time at home for tasks that require concentration and quiet, and thus are not particularly adapted to care work (Holtgrewe, 2007).

Less flexible working hours were identified in other sectors and business functions, while in customer service the higher use of flexible working time facilitated an increased involvement of women. Looking at the gender composition of the work force, customer service compared to other business functions is over-proportionally dominated by women. For example in the organisations which underwent outsourcing of telephone service (like the *DVLA* in Italy or *City life* in Austria), 60 per cent to 70 per cent of call centre agents are women. This gender composition has not changed as a result of restructuring. Because of the fact that customer service in the public sector is generally dominated by women, it makes no difference whether it is organised in-house or outsourced. This accord with the Swedish example PCC, which founded in-house call centres and also has a 90 per cent proportion of women among agents (Flecker *et al.*, 2008).

2.5 Some conclusive notes

The findings of the WORKS research confirm the centrality of ‘temporal restructuring’ in the ongoing organisational restructuring processes. In the new production patterns, oriented to a continuous and rapid variability, working time is an ‘adjustable variable’: working time - broadly intended as the duration of the working relationship, as effective working hours during the day, week, *etc.*, as the disposition of such hours within the day, the week, *etc.* - must be variable, easily changeable at a very short notice. Working time, as quantity (but also quality) of purchased work force, must be synchronised to demand fluctuations and therefore to production requirements. The first consequence of these processes is the differentiation of temporal regimes, of working times and how these combine with the other time spheres. There has been a differentiation in the duration of the working relations. Short and very short work relations have multiplied (as have discontinuous relations consisting of several short contracts during a short period), close to the ‘traditional’ ones, those that last a lifetime or at least for a long portion of an individual’s trajectory. Working hours and schedules also change as they are de-standardised and ‘de-synchronised’. Working hours differ not only in terms of length but also in terms of dislocation and variability. Short working hours are on the rise, as are part-time jobs; but, at the same time, full-timers work longer hours as overtime or supplementary work increases. Atypical working schedules are spreading, as working hours are concentrated during the weekends or at unusual times, namely during the evening, at nights or during holidays, *etc.*

However the most important consequence that the findings of the WORKS research highlight is a growing intensification of work, intended not only as a lengthening of working hours, but also as a saturation of time, a speeding up of pace and rhythm, tighter deadlines, higher pressure, and sometimes a ‘colonisation’ of the other spheres of the individual’s life. These phenomena are observable in most sectors, business functions, occupational groups, even if with different extensions, intensities and interactions.

Moreover in some sector and business functions it is worth noting the emerging and consolidation of inequalities (concerning the different dimensions of working time) among the different knots that constitute the complex enterprise-network among, in other terms, the different segments of work force involved in a value chain. A phenomenon that while occurring mostly in production in the clothing and food industry and in customer service in the public sector is rarer in research and development, in information technolo-

gies. Thus, for example, the fragmentation of production function in an industrial enterprise often produce inequalities among the workers of a source-company and the workers of its subcontractors or of its subsidiaries; or among the permanent workers and the workers with non-standard contracts. The further you move away from the centre (of the network) and from the stable positions, the more you find unfavourable situations. The working conditions of the workers of the subcontractors and of the subsidiaries - as well as those of the freelancers or of the temporary workers - are more often characterised by stronger increase of working hours, more frequent overtime, wider variability of the different dimensions of the working time, increased workloads, more time pressure, de-structuring of the traditional working week with working hours on Saturday and on Sunday, de-synchronisation of times with working hours in unusual/asocial hours.

The changes in the category of time affect possibilities and strategies of work-life balance; but affect also possibilities and strategies of career and of presence on the labour market. Here emerges another inequality: an inequality of gender. The intensification of work, the great variability of the working time, *etc.* transform some jobs in activities only for person without family responsibilities, and in general without engagements in other sphere of life. And it is a fact that the larger part of family responsibilities is still of women. Most of men can accept intensification of work, high working time variability (overtime, variability of the different dimensions of the working time, *etc.*) because they have just a little part of the family responsibilities, of the household work; while most women renounced to jobs or to career paths that require 'total involvement', that require extended, variable, unforeseeable working hours. The empirical material of the WORKS project shows, for instance, that long working hours are a predominantly male phenomenon. On the contrary, among women, there is an increase of part-time and of short or very short working hours and an increase of unstable employment, of non-standard contracts. The risk is: men with an hyper-participation within the labour market and high level of marginality in the other spheres of life; women with an underparticipation within the labour market, forced to the reconciliation of work and life, constrained in their time organisation, with less opportunities to build a gratifying career trajectory. In this ambit it seems important to highlight a 'system effect'; fundamental seems the role of institutional framework. Institutions can/could mitigate or can/could strengthen the inequalities between men and women.

The phenomena described in the previous pages involve all the European countries; in all European countries changes seems to proceed in the same direction. Nevertheless, in a context characterised by increasing pushes toward isomorphism, it needs to note some differences among countries, some differences in the extension, intensity, and consequences of the changes in work and in particular in working time (Regini, 2000). As said above, crucial in this light is the institutional framework: the ways certain aspects of the working and production organisation are regulated, the extension of regulations and possible exceptions. Consider, for example, the existing differences in connection with outsourcing, the transfer of staff, the utilisation of non-standard contracts, and the social protection of workers involved. Or consider the data relating to the diffusion of the different types of working time flexibility.

The findings of the WORKS project confirm what has emerged from other empirical studies. European countries tend to concentrate around a number of typologies and models. Nordic countries (and some countries in Central and Eastern Europe) present lower

working hours, a high flexibility of working hours, but with a higher degree of worker-oriented flexibility (part-time, parental leave, long-term leave, early-retirement opportunities, *etc.*), stronger social protection, lower gender inequality. In most central European countries (Germany, Austria, France, Belgium), on the contrary, there is less flexibility and a higher degree of corporate-oriented flexibility. A condition that occurs even more in Southern Europe, where, in addition, working hours are longer and social protection is weaker and gender inequalities (in some sectors) greater.

Finally it needs to underline the importance of the characteristics of the industrial relations system, the degree of bargaining coverage offered, the presence of trade unions at the workplace and the possibility they have in taking part in the decision-making process regarding restructuring and, more in general, the changes impacting work force and output. Several studies confirm that where such variables have a greater value, working time - as well as the possibility of striking a better work-life balance - is less disadvantageous for workers (European Foundation, 2008).

3 Balancing work and family in the knowledge-based society

3.1 Working time and its effects on work-life balance

As described in the first part of this report there is a large body of literature which is analysing recent changes of working time pattern compared with the temporal framework in the classical industrial society. Whereas the industrial society - based on Fordistic production pattern - was characterised by the strong temporal and spatial connection between the workers and their working location *i.e.* factories and plants, the concept of the temporal organisation of working life and private life has changed considerably. Through technological innovations, organisational restructuring processes as well as social changes, working time models have been differentiated according to different branches and sectors. Although there always existed typical branches like the service sector with flexible working pattern (shift work, work at weekend *etc.*), general trends also in other branches show a tendency towards more flexibility of working time (see Part 2).

Since the beginning of the 1990s in the emerging IT sector new modes of working organisation *i.e.* project based and team-oriented work, flexi trust time models as well as decentralised working models have been analysed comprehensively.²⁸ Especially within other branches and sectors these new forms of work organisation were introduced in qualified and high qualified occupations and have changed the normative expectation of working time. As a trend, in knowledge-intensive occupations the amount of working hours has increased significantly in many European countries (Ramioul & Huys, 2007). Remarkable in these processes is that the increasing overload of work is occurring mostly beyond collective bargaining processes and on the basis of individual negotiations and working contracts. Thus, it seems that working time becomes an adjustable variable which underlies more and more economic and social pressure (Valenduc *et al.*, 2008).

The trends described above have gained specific attention in academic debates and have been investigated in many branches. One central result hereby is that the boundaries

²⁸ Similar to long traditions of 'flexible' working hours in some sectors, these new modes of working organisations already were typical for some occupations for a long time *i.e.* journalists (Behringer, 1998), researchers (Krais, 2000) and other high qualified occupations (Gildemeister & Wetterer, 2007). Nowadays it seems that these modes of work become more common.

between work and the sphere of non-work more and more have been adjusted in favour of working life (Minssen, 2000; Valenduc *et al.*, 2008).²⁹

Although the flexible management of time generally implies the chance of individual time sovereignty, the risk of (voluntarily) extended working time seems very high. For example in Germany employees with flexible working time show an increasing discrepancy between the agreed and the real working time (Kastner, 2004).

Thus, working time measurement for the creation of family and personal life seems to become more and more problematic. Similar tendencies have been observed in other European countries. But not only with respect to new modes of time measurement, or with regard to new demands for further training strategies, new relationships between working time and work-life balance have been created. These new demands imply deep consequences for the individuals in different branches and sectors (Flecker *et al.*, 2008; Ramioul & Huys, 2007; from a gender perspective refer to Gildemeister & Wetterer, 2007).

As an overall trend the quantitative and the qualitative results of the WORKS project come to similar results. Furthermore, they strengthen very much the tendency that working time organisation becomes an adjustable variable in Europe. Due to the ongoing development of speeding up processes as well as to the increasing economic pressure one central result of the project describes the intensification of work as one significant issue (see Part 1; Flecker *et al.*, 2008; Valenduc *et al.*, 2008). Although the indicators of intensification of work differ between the occupations, the effects on work-life balance seem considerable with respect to the qualitative results.

As described in detail within the organisational and occupational case studies (Flecker *et al.*, 2008; Valenduc *et al.*, 2008; see also Huws, 2006), the impact of technical, organisational and political shifts have created a new concept of work organisation which not only refer to high qualified jobs but also has reached lower qualified jobs in different sectors and branches. Taking these developments into account, time organisation theoretically should be recognised as an issue which implies a dual aspect: 'a quantitative one - the *amount* of time conceded to the other party; and a qualitative one - the *control* of that time by its subjects' (Huws, 2003: 178). Both, the quantitative and the qualitative dimension of time management become crucial when thinking about work-life balance (Hochschild, 1997; Krings, 2006; Accornero, 2005).

Whereas from the very beginning of industrialisation the quantitative dimension of working time has been one of the central elements of collective bargaining,³⁰ the qualitative dimension of time has led to new concepts and perceptions of the 'personal time management' (Promberger, 2005: 11) and self-monitoring of working time. This tendency is pointed out by the image of the 'flexible person' (Sennett, 1998) in post-industrial socie-

²⁹ The discussion on boundaryless work emerged from the debate on flexibility and refers to the blurring of boundaries which were typical for the work organisation in Fordism. While the organisation of work becomes more flexible, boundaries such as fixed contracts, the limitation of working hours, spatial aspects and the separation between working time and leisure time diminish widely (Kratzer, 2003). The employees develop individual strategies to cope with the changed demands and circumstances in work, *i.e.* an increasing degree of self-organisation (Pongratz & Voß, 2000; see also Huws, 2008).

