



This is a repository copy of *Defamilisation Measures and Women's Labour Force Participation – A Comparative Study of Twelve Countries*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:  
<http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/111268/>

Version: Accepted Version

---

**Article:**

Chau, C., Yu, S., Foster, L. et al. (1 more author) (2017) Defamilisation Measures and Women's Labour Force Participation – A Comparative Study of Twelve Countries. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 33 (1). pp. 73-86. ISSN 2169-9763

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2017.1288157>

---

**Reuse**

Unless indicated otherwise, fulltext items are protected by copyright with all rights reserved. The copyright exception in section 29 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 allows the making of a single copy solely for the purpose of non-commercial research or private study within the limits of fair dealing. The publisher or other rights-holder may allow further reproduction and re-use of this version - refer to the White Rose Research Online record for this item. Where records identify the publisher as the copyright holder, users can verify any specific terms of use on the publisher's website.

**Takedown**

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing [eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk) including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



[eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk)  
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

Defamilisation Measures and Women's Labour Force Participation – A  
Comparative Study of Twelve Countries

Ruby C M Chau (corresponding author)

Marie Curie Research Fellow,

Department of Sociological Studies, The University of Sheffield, Elmfield, Northumberland  
Road, Sheffield S10 2TN UK

Email: [c.chau@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:c.chau@sheffield.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0) 114 2226486

Sam W K Yu

Associate Professor

Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Baptist University, Renfrew Road, Kowloon, Hong  
Kong

Email: [samyu@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:samyu@hkbu.edu.hk)

Tel: +852 34115511

Liam Foster

Senior Lecturer in Social Policy and Social Work,

Department of Sociological Studies, The University of Sheffield, Elmfield, Northumberland  
Road, Sheffield, S10 2TU, UK

Email: [l.foster@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:l.foster@sheffield.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0) 114 222 6434

Maggie K W Lau

Research Associate Professor

Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University, 8 Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun,  
Hong Kong

Email: [maggielau2@LN.edu.hk](mailto:maggielau2@LN.edu.hk)

Tel: +852 26167428

#### Acknowledgements

Part of the work reported in this article is supported by the Research Executive Agency of the  
European Commission (Project ID 7083050).

The authors would like to thank the journal reviewers for their insightful comments which have  
helped to improve the article in many aspects.

## Authors Biographical Notes

Dr Chui Man (Ruby) Chau is a Marie Curie Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield, conducting a study on the social investment perspective in work-family reconciliation measures in Europe and East Asia. Her main research interests are comparative social policy, East Asian welfare regimes, defamilisation and women. Latest publications include: 'The Effects of Defamilisation and Familisation Measures on the Accumulation of Retirement Income for Women in the UK', *Women and Aging*, forthcoming (with Foster, L. and Yu, S.). Address: Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield, Elmfield Building, Sheffield S10 2TU. Email: [c.chau@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:c.chau@sheffield.ac.uk).

Dr Sam W K Yu is an associate professor in the Department of Social Work at the Hong Kong Baptist University. He teaches social work and social policy. His research interests are social exclusion and welfare mix. His recent publications include 'The Contributions of the Studies of Health Care Systems to the Examination of the Productivist Welfare Capitalism Thesis', *Journal of Policy Practice* and 'Studying the Health Care Systems in Seven East Asian Countries by the Cluster Analysis', *Development and Society*. Address: Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong; Email: [samyu@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:samyu@hkbu.edu.hk)

Dr Liam Foster is a senior lecturer in social policy and social work at the University of Sheffield. His research interests include theories of ageing, pensions and funerals. Dr Foster is a member of the SPA Executive Committee and Managing Editor of *Social Policy and Society*. He has published over 35 articles, chapters and books. Recent articles include 'Active and Successful Ageing: A European Policy Perspective', *Gerontologist*, 55(1): 83-90 (with Walker, A.) Address: Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield, Elmfield, Sheffield S10 2TU. Email: [l.foster@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:l.foster@sheffield.ac.uk).

Dr Maggie K.W. Lau is a research associate professor in the Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies at Lingnan University. Her research interests include poverty and social exclusion, as well as child poverty and child well-being. Her recent publications include 'Material Well-being, Social Relationships and Children's Overall Life Satisfaction in Hong Kong', *Child Indicators Research* (with Bradshaw, J.) and 'Including the Views of the Public in a Survey of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Hong Kong', *Social Indicators Research* (with Gordon, D, Pantazis, C., Sutton, E. and Lai, L.). Address: Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University, Hong Kong. Email: [maggielau2@LN.edu.hk](mailto:maggielau2@LN.edu.hk).

# Defamilisation Measures and Women's Labour Force Participation – A Comparative Study of Twelve Countries

Abstract (150 words)

This paper examines the relevance of two interpretations of defamilisation (the 'freedom of family' and the 'freedom of women from the family') to the search for effective measures for strengthening women's participation in the paid labour market. Based on these two interpretations, two types of defamilisation measures (care-focused and women's) are identified. Two defamilisation indices are developed respectively covering twelve countries. The importance of the two types of defamilisation measures in assisting women to access employment are discussed from two angles. The input angle refers to the extent to which countries are committed to the provision of these two defamilisation measures. The output angle is about the relationship between the two defamilisation measures and the degree of women's participation in the paid labour market. Through conducting these analytical tasks, this paper also contributes to the examination of the relationship between types of welfare regimes and the provision of defamilisation measures.

