

What makes French employees so satisfied with their work-family balance? The impact of employers' family-friendly policies

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1. Introduction

French fertility remains at a relative high level with respect to other countries in Europe. One explanation advanced is the family-friendly environment which allows mothers –even with young children– to continue working without mixed feelings. And indeed, French people are satisfied with their balance between family and work: one quarter are very satisfied, one half are satisfied. Women are even a little more satisfied than men.

A family-friendly environment is created through different mediums. By developing public child care facilities, financial support to private child care, parental leave, family allowances or advantageous taxation represent one well-known medium. French family policy is designed to help women to have the number of children they want while continuing to work (Toulemon et al. 2008). A second possible medium is that of social and cultural norms (Bernardi 2003) which “allow” mothers to continue working full time even with young children. France has an intermediate position in the ranking of countries according to traditional gendered family norms (appendix 1).

Another medium that may help families to balance family and work is the workplace. Employers may contribute to the balance between family and work through schedule flexibility, benefits in kind and/or financial benefits. The literature on the role of firms in the work-life balance has been growing in recent years (Evans 2001, OECD 2002-2005). It shows that family-friendly programs may be a tool to enhance job performance, i.e. to reduce tardiness, absenteeism, turnover or low job involvement. On the other hand, a family friendly work environment may help parents to juggle work and family schedules (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2006) and then enhance satisfaction with work-family balance. However, there are huge differences between firms in terms of family-friendly benefits and services, according to the

size and gender composition of the workforce and the economic sector (Lefèvre et al. 2006). These differences result in large inequalities between employees.

The aim of this article is to analyse the determinants of satisfaction with work-family balance. It focuses on the meso level, i.e. firm level. This article analyses (i) whether employers' family friendly policies have an impact on individual satisfaction with the balance between work and family (ii) the relative impact of firms' family friendly policies compared to individual and family characteristics and (iii) which type of programs are the most effective in increasing satisfaction with regard to work-family balance. As the determinants of job satisfaction differ according to gender (Clark 1997), as does the division of parental tasks, the analysis is conducted separately for men and women.

The empirical analysis is based on rich information provided by the *Familles et Employeurs* (Families and employers) survey, which is a matched employer-employee survey carried out in 2004-2005 by the French Institute of Demographic Studies (INED). This cross-matched data set offers a very rich source of information on both individual and family characteristics and firms characteristics. It allows to build a typology of firms according to their family-friendly policies and to investigate the possible link between working in a particular type of establishment and the level of satisfaction with work-family balance .

The article is organised as follows. First, previous research and background are described. Then we make a typology of firms according to their family friendliness. Some stylised facts of work-family satisfaction are drawn before presenting the method and the models results.

2. Background

There is a huge economic literature on self-perceived job satisfaction. The initial purpose was to link job satisfaction and observable phenomena such as resignations (Levy-Garboua and al 2007), absenteeism or worker economic performance in management studies. The second economic reason was to evaluate well-being and then indirectly "utility". Indeed, according to Argyle (1989), job satisfaction, family satisfaction and marriage are the three most important predictors of well-being.

Above overall job satisfaction, different components of job satisfaction are studied in the literature. These include satisfaction with the amount of pay, work responsibilities, the work itself, promotional opportunities or co-workers. Less research has been conducted on job satisfaction with work-family balance. Using a survey of Federal Government Employees, Saltzstein et al. (2001) showed that work-family balance quality is one determinant of job satisfaction, whatever the family situation (single/in couple, with children/childless), the age and the partner's employment status (unemployed/ employed). Our argument is that work-family balance may participate in overall job satisfaction, and hence in well-being.

SATISFACTION AND GENDER

Satisfaction indicators are always a mix between feelings about reality and expectations. Both are dependent on many factors and differ according to gender. The paradox of job satisfaction pointed up by Clark (1997) in a pioneer work is the following: *though women's job content, wage and promotion opportunities are worse than men's, they report higher job satisfaction scores*. After controlling for selection bias, this paradox remains. It is assumed to lie in the different expectations in well-being: women expect less from work and will be more satisfied than men, all others things being equal.

According to the hypothesis of “incompatibility of roles”, women and men, may perceive the problem of balancing paid work and family differently (Lehrer and Nerlove, 1986).

The quality of the balance is essential in determining satisfaction with the work-family balance. In France, most women work full-time while having young children, thus the “dual burden” weighs mainly on their shoulders. As they bear the larger share of domestic and parental tasks while working, they are much more concerned by work-family balance. They may have more expectations than men because they could have more to gain from a better balance. As women bear a heavier share of the family tasks, they should be less satisfied than men.

However, satisfaction depends also on feelings about reality which are shaped by cultural factors and gender norms. The strong social pressure that allocates child-raising to women explains the division of labour between spouses (Shelton and John, 1996). The role theory explains this specialisation of women in child raising tasks by the substantial social rewards they receive when they participate in mothering, whereas men receive much fewer such rewards for fathering (Van der Lippe, 1994). Those social rewards may enable women to feel better about the way their employment and family life balance out.