³⁰ Besides the classical question of wage, working time is one of the central measurements related to capital and labour. Historically the industrial conflict is a conflict for time. But during the history of industrialisation this conflict has changed its face fundamentally. Whereas in industrial societies the conflict persisted between the inner needs of the workers and the external demands of the enterprises, in post-industrial societies the conflict more and more became an inner contradiction of the individuals (Promberger, 2005).

ties who steadily has to adapt to professional demands (see Part 1). This need for individual flexibility towards employment demands seems to be much more significant in the US than in European countries. As a considerable trend, however, it has a clear impact on working pattern as well as on work-life balance.

Because of the broad scale of occupational groups and branches in the WORKS project, the empirical results of the field studies provide a variety of tendencies concerning the quantitative and qualitative dimension of time. With regard to work-life balance these patterns seem interesting on both counts. On the one side they offer new individual options and opportunities for men and women which historically seem to have more relevance for women in the last years. On the other side they also imply new and challenging demands in combining working life with individual needs and everyday life. This co-ordination has to be done by men and women based on a reflexive individual arrangement of time. These arrangements should be able to integrate a lot of different contradictory time frames into a whole (Jurczyk, 2005).

What was expectable during the conceptional phase is that these individual efforts depend very much on the regional institutional and organisational framework (Browne & Diamond, 2003). What still was surprising after screening the first results is, however, that this type of integrative activity mostly is still fully done by women across Europe. This result led finally to the question how the concept of reconcilability of work and family differs significantly from the concept of work-life balance.³¹ In both concepts, gender-related aspects play a crucial role in describing individual strategies for combining working demands with life. Interestingly, all the interview partners in the case studies across Europe (including countries with traditional welfare policies) referred much more to the issue of reconcilability than to a broad concept of work-life balance. Taking the increasing pressure for nearly all occupational groups into account, it seems, furthermore, that the concept of work-life balance in a broader sense has taken a back seat in the workers' minds.

As the WORKS approach to gender was 'mainstreamed' into the research, the following section focuses on the gender perspective in working time organisation and work-life balance in order to point out gender differences. The evaluation of these differences shows the persistency of gender inequalities and stresses that the logic of societal development in many European countries refers very much to these issues (Esping-Andersen, 2002).

3.2 Work-life balance or 'gendered' working time?

The gender approach of the WORKS project is based on several theoretical concepts, *i.e.* the 'gender contract' approach (Gunnarsson, 1998), the 'doing gender' approach (West &

³¹ Work-life balance can be much more considered as a broad concept covering issues like health, individual well-being, social networks, family support, social integration, quality of life, *etc.* (Kastner, 2004). However, in the case studies it was basically understood and analysed as reconciliation of work with family needs. Consequently, in the following report both terms - work-life balance and reconciliation - are used with the same significance.

Zimmerman, 1987; Acker, 1990 & 1992) and the 'segregation' approach.³² Dahlmann, Huws and Stratigaki (2009) mention that working time arrangements are crucial for gendering jobs, sectors, working conditions and quality of working time.

In the WORKS project, the aim is to get beyond the 'head counting' of men and women that underlies *i.e.* the gender segregation approach. 'This involves seeing gender not as a fixed characteristic of individual human beings but as a relationship which is continuously being produced, challenged, reproduced and transformed by both men and women in an ongoing process which is shaped by a range of different factors many of which are in conflict, or at least tension, with each other' (Dahlmann *et al.*, 2009: 19).

The analysis of time arrangements serves on different levels as identification of gendered practises and processes. Based on the issue 'working time' the empirical results lead to the consideration that gender constitutes an overarching dimension of difference which operates from the workplace to the household to the region to society (Dahlmann *et al.*, 2009). Thus, the time issue methodically bridges the gap between working time arrangements *and* work-life balance whose relationship has been under review. The strategies of work-life balance related to the individual perspective on the workplace level are widely based on information of the temporal arrangements between working life and family needs. 'In order to gain a real insight into the specifics of gender contract it would also have been necessary to carry out in-depth research at the level of the household and the region. These were beyond the scope of the project' (Dahlmann *et al.*, 2009: 17). Nevertheless, the analysis of working time arrangements provides interesting information with respect to the relevance of work in the household organisation and the social organisation of paid and unpaid work in Europe.

Family needs mainly refer to daily duties for *other* people like children, sick or elderly family members. From the gender perspective care work refers very much to the other side of 'productive work' and strongly belongs to the dual picture of work *and* life.³³ According to this approach work and life always should be reflected together because of the closed dependency between the productive and the reproductive sphere.

The assumption here is that societal development depends basically on social reproduction which means upbringing children, sociality, education, creation of cultural goods and much more. For example the prominent statement 'without human beings there is no economy' (Baier, Bennholdt-Thomson & Holzer, 2005: 16) strengthens very much the idea that care work is much more than a set of activities besides employment. 'Private family work' stands on the one hand for concrete working activities but on the other hand for an emotional and intuitive behaviour towards the others. At the same time it stands in a

³² In the thematic report 'Changing patterns of segregation and power relations in the workplace: results from the WORKS project' the gender approach of the project is presented comprehensively. In order to focus on labour market restructuring Dahlmann *et al.* gather the vast body of literature stretching back over two decades on gender and work (2009). For further insight into the gender approach of the WORKS project refer to this thematic report.

³³ The division between the productive as well as the reproductive sphere goes back to Karl Marx and has been further developed basically by the Feminist Theory since the 1970s. Here, the basic assumption is that the productive sphere of industrial societies depends strongly on the reproductive sphere which implies besides the reproduction and the upbringing of children the whole care work in the household sphere. Whereas in the very beginning the feminists claimed for the equal financial distribution coming from the production sector, the concept shifted more to the idea of societal recognition for women in the reproductive sphere (Becker-Schmidt, 1983; Fraser, 1994; Ostner, 1978; Scisci & Vinci, 2001).

broader sense for the creation of emotional relationships as the basis of moral and ethical attitudes (Jurczyk, 2005). As the core characteristic of family relations par excellence, these activities have a political dimension for the welfare states which in the academic debates are mostly neglected (Esping-Andersen, 2002; Dornes, 2002). Particularly in the US there are studies which show significantly that due to working time constraints parents have to leave their children alone (or in institutions) for more than ten hours per day (Hochschild, 1997).

Across European countries, care activities are basically done by women (European Foundation, 2007b). Depending on different institutional and political settings in the European context, female responsibility for care activities is reflecting different models of female integration into the labour markets. These models have a multitude facet. As described in the section before the high female proportion of part-time work in some European countries can be observed as one practical model in combining work and family needs (Fasano, 2005; Gasparini, 2000). But also the absence of women in some branches or the decrease of the birth rate in some European countries during the last decade has been interpreted as the expression of female strategies within labour markets. These different strategies are also widely reflected in the empirical findings of the WORKS project where changing time restrictions and options in knowledge-based economies have been analysed.

However, speaking about work-life balance in post-Fordistic societies, blurring boundaries between work and life seem crucial for two reasons. Firstly, the ongoing change in gender roles and in gender behaviour is producing the fade of the male breadwinner hegemony (Esping-Andersen, 2002; Mutari & Figart, 2001). Secondly, especially from the perspective of management literature concepts of work-life balance appear as new instruments of human resource management in organisations. Hereby, some elements like sports, physical treatments and different types of family services are offered by companies in order to boost the corporate identity of the employees. These types of strategies are mainly focused on the level of qualified jobs in order to improve the availability of both male and female employees within working time. Thus, very often perspectives on gender equality with regard to family or life aspects become lost. Moreover, from a critical point of view these strategies show that on the one hand boundaries between work and life remain conceptionally as the double face of employment. In many cases both women and men have 'to conform to a traditionally masculine lifestyle model in which the demands of work take supremacy over all aspects of life, be they familial or social (Dahlmann *et al.*, 2009: 84). On the other hand these boundaries have to be performed by the individuals which - in the case of family needs - can be a contradictory task (Jürgens, 2006).

In the following sections the empirical findings show that the search for a new gender contract as well as the recognition of the reproductive sphere in knowledge-based societies seems crucial when thinking about the concept of work-life balance. Hereby, the idea of reconcilability between work and life should be dismissed in favour of balancing different life courses of women and men with professional demands. This idea should encompass innovative aspects: 'New approaches discuss how leisure, paid and unpaid work, learning and care activities can be optimally distributed over the life cycle against the background of the emergence of new non-standard work-life biographies and new risks, changing working hour preferences, an ageing population and the desire to increase

participation and employability' (Groot & Breedveld, 2004: 301). In most countries, however, reconcilability and respectively balance between work and life still seem far from considering these aspects.

3.3 Institutional settings as framework for work-life balance: country differences across Europe

The broad and comprehensive quantitative analyses of the WORKS project show that development and changes in work are not convergent across Europe. In contrast, they offer a broad variety across European countries. 'If the reports find evidence of increasingly flexible and uncertain work across a range of countries and dimensions, they cannot point to a single model of change or of adaptation' (Birindelli *et al.*, 2007: 33). Especially in the case of flexible working time arrangements important country differences on a European level become apparent (see Part 2). Ramioul and Huys (2007: 29ff.) argue that the 'policy and practice of flexible working time arrangements is largely influenced by the national institutional frameworks and by nation-specific cultural factors'. Consequently, the effect of national work cultures, political decisions as well as (culturally shaped) demands for flexible working time are important factors influencing work organisation next to organisational constraints. Therefore, the way how individual working time pattern are developing depends significantly on institutional as well as on organisational frameworks. These frames open the field and simultaneously determine the field for options and possibilities of individual strategies and action.

3.3.1 Pattern of temporal flexibility across Europe

Flexibility in work time organisation is an important topic of the European debate on changes in work which is widely reflected in a large body of literature (see Part 2; cf. *i.e.* Erlinghagen & Knuth, 2004; Flecker, Papuschek & Gavroglou, 2006; Kronauer & Linne, 2005; European Foundation, 2008).³⁴ Coming from this angle of discussion the analysis of work-life balance seems essential to understand the variety of pattern combining work and life. As described above these patterns vary conceptionally very much across Europe due to different historical backgrounds.

The European Survey on Working Time Flexibility (ESWT) (European Foundation, 2007a) continuously assesses this large variety of flexibility pattern. The survey identifies six types of flexibility practices in organisations by covering very flexible, moderately and low flexible types of organisations. The first type of organisations offers a high degree of worker-oriented flexibility with long-term leave arrangements like parental leave or part-time work. While the first type takes needs and preferences of the employees into account, the second type covers flexible working time arrangements which are arranged solely by the firms. The following three types cover 'moderately flexible' organisations with different flexibility pattern (flexibility over the life course in the third type, the possibility for part-time work in the fourth, and overtime in the fifth). The sixth type encompasses

³⁴ In the WORKS project the impact of flexibility due to value chain restructuring is discussed comprehensively in the thematic report of by Flecker *et al.*, 2009.

organisations which have no flexible working time practices at all (cf. Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 38).

The distribution of this flexibility pattern is spread across Europe. One may consider that one single European model does not exist but a variety of different models. According to the ESWT country differences, including legal, cultural and institutional settings, are the most important criteria for a typology of flexibility pattern.

Four central country groups of working time flexibility can be identified (see Table 3.1). Whereas the Nordic countries can be characterised by a high level of flexibility-oriented on workers' needs, in contrast, the Southern countries generally have a low degree of working time flexibility which is very much aligned to the demands of the firms. In between there are Central European countries with intermediate flexibility models which are either more firm- or worker-oriented.