Key words

Comparative welfare study, Care-focused defamilisation, Defamilisation indices, Welfare regimes, Women's defamilisation, Women labour participation

## Introduction

Since Esping-Andersen (1990) presented the ‘three worlds of welfare capitalism’ thesis based on the examination of the labour market decommodification of 18 members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD), studies of comparative social welfare have been dominated by his work and the criticisms of it. One of the key criticisms is concerned with the gender insensitivity of his classification (Korpi, 2010; Kroger, 2011; Leitner, 2003; Sainsbury, 1999). Feminist analysts argue that the study of the decommodification of labour gives insufficient consideration to the difficulties faced by women in the pursuit of paid employment (Lister, 1994; Orloff, 1993). For many women family responsibilities present a challenge to their capacity to undertake paid employment (Bambra, 2004, 2007; Orloff, 1993; Saraceno and Keck, 2010). One of the solutions to this problem is to provide measures to assist women to earn income from the paid labour market. Nyberg (2002) argues that independence from the labour market has been an important criterion for male workers’ emancipation, whereas inclusion in paid work has been an essential requirement for women’s emancipation. An independent income is important given links between individual income and pension receipt in retirement (Price, 2007, Foster, 2010) and the fact that household income is not guaranteed to be distributed evenly (Bennett and Daly, 2014). It could give women a voice to negotiate power relations within families, and a way to opt out of unsatisfactory relationships.

Unsurprisingly, there is a search for effective measures that could create favourable conditions for women to take part in the paid labour market (Chzhen, 2010; Daly, 2011; Korpi, 2000, 2010; Kroger, 2011; Leitner, 2003; Lohmann and Zagel, 2016; Thévenon, 2013). This paper continues

these discussions. It focuses on examining whether and how the two different interpretations of defamilisation presented by Bambra (2007) ('the freedom of family' and 'the freedom of women from the family') is useful in guiding the search for effective measures for strengthening women's participation in the paid labour market. To meet this objective, three analytical tasks are carried out. Firstly, with reference to two different interpretations of defamilisation, two types of defamilisation measures are identified, care-focused and women's economic defamilisation. Secondly, we develop two defamilisation indices, which cover twelve countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, South Korea and the UK). Thirdly, we discuss the implications of the findings of these indices for the two defamilisation measures and their importance in assisting women to access employment from both input and output angles. The input angle is concerned with the extent to which the twelve countries are committed to the provision of these two types of defamilisation measures. The output angle is concerned with the relationship between the two types of defamilisation measures and the extent of women's participation in the paid labour market. Studies of family measures have been applied to studies of welfare state regime models (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 2000; Pankratz, 2009). As shown later in this paper, the implementation of these three analytical tasks also contributes to the examination of whether there are differences between types of welfare regimes and the provision of defamilisation measures.

This paper is organized into three parts. The first part discusses the interpretations of the defamilisation and defamilisation measures. The second part is concerned with how the defamilisation indices are developed and what the key findings are. The third part discusses the

implications of the findings from the indices in relation to the effects of the defamilisation measures on women's participation in the labour market, and studies of welfare regime models.

## Defamilisation

Different analysts have different views on the notion of defamilisation (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 2000; Lister, 1994; Leitner, 2003; McLaughlin and Glendinning, 1994). In responding to these different views, Bamba (2007) has presented two different interpretations of defamilisation. The first interpretation stresses the 'freedom of family'. For example, Leitner (2003) regards defamilisation as unburdening the family of its caring function. Esping-Andersen (1999, p. 51) defines defamilisation as the extent to which households' welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed either via welfare provision, or via market provision. Both Leitner (2003) and Esping-Andersen (1999) are concerned with how to reduce the caring responsibilities of the family through defamilisation measures such as public provision of child care services (Bamba, 2007; Leitner, 2005). The direct target of defamilisation services under this interpretation is the family.

The second interpretation of defamilisation emphasises 'freedom of women from the family'. Proponents of this interpretation are concerned about how women could reduce the economic importance of the family in their lives (Bamba, 2004, 2007; Chau et al, 2016). This idea is indebted to Lister's (1994, p. 37) notion of defamilisation:

(T)he dimension of decommodification needs also to be complemented by that of what we might call ‘defamilisation’, if it is to provide a rounded measure of economic independence. Welfare regime might then also be characterized according to the degree to which individual adults can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living, independently of family relationships....

Kroger (2011) points out that in discussing the concept of defamilisation, Lister (1994) focuses on individuals and not families; and it is evident that the individual adults in need of a socially acceptable standard of living and independence from families, whom Lister has in mind, are usually women in the first place.

