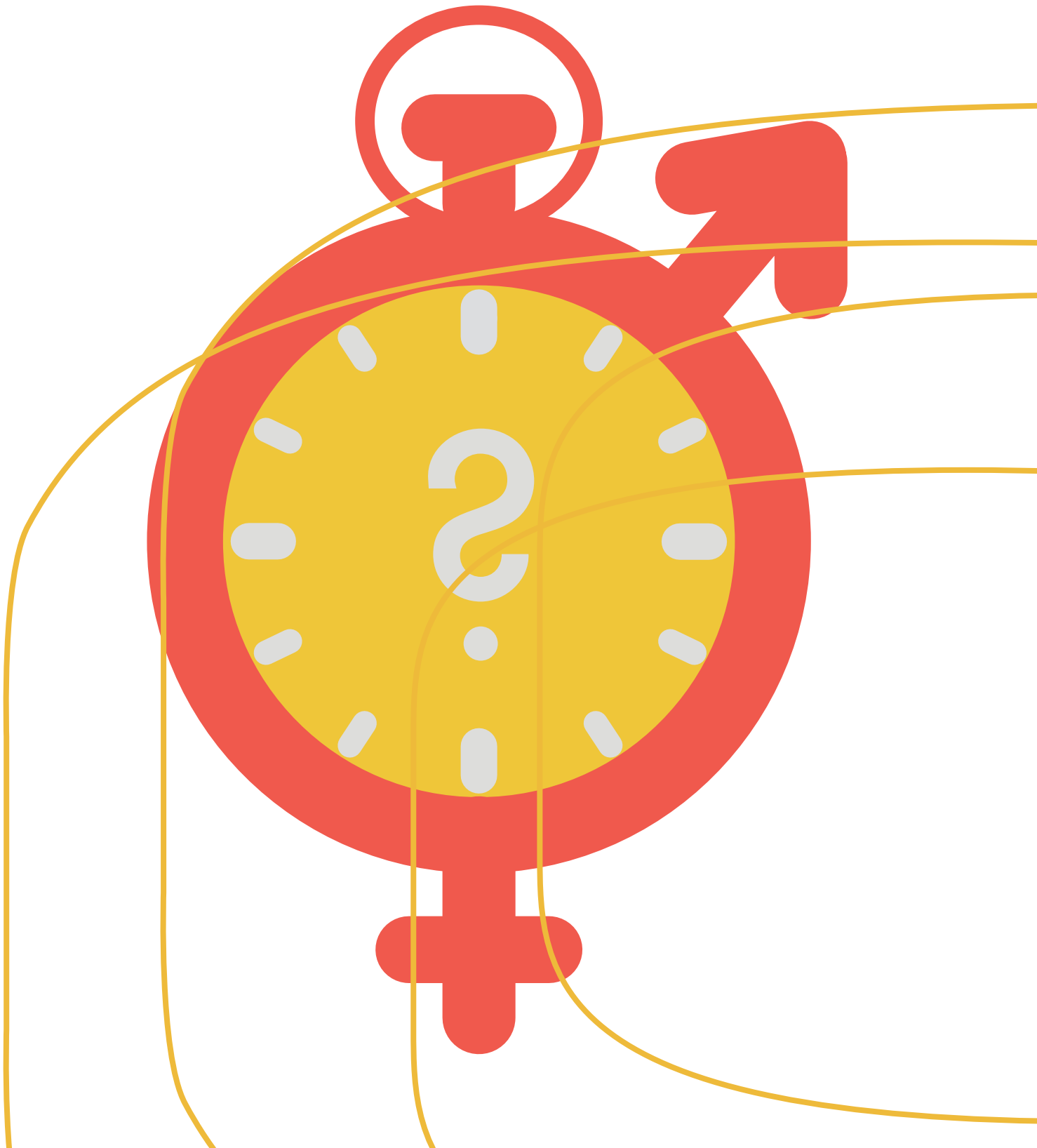
Part-Time Work in the Nordic Region II

A research review on important reasons

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Content

Preface

The Nordic cooperation on gender equality 2011–2014 has identified gender equality in the labour market as an important issue to address. The gender divide in the labour market, part-time work and income differences between women and men are key challenges to achieving gender equality. Part-time work is overall more common among women than men and affects the economic opportunities of women and men as well as gender equality in the labour market, differences in pensions and the possibility to economic independence.