However this paradox is far from being universal in Europe. In a comparative study on twelve European countries using the ECHP data, after controlling for job characteristics, Davoine (2006) finds that women are less satisfied in Portugal whereas there is no gender effect in Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands, which are countries where the female participation rate is very high. One explanation may be that with the generalisation of female employment, holding a job is not seen as a privilege, so women are as demanding, or more so, than men. . Another explanation could be that if female employment is the rule, then the institutional and business environment may have adapted and provide some help in terms of child-care facilities, work schedules, etc.

FACTORS AFFECTING SATISFACTION WITH WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

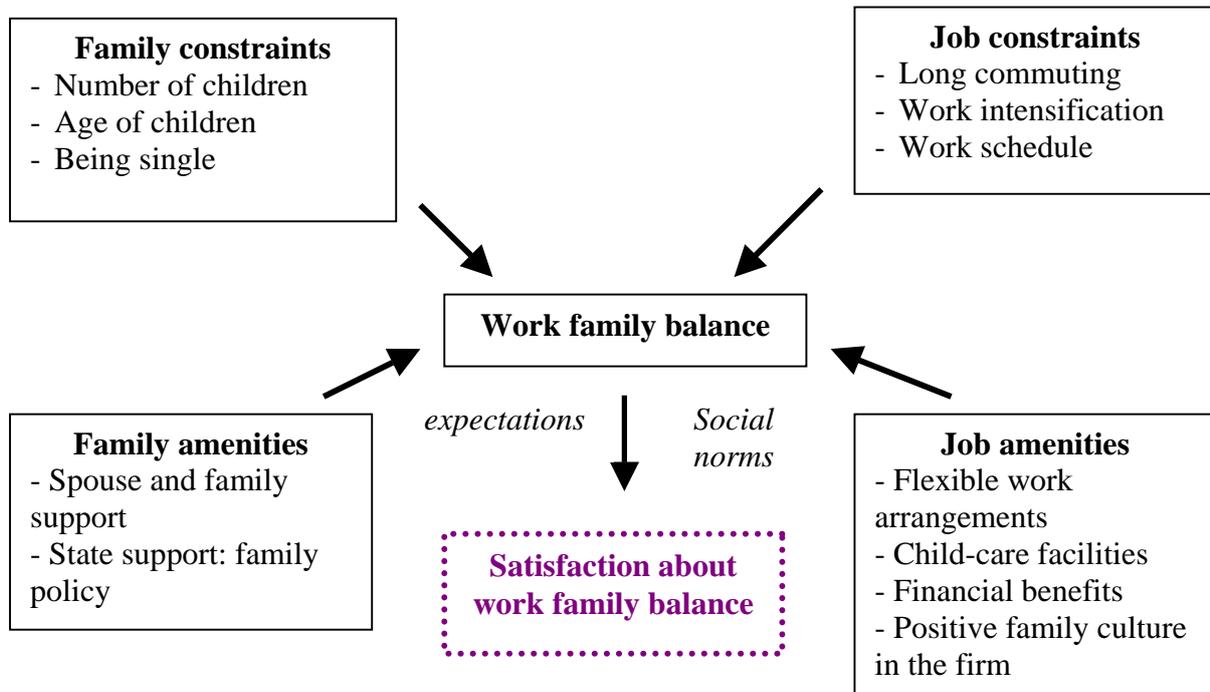
Time spent in paid work outside the family can therefore conflict with that spent for the family, at home. Perception of work family balance derives from assessing the relative demands and resources associated with work and family roles (Voydavnoff, 2005). Work-family balance is at the intersection of two domains, family and work, which both have constraints and amenities (see figure 1).

On the family side, one can assume that the larger the number of children and the younger they are, the higher the demands. The combination of work and family life may be eased through spouse and family support. Hence, according to Erdwins et al (2001), spousal support is one of the largest determinants of work-family conflict. Grand-parents or other relatives are also a resource for childcare. The availability of subsidized child care facilities or subsidized child minders is also a key determinant. In France collective and private care arrangements are well developed for children under three and 97% of children are enrolled at school at age three (Blanpain 2006). As those facilities are available for most working parents, we will not focus on their role.

On the employment side, work family balance may be altered by long commuting, long or atypical work schedules and work intensification. Family-friendly programs or policies may increase satisfaction with work-family balance. Those programs and policies may include flexible work arrangements, with regard to work schedule (e.g. flexitime, telecommuting, compressed workweek, job sharing), sick leave, child-care assistance (child care referral services or on-site child care) or in cash benefits. Family-friendly culture at work may also play a key role concerning satisfaction with work-family balance. The perceptions of a

supportive work/family culture and of supportive supervisors and co-workers may be determining factors, according to the literature on human resources management. Moreover, a condition for using family friendly benefits would be that there are no negative career consequences associated with the use of such benefits.