Table 3.1 Summary of country profiles

Group	Characteristics	Countries included
Nordic	High flexibility + worker-oriented	Finland, Sweden
Central 1	High/intermediate flexibility + worker-oriented	Denmark, the Netherlands, UK, Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland
Central 2	Low/intermediate flexibility + firm-oriented	Germany, Austria, Ireland, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Slovenia
South	Low flexibility + firm-oriented	Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary

Source: European Foundation, 2007a, cited in Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 40

Further empirical analyses show that the country differences are important factors for working time flexibility across Europe.³⁵ While the Scandinavian countries set the framework for high worker-oriented flexibility, especially Southern countries offer rarely flexible working possibilities.

3.3.2 Flexible working time models

On the one hand, the origin and aim of temporal flexibility can be focussed on the adaptation of personal capacities to organisational requirements (Flecker, 2007b) and is therefore organised along firm's demands (see Part 2). On the other hand flexibility in working time may support temporal needs of the employees with regard to the non work sphere.

³⁵ There is empirical evidence for country differences with regard to border lines between Northern *versus* Southern and Northern *versus* Eastern countries. While in Northern countries employees can widely decide over their working time, more than 75 per cent of employees in Southern and Eastern countries have no autonomy over their working time schedules and arrangements (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007: 24). This line between European countries with regard to working conditions can be enforced by the findings of Greenan *et al.* (2007: 64). Their analysis shows that in terms of work organisation Northern and Western European countries like Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands offer complex jobs with learning opportunities, high quality of work but intense market constraints. In contrast, the working conditions in Mediterranean countries (Greece and Spain) as well as Central and Eastern countries (Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania) can be more characterised as routine jobs with a low work complexity and low quality of work.

Temporal flexibility is organised along different working time models, either in a daily or weekly perspective, *i.e.* part-time work or in a longer-term, biographical perspective, *i.e.* long-term leave options or phased retirement schemes.

In the context of work-life balance, worker-oriented flexible working time models are in the focus of interest in order to evaluate the combination of work and life along given or negotiated time frames (European Foundation, 2006).

In the following, quantitative evidence will be presented in order to map special characteristics of working time models across Europe with a special focus on the creation of work-life balance.³⁶

Part-time work

Part-time work is the most common instrument of atypical working time arrangements. On a political level as well as in academic debates, part-time work is regarded as the main organisational instrument for employees to balance work and life. Whether part-time work can afford this balance depends very much on the shape of part-time work in the organisation. Institutional issues like wage level, social protection, career progression, distribution of working-hours among others are crucial for employees to regard part-time work as an attractive work organisation model. Since many decades, part-time work has a strong gender-bias, because this working time model is used to a high extent exclusively by female employees (European Foundation, 2007b).³⁷

The quantitative analyses of the WORKS project show that the overall rate of part-time work increased remarkably over the past ten years,³⁸ and is still highly-gendered (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007: 17ff.). Furthermore, the organisation of part-time work shows institutional differences. Whereas around 75 *per cent* of the organisations practising part-time are in Scandinavia, Western Europe or Anglo-Saxon countries, part-time work is far less common in the Mediterranean countries. The countries of the New Member States lay in between these two poles. Furthermore, Northern as well as Western European countries offer 'innovative' forms of part-time which go beyond fixed daily or weekly pattern of working hours. These forms of temporal flexibility offer high degrees of individual freedom to arrange working time around life and can therefore be beneficial for creating the balance between work and life. These flexible part-time models which can be favourable for the creation of work-life balance are again far less frequent in Mediterranean and in Central European countries. For most Anglo-Saxon employees working part-time has a different meaning. Here, part-time work seems to be far less oriented on employees' needs, but is used to fulfil organisational demands for additional work force.

³⁶ Please refer to Part 2 of the report, where the topic of changing working time pattern in knowledge-based societies is elaborated in more detail.

³⁷ For further country-related analyses on the issue of the gender-bias of part-time work as working time instrument please refer to Paragraph 2.4.1 of this report.

³⁸ In terms of working conditions and work organisation there are still big differences between the countries of EU-15 and the New Member States (NMS). Jobs in the NMS are less complex and less intense in terms of market constraints and have a lower quality of work (Greenan *et al.*, 2007: 63). While there was a significant increase in part-time work in the EU-15, the share of part-time work in the NMS is lower and did not grow (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007: 18ff.) (see also Paragraph 2.4.1).

In this approach, part-time work seems far less favourable to support work-life balance (Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 34ff.).

However, career prospects tend to develop negatively due to part-time work. Therefore 'part-time work is only rarely indicated by employee representatives as desirable work-life balance' (Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 36). Furthermore, flexible working pattern only affect work-life balance in a positive way if they correspond to the individual demands of the employees.

According to the empirical data working time relations in the knowledge-based society are currently under change. Whereas new demands on qualifications and skills are becoming more and more important options for female participation in the labour market, part-time models seem to become more and more unattractive for women. In nearly all occupations female employees prefer high temporal flexibility at the workplace in order to make individual temporal arrangements.

Long-term leave options

Other prominent flexible working time models are long-term leave options like parental leave, sabbaticals or flexible retirement schemes.³⁹ All these models are organisational options to organise work-life balance on an individual level. As the ESWT on work-life balance examined, especially the introduction or extension of innovative instruments like flexi-time or working time accounts would improve organisational working time policy (European Foundation, 2006; Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 54). However these forms of temporal work organisation are less frequent. The empirical evidence shows that temporal agreements are mostly organised along fixed pattern of work, either along fixed hours per day or days per week (Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 35).

In academic debates, the concept of work-life balance is very often limited to the reconciliation of work obligations with responsibility for young children. But also other aspects affecting work-life balance like care activities for elderly people or temporarily limited absence from the workplace seem to become more common in Europe.

Children-related family obligations are nevertheless discussed as the most important issues in work-life balance. These demands on the worker's side have been the main incentive for organisations to develop models like part-time work or long-term leave options (Erler, 2005). An important option for this family-related aspect of work-life balance is parental leave. As the ESWT report shows, again country differences are crucial (European Foundation, 2006). Organisations with employees on parental leave vary between the share of 45 to 60 *per cent* of organisations in most European countries. On the two extreme poles are Sweden and Finland far above the average and Spain at the bottom end being far below the average. The differences depend mainly on national parental leave regulation covering length or salary compensation. Whereas in Sweden parents receive 80 *per cent* of their previous salary, in Spain the leave is totally unpaid. Parental leave is still mostly used by female employees which represents a significant gender

³⁹ In this context early retirement models are considered as organisational work time models in order to improve work-life balance. Obviously, this model has been introduced in many European countries as a central labour market policy in order to avoid increasing unemployment rates. In general, this model was highly-appreciated by the workers, but it has strong economic implications for the government. Due to neo-liberal concepts it has been reduced significantly during the past five years (Ramioul & Huys, 2007).

imbalance. The use of parental leave seems still strongly influenced by social conventions leading to the development that the measures are taken to a great extent by women. But in many countries the participation of men is fostered on a political level. Although on average 30 *per cent* of the organisations report that one or more men used the possibility of parental leave, a large variance across the countries exists, having again Sweden on top with 69 *per cent* of men taking parental leave in organisations. The experiences from European countries show that it seems essential that parental leave options focusing on fathers reserve a special part of the parental leave time exclusively for them in order to be 'effective' (cf. Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 55ff.).

Other forms of long-term leave options for *i.e.* prolonged education or elderly care become more important and are already supported by around a third of the organisations. The public sector has hereby been a pioneer for long-term leave options in many European countries. Other forms of organisational measures for work-life balance are phased retirement schemes which allow a gradual decrease of working hours before retirement. These retirement schemes differ across the European countries, too. While phased retirement schemes are regarded as 'normal' in Middle and Northern Europe, they occur rather 'exotic' in Southern Europe due to existing part-time cultures as well as (low) salary levels (cf. Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 56ff.).

All in all, empirical evidence shows that flexible working time arrangements became more frequent in organisations during the last years. This goes in line with the increasing differentiation and great variety of working time models. Nevertheless, the implementation of these models depends very much on the type of organisation: Basically they are introduced in organisations which are either large, belong to the public sector, or have active unions. Reflecting the broad variety of working time models, it seems that a change in management strategies according to work-life balance already came into action. However, still much policy initiatives are required because the flexible combination of work life and private life is not self-evident. For example, options like the possibility to work from home or variable begin and end hours are not common in all countries, yet (cf. Ramioul & Huys, 2007: 58ff.).

These considerations also have been reflected in the empirical findings of the WORKS project. Based on these findings one may argue that country differences as well as cultural pattern of work organisation play an important role in institutional and organisational settings for the construction of an individual work-life balance, *i.e.* part-time work, long-term leave options. Nevertheless, the organisational framework for working conditions does explain only partially when a successful balance between work and life has been realised.

As the cases from the qualitative pillar have shown, the subjective appraisal of balancing work and life seems hereby important. The organisational framework as well as specific institutional policies of support seem crucial in finding the own balance of work and life. Furthermore, the empirical findings show that this balance is organised along different biographical stages as well as along different steps of career trajectories (Valenduc, Vendramin, Pedaci & Piersanti, 2009). Thus, the effect of institutional and organisational support depends very much on changing demands in the organisations and on the demands in the private spheres of the workers. In many countries this balance is barely established for many reasons. In the following section the subjective constraints of this balance will be strengthened.

3.4 Acceleration and temporal pressures as framework for the balance of work and life: individual strategies of work-life balance

Both the results of quantitative and qualitative pillar of the WORKS project give evidence that work in Europe becomes more intense (see Part 2, Birindelli *et al.*, 2007; Flecker *et al.*, 2008; Valenduc *et al.*, 2008). Processes of intensification can be especially proved by the trends of acceleration and temporal pressures across all industries.

'All in all, neither value chain restructuring, increased pressures for flexibility nor other factors appear to push work organisation in Europe uniformly into a direction of higher work complexity and increasing work organisation. Surprisingly, it is technical constraints on the rhythm and timing of work that have most consistently increased in EU-15 whereas in spite of ongoing tertiarisierung market constraints are on the decrease or constant' (Flecker *et al.*, 2008: 42).

According to this consideration, a new concept of time organisation seems to become increasingly apparent. The findings confirm the expectation that workers in more advanced countries face market-driven intensification of work rather than technology-driven intensification of work (Flecker *et al.*, 2008: 40). This evidence reflects empirically the reference of Castells when developing the concept of the network society as a post-Fordistic model of society: 'Time is managed as a resource not under the linear, chronological manner of mass production, but as a differential factor, in reference to the temporality of other firms, networks, processes or products' (Castells, 1996: 439). [...] 'Indeed, while value chains are expanding across time and space, time and space are not rendered irrelevant but are both managed and articulated in different ways' (Flecker & Holtgrewe, 2008b: 139). Actual changes in working time organisation are highly-influenced by restructuring of organisations. How they are defined and expressed depends very much on the type of work and its involvement in bargaining processes.