With reference to the two interpretations of defamilisation presented by Bambra (2007), the authors (2016) in their previous studies have identified two defamilisation measures - care-focused defamilisation and economic defamilisation. Care-focused defamilisation measures are associated with ideas about freedom of the family from caring responsibilities. An example of these types of measures is formal care services. These services reduce family’s caring responsibilities. Economic defamilisation measures are concerned with women’s freedom from the family. An example of this type of measure is maternity leave benefits. These differ from formal care services as maternity leave benefits are targeted directly at women, not the family. Since we are concerned with identifying the measures that strengthen women’s (not men’s) financial autonomy in the family, we use the term ‘women’s economic defamilisation measures’ rather than ‘economic defamilisation measures’ to represent these measures.



It is one thing that these two types of defamilisation measures have the potential to assist women to take part in the paid labour market, however, whether or not this potential can be realized could be quite another. Some analysts (Bambra, 2007; Saraceno and Keck, 2010) point out that their importance in strengthening women's employment should not be over-estimated. Given that the target of care-focused defamilisation measures is the family rather than women, whether women have more opportunities to undertake paid work as a result of using these services still depends on the division of labour within the family and women's other commitments (Bambra, 2007). Furthermore, too long a period of leave may result in disincentivising mothers from remaining in the labour market and encouraging them to perform the role of family carer on a full time basis (Saraceno and Keck, 2010; Van der Lippe et al., 2011).

It is also important to note that not all countries have the same desire to utilise defamilisation measures to boost women's employment or may not deem to be financially viable. A number of studies indicate that there are variations between countries of different worlds of welfare regimes in using defamilisation measures to assist women to access paid work (Bambra, 2007; Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 2000; Kroger, 2011). Korpi (2000) has categorized countries based on whether they provide dual earner support, general family support or market-oriented policies. Dual earner support refers to policies that enable women's continuous labour force participation, facilitate men as well as women to combine parenthood with paid work, and attempt to redistribute care within the family. General family support refers to policies that support the nuclear family while having institutional characteristics based on the assumption that wives have the primary responsibility for caring work carried out within the family, and enter the paid workforce only as secondary earners. Market-oriented policies occur when none of the above

two policy dimensions are well-developed (Korpi, 2000, 2010; Pankratz, 2009). Korpi (2000) asserts that social democratic regimes (such as Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway) are marked by an emphasis on dual earner support; conservative welfare regimes (such as Germany, France, Austria and Belgium) are marked by an emphasis on general family support; and the liberal welfare regimes (such as the Canada, US, UK and Australia) emphasize market-oriented policies. The categorization of countries by Korpi (2000) based on family measures reinforces the three worlds of welfare capitalism thesis developed by Esping-Andersen (1990). In addition, with the focus on family policies that reinforce class stratification, Pankratz (2009) developed a typology which mirrored that of Korpi (2000), providing further support for the welfare regime typology.

#### Two defamilisation indices

This section discusses how the care-focused defamilisation index and the women's economic defamilisation index were constructed and outlines the key findings. To develop defamilisation indices it is necessary to identify countries, select indicators, utilise appropriate sources of data and employ appropriate statistical techniques. As mentioned in the introduction, the defamilisation indices developed in this paper consist of twelve countries. These twelve countries were selected for two reasons. Firstly, high quality comparable data concerning these countries was available in international data-sets. Secondly, as these twelve countries are from different worlds of welfare regimes, they lay a useful foundation for comparative analysis of defamilisation typologies. In the studies by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) of the "three worlds of welfare capitalism", the UK and New Zealand were classified as liberal regimes; Belgium, the

Netherlands and France were identified as conservative welfare regimes; and Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland were seen as social democratic regimes. South Korea and Japan are commonly identified as core countries forming the East Asian welfare model (Karim et al., 2010; Walker and Wong, 2005). Hungary is regularly examined in studies which focus on post-socialist European countries (Chzhen, 2010; Javornik, 2014). These twelve countries do not fully reflect the diverse and dynamic picture of all welfare regimes. For instance, south European countries (such as Italy and Greece) have not been included in this study despite their familistic features, due to difficulties in obtaining sufficient comparable data in both types of defamilisation measures.

#### Care-focused defamilisation index

As previously stated, care-focused defamilisation measures are associated with the provision of care services. These could entail services for a wide range of care receivers including older people, people with disabilities and many others. Undoubtedly, these care services are important. However, this paper focuses only on young children as public child care services have been relatively well recorded and are accessible in the OECD datasets. Furthermore, we are able to build on existing work in the field such as that by Kroger (2011), who systematically developed an index for comparing how care is provided for young children in a number of countries. His work provides a useful foundation for developing the defamilisation indices in this paper which are able to utilize more up-to-date information.

In building the care-focused defamilisation index, this paper focuses on three key dimensions of the provision of formal child care services - affordability, quality and coverage of formal child care services. Three variables have been used to measure these dimensions:

- (1) the child care cost for a dual earner family (as a percentage of net family income);
- (2) the child-staff ratio in formal child care; and
- (3) the participation rate in formal child care.