Figure 1: Components of Work-Family Balance Satisfaction



3. Method

DATA

The originality of our approach lies in the fact that it combines individual determinants, household determinants and firm determinants thanks to a matched survey of individuals and their employers. The data set used here comes from the *Families and Employers Survey* conducted by INED in 2004-2005 (see www-efe.ined.fr). The objectives of this survey are to describe the work-life balance in France from the point of view of both individuals and employers, and to understand the correlation between the working lives and family behaviours of men and women. The Family section was carried out by means of face-to-face interviews on a sample of approximately 9,500 respondents. The data set contains rich sets of background information on individuals and households as well as a detailed description of the respondents' current work situation. The Employer section took the form of a postal survey to the workplaces of the Family survey respondents (2,673 respondent establishment with over 20 employees). The questionnaire covered the establishments' human resources management (work organization, personnel management, working environment and general characteristics).

We use the matched sample: our sample is made up exclusively of men and women in couples with at least one child under the age of 25 living at home (more than half the week) working in an establishment with at least 20 employees. After excluding individuals with missing information, the sample counts 988 women 964 men. Sample characteristics are given in Appendix 2.

As we have seen, work-family balance is a multi-faceted concept. For some people, work-family balance may be simply the feasibility of combining childbearing and employment. For others, it may be the possibility, for instance, of taking parental leave. For others, it could be flexible work schedules that enable them to take care of the children, or the possibility of having totally fulfilling private and professional lives.

So we propose a single measure of the job satisfaction in terms of work-family balance which is a general satisfaction indicator. The question used to build our variable of interest is the following:

How satisfied are you with your job in terms of reconciling your family with your working life?

1. very dissatisfied
2. slightly dissatisfied
3. fairly satisfied,
4. very satisfied

The question was included in a series of questions, others components of job satisfaction being income, job interest and schedules.

TYPOLGY OF EMPLOYERS ACCORDING TO THEIR FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICY.

The aim of the typology is to synthesise the huge amount of information about family-friendly policy that is obtained through the *Employer section*. It avoids building ad hoc synthetic indicators and constraining the weight of any variable. .

For that purpose we ran a classification analysis using 21 variables related to the work-family balance. These 21 variables cover benefits in cash and in kind related to children proposed by the employer and the availability of work schedule adjustments. Analysis also includes two variables measuring the degree of availability of part-time work schedules and the choice of day off. Table 2 gives their distribution.

We used a mixed method of classification which consists in using first a hierarchical upward classification followed by a consolidation. The *method of hierarchical upward classification* involves grouping together classes successively by aggregation. At each step, the two groups made by the preceding iteration are merged. At the first step, the aggregation consists of making n-1 classes, with n being the number of individuals. At the second step, n-2 classes are created, and so on.

Table 2: Description of family friendly variables chosen

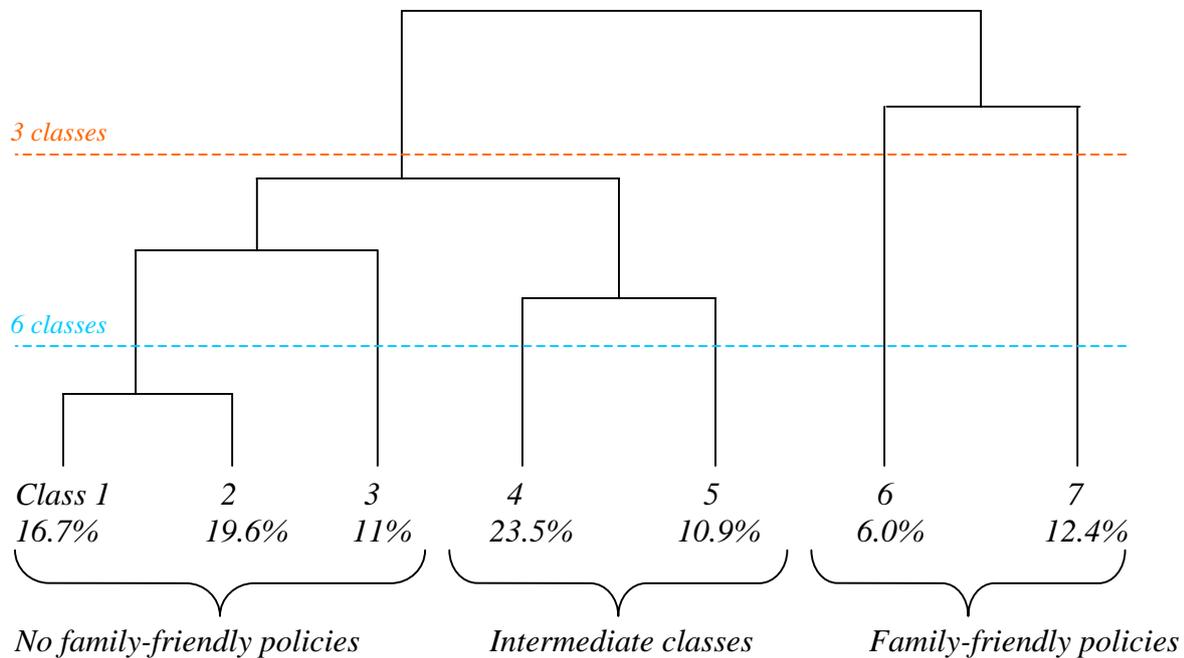
Variables	Items	Frequency
Number of paid days off when a child is ill	0	32.0
	1-3	13.4
	4-6	22.6
	>6	32.0
Number of additional weeks off for maternity leave	0	92.8
	1-3	4.5
	>3	3.7
The establishment proposes child care	Yes	7.8
The establishment gives access to holiday camps for children	Yes	40.2
The establishment offers a childbirth bonus	Yes	65.8
The establishment offers financial benefits for child-care	Yes	27.6
The establishment offers financial benefits for child education	Yes	32.0
The establishment offers financial benefits for disabled children	Yes	26.5
Full wage during maternity and paternity leave	Yes	70.6
Work schedule adjustments for the start of the new school year	Yes	85.9
Work schedule adjustments for children (school, kindergarten)	Yes	39.1
Work schedule adjustments for a sick child	Yes	71.7
Work schedule adjustments for long commuting	Yes	23.6
Possibility to work at home for private reasons	Yes	11.9
Some jobs are defined as part time	Yes	49.3
Part-time accepted at employee's request	No	8.3
	Sometimes	42.1
	Always	49.6
Possibility to choose days off (gained by French reform of working hours)	No	19.5
	Constrained	14.7
	Need agreement	53.7
	Free	12.1
Availability is a requirement for promotion	Never	2.2
	Sometimes	34.0
	Often	31.4
	Always	9.4
Holiday vouchers	Yes	50.0
The employer subsidizes health insurance	For all	55.0
	For executives	8.0
	No	37.0
The employer provides health services	Yes	31.6