As part of the Nordic cooperation on gender equality, the Nordic Council of Ministers has asked NIKK, Nordic Information on Gender, to coordinate the project *Part-Time Work in the Nordic Region*. The project is part of NIKK's assignment to gather and distribute comparative information that can inform political discussions related to gender equality. The aim of the project is to shed light on and analyse part-time work in the Nordic region, develop reports and arrange conferences. During the Swedish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2013, the project identified how part-time work affects the economic resources of women and men. The first report – *Part-Time Work in the Nordic Region: Part-time work, gender and economic distribution in the Nordic countries* – presented statistics on full- and part-time work and compared the effects of part-time work on pensions in the Nordic countries. Marianne Sundström, professor of labour economics at Stockholm University, and Alma Lanninger Wennemo, Master's student at Stockholm University, wrote the report on request by NIKK.

In this second report from the project, Ida Drange and Cathrine Egeland, senior researchers at the Center for Welfare and Labour Research, Work Research Institute (AFI), Oslo and Akershus University College, follow up the earlier study. Drange and Egeland have compiled an interesting research overview on the arguments used to explain part-time work and gender in the Nordic countries. Further, they describe relevant measures taken by different actors in the labour market and the political sphere in order to reduce foremost women's part-time work. The results and conclusions presented in the report are the authors' own and not those of NIKK.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation

The Nordic countries have a high occurrence of part-time work, particularly among women. In e.g. Norway, approximately 40% of women in paid employment work part-time and part time work is a normal work hour contract in women-dominated sectors and occupations. The situation is similar in the other Nordic countries except Finland, where more women work full time. This difference between Finland and the other countries is becoming less pronounced, however, since part-time work among women in Finland is on the rise while the opposite seems to be under way in the other Nordic countries.

Many part-time workers have chosen to work less hours, and consequently earn less money, for a shorter or longer period of time. This choice is often explained with reference to a need for a better balance between family and working life. The opportunity to work part time has contributed to the high degree of labour market participation among women in the Nordic countries. The flexibility made possible by the opportunity to work part time is perceived as advantageous for woman and their families and employers. In addition, the state is, according to international regulations, required to offer part-time work to employees who prefer this.

At the same time, part time work is challenging when seen from a gender equality perspective. One problem is that part-time work is involuntary for some people. Another problem is that the high occurrence of part-time work among women increases the already existing divide between women and men in terms of economic resources. Women's part-time work cannot exclusively be understood as conducive to flexibility for women and their families and employers, but must also be addressed in terms of gender equality and women's economic independency. For many women, the choice of part-time work presumes the presence of a partner in the role as main breadwinner, which means that a divorce or the possible death of the main breadwinner represents a threat to the family economy both in the short or longer term. This makes the woman economically dependent on the (often male) partner. Moreover, the fact that it is mostly women in heterosexual relationships

that work part time indicates that gendered cultural stereotypes and social expectations towards women and mothers also influence the choice of part-time work.

Based on these concerns, the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) commissioned a project that from 2012 to 2014 partly has investigated the economic consequences of part-time work (phase 1) and partly has provided knowledge about the most important causes for the relatively high occurrence of part-time work among women in the Nordic countries (phase 2). The project has been managed by Nordic Information on Gender (NIKK).

The first report from phase 1 of the project was written by Alma Wennemo Lanninger and Marianne Sundström (2014) and dealt with part-time employment among women and men in the Nordic countries with particular regard to the labour-market and economic situation of part-time workers compared with full-time workers.

The present, second report is written by Cathrine Egeland and Ida Drange and is particularly concerned with the primary *reasons* women have for working part time in the Nordic countries. Like phase 1, phase 2 is largely motivated from the perspective of gender equality since in the Nordic countries, part-time work is much more common among women than men. Looking at the Nordic countries in this respect is of interest then since they in conventional knowledge are perceived to be forerunners in gender equality.

Regarding phase 2, NMC commissioned a project that following phase 1 should explore mechanisms at an individual, organisational and social level that channel more women than men into part-time work. The project should have its point of departure in already existing research. It was also expected to clarify the possibilities that politicians, authorities and the social partners[1] have at hand in their work for a better gender balance in labour market participation. Previous experiences and practice from different countries should also be included as part of the project.