These three variables have been developed with reference to Kroger's work (2011). The child care cost for a dual earner family indicates the affordability of the child care. This variable is given double weight in the care-focused defamilisation index because it best highlights how far families have the option of externalizing care. Similarly, the child-staff ratio in formal child care serves as an indicator of the quality of the child care services. The participation rate in formal child care is concerned with the proportion of children attending formal child care services (OECD, 2014) and is used to show the coverage of child care services. The data for the three variables used to build the care-focused defamilisation index are drawn from the latest OECD data-sets (OECD, 2014).

The data were interpreted with the aid of Esping-Andersen's (1990) index-based regime construction method. This method is based on the numerical description of the relationship of an individual country's score to the mean (and standard deviation) for the variables that make up the index, with adjustment where necessary for extreme outliers (Bambra, 2005; Esping-Andersen, 1990). The limitations of this method have been discussed by some analysts (Bambra, 2007;

Castles and Mitchell, 1993; Kangas, 1994). For example, the use of one standard deviation around the mean to classify the countries into regimes makes the resulting typology inevitably three-fold and there is too much reliance upon averaging. However, the index-based regime construction method enables us to rank the countries according to the degree of care-focused defamilisation that they have achieved. We take the extreme cases into consideration when calculating the mean.

The data for each variable of the care-focused defamilisation index are outlined in Table 1. The index score for each country in Table 2 is the aggregate index scores of the three variables in Table 1. Therefore, it is within a range from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 12. As shown in Table 2, the scores of the twelve countries in the study are from 6 to 10 with a mean of 8. They are classified into three categories: low (6); medium (7-9) and high (10) as follows.

Insert Tables 1 and 2

Japan (6), New Zealand (6) and the UK (6) are in the low care-focused defamilisation group, which is marked by relatively low participation rates in formal child care or pre-school among the twelve countries, with their child care cost for dual earner families being higher than the average of the twelve countries. Belgium (9), Denmark (9), Finland (8), France (7), Hungary (9), the Netherlands (9), Norway (8) and South Korea (9) belong to the medium defamilisation care-focused group. The participation rate in formal child care or pre-school varies in this group. The child care cost for dual earner families in this group is below the average of the twelve countries (except France, Norway and the Netherlands). Sweden (10) is the only country belonging to the

high defamilisation care-focused group. It has a higher participation rate in formal child care or pre-school than the average of the twelve countries. Its child care costs for dual earner families is lower than the average of the twelve countries.

### *Women's Economic Defamilisation index*

Two variables (the maternity leave compensation and the compensated maternity leave) were used to develop the women's economic defamilisation index. These two variables can be seen as input indicators in the defamilisation index developed by Bambra (2007). They indicate whether women are given sufficient welfare support when they have children (Bambra, 2004). Since the entitlement to these benefits is usually based on citizenship (and work status), women are not necessarily required to negotiate with their family members in claiming these benefits (Chau et al, 2016). Michon (2008) has put forward a formula for developing a combined maternity leave index by linking the maternity leave compensation to the compensated maternity leave duration variables. This formula is the replacement rate x number of weeks of leave x replacement/ 100. The maternity leave compensation is represented by the replacement rate, which refers to the proportion of the maternity leave compensation for duration covered to the normal wages. This rate is expressed as a percentage of normal wages. The compensated maternity leave duration is calculated in terms of the week. To illustrate how to calculate the maternity leave index, Belgium is used as an example. The proportion of the maternity leave compensation for duration covered to the normal wages in Belgium is 75 (percentage) and the length of the compensated maternity

leave duration in Belgium is 15 (weeks). Hence, the maternity leave index score of Belgium is calculated as  $(75/100 \times 15)/100$  and is equal to 0.1125.

However, it is interesting to point out that while both Michon (2008) and Bambra (2004, 2007) study the relationship between maternity leave benefits and female employment, they have different interpretations of the relationship between the maternity leave benefits and the concepts of defamilisation/familisation. As mentioned above, the maternity leave benefits in Bambra's studies are seen as an instrument for promoting women's economic defamilisation. However, Michon (2008) sees the maternity leave benefits as an instrument for promoting care-familisation – that is to encourage a situation where young children receive care at home. Obviously, the target of the maternity leave benefits in Bambra's study is women whereas the target of the maternity leave benefits in Michon's study is the family – meaning the family is given the positive freedom (in terms of material support) to provide care (note 1).

The women's economic defamilisation index is developed on the basis of this formula. The data for each of women's economic defamilisation measures are outlined in Table 3. As shown in Table 4, the scores of the twelve countries in the study are from 1 to 3 with a mean of 2.17. They are classified into three categories: low (1), medium (2) and high (3) as follows:

Insert Tables 3 and 4

Japan is in the low women's economic defamilisation group. It has the lowest maternity leave compensation duration and second lowest compensated maternity leave duration. Belgium,

Finland, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea and the UK belong to the medium women's economic defamilisation group. Some of these countries, such as France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and South Korea have 100% maternity leave compensation for the duration covered. Most of the countries in this group, except the UK, have a lower Michon's combined maternity leave score than the average of the twelve countries. Denmark, Norway and Sweden are in the high women's economic defamilisation group which is characterised by their high Michon's combined maternity leave scores and lengthy compensated maternity leave duration.