Survey: "Familles et Employeurs" INED 2004-2005

Sample: Establishments of 20 employees or more.

7 classes are determined which could be grouped either into six or three groups. We obtain the following three.

Figure 2 : Classification tree



The class 7 called “*modern paternalist*” includes establishments in which everything is done to keep employees at work. Almost all types of family-friendly measures are implemented more frequently by the establishments belonging to this class. For instance, child-care centres in the workplace are more frequently available than on average (5 times more), as are financial contributions to child care (90% against 30 % on average). Additional pay for maternity and paternity leave are the rule. However, work schedule adjustments do not exist. Additional covariates confirm that this type of firm has strong schedule constraints: work schedules are extended, night and Sunday work are more common.

The class 6 called “*flexible working time*”, includes establishments in which working hours and schedules are flexible. Less institutionalised, family-friendly measures are adapted according to each employee’s preferences. For instance, employees are free to choose their day off obtained under the “reduction of working hours” policy. Moreover, it is more frequently possible to reduce working hours because of long commuting or childcare problems, and to work at home for private convenience. Part-time work is available on request. The duration of maternity leave is also extended beyond the legal minimum. Moreover, half of these establishments offer financial contributions for child care or education.

These establishments open 5 days a week. Sectors represented are finance (banking and insurance) and central administration. Establishments are relatively large (half of them have more than 500 employees, and one third more than 1000 employees) and are more likely to be in Paris and its suburbs. The proportion of highly qualified employees is large.

At the other end of the scale, we found the groups of establishments providing very few services.

In the class 3 called “*macho establishments*”, the family constraints are completely ignored. All the measures are less frequent than elsewhere. None of these establishments offer part-time work. Promotion is dependent on workers’ availability. Some benefits are available, but they are less linked with work-family balance. For instance, senior personnel are more likely to benefit from subsidized health insurance. Help with housing may also be provided. The introduction of additional covariates shows that the proportion of men is high in such establishments (half have more than 75% male workers). The construction sector and small businesses (half have between 20 and 50 employees) are over-represented.

The class 2 called “*international firms*” is very close to the previous one. It differs by the possibility of working part-time. A very common measure, such as offering flexible schedules at the start of the new school year is not possible.

The construction and metallurgical industries are over-represented. These firms have an international or European market.

The class 1 is called “*minimum services for special situation*”. Employers in this category provide few measures except in the case of an ill child or for the start of the new school year. In most cases, days off are granted for sickness. The childbirth bonus exists in three quarter of these establishments.

Large French corporations, but also non-profit organisations are over-represented. They may be open on nights or on Sunday (25% of cases). The retailing and manufacturing industries are present. They are more likely to have trade unions and a human resources department.

The intermediate classes provide only some kinds of services.

In the class 4 called “*possible but penalizing time adjustment*”, work schedule adjustments are possible (for instance 97% of firms in the case of a sick child) and numerous firms enable employees to take part-time work, but those who do so are penalized for their career: promotion is linked to availability (in half of cases “often” or “always”).

Employees are young on average.

Lastly, the class 5 is characterised by a longer maternity leave (a supplement for maternity leave benefit is systematic), the choice of working time and access to a health centre. Being similar in numerous respects to the previous class, this class presents some additional measures. The number of days off allowed in case of a sick child is higher (more than 6 days off in 70% of cases). Part time working is more often granted on request. Working at home for private reasons is allowed three times more than on average. Half of these establishments have access to a health centre.

These establishments are mainly in the state public sector (60% against the mean 13%) and particularly in the education sector (45% against 8%). Most employees are highly qualified. They often work less than 35 hours (teachers). The majority of employees are women, including in senior positions.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

As said before, roles and values play a huge role in satisfaction with the work-family balance and the determinants are gender-specific. For this reason, two separate estimations are performed for women and men.