Global dynamics and its manifold consequences on the workplace has been summed up as an increase of intensification of work which can be measured by new temporal constraints (Di Nunzio, Hohnen, Hasle, Torvatn & Øyum, 2009). However, they have different effects on sectors and on occupations. Focusing on the possibility of creating work-life balance at the workplace, it seems crucial to integrate the subjective perspective of the workers and their different modes of combining work and family life.

Although the theoretical approach of the WORKS concept refers to a broader concept of work-life balance (Huws, 2006; Kastner, 2004), global restructuring processes seem to have a remarkable impact on individual strategies in combining work and family needs. Hereby qualitative changes of working time create blurring boundaries between work and life which basically have been analysed in qualified occupational groups. But also on the life side socio-cultural changes *i.e.* the decreasing family support in Italy or Portugal, are leading to the need to explore new models of reconcilability. Hereby, the overview

shows that still women are mainly in the role of caregivers and responsible for the organisation of the households.⁴⁰

The diverse European situation of working time models makes it difficult to reach an overall idea about individual strategies of work-life balance. Although the high proportion of female part-time work in the sample gives an impression about the dominant model of combining work and family needs, 'the breadwinner family are being supplanted by a hegemonic model in which gender is differentiated by time rather than participation and nonparticipation in paid labour' (Mutari & Figart, 2001: 38). The assumption that working-time regimes are constituted according to the degree of flexibility in workhours and gender equity in work schedules and economic roles, at least seems appropriate for women in European labour markets.

The qualitative research of the WORKS project basically has shown, that the reorganisation of work has led to a changing normative concept of working-time which is based on new technological innovations, increasing market demands, an increasing individual commitment to work, high personal involvement into specific career pattern as well as the increase of flexible working arrangements. Although this consideration mainly refers to qualified and high qualified jobs, changes in lower qualified jobs also have to deal with the intensification of work. Due to technological innovations as well as organisational restructuring the workloads have increased. In many case studies workloads became physically less exhausting but at the same time more demanding mentally. Another important aspect also seems to be the insecurity of future perspective which put significantly pressure on the workers.⁴¹

However, institutional pattern still matter and create different cultural and social models of work-life balance (see Paragraph 2.1). For example, a 'generous' parental leave policy in Sweden or in Norway allows parents to shorten their daily working hours until the child enters into school. Compared with other countries this instrument seems to be part of the Scandinavian working culture. But, 'despite efforts to encourage men to participate, women are still the primary caregivers who utilise the policy' (Mutari & Figart, 2001: 51; Bergqvist & Jungar, 2000).

In Germany, in contrast, traditionally policy strongly promoted part-time jobs for married women which has created a male breadwinner model with a gendered division of labour within households (Pfau-Effinger, 1998). These two examples strengthen very much the necessity of evaluating different models of work-life balance within the contextual framework. Facets of traditions, working cultures as well as individual behaviours have to be taken into consideration when analysing qualitative aspects of work-life balance. Nevertheless the results from the research field of the WORKS project provides a broad variety of work and life realities of women and men which are presented in the following along different occupational groups. With regard to individual work-life bal-

⁴⁰ Mutari and Figart have developed working-time regimes according to the degree of flexibility in working hours and gender equity in work schedules and economic roles. They define four types: (1) male breadwinner working-time regimes, (2) liberal flexibilisation working-time regimes, (3) solidaristic gender equity working-time regimes, and (4) high road flexibilisation working-time regimes. These typologies as well as other studies show that there are a lot of indicators involved in offering the best prospects for achieving gender equity (Mutari & Figart, 2001).

⁴¹ The consequences of work intensification on the physical and mental constitution of employees are discussed in detail in the WORKS thematic report of Di Nunzio *et al.*, 2009.

ance, the indicators time frame, dimensions of insecurity, reconciliation of work and family needs as well as satisfaction on-the-job have been used.

3.4.1 Balancing high commitment towards work with the 'rest of life': knowledge-intensive occupations

Designers

Little surprisingly, the clothing industry is one of the most dynamic sectors in global restructuring processes and the overall trend of acceleration and speeding up processes becomes especially apparent in this sector (Flecker & Holtgrewe, 2008a; Nierling & Krings, 2008; Valenduc & Muchnik, 2008). Through speeding up processes of the whole production, deadline constraints become an important aspect of daily working life on all occupational levels. However there are big differences in the consequences and practical implications of the acceleration according to the position in the value chain.

Designers in all analysed countries have to face a higher workload, a multiplication of tasks, a growing time pressure, tighter deadlines, shorter collections cycles and steady market control: 'We must be good, but more important, we must get to the clients on time. I can have a great idea but others do the same that I do and big brands decide on minutes with the information they have. So if mine isn't there it will not be considered after, and I lost time. So time is a big issue and this dimension is out of control' (Portuguese designer, cited in Vasconcelos da Silva, Woll & Paulos, 2007: 10). Generally, the designers work project-oriented with a high degree of self-responsibility on-the-job that partially has tremendous consequences on the time management. Thus, the time frame very often implies flexible and long working hours especially in times with high working peaks due to collections. Due to these peaks in most countries flexi trust time is the most dominant working time model of the designers. That means that the organisation of working time is project-orientated and depends very much on finishing the collections.

Because of these peaks part-time work seems not possible for women and men and indeed part-time work arrangements seem non-existent in design. Working time is organised along the male breadwinner concept which is also the case for female designers. The work-life balance of the respondents in the case studies is strongly oriented on their jobs. They realise either the single breadwinner model or they do not have children. Furthermore none of the respondents expressed interest in family friendly measures, because they have already organised their life according to the current working conditions (Nierling, Krings & Bechmann, 2007: 16). This development can be illustrated by a French case: 'All designers I met had between 25 and 35 years old and very few had children, I would say that within the ten to fifteen with whom I had tighter relations, only one had a baby (...). Indeed, it's not easy to get a job as a designer. Everybody wants to keep his job and unfortunately it's not convenient to have a baby at this moment. In any case, I wouldn't even think about it now because of that' (French designer, cited in Valenduc & Muchnik, 2008: 42).

From the perspective of reconcilability of work-life with family needs this occupational group is characterised by remarkable individual efforts which have been increased due to restructuring processes. In the case of starting a family, gender differences generally are becoming obvious. Because of the tied workloads and the high flexible work and life con-

cepts in terms of time and space childcare would not be possible. 'The overall constraints - time pressure, acceleration of collections renewal, impacts on designers of the worldwide organisation of the workflow, increasing role of information and communication technology - apply to both men and women, but however with differentiated effects on the work-life balance. Particularly, the issue of motherhood (to be a mother or deciding not to be) is an important aspect on the life of women designers that biases their professional development' (Valenduc & Muchnik, 2008: 44). In most cases, female designers either decide to quit their career or they decide to abstain having children. Male designers in most cases have not to confront such a polarised situation because their wives overtake the role of caretakers.

In order to assess these types of individual decision making processes, the strong identification of the designers with creativity and artistic aspects of their work has to be taken into account. Historically this occupation is - at least in the public perception - eminently distinguished as a creative profession which created the professional identity of designers. Thus, the qualitative dimension of working time also has a high subjective importance for the designer in all countries. 'Self-fulfilment, personal investment in work, expression of subjectivity, talent and creativity are part of the normative image of the occupation' (Valenduc & Muchnik, 2008: 45).

Designers seem to have a high commitment towards the content of work. Demands from the organisation, also new demands which arose from restructuring processes, have been incorporated by the designers. Despite of numerable technical and organisational changes in their work profile, they still seem very much dedicated to their occupation which represents a core aspect of their conduct of life. This is also reflected by the fact that designers tend to work during weekends and in the evening. Their work 'never ends', thus the boundaries between work and life diminished widely (Kratzer & Sauer, 2005).

Through changing professional demands the normative image of the occupational identity still influences strongly the expectation towards work-life balance. However the high orientation is in some cases 'perceived as threats to creativity: less time to create and innovate, more constraints from market feedback' (Valenduc & Muchnik, 2008: 46) which probably has an impact on their professional identity in the long run.

IT professionals

The development of innovative models of work and life in high qualified occupations in the IT sector forms already a broad research tradition. A huge number of studies have been conducted in this field, showing that new models of work and life evolved in the IT sector during the 1990s (Schmiede, 1996; Baukowitz *et al.*, 2006; Boes & Baukowitz, 2002; Pfeiffer, 2004). In the empirical research of the WORKS project the field of IT is covered by mainly three different business functions: IT R&D, software development, and IT service outsourcing in the public sector. Although R&D of IT and software development are foreseen as two different business functions in the global value chains, the profile of the occupations as well as the occupational identity seem quite similar. With respect to the need of synthesising the results they have been combined in this report.

The IT sector is a comparatively new sector in all countries which is also true for both occupational groups.⁴² Basically the sector is composed by white-collar work with a high proportion of male employees in all analysed countries. Through restructuring processes the work profile has been widened towards project management skills, customer-oriented communication skills as well as social interactive skills (Valenduc, 2008: 89). Thus, in many countries the female proportion has been increased significantly in these occupational groups. On the other side the new demands also mean a higher mobility in the job as well as a high commitment to work. For example the increasing standardisation of IT services has led to new forms of a global work organisation which for many employees implies travel activities, a certain synchronisation and co-ordination of workflows all over the world. Nevertheless, IT professionals working in the field of R&D or software development generally seem to enjoy a high quality of work with regard to long-term job perspectives, permanent contracts with stable working hours, but (voluntary) working time flexibility.

In the case studies under review IT professionals face global speeding up processes by tighter planning and schedules. Through internationalisation they have to keep with unusual working time demands due to the need for global synchronisation. Although they have to adjust their tasks both with internal and external work processes and colleagues, they still have a high level of autonomy in work. The case studies show that they are able to realise stable working hours in nearly all countries (cf. Holtgrewe & Meil, 2008a & b; Krings & Nierling, 2008; Valenduc, 2008). This autonomy and stability in working time can be used in a positive way to combine work with family needs as the German case study in IT implies: 'Although the two women software developers did not have children, and therefore it is difficult to judge how that would be dealt with, the men with children did report that there was understanding among their colleagues that they had family responsibilities and needed more regular working rhythms' (Meil, 2007: 14).

In contrast, the employees working in the field of 'IT service outsourcing in the public sector' are much closer to direct market demands. This causes various impacts on their working conditions as well as work content: 'As a rule, work becomes more standardised [...]. Another reason lies with the contractual relations: service-level agreements impact on the day-to-day work, increasing the paperwork and creating stress and pressures. In part, workers experience the changes in work as deskilling' (Flecker, 2008c: 102). This development can be illustrated by the UK case analysing IT outsourcing in a municipality: 'software developers who were used to building software or designing a website from scratch are now supposed to use templates and systems [...]. Two staff interviewed [...] felt they have become more ICT system administrators rather than creative software designers and they feel frustrated having to work in this more structured way' (Dahlmann, 2007: 12).