## Discussion

The findings drawn from the two defamilisation indices provide evidence for the discussion of whether defamilisation measures play an important role in creating favourable conditions for women to take part in the paid labour market, both in relation to input and output angles. It also provides an opportunity to add to debates regarding welfare regime models.

## Input Angle

As previously discussed, the input angle is concerned with the extent to which the 12 countries are committed to the provision of the two types of defamilisation measures. As shown in Table 5, there are significant variations in their provision of these measures. Sweden is a member of the high score groups in both care-focused and women's economic defamilisation indices; Japan belongs to the low score group in both of these two defamilisation indices; and some countries



(Belgium, Finland, France and Hungary) belong to the medium score group in these two defamilisation indices. The differences between countries are extensive in some cases. For example, Sweden's score in the Michon's combined maternity leave index is 0.55 whereas the score gained by Japan in the same index is 0.09. The participation rate in formal child care or preschool for children in Sweden is 47 whereas it is only 26 in Japan. The child care costs for a dual earner family in terms of the percentage of net family income in Sweden is 5, whereas it is 17 in Japan. As such the two defamilisation measures may not be perceived as important policy instruments in all of the 12 countries.

As mentioned above, the targets of the two types of defamilisation measures are different. The target of the care-focused defamilisation measures is the family, whereas women's economic defamilisation measures target women. Despite these differences, these two types of measures, to a certain extent, reflect the level to which governments provide support in relation to care for young children. Hence, it is perhaps not surprising that those countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) which belong to either high or medium score groups in the two defamilisation indices are commonly seen as members of the social democratic group (associated with the dual earner support model). Neither is it surprising that those countries (Japan, New Zealand and the UK) which belong to either low or medium score groups in the two defamilisation indices are commonly seen as members of the liberal group (associated with the market oriented model). It is also important to note that countries commonly understood to be members of the conservative group (Belgium, France and the Netherlands) belong to the medium score groups in the two defamilisation indices.

An important reason for the provision of the maternity leave benefits is a concern about the health of women and children (Michon, 2008). Therefore, it is understandable that there are more generous provisions of maternity leave benefits in those countries (Denmark, Sweden and Norway) which have a tradition of recognizing women as an individual worker, and stressing the importance of female workers' right to have a healthy work life. This also implies that they are prepared to promote women's freedom from the family. Furthermore, following the same logic, it is understandable that those countries (such as Belgium, France, Japan, South Korea and the Netherland) which emphasize the importance of the family in taking care of young children have a lower Michon's combined maternity leave index score than the three Scandinavian countries. There are also exceptions which should not be overlooked. For example, Finland (commonly seen as a member of the social democratic group) has similar care-focused defamilisation and women's economic defamilisation patterns as Belgium, France and the Netherlands.

Insert Table 5

### Output Angle

The output angle is concerned with the relationship between the two defamilisation measures and female employment. Female employment in this study is measured in terms of relative female full time employment rate, which is calculated as the difference between men's and women's full time employment rate (note 2). As highlighted by Bambra (2004), the advantage of measuring female employment in relation to male employment is to reduce the influence of different national unemployment rates. The relative female full time employment rate in the twelve

countries is outlined in Table 5 in addition to the defamilisation index groups. It should be noted that there is a tendency for countries which have a greater provision of the two types of defamilisation measures to also have a lower relative female full time employment rate. There are six countries which have relative female full time employment rates lower than the average of the twelve countries - Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Norway and Sweden. These countries all belong to either high or medium score groups in the two defamilisation indices. All of the three members of the low care focused defamilisation score group (Japan, New Zealand and the UK) have higher relative female full time employment rates than the average of the twelve countries.

However, it is important to recognize that women's participation in the paid labour market can also be influenced by other factors such as the availability of public care services for older people and paternity leave (Daly, 2011; Korpi, 2010; Pylkkanen and Smith, 2003; Saraceno and Keck, 2010). It is also evident that the extent to which countries' implement defamilisation measures is not always negatively associated with relative female full time employment rates. For example, Sweden belongs to the high score group in both of the defamilisation indices, yet its relative female full time employment rates are higher than those of Finland and Hungary, which belong to the medium score groups in the two defamilisation indices. (note 3)

### Challenges to the Welfare Regimes Model

Welfare regime theory studies in general, and the studies by Korpi (2000) and Esping-Andersen (1990) in particular, stress that different countries, especially those from different worlds of welfare regimes, have attached differing importance to the provision of defamilisation measures.

To a certain extent, the findings provided by the two defamilisation indices support their views. For example, Denmark and Sweden have more extensive defamilisation measures than most of the other countries in both of the indices and their relative female full time employment rate scores are lower than the average of the twelve countries.