Our sample is exclusively made up of employees. For some people, and especially women, the probability of being employed is probably correlated with their potential satisfaction with work-family balance. In other words, work-balance dissatisfaction may be a reason for quitting the labour market. Employees would not be not randomly selected and they more likely to be satisfied with the work-family balance. Hence, 36% of housewives with children report that their previous work frequently came into conflict with their family life. This figure falls to 17 % among working women. The people who are not included in our sample, i.e., people not in the labour force, may be self-selected into this state and hence not be representative individuals¹. Since only very few men are out of labour force, we correct for selection bias only for women.

We test for selection bias following Heckman's two-step procedure (Heckman, 1979). We derive Heckman's coefficient by estimating a probit equation for being in work² relative to being out of the labour force. The unemployed, students, and retirees are excluded from our sample. The explanatory variables are age, age squared, education dummies, number of children and a dummy if the person has at least 1 child aged under 3, a dummy for living in a couple, dummies for being a disabled person, to control for being an immigrant, and the mother's activity status during adolescence –which stand with immigrant status as the exclusion variables³.

In a second step, we estimate an ordered probit on the scale of satisfaction with the work-family balance. The ordinal dependent variable requires the use of ordered probit regression.

COVARIATES

Variables related to the four dimensions playing on satisfaction related to work-family balance are introduced as explanatory variables.

- Family constraints
 - number of children under 18 living in the household
 - dummy variable indicating the presence of children under 3 in the household
 - dummy variable indicating that the respondent is single

- Family resources

¹ Another self selection process would be that the women's preference towards one type of firm may be linked to the better conditions of work-family balance in this sector. While controlling for a maximum of characteristics of the job status, we expect to minimise unobserved heterogeneity and then this selection problem. Again, as in France, the unemployment rate is high especially for women, and job mobility low, the job choice is rather limited. Moreover, work-family balance is not the first reason cited for choosing a job. Usually, wage, geographical proximity, interest of job and job security arrive first. So we can assume that the family-friendly policy of the firm acts as a bonus or a surcharge but do not act directly in the job search process, after controlling for some job characteristics.

² We observe in our sample only the wage earner working in an establishment with at least 20 employees. We do not control for potential selectivity of being employed in an establishment of more or less than 20 employees. We assume that establishment size is a random process, in others words that people do not choose to work in an establishment according its size, specially in a context of high unemployment .

³ The estimations show the expected effects of education (higher probability of participation for the higher levels), and of children (negative and significant) Being immigrant reduces the probability of being employed while having a continuous working mother increases it. The detailed results are presented in Appendix 3.

- One variable indicating the proximity of the respondent's mother⁴: whether the time taken to travel from the respondent's to his/her mother's home is less than 90 minutes . This variable is a proxy for external help to take care of the children.
- Employment constraints
 - Number of hours worked per week
 - Schedules
 - ~ Non standard work schedule: whether the respondent works on evenings, Saturdays or Sundays (regularly or occasionally).
 - ~ Strict control of working hours (clocking in and out)
 - ~ Schedules fixed by employer
 - Commuting duration (less than 30 min/ between 30 min and 1 hour/ more than one hour/ no regular journey)
 - Quality of job :
 - ~ Work under pressure
 - ~ Poor job atmosphere
 - ~ Tiring job due to stress
 - ~ Position of responsibility
- Employment resources
 - Monthly wage (in logarithm)
 - Schedules
 - ~ Reduced number of working days (four days or less worked per week)
 - ~ Regular time schedule (same schedule everyday)
 - ~ Possibility to change schedule
 - Employer characteristics
 - ~ Branch (transportation/finance and real estate/others)
 - ~ State public sector
 - ~ Size of the firm (fewer or more than 50 employees)
 - Family friendly classes
 - Work family culture (from the employee's point of view)
 - ~ Acceptance from colleagues and supervisors of employee's absence for family reasons
 - ~ Indicator of how family constraints are taken into account in work organisation (holidays, business trips, part-time, work schedule, ...)

Results

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

There is not much gender difference in satisfaction (table 1). This result confirms that work-family balance is not the expression of the parental load. Indeed the unequal division of work between women and men does not express itself through satisfaction since satisfaction is a subjective concept that integrates prevailing social norms. However, reconciling family and work does not involve partners in the same manner. Usual parental and domestic tasks are

⁴ We did not use the information on the proximity of the mother in law since this information is not available for all respondents.

mainly performed by women (Algava 2002, Brousse 2000). In case of exceptional events such as a sick child, it is mainly the mother (58% in our sample) who takes care of him/her against 9% of fathers.

The number of children under 18 years old in the household does not affect the frequency of satisfaction items, neither does the single/couple situation, except couples who declare more often being “very satisfied”. On the other hand, working in the public or private sector makes a difference, people working in the public sector being much more often “very satisfied”.

These first stylised facts show that the distinction between very and fairly satisfied is crucial and that we cannot merge the positive items and negatives ones. We will therefore keep the complete scale in the model. They also show that work-family balance satisfaction is more sensitive to job and workplace characteristics than to family characteristics.