Especially in the IT sector employees have to face increasing mobility demands, due to the posting of workers at client companies. This is strongly experienced as stress and can

⁴² In Europe IT services had a considerable employment growth during the period 1996-2004, although a slight slowdown was observed in the years after the 'Internet bulb' in 2001. 'In the former member states (EU-15), the number of jobs in NACE 72 increased by 106 per cent, and round 1.2 million jobs were created. The share of IT services in total employment grew from 0.7 per cent to 1.4 per cent. In the New Member States, the evolution was also positive in the period 1999-2004' (Valenduc, 2008: 73).

encompass lengthy periods. This development is accompanied by higher demands in forced flexibility and increase in working time (Flecker, 2008).

Restructuring processes, here, partially have significant effects on the organisation of working time. Although from the very beginning of the IT sector the work organisation was based on project-oriented work with a high degree of individual self-management and self-responsibility, internationalisation of work has created an increasing demand towards more flexible working time patterns.

In most countries overtime is usual and part-time work seems not appropriate for these working cultures. According to this type of working culture part-time work in most case studies would cause disadvantages for the individual career. In fact, part-time work options are very rarely used and seem to be difficult to realise. On the one hand, this can be traced back to the male working culture with a high percentage of men working in IT. On the other hand, the form of work organisation along projects increases the degree of responsibility for the workers. The need towards self-organisation of the workloads is described by the prototype of the 'Arbeitskraftunternehmer' ('self-employer') (cf. Voß & Pongratz, 1998) which leads to a self-rationalisation of demands and needs in fulfilling working demands. This mode of working time organisation often leads to longer working hours and consequently part-time work options are very rarely used. Generally, the considerations focus on this type of self-organised work organisation in this sector. At the same time in nearly all countries this occupational group is able to defend successfully the expectation towards work-life balance. In contrast to the designers, however, working time patterns of IT workers are mainly based on fixed core working hours and the possibility of gliding time. Especially costumer-oriented activities are raising the necessity to remain in fixed time schedules.

In the self-perception of the employees these changes have a double face: on the one hand the international organisation of work creates challenging career pattern as well as interesting labour markets which has been expressed by both women and men. On the other hand the need for flexible working pattern has strengthened very much the model of male breadwinner hegemony (see Section 3.2).

For example the need to communicate late at night or during the weekend with partners abroad in many firms became a usual matter of work. On the base of networked technologies very often these needs are manageable in reconciliation with family needs. But as the case studies show normative aspects of work are changing significantly, especially for women. These changes are well-described by an observation of a French unionist: 'with this increased flexibility, related to mobility and new technologies (laptops, mobile phones, internet access, *etc.*) limits between working time and private time is blurring. More and more employees, even if they leave workplace earlier, work at home in the evening, in the weekend or keep in touch during holidays' (Muchnik, 2007: 15).

With regard to work-life balance the time framing becomes an important issue when evaluating these occupational groups. Especially the specific family-friendly policy in some Scandinavian countries has caused a surprising effect within the sample. 'In Norway statistics show that three of four women give birth to children, take 52 weeks paternity leave, while men only use their earmarked for weeks to stay with the new born children' (Anthun, 2007: 16). In other countries, in contrast, the male dominance in this branch has created a specific symbolic and social order of working culture which is based on individual performance. According to this culture working time frames have been

adapted according to institutional settings and still, 'temporal pressure is more perceived by female R&D workers, mostly because they have to harmonise these changes with family needs' (Klings & Nierling, 2008: 67). Gender-related differences in working time and work-life balance can be well-exemplified by the occupational case study findings on IT professionals in software services: 'Work-life and work-family balance is only considered equally for men and women in the Swedish case study. At the opposite, the Belgian case study quotes a manager telling that women (not men) have to choose between work responsibilities and family responsibilities. The UK case study describes a very paternalistic behaviour of a manager towards a single mother, who was working part-time and harassed to take part in meetings any day of the week. The Dutch case study points out that the high demanding conditions imposed to the employees are ipso facto extended to their partner; in this case all male employees lived with women working only part-time or not active on the labour market' (Valenduc, 2008: 94).

Basically, the occupational groups in IT show that trends in work and employment are crucial for work-life balance. Having a look on the biographical information the main caretakers are women whether they are working as IT experts or whether they are caring the children of male IT workers in the sample. But the intrinsic motivation of work has led to the attitude on both - men and women side - that the job is the constitutive element of biographical planning. If family needs have been raised mostly women decrease actively the commitment towards work. 'In this case changing boundaries take place between work and non-work' (Klings & Nierling, 2008: 65).

Both occupational groups, designers as well as IT professionals, belong to high-qualified knowledge workers. Both working profiles can be characterised by a high commitment towards work and by a high degree of self-control (see Part 2). In general, employees in both fields have a high degree of temporal flexibility in their working time. However, flexible working time models can only be used in favour of family needs, if organisational circumstances allow setting them into action. Very often the flexibility of working time is determined by organisational demands, although there is working time flexibility on part of the workers (Jürgens, 2005).

Accordingly, in high-qualified occupations, part-time models are not frequent. From the perspective of the organisation, part-time options are difficult to realise, and very often disadvantages in the career are prospected. At the same time, employees usually do not demand for part-time options, because they are very much dedicated to the content of their work as well as to their occupation which they perceive as a fundamental element of their biography. Due to the dynamics of high-qualified occupations, private life outside work is very often organised according to the single-breadwinner model.

Although these general findings characterise trends and developments in high-qualified occupations in intensified work processes, the results furthermore show differences within the business functions and occupational groups under review. Whereas in the occupational group 'designers' boundaries between work and life really seem to have diminished widely which is regarded as the normal way of working, the development is different in the field of IT. IT professionals show a high commitment towards work but nevertheless they intent to realise and to look for regular and stable working hours. Thus, the blurring of boundaries between life and work is here far less distinctive as in the design occupation.

Furthermore, the development in the field of IT services hints to the consequences of increased market demands for an attitude towards work. Here, forced flexibility and mobility as well as the deskilling of working tasks tend to worsen working conditions. Employees in IT services seem to much more suffer from flexible working time regimes due to a higher extent of standardisation and market-driven pressure in their occupation. The degree of creativity and the commitment of work is much lower leading to a different approach towards work in the field of IT.

Within the creation of models of working time and work-life balance cultural and national differences have a large impact (see Paragraph 2.2). In the field of IT it becomes apparent that family-friendly work settings or part-time models are much more common in the Northern countries. Cultural embeddings of familial life as well as institutional settings allow family friendly working models, leading *i.e.* to a 'baby boom' in Norway (Krings & Nierling, 2008: 64). These preconditions for work-life balance are much weaker in other parts of Europe. Especially the countries in Eastern Europe show a contradictory development. Here, the fields of high-qualified occupations in IT are in a developing stage, which sets a high pressure on the (mostly male) employees and demands a high commitment towards work including long working hours with a high degree of flexibility:

Flexibility and overtime provides Hungarian employees competitive advantage: work councils do not allow working at weekends in Austria or in Germany. There are no limitations in Hungary, and employees do not mind working on weekends, that increases their efficiency and helps them obtaining certain jobs. Flexibility also means that in contrast to German colleagues for Hungarians it is not a problem to stand up from their desk and rush immediately to the airport to travel to some remote place. Young and mostly unmarried Hungarian employees even like this. (Makó, Illéssy & Csizmadia, 2007: 12).

Integrating family needs in such a work surrounding is very difficult. Indeed, recent findings of the EWCS survey on the gender-perspective of European working conditions show that a polarisation of male and female workhours occurs in the New Member States (European Foundation, 2007b). While men tend to work increasingly long hours, part-time work becomes more likely identified with women's labour. Although the gender equality of former socialist regimes is still higher than in the Old Member States, 'a widening gap in working hours may reduce women's longer-term ability to compete with men in the labour market' (European Foundation, 2007b: 57). The results show significantly that gender relations at work are very much shaped by the distribution of working time between the sexes.

3.4.2 Fixed schedules and high flexibility demands: temporal organisation in production work

In contrast to the working and living realities of high-qualified work in the clothing and IT sector the production sector represents a group of workers with a more traditional or Fordistic work organisation. In the field of production work, the WORKS project offers empirical evidence from the clothing and the food sector. Both sectors can be characterised by different trends towards global dynamics. The clothing sector is very strongly shaped by global dynamics. Manufacturing in this sector is labour-intensive allowing only

a low level of automation (Dunford, 2004). The pressure due to acceleration is either put on global-wide subcontractors downward the value chain (Flecker & Holtgrewe, 2008a: 28), or is compensated by higher demands in temporal flexibility for (remaining) production workers. As the case study evidence shows, *i.e.* Portuguese production workers felt to be highly-burdened by increased and new demands of temporal flexibility (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 111ff.).

Empirical evidence from the food industry gives a more moderate picture about the trends of global pressures. In contrast to the clothing sector, industrial processing in the food sector encompasses a high level of automation. In some cases of food production there can be observed a higher level of intensification and pressure in work. This is caused by a higher efficiency in working tasks as well as by the need for temporal flexibility. Thus, the dynamics of global markets gain steadily in importance. The Danish case describes an increased pace of work, causing that workers feel stressed and being afraid to be able to keep up with new efficiency demands (Gorm Hansen, 2007).

This is, however, not an overall trend for the sector (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 112). 'The general outcome has been increased standardisation and some flexibility in time use, while sustaining existing wages and overall working time levels' (Meil & Schönauer, 2008: 82). In terms of temporal organisation, seasonal fluctuations seem to be still the main challenge for the sector for which adaptation strategies like technical solutions as well as a broad variety of working time models are developed. This broad variety of working time models in food production can be illustrated by the Norwegian case: 'Most of the workers work full-time. The fish farm workers have regular eight hour days from 8a.m.-4p.m. Sometimes they have to work overtime, but this is offset by calm periods in which they work less. The workers in fillet production rotate between two six hour shifts and have delivery deadlines everyday. The line workers previously worked one eight hour shift, but to increase utilisation of the new machinery, two six hour shifts were introduced' (Saetermo, Torvatn & Dahl-Jørgensen, 2007: 17).

Working time models of production workers cover traditional forms of flexible work organisation like fixed shift work and weekend work. As the results of the quantitative pillar of the WORKS project show, shift work is widespread in clothing and food production (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007: 43ff.). The degree of autonomy in working time differs across the countries. Especially the workers from Southern European countries report frequent overtime during peak periods including night work and weekend work which causes a high level of stress for the workers (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 111).

Restructuring processes in most cases cause strong feelings of uncertainty on the workers' side. The wish for stable working places basically has priority when reflecting the conditions of work-life balance. In contrast to knowledge-intensive occupations, in the field of production work boundaries between work and life are still clearly defined. Beyond the formal organisation of working time, the sphere of work does not play an important role in the life of workers. However, workers have to align their life very much along the working time demands of the firms. According to the quantitative data of the WORKS project, there is a high share of asocial working hours in the production of food and clothing, *i.e.* working on weekends or in the night (Birindelli & Rustichelli, 2007: 53). This is confirmed by the findings of the case studies, especially in the clothing sector. The Portuguese case implies that the introduction of flexible production pattern caused a new (flexible) organisation of working time. Due to frequent high peaks in workload workers

had to offer higher temporal flexibility regarding extra hours, weekend work and adaptation to night shifts. Workers experienced 'that they have to adapt their lives to this reality [flexible production]' (Vasconcelos da Silva, 2007: 8).