However, evidence drawn from the two defamilisation measures also differs from the findings of Korpi (2000) and Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) in several ways. Firstly, not all of the components of the three groups in the two defamilisation measures are in line with the categorization of the countries suggested by Korpi (2000) and Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999). Based on the work by Korpi (2000) and Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), Finland (as a member of the social democratic group associated with the dual earner support model) and France (as a member of the conservative welfare group associated with the general family support model) are assumed to differ significantly from each other in the provision of family measures. However, based on the women's economic defamilisation index and the care-focused defamilisation index, these two countries belong to the same group. Secondly, given that the UK is deemed to adhere to a market-oriented model, in theory it should provide more limited defamilisation measures than the other countries. However, in contrast to this assumption, the UK's Michon's combined maternity leave index score (0.47) is much higher than the average of the twelve countries (0.27).

It is important to note that not all analysts support the arguments made by Esping-Andersen (1990) and Korpi (2000). Some suggest that welfare regimes may exhibit significant variations across different areas (Bambra, 2004; Kasza, 2002). They emphasize that countries may differ in their commitment to the provision of defamilisation measures, but disagree that these differences

between these countries necessarily reflect the typology put forward by Esping-Andersen (1990) and Korpi (2000). Their arguments are, to a certain extent, reflected in these findings.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored the two different interpretations of defamilisation presented by Bamba ('freedom of the family' and 'freedom of women from the family') in informing the search for effective measures in assisting women to participate in the paid labour market. In order to do so, two types of defamilisation measures (care-focused defamilisation and women's economic defamilisation) were utilised which focus on maternity leave benefits and formal child care services respectively. It is evident that all of the twelve countries studied in this paper, to varying degrees, provide both maternity leave benefits and public child care services. These have potential implications for facilitating women's participation in the paid labour market by reducing caring responsibilities within the family and providing support directly to women.

However, it is important not to take for granted that care-focused defamilisation and women's economic defamilisation measures promote women's employment given that, in practice, the analysis of the statistics shows that it is difficult to establish a definite causal relationship between the country's provision of the two types of defamilisation measures and women's participation in the paid labour market. While all of the countries with a lower relative female full time employment rate are characterized by a greater provision of defamilisation measures, some individual countries, such as Sweden, do not have a very narrow gap in employment between men and women that is commensurate with its provision of defamilisation measures.

Furthermore the analysis has also indicated that not all of the countries in the study are located in the groups one might expect based on the work of Korpi (2000) and Esping-Andersen (1999) on welfare regime models.

Finally, it is necessary to stress that searching for ways of promoting women's employment is an important but complicated task. Hence, more research needs to be undertaken to consider women's opportunities to undertake paid employment. This includes exploring additional kinds of care focused defamilisation and women's economic defamilisation measures; examining their impacts on gender equality in labour market participation; and studying the effectiveness of alternative family approaches in achieving gender equality in the work place (such as approaches to familisation of men). It also entails exploring additional factors which may affect women's access to paid employment, including the impact of other caring responsibilities, especially within the context of an ageing population and sex discrimination in the labour market. Furthermore, it is also important to recognize that women should have choice in relation to paid employment and should not be penalized for years in which they undertake caring responsibilities.

#### Notes

1. Both our study and Michon's study are concerned with the relationship between female employment and defamilisation/familisation. However, there are four differences between our study and Michon's. Firstly, based on the ideas of Bambra (2004, 2007), we see maternity leave benefits as an instrument for promoting women's economic defamilisation rather than care familisation. Secondly, we compare not only European countries but also

countries in other continents. Thirdly, we use more up-to-date information for conducting the comparison. Fourthly, in studying female employment, we study the gap between male and female full time employment (the relative female full time employment rate) rather than the employment rate (as a percentage of whole population). As mentioned in the text, the advantage of measuring female employment in relation to male employment is to reduce the influence of different national unemployment rates.

2. Women in the twelve countries have a much higher part time employment rate than their male counterparts. Despite this we focus on women's full time employment rate given that women in full time employment have a greater opportunity to achieve financial autonomy in the family.
3. To further explore the link between the provision of defamilisation measures in the twelve countries and the relative female full time employment rates, we have examined the z-scores for the components of the two types of defamilisation measures and z-scores for the relative female full time employment rates. No significant correlation is found between them. This finding to a certain extent supports our argument that women's participation in the paid labour market can be influenced by a number of factors, and thus the extent to which countries implement defamilisation is not necessarily always negatively associated with relative female full time employment rates.