Even if family and household responsibilities gradually have become more equally shared between men and women in recent decades, both statistics and quantitative and qualitative research have shown that women still bear the heaviest burden in family life, while men still con-

[1] I.e. employers' federations and trade unions that cooperate as two sides of a social dialogue. In the Nordic countries the government is included due to the model of tripartism.

tribute the most to the family economy both in terms of direct income and hours spent in the labour market. The Nordic countries have provided their citizens with economic arrangements that give both women and men the opportunity to stay at home with their children for a period of time after they are born. Men's portion of the parental leave has increased over the last 20 years, and so has women's participation in the labour market. Nevertheless, there are persisting differences between women and men in terms of hours spent on paid labour, income differences, positions in companies and organizational structures, occupations, and family care responsibilities.

The project commissioned for phase 2 should therefore first of all shed light on women's and men's attitudes to both work and family life as well as on their possibilities when it comes to combining paid work with family responsibilities.

Secondly, the project should address how workplaces are organised in order for both women and men to be able to combine work with family life. Workplaces can potentially represent both barriers to full-time work and opportunities for change. What does research say about the importance of the work organisation for the part-time work situation in the different Nordic countries?

Thirdly, the project should take a closer look at the importance of welfare state politics and economic arrangements for the occurrence of part-time work among women in the Nordic countries. This part of the project should address the different ways of organising parental leave in each Nordic country, day care arrangements for children and other benefits aimed to improve thebalance between family and working life, and how these factors affect men's and women's choice of working hours.

The overarching aim of the phase 2 project should therefore, according to NCM's assignment, be to explore dynamics in the relations between the individual, the organisation and the social/cultural level and their consequences for women's part-time work. The project is supposed to disclose mechanisms influencing the gender equality aspects of women's choice of employment contract.

1.2 Point of departure and approach

Based on this assignment, the main purpose of this report is to provide a state of the art of research on important reasons for part-time work among women in the Nordic countries.

With a point of departure in our assignment, we explore women's part-time work as the result of mechanisms played out at individual, organisational and social/cultural level. This is both in accordance with findings in Lanninger and Sundström's report from phase 1 (Lanninger & Sundström 2013) and theory developments addressing women's choices in the labour market as the result of complex and shifting rather than simple and stable intersections between individual, structural and discursive levels of women's and men's social life.

Using data from Eurostat for women and men aged 25–64 and comparing the years 2007 and 2012 (i.e. prior to and after the financial crisis), Lanninger and Sundström find that in all the Nordic countries, "family or personal activities" is the most frequently reported reason for working part time among women. In 2007 the percentage stating this reason ranged from about 36% in Iceland to about 56% in Denmark, while in 2012 it ranged from about 30% in Norway to 48% in Finland. In addition, a substantial fraction reported "could not find a full-time job" – a fraction rising especially in Iceland but also in Denmark and Sweden from 2007 to 2012. "Own illness or disability" is also reported to be an important reason for working part time, particularly in Norway, and these percentages were stable in all countries except Finland, where it increased (Lanninger & Sundström 2013).

Departing analytically from the intersections between the three different levels of social life inherent in these three causes (individual, organisational and social/cultural) resonates well with theoretical approaches that highlight the causal complexity of women's labour market choices. In particular we find theoretical resonance for this in Birgit Pfau-Effinger's argument that labour market and parental choices emerge in the intersection between gender cultures, gender orders and gender arrangements (Pfau-Effinger 1998, 2004). Gender culture refers to the common ideas, perceptions, norms and representations considering gender relations and the division of labour in terms of paid work and unpaid care work shared by a group. Gender order refers to social structures and institutions, like the labour market and the family, within which the division of labour is organised and established. Gender arrangements denote the relatively stable forms of action resulting from different actors' choices and practices against a backdrop of different

institutions and the cultural context, or between norms and structures. Pfau-Effinger's conceptualisation thus highlights gendered practices as a process that is continuously formulated by negotiations and re-negotiations of meaning between individuals, structure and culture or discourse (Pfau-Effinger 1998, 2004). This makes it possible to explore a gendered practice like women's part-time work both in terms of individual choices and in a specific cultural, social and economic context.

As we will show, some of the intersections between these levels are highly complex and to a certain extent underexplored and prone to theoretical path dependencies. Against this background we will make recommendations for future research as well as for future policy, action and approaches to women's part-time work.