On the other side the organisational demand for temporal flexibility has increased in most countries. 'For the individual workers, this caused a change in work organisation, because they have to offer a higher temporal flexibility regarding extra hours, weekend work and adaptation to night shifts in order to handle frequent high peaks in workload' (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 111). However, the development is diverse. For example in Italy temporal flexibility with long working hours during high peak periods including work at the weekends and extra hours is prevalent. The situation is similar in Portugal and Denmark. In Denmark workers had the impression that they have to work more for the same amount of money (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 111). In other cases (*i.e.* Belgium, Greece and Norway) work intensity stayed the same after restructuring processes.

Through restructuring processes in some countries reconciliation between work and family needs becomes even more difficult. New working time schedules including overtime and night shifts lead to longer and irregular working hours. These schedules make it difficult to plan leisure activities or to have regular time with their families.

Also here, the topic of work-life balance is mainly focused on the reconciliation between work and family needs. Due to working time flexibility solely on part of the firms it is very difficult for the workers to synchronise the fixed working schedule with the 'schedules' of private life or family duties. As the case study evidence shows, a major difficulty lies in organising an 'individual fit' between working time and opening hours of public service institutions like kindergartens, day care centres or medical assurances (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 113).

Due to restricting working hours the balance between work and family needs remains difficult and has to be managed elaborately: 'Women that have to take their children to kindergarten have quite a lot of problems; when they have morning shifts and must clock in at six they cannot take their children because nobody looks after them at kindergarten or school ...' (Italian production worker, in Pedaci, 2007b: 10).

This missing link between different time regimes has to be mainly organised individually, very often by the support of social networks. Depending on institutional differences the practices of combing work and life differs. Whereas in Southern Europe the family network is still strong, in Continental and especially Northern European countries the workers depend much more on institutional settings as well as measures of the companies. Nevertheless, in all countries social networks have a high importance, due to the lack of (voluntary) working time flexibility.

With regard to work-life balance the orientation of working time organisation follows the male breadwinner model, because outside paid work the traditional division of labour between the sexes seems still dominant: women are the main caretakers in both sectors although they mostly work full-time. This picture correlates very much with the sex segregation within organisations on two levels. 'First, the often strongly gendered allocation of working tasks within the organisation may cause disadvantages for women *i.e.* due to the loss of special payments or career possibilities. Second, the household division of tasks is still oriented on the male breadwinner model' (Krings & Nierling, 2008: 116). Interestingly, in all countries the organisational frameworks do not provide much support for female workers. Even in Scandinavian countries the changes have worsened the balance

between work and family which mainly affects female workers. However, in some countries internal working time arrangements were offered in order to improve the reconciliation between work and family needs.

It has to be stressed that the impact of global restructuring processes on work-life balance in the production sector basically has led to a high level of insecurity in employment. In the perception of the workers the individual need to keep the workplace seems much more important than the changes in working time structure. Nevertheless, the increase of temporal flexibility has strengthened sex segregation within the companies. But also with regard to reconciliation female workers usually have to confront difficulties. These differ between the countries. Mentionable for the countries in Southern Europe is that the traditional family support is still strong in this sector but there are indices of erosion which create a formidable need towards new models of gender equality in the long run.

3.4.3 Need for individual freedom in a regulated environment: customer services in the public sector

Currently the area of customer services in the public sector⁴³ is facing reorganisation processes to a high extent. Changes encompass a fragmentation of employment which affects various fields of work organisation such as wage level, work intensity, degree of (involuntary) working time flexibility, and job security. The main trends in change can be summarised as an increase in workload as well as a growing level of standardisation so that the work force can be appointed interchangeably (Dunkel & Schönauer, 2008; Muchnik & Valenduc, 2008: 151-152).

The results from qualitative research show that the changes through global restructuring processes have led in some countries to more flexible, but in other countries to more constraining working time management. Thus, there are two different developments, although the main trend implies a 'systematic staff reduction (cost saving) [which] has increased workload' (Muchnik & Valenduc, 2008: 153). Due to higher orientation towards customer needs, working hours are often extended to unusual working hours; especially weekend work as well as overtime becomes frequent. However, compared to private organisations, working time remains very much regulated because of employment regulations which are still strong in the public sector.

Basically working time in the public sector is organised in shifts which are based on 'normal' office hours, which are - through restructuring - extended in some countries to Saturday work. Interestingly, it seems that the main changes in working time could be circumvented in some cases by outsourcing the temporal requirements to private companies, as the case study evidence from Austria describes: 'public administration jobs could only stay that regulated because of the outsourcing. If the city administration had kept telephone service in-house, an extension of working hours for customer service employees at service centres might have been the consequence [...] according to working times,

⁴³ In the conceptual approach of the WORKS project customer services in the public sector basically refers to front office employers with different sectoral and occupational classifications. More concrete the case studies are based on railway and postal services as well as on public administration. The qualification level of the employees encompasses partially low-skilled tasks; others have a higher skill profile, combining interactive and service-oriented tasks. Generally, the female proportion in customer service is very high in all countries (Dunkel & Schönauer, 2008; Muchnik & Valenduc, 2008: 151-152).

the outsourcing of telephone service prevented employees at service centres from fundamental changes' (Schönauer, 2007: 8-9).

Thus, restructuring becomes a double face. Whereas on the one hand outsourcing strategies imply the reduction of the working staff in the long run, on the other hand these strategies anticipate the peroration of working conditions for the employees.

This specific situation offers an important aspect which seems interesting when reflecting the reconciliation of work and life. In general parents (mostly women) need predictable working hours and therefore prefer more or less standardised working time pattern. At the same time this pattern should offer a certain degree of flexibility in order to react on the manifold situations arising with children like *i.e.* visits to the medical scientists, school attendances, *etc.*

Although a high share of employees working in customer services in the public sector are women, part-time work as well as flexi-time is not widespread (one exception is Belgium and partially the UK). The organisation of working time along shifts is perceived by the employees as a big disadvantage in terms of combining work and family life, but positive aspects like the stability of the shift system are mentioned, too (cf. also Jürgens, 2005: 41ff.). This type of coexistence between standardised working pattern and a certain amount of temporal flexibility seems the ideal structure in order to reconcile work with family needs. Experiences of lower qualified skills show that on the one hand standardisation of working time pattern seems important for the employees in order to establish stable daily routines. But adapting to family needs on the other hand very often demands individual flexibility which may be reached by establishing timing fines at the workplace.

Flexible working time arrangements on part of the employees which can be used to organise work-life balance on an individual level, only exist in few countries. Although there have been changes of working time structure by strategic decisions of the management, generally the employees have to arrange their work-life balance individually.

In this context, the experiences of the UK case seems interesting. Here, former flexi-time was lost through restructuring which caused a high level of dissatisfaction by the employees. On part of the employees there seems to be a strong wish for a certain degree of flexible working time. Therefore, the 'unhappiness' about the loss of flexible working time models seems to be representative for all cases under review: 'The desire for flexi-time seems to tie in with the fact that most customer service agents are women with family responsibilities who feel that these responsibilities can clash with their new, more structured way of working' (Dahlmann, 2007: 21).

It seems that all women working in customer services carry the main burden for household duties. In the field of customer services in the public sector, the division of labour is organised still very traditionally and very often work-life balance remains an individualised 'female problem'.

However, in some countries the existence of family-friendly policies has been promoted and staff has been encouraged to take advantage of these policies. In other countries informal agreements between managers and employees support the reconciliation between work and family needs, but generally the working conditions with regard to time have been worsened for the employees. Analysing this result the temporal dimension of the new working conditions also have created new burdens for the employees like commuting time because of relocation or an intensification of work. Both issues, the extension of travelling time every day and stress, have an impact on time management as well as on

work-life balance. 'In a general way, front office employees confronted to "critical" or "emotional" situations often transfer their stress from the work atmosphere to the family atmosphere. Stress, uncertainty and anxieties can also be created by the reorganisation process and influence the family as mentioned in the Swedish case, where sick-related absence has been a major problem for the organisation over the last years' (Muchnik & Valenduc, 2008: 155).

To sum up, in some countries restructuring processes have led to extended and variable working schedules that hinders the creation of a balanced work and life. Nevertheless in most countries working in this sector is favourable for working mothers whose husband is taking on the main breadwinner role. As a complementary role to the male-oriented breadwinner concept female employees basically are the main caretakers and 'give priority to their traditional gender role and not create undue conflicts in their lives' (Dahlmann, 2007: 11). The high female proportion together with this more or less traditional identity seems to affect the sector. Based on the gendered division of labour in most of the countries restructuring processes create problems of reconciliation between work and family needs. With regard to the temporal management these processes not only have an impact on the quantitative dimension of working time but also on the qualitative dimension. On both levels women have to arrange new models of reconciliation whose impact on work-life balance differs significantly between the countries.

3.5 Widening the concept of work-life balance towards new perspectives of models of work and life: some conclusions

3.5.1 New dimensions of working time organisation: European differences

The thematic analysis of the WORKS findings focusing on working time and work-life balance has resulted in two main conclusions. Firstly, in Europe we find a high variety and diversity of living and working models which differ significantly according to sectors and occupations. Secondly, there can be adhered to the consideration that restructuring leads to different forms of intensification of work (see Part 2). This intensification influences very much the individual (and collective) control of working time. As described in detail before, both conclusions have to be evaluated in the specific regional and sectoral context.

Sectoral and regional factors provide the framework for institutional settings shaping work-life balance. Hereby, models of working time flexibility, different models of part-time work, long-term leave options or child care facilities play a crucial role in harmonising work and life. Not surprisingly, the dividing line with regards to national differences runs between the Northern countries *versus* the Southern, Eastern and Continental countries within the case studies.

The Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway and Denmark) generally provide a supporting institutional infrastructure in order to guarantee an individual balance of work and life. These institutional as well as organisational patterns refer very much on working time models, which are based on a comprehensive understanding of work and life. This consideration strengthens very much the importance of an organisational framework which clearly diminishes negative effects of global restructuring processes.

The Continental countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands) show a diverse picture in working time organisation. In most Continental European countries the outstanding working culture is based on the male breadwinner model which seems highly-gendered. There is a high proportion of women in part-time work on nearly all sectoral levels in order to manage work and family needs. In France and in the Netherlands the development is different. In France, women seem fully integrated in the labour markets with full-time jobs. As a trend, in Austria and Germany mainly in high qualified jobs, women are quitting the role of the caretakers and are adapting to the male breadwinner model on-the-jobs which implies a high individual commitment with long working hours. In the case of the Netherlands part-time work is widespread across the country and is used equally by both sexes. In all countries institutional pattern with its different bargaining processes affect the impact of global restructuring. But in contrast to the Nordic countries it seems that at least in Austria, Belgium, France and Germany negative effects arise for some occupational groups with regard to work-life balance. An increasing level of intensification of work, a high degree of insecurity, changing working time pattern have clearly been presented as driving forces for (negative perceived) changes. This can also be stated as a trend for some business functions in the UK.

In the Southern European countries (Italy and Portugal) flexible working time pattern are not frequent and the conciliation between work and life relies mainly on the family network. Due to global restructuring the demand for increasing flexibility in terms of time and space the female integration on-the-job level becomes more difficult because of its role as main caretakers in these cultures. One other reason for this problem is that the supporting family networks in many cases are slowly disappearing. Because of the lack of institutional and organisational support the reconciliation of work and life becomes complex and restrictive for women. Therefore the effects seem tremendous according the difficulties women have to deal with.