## References

- Bambra, C. (2004). The Worlds of Welfare: illusory and gender blind, *Social Policy and Society*, 3(3), p. 201-211. .
- Bambra, C. (2005). Cash Versus Services: ‘Worlds of Welfare’ and the Decommodification of Cash benefits and health care services, *Journal of Social Policy* 34(2), 195-213
- Bambra, C. (2007). Defamilisation and welfare state regimes: a cluster analysis. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 16, 326-338.
- Bennett, F. and Daly, M. (2014). *Poverty through a Gender Lens: Evidence and Policy Review on Gender and Poverty*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Chau, R. Foster, L. and Yu, S. (2016) Defamilisation and familisation measures – can they reduce the adverse effects of pro-market pension reforms on women in Hong Kong and the UK? *Critical Social Policy*, 36(2): 205-224.
- Castles, F. G. and Mitchell, D. (1993). Worlds of welfare and families of nations. In F. G. Castles (Ed.), *Families of nations: patterns of public policy in western democracies* (pp. 93-128). Aldershot: Dartmouth.
- Chzhen, Y. (2010). *Gender Differences in Earnings and Occupational Attainment in Europe* (Doctoral Thesis). University of York, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, UK.
- Daly, M. (2011). What Adult Worker Model? A Critical Look at Recent Social Policy Reform in Europe from a Gender and Family Perspective. *Social Politics*, 18(1), 1-23.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. London: Polity.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1999). *Social Foundation of Postindustrial Economies*. New York: Oxford University Press.



- Foster, L. (2010). Towards a new political economy of pensions? The implications for women. *Critical Social Policy*, 30(1): 27-47.
- Javornik, J. (2014). Measuring state de-familialism: Contesting post-socialist exceptionalism. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 24(3), 240-257.
- Kangas, O. (1994). The politics of social security: on regressions, qualitative comparisons and cluster analysis. In T. Janoski, A. Hicks (Eds.), *The Comparative political economy of the welfare state* (pp. 346-364). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Karim, S. A., Eikemo, T. A. and Bambra, C. (2010). Welfare state regimes and population health: Integrating the East Asian welfare states. *Health Policy*, 94(1), 45-53.
- Kasza, G. (2002). The illusion of welfare regimes. *Journal of Social Policy*, 31(2), 271-287.
- Korpi, W. (2000). Faces of inequality: Gender, class and patterns of inequalities in different types of welfare state. *Social Politics*, 7(2), 127-191.
- Korpi, W. (2010). Class and gender inequalities in different types of welfare states: the social citizenship indicator program. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 19(S1), S14-S24.
- Kroger, T. (2011). Defamilisation, dedomestication and care policy: Comparing childcare service provisions of welfare states. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 31(7/8), 424-440.
- Leitner, S. (2003). Varieties of familialism: The caring function of the family in comparative perspective. *European Societies*, 5(4), 353-375.
- Leitner, S. (2005). Conservative Familialism Reconsidered: The Case of Belgium. *Acta Politica*, 40, 419-439.

- Lister, R. (1994). 'She has other duties': women, citizenship and social security. In S. Baldwin and J. Falkingham (Eds.), *Social Security and Social Change: New Challenges to the Beveridge model* (pp. 31-44). New York; London: Harvester.
- Lohmann, H. and Zagel, H. (2016). Family policy in comparative perspective: The concepts and measurement of familization and defamilization. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 26(1), 48-65.
- McLaughlin, E. and Glendinning, C. (1994). Paying for care in Europe: Is there a Feminist approach? In L. Hantrais and S. Mangen (Eds.), *Family policy and the welfare of women* (pp. 52-59). Loughborough: University of Loughborough.
- Michon, P. (2008). Familisation and Defamilisation Policy in 22 European countries. *Poznan University of Economics Review*, 8(1), 34-54.
- Nyberg, A. (2002). Gender, (de)commodification, economic (in)dependence and autonomous households: the case of Sweden. *Critical Social Policy*, 22(1), 72-95.
- OECD (2011), *OECD Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*. Retrieved Jan 12, 2017, from <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/49322823.pdf>.
- OECD (2014). *OECD Family Database*. Retrieved February 20, 2014, from [www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database).
- OECD (2016). *OECD Employment Statistics Database*. Retrieved November, 26, 2016, from <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=64196>
- Orloff, A. (1993). Gender and social rights of citizenship: the comparative analysis of gender relations and welfare states. *American sociological review*, 58(3), 3030-3328.
- Pankratz, C. (2009). Cross-National Comparisons of Family Policies: The Relevance of National Approaches to Social Welfare. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 40(3), 493-511.

- Price, D. (2007). Closing the Gender Gap in Retirement Income: What Difference will Recent UK Pension Reforms Make? *Journal of Social Policy*, 36(4), 1-23.
- Pylkkanen, E. and Smith, N. (2003). Career interruptions due to parental leave: A comparative study of Denmark and Sweden. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper. Retrieve December 8, 2016, from <http://www.oecd.org/social/family/2502336.pdf>
- Sainsbury, D. (1999). Gender, Policy Regimes and Politics. In D. Sainsbury (Ed.), *Gender and Welfare State Regimes* (pp. 245-276). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Saraceno, C. and Keck, W. (2010). Can we identify intergenerational policy regimes in Europe? *European Societies*, 12(5), 675-696.
- Thévenon, O. (2013). Drivers of Female Labour Force Participation in the OECD. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 145, Paris: OECD Publishing.
- United Nations (2010). *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*. Retrieved February 10, 2014, from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm>.
- Van der Lippe, T., de Ruijter, J., de Ruitjer, E., and Raub, W. (2011). Persistent inequalities in time use between men and women: A detailed look at the influence of economic circumstances, policies and culture, *European Sociological Review*, 27(2), 164-179.
- Walker, A. and Wong, C. K. (2005). Introduction: East Asian welfare regimes. In A. Walker, and C. K. Wong (Eds.), *East Asian welfare regimes in transition* (pp. 3-20), Hong Kong: The Policy Press.