1.3 The Nordic countries

In this report we will primarily review research that directly and sometimes indirectly addresses women's part-time work in one or several of the Nordic countries. Unfortunately, we have only been able to find scientific publications on the situation in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Data from Iceland is analysed in a couple of articles, but is otherwise mainly presented in the statistical material, and we have also included a special report on the debate on part-time work among the Icelandic social partners.

We have adopted a pragmatic approach to the challenge represented by the fact that the Nordic countries are both similar and different, inspired by Kautto *et al*. (1999) and Christiansen and Åmark (2006). When it comes to the Nordic countries, Kautto *et al*. talk about them as "groupings of nations that to varying degrees share common historical and cultural experiences" (Kautto *et al*. 1999: 12). Due to different tracks in especially the economic sphere and to some extent in politics in Sweden and Finland on the one hand and Norway and Denmark on the other, there seems to be some notable diversity among the countries at least since the 1990s. Still, Kautto *et al*. conclude that it makes more sense to talk about similarities than differences between the countries; the Nordic welfare state model continues to exist with its traditional hallmarks still in effect (Kautto *et al*. 1999). A similarity that is often highlighted is the situation for women. In dual-earner social democratic welfare regimes, gender equality is promoted through social policies and services as well as public employment of and universal benefits to working mothers. Even if the social and family policies vary among the Nordic countries, the Nordic

feature makes women's situation different than the situation of women in more "familistic", conservative countries as well as in more "market-oriented" liberal countries where the state is not expected to deliver such services. Building on historical comparative studies, Christiansen and Åmark (2006) question the notion of the Nordic model as social-democratic, however. They argue that the Nordic countries took different roads to modernity in the 20th century, and that "all major welfare reforms have been passed by broad parliamentary majorities" (Christiansen and Åmark 2006). In terms of political culture, others also point out that although marked by a legal tradition where the protection of individual liberties and protective rights against state intervention was relatively weak (Kulawik 2002), individualism stands out as a distinct but overlooked element in the Nordic political culture (Sørensen and Stråth 1997). Thus, the Nordic countries are in different ways characterised by individualism combined with a state responsibility for the common welfare through social reforms and policy developments.

We think that this combination is crucial for a good understanding of women's part-time work in the Nordic countries since much of the research we have reviewed implies that the phenomenon is the result of processes unfolding in the intersections between individual conditions, social structures and cultural understandings and expectations that draws both on discourses of employees' and employers' right to flexibility, gender equality values and state responsibilities. When we address women's part-time work in the Nordic countries, it will be against this rather pragmatic background, and we will only make comparisons between the countries to the extent the reviewed research allows.

In what follows we will start by giving an overview of employment patterns in the five biggest Nordic countries, and compare them with the corresponding average patterns for the 27 EU Member States. The overview will present the development in total employment rates, part-time employment as a percentage of total employment and average weekly work hours in full- and part-time employment, respectively.

2. Descriptive statistics and developments in part-time employment

As will be evident from the presented figures, the length of a normal work week varies considerably among the countries. The definition of what constitutes part-time employment also varies.

The figures report changes in part-time employment based on gender only. The articles included in the literature review describe changes in part-time employment according to age and life phases, and we also give a summary of the trends described in these publications.

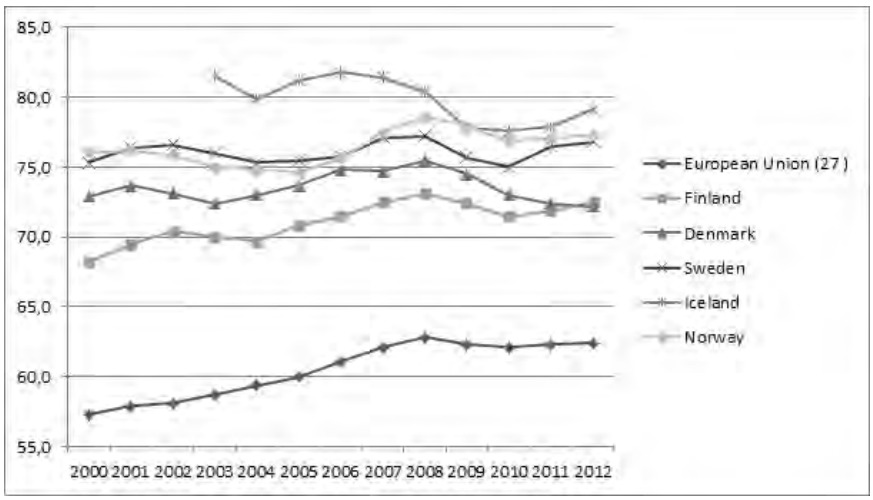
2.1 Labour market participation rates and average weekly working hours in full-time and part-time positions