The Eastern European countries (Bulgaria and Hungary) are still experiencing a period of economic and political transition while global restructuring processes contribute to the change processes. Although there is little concrete information about social transformation processes within the case studies, it seems that the participation in different occupations changed simultaneously with gender roles. The introduction of flexible working-time options aiming to combine work and life has been developed steadily but they are evolving with a clear gender bias. Furthermore, the normative concept of the breadwinner model within occupations seems very strong in terms of social recognition on-the-job level.

3.5.2 New working time pattern and its implications for work-life balance

With regard to the changes of working time organisation, the creation of work-life balance depends very much on occupational circumstances. The differences between knowledge-intensive occupations in contrast to production work as well as customer service work are remarkable. The attempts and difficulties to reach a work-life balance in personal life differ fundamentally due to the diverse preconditions coming along with an occupational setting like social affiliation, status, income, educational level and so on. An occupational identity assigns 'an individual to his or her "place" in society' (Huws & Dahlmann, 2007:

3) and thus, affecting possibilities as well as power for the individual employees and workers to construct their own work-life balance.

Whereas in knowledge-intensive occupations like fashion designers or IT professionals the *qualitative* dimension of time plays an important role, in production work as well as to some extent in customer services the *quantitative* dimension of time is still determining for creating the balance between work and life (see Paragraph 2.1; cf. Huws, 2003: 178). This consideration should not be taken as a rule, but as a general trend which has been elaborated between these different occupational groups. Of course when there is a qualitative change of working time pattern in many cases this has consequences on the prolongation of working time. And on the side of production workers the changes of work organisation through new technologies very often go along with qualitative changes of work intensity.

In occupational groups like production workers and partly employees in customer services, the creation of work-life balance depends on given temporal frameworks. The individuals working in the field of production are asked to construct an 'individual fit' (Nierling & Krings, 2008: 113) around often uncorresponding time schedules in the sphere of life and work. Therefore, especially for women, the (*quantitative*) temporal organisation of work seems crucial for work-life balance like the shift system, length and amount of overtime hours, as well as unusual working hours.

Evaluating this context, the study of Lautsch and Scully (2007) offers the insight that changes in the *quantitative* organisation of working time can have serious impacts on work-family relations of the workers.⁴⁴ The methodological approach of the study shows that various aspects of work and life have to be elaborated carefully in order to discover relevant topics describing working and living realities of workers. They point out that aspects of the living reality of production workers, *i.e.* the term 'family' encompasses only to small extent the nuclear family and childcare. To a far larger extent, workers carry also burdens for the extended family *i.e.* in elder care or care for grandchildren. In order to evaluate those aspects qualitative research approaches would be needed in order to describe adequately the problems workers have in their work-life relations.

A high share of employees working in customer service is women, often being the main caretakers in their families. The sector was and can still be characterised by stable and fixed working hours. However, it seems that flexible working pattern will affect the creation of the employees' future work-life balance in mainly two aspects. First, on the part of the employees there is a strong wish for flexible working time arrangements like flexi-time or part-time work options. Second, on the part of the organisation flexible working time demands will surely increase leading to irregular and unusual working hours. In which way these developments affect work-life balance has to be elaborated in further research.

In contrast, in the field of knowledge-intensive occupations flexible working time arrangements allow 'a broad range of individual strategies to combine work and life' (Krings, Nierling & Valenduc, 2008: 190). Due to the high degree of responsibility for working tasks the employees generally have a high level of autonomy to organise their

⁴⁴ One important result of this study - conducted in an US-American company - is that production workers depend very much on the income coming from overtime work solving problems in the work-family relation 'ranging from the basic need to "make ends meet" to the more hidden strains of caring for the extended families and dealing with divorce, illness, and addiction' (Lautsch & Scully, 2007: 719).

working time. In these occupations working time is changing *qualitatively*, the occupation is becoming more and more *the* constitutive element also for female biographies. Career development as well as self-fulfilment in the occupation are often clearly prioritised by the employees and shape the individual work-life balance.

Dahlmann *et al.* (2009: 84) sharpen this type of working culture and coming to the ironic conclusion: 'Some of these requirements put direct barriers in the way of people who wish to combine work with responsibilities to their families or local communities and might be regarded as indirectly discriminatory against women. In order to survive in such an environment, both women and men, to all intents and purposes, to behave like "supermen"'.

The gender dimension remains transversal along all occupations and countries. Common in all fields of analysis is the orientation along the male breadwinner hegemony which becomes apparent in various aspects: First in the 'continuing male attitude towards work and the lack of involvement in care work' (Krings *et al.*, 2008: 190). Even in knowledge-intensive occupations where women both have left the traditional role model and have adapted to male biographies, they often remain the main responsible for care work. This development can be illustrated by the fact that organisational options for balancing work and life are in all fields almost solely taken by female employees. Nevertheless, there are differences in the power relations between the sexes depending on the cultural background and occupational status of the (female) employees.

3.5.3 Towards a new normative model of work?

Basically the empirical results offer a high consistency with the main issues of changes in working time which are discussed in the actual academic and political debate. Through global restructuring processes developments have been identified which have an impact on working time management of the workers in nearly all sectors. In order to understand the dynamics of these developments it seems evident to point out that the trends do not follow a universal pattern. On the contrary, the country differences show that they take specific forms in particular regions. 'Not only does each region and nation have its own distinctive history and institutional structure which shapes all subsequent developments there, but human beings are not automata and adapt and react in different ways to the changes of they are confronted with, depending on their particular social location and with varying degrees of success' (Huws, 2007: 2).

Hence the hypothesis about the intensification of work has been developed along different working time pattern in various occupational groups. With regard to working time the distinction between the quantitative and the qualitative dimension of time becomes more and more relevant. As a tendency, on a lower qualification level flexibility demands are translated into tight controls over working time and flexibility. In the perception of the workers, this decreases significantly the quality of work from the perception of the workers. On a level of higher qualifications the control of work processes are delegated to the employees. Exemplarily the consequences on the working conditions have been discussed

intensively within the IT sector after 1995 (Schmiede, 1996; Baukrowitz & Boes, 2000; Boes & Baukrowitz, 2002; Huws, 2003).⁴⁵

Here, the reorganisation of work towards result-oriented work implied a high degree of self-organisation with regard to the workload as well as the working time. Although this type of self-organisation or individual control of the workload partially has been appreciated very much by the employees, the trend towards overtime, however has increased significantly in those branches.

This aspect seems closely linked with the level of work quality and how it is perceived by the employees in those branches analysed in the WORKS project. The individual control of working time, a high degree of creativity and self-organisation at work have been considered mainly in qualified and high qualified sectors. The normative idea of the 'ideal employee' as 'career primary' has been arisen within these changing pattern describing a person who is able and willing to put work first and for whom working-time is infinitely expandable (Voß & Pongratz, 1998). This expectation mostly is translated into work practices that, as it is often used in big corporations, 'include dawn meetings, planning sessions that run into the evening, often ending with the suggestion to "continue this over dinner"; and training programs requiring long absences from home' (Rapaport & Bailyn, 1996: 16). In work culture where 'ideal employees' are assumed to be those whose first allegiance is to the job, people with career aspirations go to great lengths to keep personal issues out of work.

Especially when it comes to issues of work-life balance in such environments both men and women have trouble juggling work and family although very often work-life balance is claimed as an important issue by the firm's working culture. Even though these working patterns imply a high degree of equality between men and women it seems that 'people do not challenge the gender roles that encourage men to put careers first and women to focus first on family. These roles tend to be internalised at very deep, often unconscious level' (Rapaport & Bailyn, 1996: 18).⁴⁶

As the case studies of the WORKS project show requests for temporal flexibility because of family needs have different career implications in various branches. But, the implications for the individuals depend very much on institutional and organisational pattern. As described before part-time work, flexible hours or parental leave options are mainly used by women in nearly all countries. The qualitative dimension of working time, however, also has an impact on the self-image of women which has led to a changing living (and working) concept of female integration into the labour market. There are indices that women on the one hand still feel responsible for the reconciliation of work and family needs on a general level. On the other hand more and more (younger) women

⁴⁵ Traditionally there are sectors and societal spheres like professional careers in R&D or occupations in art and culture where orientation on results has been considered the central criteria for the occupational performance. As a trend, however, this type of work organisation has been introduced in the IT sector and customer services as well as in the service sector in most of the European countries. Especially in qualified occupations it seems an effective instrument in order to increase the individual disposition at the workplace.

⁴⁶ Consequently in many countries reconciliation strategies still seem difficult in many occupations. Because of the increasing participation of women on the labour markets, these difficulties are reflected by postponing starting a family or even the decision of men and women against having children (see for Germany: Szydlik, 2008).

in knowledge-based societies assign the role of the main caretaker in order to participate equally on the workplace (Krings, 2006; Gildemeister & Wetterer, 2007).

Normative changes in work with regard to a higher involvement of women probably would create deep societal problems in many countries. Demographic trends, exploding costs in the health sector as well as increasing demands in education and formation of young people in many European countries strengthen very much the necessity for a new gender contract as well as new models of the welfare state. 'If women are emerging as a key axial principle in the new socio-economic equilibrium, it follows that the quality of our future society hinges on how we respond to their own claims as men, the welfare state, and on society at large. For good or bad, gender equality becomes therefore a "societal affair", a precondition for making the clockwork of post-industrial societies tick' (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 69; Browne & Diamond, 2003). In this sense the results of the WORKS project also show that hidden or ignored assumptions about work practices and gender equity still have to be put on the political agenda of the welfare states.

3.5.4 Work-life balance beyond the reconciliation of work and family needs

The results from the research field of the WORKS project significantly show that the temporal framework of working conditions plays a crucial role for individual strategies of harmonising work and family needs. Global restructuring processes have different impacts on the quantitative and qualitative dimension of time frames at the working places which have to be analysed carefully. Without doubt vulnerabilities for the individuals arise in manifold ways which not necessarily always have to deal with temporal changes but with increasing insecurity of the workplace on different levels. These changes also have a major impact on work-life balance especially in lower qualified occupations.

Conceptually work-life balance in the qualitative research is strongly connected with the issue of reconciliation of work and family needs. Thus, this issue becomes an outstanding gender bias because still in most European countries women are the main caretakers. From the perspective of time it seems that women in professional roles face a double burden. Although there are organisational and institutional offers in order to facilitate work with family needs, women suffer from negative career consequences in nearly all branches. But apart from these offers, the important point seems that 'work-family issues are viewed as individual concerns to be addressed only through flexible work practices, sensitive managers, and individual accommodations. This approach often fails the individuals involved, and it may lead to negative accommodations' (Rapaport & Bailyn, 1996: 19; Webster, 2001; Gildemeister & Wetterer, 2007). Therefore, the cultural separation of work and family by gender hinders women in the workplace in an unfair way, while - in many cases - purporting to support them.