Table 1: Distribution according to the level of satisfaction (%)

	<i>satisfaction</i>			
	very dissatisfied	slightly dissatisfied	fairly satisfied	very satisfied
Female	5	14,7	54,5	25,7
Male	5,8	13,6	57,6	23,1
1 child under 18	4,1	15,8	55,7	24
2 children	6,4	13,49	57	23,1
3 and +	6,7	14,1	54,9	24,3
single	5,4	14	56,6	24,1
Couple	5,8	15,1	52	27,1
Private	6,1	15	57,8	21,1
Public	4	12,5	52,7	30,75
class 1	5,4	15,8	57,7	21,2
2	7,8	15,6	55,4	21,2
3	9,2	10,8	60,8	19,2
4	8	13,7	56,7	21,7
5	0,5	15	49	35,5
6	2,5	10,5	58,2	28,9
7	4,7	14,4	55,3	25,6

Source: *Family and employers survey, 2004-2005*

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The results of the multivariate analysis are shown in Table 2.

Individual characteristics

Whatever the gender, work-balance satisfaction is not sensitive to individual characteristics such as education or age. The amount of the variance explained by a model containing only individual variables is very small⁵. The traditional u-shaped relation between age and job

⁵ Table not presented here.

satisfaction is not found for work-balance satisfaction. It may be explained by the restriction of our sample to working parents aged 20 to 49 years old, and its homogenous nature. Education level is significant without controlling for selection bias (the more educated are more satisfied), but no longer once selection bias controlled for.

Family characteristics

Being a single parent has no impact. For women, as expected, having a very young child (under three years old) has a negative impact on satisfaction with the work-family balance. Indeed, family constraints are highest with very young children. Work-family balance satisfaction also depends on the number of children under 18 living in the household. For men, neither do the number of children nor having a young child play any role in their level of satisfaction with the work-family balance. This illustrates the fact that the fathers' involvement with children is still low in France.

For men and women, family resources increase satisfaction. Having a grandmother leaving nearby, i.e. an external help to take care of the children, increases satisfaction. It is a bonus for reconciling family and work.

Job characteristics.

Introducing job characteristics in the model increases significantly the explanatory power of the model. While the wage level has no direct impact on satisfaction, the number of hours worked plays a huge role. Long working hours decrease satisfaction with work-life balance for both sexes. But as Harriet Presser emphasizes "It really matters which hours people work, not just the number of hours people work". Indeed, having non-standard schedules (working during at night or on week-ends) is really prejudicial for the work-family balance. Even if some studies show that the parents can replace each other in case of non-standard schedule and reduce costly child-care, satisfaction is reduced. Working only four days a week is also a means to improve work-family balance for women; it is not significant for men (and also less common). The commuting time is also important. The shorter the commuting, the higher the level of satisfaction with the work-family balance.

Conversely, having regular time schedules is a bonus in terms of work-family balance. Schedules may be fixed by the employer or by the employee according to the type of job. Obviously, if the employer fixes the working schedules, the satisfaction is reduced. Interestingly, clocking on and off has a positive effect on male satisfaction. It allows employees to track the exact amount of hours worked; it objectifies the hours worked in a country where the number of hours spent at work, rather than productivity, is a sign of job involvement. Moreover, some days off can be obtained in compensation for extra hours worked. Lastly the possibility of changing the working schedule in case of an unexpected event significantly increases satisfaction.

The indicators of stress on the workplace also play a role. Working under pressure reduces significantly the level of satisfaction, particularly for men. A tiring job due to stress is also negatively correlated with job satisfaction. For men, a poor work atmosphere also has a strong negative impact while it does not matter for women. More objective indicators, such as the indicator for a position of responsibility, have no significant impact.