Table 1 Unstandardized Care-focused Defamilisation Measure Data (plus aggregated index score of the three variables)

Country	Child care cost for dual earner family, % of net family income		Child-staff ratio in formal childcare, for children under 3 years old		Participation rate in formal child care or pre-school, for children under 3 years old		(Aggregated index score of the three variables)
	2008	(IS**)	2009	(IS)	2010	(IS)	
Belgium	5	6	7	1	39	2	9
Denmark	9	4	5.25	2	66	3	9
Finland	8	4	5.5	2	28	2	8
France	10	4	6.5	1	48	2	7
Hungary	4	6	6	2	11	1	9
Japan	17	2	4.5	3	26	1	6
Netherlands	10	4	5	2	61	3	9
New Zealand	19	2	5.5	2	37	2	6
Norway	11	4	5	2	54	2	8
South Korea	9	4	4	3	51	2	9
Sweden	5	6	5.5	2	47	2	10
UK	27	2	5	2	42	2	6
Mean	9.7*		5.4		42.5		
Standard Deviation	4.5*		0.8		14.9		

IS: Index Score

\* Adjusted for extreme outlier (UK).

\*\* The values of IS were multiplied by 2.

(Source: The data come from OECD, 2011; 2014 compiled by Authors)

Table 2 Care-focused Defamilisation Index

Country	Index score for each country	State-led care-focused Index-based Regime*
Belgium	9	Medium
Denmark	9	Medium
Finland	8	Medium
France	7	Medium
Hungary	9	Medium
Japan	6	Low
Netherlands	9	Medium
New Zealand	6	Low
Norway	8	Medium
South Korea	9	Medium
Sweden	10	High
UK	6	Low
Mean	8.0	
Standard Deviation	1.35	

Note:

\*High > Mean+SD; Medium between (Mean-SD) and (Mean+SD); Low < Mean-SD

Table 3 Unstandardised Women's Economic Defamilisation Data (plus aggregated index score of the variable)

Country	Maternity leave compensation for duration covered (expressed as a % of normal wages) 2009	Compensated maternity leave duration (number of weeks) 2009	Michon's combined maternity leave index <sup>a</sup>	(IS)	(Aggregated index score of the variable)
Belgium	75	15	0.11	2	2
Denmark	100	52	0.52	3	3
Finland	70	21	0.15	2	2
France	100	16	0.16	2	2
Hungary	70	24	0.17	2	2
Japan	67	14	0.09	1	1
Netherlands	100	16	0.16	2	2
New Zealand	100	14	0.14	2	2
Norway	100	56	0.56	3	3
South Korea	100	13	0.13	2	2
Sweden	80	69	0.55	3	3
UK	90	52	0.47	2	2
Mean	87.67	30.17	0.27		
Standard Deviation	13.51	19.79	0.18		

<sup>a</sup> Calculated by multiplying the number of weeks of compensated maternity leave by replacement rate (i.e. maternity leave compensation for duration covered) and divided by 100.

IS: Index Score

(Source: Data come from United Nations, 2010 compiled by Authors)

Table 4 Women's Economic Defamilisation Index

Country	Index score for each country	Women's Economic Defamilisation Index-base Regime*
Belgium	2	Medium
Denmark	3	High
Finland	2	Medium
France	2	Medium
Hungary	2	Medium
Japan	1	Low
Netherlands	2	Medium
New Zealand	2	Medium
Norway	3	High
South Korea	2	Medium
Sweden	3	High
UK	2	Medium
Mean	2.17	
Standard Deviation	0.55	

Note:

\*High > Mean+SD; Medium between (Mean-SD) and (Mean+SD); Low < Mean-SD

Table 5 Countries' Commitment to the Provision of Defamilisation Measures and Relative Female Full Time Employment Rate

Country	Care-focused Index	Women's Economic Defamilisation Index	Relative Female Full-Time Employment rate*
Belgium	Medium	Medium	22.5
Denmark	Medium	High	11.9
Finland	Medium	Medium	6.8
France	Medium	Medium	14.9
Hungary	Medium	Medium	5.0
Japan	Low	Low	30.5
Netherlands	Medium	Medium	42.4
New Zealand	Low	Medium	20.5
Norway	Medium	High	16.8
South Korea	Medium	Medium	21.8
Sweden	High	High	11.3
UK	Low	Medium	24.4
Mean			19.1

\* Calculated as the difference between men and women's full-time employment rate.

(Source: Data from OECD Employment statistics database, 2016 compiled by Authors)