The idea of the cultural separation of work and family in all European countries is based on the historical development of employment which still is the origin for categories

and perceptions about the division of labour between men and women.⁴⁷ The empirical evidence in the field of the WORKS processes show significantly that the separation of 'work and life' seems contradictory and leads to a hierarchical order of living spheres (Jürgens, 2006: 106). Through increasing pressure from global restructuring this order has been strengthened very much in a sense that work becomes more and more important for the individuals.

Consequently, from the perspective of organisations and institutions there is a narrow organisational definition of what constitutes a work-family need. As the results show, these definitions are more reduced to general temporal issues and less to the perception of the employees that business issues are 'separate, conceptually and functionally, from individuals' personal lives' (Rapaport & Bailyn, 1996: 19). Bringing work and life together would imply much more than 'family'. It would also cover various aspects of the personal life of the individuals: involvements and commitments, both at home and in the community. Furthermore, the perspective on biographical aspects becomes crucial to describe changes in 'work-life balances' across the life course. Groot and Breedveld (2004: 297) refer to an 'imbalance' of work-life by comparing different biographical phases: 'The work-life imbalance can best be illustrated by comparing the *rush hour* of life with other phases of the life cycle. In the rush hour of life between the ages of 30 and 50, there is a family to be raised, a career to develop and parents and grandparents to be looked after. This can be seen as a triple workload, as opposed to only a single one in the phase described as the *playtime* of life from age 18 to 30 and the *active senior* phase from age 50 to 75.' In order to smooth out this imbalance over work-life policy instruments should focus much more on the biographical stages.

Innovative working time models like private life time saving accounts or a de-standardisation of work biographies could straighten out the 'rush hour of life' and ease also other biographical stages than the orientation on the flexibility of daily or weekly working time regimes (Groot & Breedveld, 2004; Hildebrandt, 2007; Rüling, 2007). There already exists a large variety of working time models in different sectors and occupations which are embedded in the specific working cultures of the countries. The current stage of these models still needs improvements and should be enriched by innovative temporal approaches. Nevertheless, in order to diminish negative effects of current intensification of work models research on and the implementation of work-life balance should integrate much more aspects than only temporal issues.

'Good work is more socially sustainable than degraded work, reducing the long hours culture of work, and allowing people to live their lives outside of paid employment, creating healthy workplaces, reducing stress and burnout and improving physical and mental health' (Webster, 2001: 2).

⁴⁷ The analysis of the separation between 'employment and life' is based on the Marxist social theory. The idea is that the historic separation of the productive and reproductive sphere creates not only still the perception of employment in actual societies but also creates daily routines and work processes. The strict separation of employment and care work is perceived by the relevant people as a 'problem of reconciliation' and mainly becomes manifest in the work-life balance of women. The separation between 'employment and life' is a central issue of Feminist as well as Gender Theory (Jürgens, 2006; see also footnote 33).

4 Working time, gender and work-life balance: overall conclusions

The question how time issues at the workplace are interconnected with work-life balance in a changing environment, this relationship seems to be an important topic in current political debates in Europe. Due to enormous processes of economic upheavals, technological transformation and the dominance of service employment provoke major changes not only on the labour markets but also in the social structure of societies. Without doubt these changes also imply societal issues like ageing societies, shortage of public health care or the ongoing integration of women into the labour markets. As a political trend, the existing systems of social protection may hinder rather than promote employment growth in knowledge-intensive economies. In these economies, life chances depend more and more on individuals learning abilities and one's accumulation of human resources (Esping-Andersen, 2002).

Coming from the restructuring of global value chains and its impact on organisations it seems that basic requisites needed for a secure employment (and life) are growing and changing at the same time. The overwhelming thrust is in favour of skilled and professional jobs and a sizeable market of low-end, routine services emerges slowly in many European countries. Reflecting the (new) quality of these changes the time issue seems significant in order to understand the question how individuals cope with these changes.

The analysis of the quantitative and the qualitative findings according to this relationship has resulted in five conclusions:

1. there is a clear trend towards '*changing temporalities*' which means a differentiation of working time pattern;
2. there is a clear trend towards *intensification of working time* which does not necessarily influence the amount of working time but the individual (and collective) control on working time;
3. there is a trend towards *new measurements of time regimes*: first towards a broad variety of working time models (far away from standards) and second towards new organisational pattern due to an internalisation of working demands (especially in high qualified occupations);
4. the *temporal organisation of paid work* still defines very much the social organisation of paid and unpaid work;
5. *institutional settings* are still central to buffer effects of gender equalities.

With regard to work-life balance we conclude that the *asymmetry is increasing within the households and the labour market*. Time pressure and accelerating processes at the workplace can be considered as creeping processes which have an impact on social and cultural quality of social changes.

Based on the increasing demand for flexibility (Flecker, 2005b & 2007b) working time is implicitly and explicitly affected by restructuring processes. In many branches these effects cannot be proved empirically by concrete changes of working time models. But especially in low-skilled occupations the increase of mental insecurity on the workers' side came to the fore. The widely spread fear of losing the job through restructuring also affected time issues as a means of internal pressure. These effects should be analysed more intensively in further research.

The chapter on working times of this report (Part 2) describes in detail characteristic features of the transition from Fordistic to post-Fordistic working pattern with regard to time. Here, the first hypothesis has been developed very much according to different branches and sectors. Expressed by the metaphor of the 24/7 society the argumentation line follows the organisational and individual need for a high degree of flexible working models. These models have been developed historically by a wide range of working time patterns like shift work, part-time work or flexi trust time which have provided specific models of working culture in Europe. A prominent example is part-time work which seems to be a typical female working time pattern in many European countries. The amount of part-time work has steadily increased because it is offered as a working-time model which allows the reconciliation of work and family needs.

Generally, through restructuring processes a tendency towards more de-standardised working time structures can be observed. These are organised more and more along workload peaks, customer needs as well as along market demands in nearly all business functions. Working time patterns are more heterogeneous and differ not only in terms of length, but also in terms of dislocation of the working hours and for the variability of all these dimensions. Short working hours are on the rise, but, at the same time, long working hours are on the rise, above all because of overtime is increasing. Atypical working schedules are spreading, with new forms of shifts, unusual times (namely during the evening, at nights or during holidays) and different schemes of flexi-time. Although on an institutional level working time remains as an important means of work organisation the variety of individually-shaped working time pattern has increased especially in high qualified occupations.

Despite these changes the most important impact of restructuring processes seems a growing intensification of work which goes beyond the plurality of working-time pattern. Not necessarily as a prolongation of working time but as a speeding up of pace and workloads the intensification of work can be recognised in all business functions. Whether the intensification of work is caused by new production modes (new technologies) in the production sector or whether the intensification is caused by tighter deadlines and a high degree of self-organisation of work in qualified occupations, differences between the branches seem to underline the overall trend towards more intensive work profiles in most countries. The consequences of these trends differ enormously according to individual career prospects, institutional settings as well as specific working conditions.

These tendencies affect very much work-life balance, as it is evaluated in Part 3 of the report. Particularly the qualitative research has been exploited in order to understand the relationship of working time and individual life of the workers. Less surprisingly, the gender dimension remains transversal along all occupations and countries. When it comes to reconciliation of work and family needs mostly women have problems to cope with new demands on the labour markets. Thus, as the case studies show, part-time work,

flexible hours or parental leave are mainly used by women in nearly all countries. Qualitative demands mostly in qualified job profiles, however, have an impact on the self-image of women which has led to changing living (and working) concepts of female integration into the labour markets. In nearly all European countries under review women feel - on the one hand - still responsible in their roles as main caretaker, on the other hand more and more (younger) women in knowledge-based activities assign this role in order to participate equally on the workplace. Of course institutional frameworks as well as cultural pattern play a crucial role in the self-perception of women when organising work-life balance.

In detail these considerations have been differentiated according to the main occupational groups:

- in *knowledge-intensive occupations* (IT professionals, designers) global restructuring processes have changed professional demands having a considerable impact on the organisation of working time and work-life balance. As a trend, organisational changes towards customer and market orientation, speeding-up processes as well as internationalisation of work structures lead to qualitative changes of the work profile which strongly affect working time patterns. In many countries there is an increase of working time. However, in all occupational groups the normative perception of the work profiles still influences strongly the expectation towards work-life balance. The occupations also offer a high level of creativity and career options which seem highly-estimated by the employees in all countries;
- the *production workers* (food and clothing industry) have to meet global restructuring processes, too. Due to technological innovations, organisational changes and speeding up processes the production workers have to offer an increased temporal flexibility regarding extra hours, weekend work as well as night shifts in order to manage frequent high peaks in workload. These new demands together with an increased job insecurity affect very much the creation of work-life balance in many countries. Consequently, reconciliation between work and family needs becomes much more difficult. New working schedules imply longer and irregular working hours, which make it much more difficult to have regular family or leisure time;
- the *customer services in the public sector* is facing reorganisation processes to a high extent. Changes encompass a fragmentation of employment which affects various fields of work organisation such as wage level, higher demands towards temporal flexibility, and job security. The main trends can be summarised as an increase of workload but at the same time a growing level of standardisation. Thus, the workers step by step can be appointed interchangeably. With regard to temporal flexibility - in some cases - the shifts have been extended to unusual working hours. However, compared to private organisations, working time remains much more regulated because of stronger regulations in the public sector. Without doubt these trends effect on work-life balance. Based on the high female proportion in this sector the changes lead to problems of reconciliation between work and family needs which has resolved distinctively within the countries.

Basically from the perspective of work-life balance it seems that women in all business functions face a double burden with regard to changing working time pattern. The empirical findings show significantly that still the cultural and political separation of work and family/household organisation by gender causes inequalities and career disad-

vantages for women at the workplace. Evaluating these processes from a gender perspective the results strengthen very much the fact that reconciling work and family needs always implies contradictory tasks. These tasks have to be harmonised by individual strategies and efforts. Here, examples from different countries showed that widening the inequalities at the individual level may easily harden at the household level. Thus, changes at workplace level are closely connected with the household level. Work-life balance, therefore, goes beyond the concept of reconciliation. Bringing work and life closely together would imply much more aspects than integrating family needs but also the organisation of social life and the creation of community which at least may help to promote new visions of work in Europe.

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- Drawing on both the quantitative and qualitative research findings of the WORKS project, this report analyses the impact of global restructuring processes on the organisation of working time and also examines its contribution to the creation of work-life balance. With a special focus on gender relations, it illustrates how men and women are dealing with changing temporal demands in different sectors and occupations.

In relation to working time, the results highlight a tendency towards de-standardisation and increasing differentiation of temporal models: with an increase in atypical hours, flexi-time, and shortened as well as lengthened working hours.

Besides this differentiation, the most important impact of restructuring seems to be a growing intensification of work - not necessarily as a prolongation of working time but as a speeding up of pace and workloads.

In terms of work-life balance, intensified work profiles increase demands on the combination of work and family, a field which remains strongly gendered. Here, occupational contexts are crucial for assessing change processes. A high autonomy in working time offers some women in high-skilled occupations the option of developing emancipated strategies. Women working in lower skilled occupations follow traditional gender rules and depend much more on temporal frameworks laid down by the employers.

In both fields, country differences underline the importance of institutional support in times of globalisation.