Table 2: Determinants of satisfaction with work-family balance

	MEN		WOMEN	
	b	t	b	t
INDIVIDUAL characteristics				
age	0,062	1,04	0,078	1,09
age2	-0,001	-0,7	-0,001	-0,96
education high (ref=no)	0,003	0,02	0,227	1,06
education medium	0,006	0,05	0,097	0,57
education low	-0,116	-1,08	0,187	1,24
FAMILY characteristics				
family constraints				
single	0,178	1,04	-0,03	-0,27
number children	-0,026	-0,6	-0,169	-1,88 *
child < 3	0,117	1,18	-0,308	-1,71 *
family resources				
parents close	0,141	1,7 *	0,136	1,7 *
JOB characteristics				
monthly wage log	-0,005	-0,04	0,041	0,37
weekly hours	-0,026	-4,37 ***	-0,013	-2,01 **
non standard schedule	-0,271	-2,95 ***	-0,241	-2,83 ***
regular time schedule	0,399	4,78 ***	0,298	3,74 ***
schedule fixed by employer	-0,284	-2,95 ***	-0,225	-2,6 ***
checking control by time clock	0,247	2,64 ***	-0,102	-1,15
availability to change	0,192	2,25 **	0,183	2,22 **
work less than 4 days per week	0,21	1,52	0,228	2,44 **
commuting <30mn (ref>90mn)	0,47	3,44 ***	0,502	3,49 ***
commuting =30-90mn	0,303	2,06 **	0,291	1,92 *
commuting=no usual trip	0,272	1,32	0,594	2,81 ***
responsibilities	-0,115	-1,31	-0,106	-1,02
working conditions				
work under pressure	-0,463	-5,6 ***	-0,398	-4,97 ***
stressful job	-0,378	-1,99 **	-0,415	-2,55 **
poor job atmosphere	-1,06	-1,93 *	0,054	0,17
FAMILY-FRIENDLY work environnement				
colleagues and supervisor family-friendly	0,243	2,73 ***	0,126	1,12
family-friendly work organisation	0,052	3,44 ***	0,095	6,19 ***
FIRM characteristics				
class 1 (ref=class 2 less family friendly)	-0,161	-1,31	0,149	1,1
class 3	0,272	1,67 *	0,121	0,56
class 4	-0,025	-0,19	0,049	0,34
class 5	-0,116	-0,66	0,408	2,35 **
class 6	-0,064	-0,42	0,278	1,69 *
class 7	-0,118	-0,78	0,159	1,03
state public sector	0,264	2,09 **	0,022	0,2
firm size <50 employees	-0,133	-1,26	0,106	1,09
finance and real estate sector	0,439	1,85 *	0,115	0,62
transportation	-0,342	-2,13 **	0,174	0,71
lambda			0,254	0,78
speudo R2	0,133		0,126	
N	964		988	

Family friendly work environment

The gender differences may come from social norms prevailing in the workplace and the family-friendly climate at work. To control for possible social norms, we introduced some indicators of the feeling of peers and supervisors on parental investment. Results show that peers judgement is essential for male satisfaction whereas it has no significant impact on women. The indicator of family friendly environment plays a role in increasing both male and female satisfaction.

Firm characteristics

Since our regression contains a lot of covariates, we limit the firm control covariates to those which are significant: state public sector, real estate and financial sector and transportation sector. Other things being equal, the establishment size is not significant. As Lang and Johnson (1994) conclude on job satisfaction “firm size, contrary to prevailing wisdom, only acts as a moderator” and then indirectly through other characteristics of the job and firm.

The family friendly classes of establishments are significant overall for women. The reference class (class 2) represents employers which offer the lower family-friendly benefits and services. For the male regression, the class 3 is the only significantly different one. In that class, some benefits are available, but are less linked with work-family balance. Thus, in their appreciation of work-family balance, men seem to take into account some factors not directly linked with family or children. For them, working in the state public sector has a positive impact, or working in the finance and real estate sectors is much more positive. For women, working for the much more family-friendly types of employers does play a role. Working in firms where both benefits in kind and flexible working schedules are available is positive. This emphasizes that the family-friendly environment increases satisfaction of mothers but not one of fathers. One explanation may be that women are the main users of such amenities, since mothers assume the majority of parental tasks.

Conclusion

Work-family balance satisfaction may be explained by a multitude of factors. Among those tested in this article, job characteristics are the most important whether the respondents are men or women. Family aspects, constraints and amenities, play a small role whereas job characteristics are essential. Employer characteristics play a secondary role

A friendly work-family environment, such as the absence of negative judgement of peers (colleagues and supervisor) in case of family constraints, or the taking into account of family constraints in the work organisation are key aspects of work-family balance satisfaction. After controlling for this family-friendly environment, employers' policies and practices are only partially determining, and more particularly for women. The classes characterised by flexible schedules are the more significant. Since women assume the majority of parental tasks, they are also the main users of such amenities (schedules arrangements). The classes characterized by benefits and services are less determining on work-family balance satisfaction.

Another striking result is that the level of satisfaction between men and women is similar whereas their levels of investment in family and working spheres are very different. Expectations about work-family satisfaction are likely to be different, as shown by the different determinants. For women, schedule flexibility is essential to have a good satisfaction score, whereas for men, the sector, the working atmosphere and the family-friendly acceptance of peers (colleagues and supervisors) are essential. This suggests that policies for

improving satisfaction need to provide schedule flexibility for women. For men, recommendations are more difficult since social norms have to be changed. But employers' family-friendly practices and benefits act more as a marginal bonus than as a central determinant of satisfaction.

