

How different is the work-life balance satisfaction between men and women in European comparison?

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In this paper we focus on questions related to work-life balance issues paying special attention to significantly different views of men and women. In the socialist era just a few women stated that they had difficulties in reconciling their family lives and their work while the most of them were in full time position in Eastern-Europe. The situation has changed and the number of women who have difficulties in harmonizing their roles (as wife/mother and employee) is increasing in Eastern Europe. It is a well-known fact that the participation of men in housework can reduce the burden on women. We can find that men especially in the Scandinavian countries take part in housework activities more.

We try to find answers to questions like: Is there yet differences in work-life balance satisfaction between Eastern and West European countries? The women in Scandinavian countries are more satisfied with the work-life balance than in other countries?

We expect that the family type would have significant effect: singles would be more satisfied with the work-life balance than those who have partners. The impact of employment on parenthood is also different for men and women: Hungarian as well as European data show that childless women and men with children do more paid work than women with children and childless men. The fact that men with children are more likely to be employed than women with children can indicate that men are dealing with less time management problems deriving from reconciliation of family and work than women.

Data from the third wave of the European Social Survey (ESS), conducted in 23 European countries (N=42,999), are used to test the assumptions. In addition to descriptive statistics displaying the European situation, causal models are developed to investigate statistical relationship with basic socio-demographic categories, some work attributes, as well as the workplace and employment relations characteristics as the main predictors of work-life balance satisfaction, separately for men and women. We will apply multilevel analyses to eliminate the design effects in the sample.