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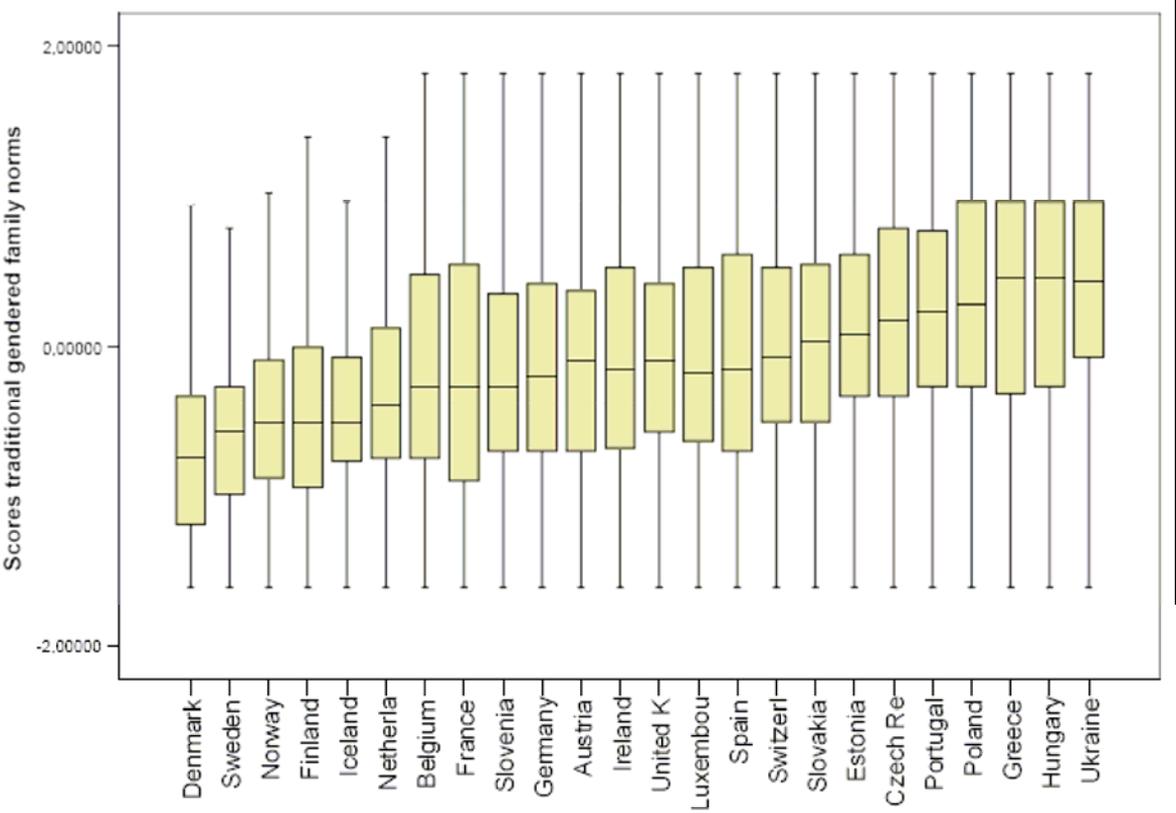
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Appendix 1 : Factor scores on traditional gendered family norms, box plot by country



Source : Bavel, Jan (2007) Field of education and postponement of parenthood in Europe

Appendix 2: Description of variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
sati	2,99	0,78	1	4
INDIVIDUAL characteristics				
age	38,36	6,67	20	49
age2	1516,31	496,67	400	2401
education high	0,33	0,47	0	1
education medium	0,17	0,38	0	1
education low	0,32	0,47	0	1
education=no (ref)	0,32	0,47	0	1
FAMILY characteristics				
single	0,11	0,31	0	1
number children	1,59	0,90	0	8
child < 3	0,23	0,42	0	1
parents close	0,66	0,47	0	1
JOB characteristics				
monthly wage log	7,27	0,55	0	10,03
weekly hours	36,29	8,49	1	75,00
non standard schedule	0,63	0,48	0	1
regular time schedule	0,52	0,50	0	1
schedule fixed by employer	0,61	0,49	0	1
checking control by time clock	0,28	0,45	0	1
availability to change	0,56	0,50	0	1
work less than 4 days per week	0,20	0,40	0	1
commuting <30mn (ref>90mn)	0,64	0,48	0	1
commuting =30-90mn	0,22	0,41	0	1
commuting=no usual trip	0,14	0,35	0	1
responsabilities	0,06	0,23	0	1
working conditions	0,27	0,44	0	1
work under pressure	0,45	0,50	0	1
stressful job	0,05	0,22	0	1
poor job atmosphere	0,01	0,10	0	1
FAMILY-FRIENDLY work environnement				
female colleagues and supervisor famil	0,83	0,38	0	1
female colleagues and supervisor famil	0,72	0,45	0	1
family-friendly work organisation	-0,45	2,67	-5	5
FIRM characteristics				
class 1 (ref=class 2 less family friendly)	0,19	0,40	0	1
class 3	0,06	0,24	0	1
class 4	0,16	0,36	0	1
class 5	0,10	0,30	0	1
class 6	0,12	0,32	0	1
class 7	0,22	0,42	0	1
state public sector	0,27	0,45	0	1
firm size <50 employees	0,19	0,39	0	1
finance and real estate sector	0,04	0,20	0	1
transportation sector	0,04	0,21	0	1

Appendix 3 : Probability of being employed (Probit model)

	WOMEN	
	b	t
variables		
age	0,178	3,220 ***
age2	-0,003	-3,460 ***
number of children	-0,463	-10,560 ***
child under 3	-0,927	-9,610 ***
education high (ref=no)	1,061	10,700 ***
education medium	0,609	5,570 ***
education low	0,518	5,370 ***
single	0,243	2,170 **
Exclusion variables		
working mother during adolescence	0,167	2,220 **
immigrate	-0,712	-5,640 ***
disability	-0,117	-1,160
constant	-2,017	-2,060 **
pseudo R2	0,227	
N	1640,000	