The figures present the employment rates of men and women in the Nordic countries and the average number of working hours in full-time and part-time employment, respectively. The statistics are based on Eurostat's Labour Force Survey. Persons surveyed are considered employed if they at least had one hour of paid employment during the reference week, or if they were temporarily absent from their regular job. Work hours are calculated based on the individual's normal work hours, including extra hours either paid or unpaid. The distinction between full-time and part-time employment is based on a spontaneous question to the respondents, except for Norway and Iceland where part-time is determined based on whether the typical number of hours worked is fewer than 35 per week.

The employment rate in the Nordic countries is high compared with the average employment rate among women in the EU. Yet, there is some variability among women's labour market participation in the Nordic countries. Women in Iceland have the highest employment rate. From 2003 to 2008, approximately 80–82% of all Icelandic 20–64 year old women were employed. In 2009, the rate dropped by two percent-

age points and has remained below 80% since, but does show an increasing trend. Next, Norway and Sweden also have high employment rates; there is some cyclical variation, but the rates were between 75 and 79% throughout the studied period. Denmark and Finland have the lowest female employment rates in the Nordic cluster. At the turn of the millennium, the employment rate among Danish and Finnish women were 73% and 68%, respectively. By 2012, the employment rate was approximately 72% in both countries. Nevertheless, the female employment rate in the Nordic countries is 10–20 percentage points higher than the EU average, depending on the country of comparison.

Figure 1*: *Employment rate among women aged 20–64

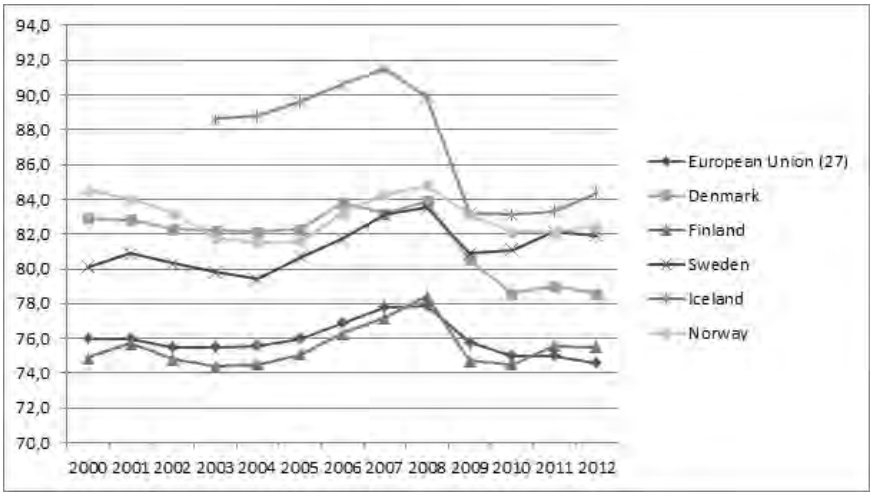


Source: The European Labour Force Survey.

The pattern is similar for male employment rates. Again, Icelandic men stand out with an employment rate of 89–91% until 2009. A significant drop is registered in male employment at the same time as the financial crisis strikes Iceland. From 2009 and onwards, the employment rate in Iceland has been closer to the level for the remaining Nordic countries, but is still the highest. The employment rates of the Scandinavian countries follow a similar trend during the first part of the decade. From 2000 to 2008, the rates in Norway and Denmark overlap somewhat, and the Swedish employment rate is just about two percentage points lower. However, since 2008 the Danish employment rate has declined while the Swedish rate has increased. Thus, at the end of the period Norway and Sweden have an employment rate of 83% while the corresponding rate in Denmark is 78%. The employment rate among Finnish men is equal to the EU average,

varying between 74 and 78% and peaking in 2008. It is noticeable that 2008/2009 marked a shift in all nations' employment rates, but more dramatically so in Iceland.

Figure 2*: *Employment rate among men aged 20–64



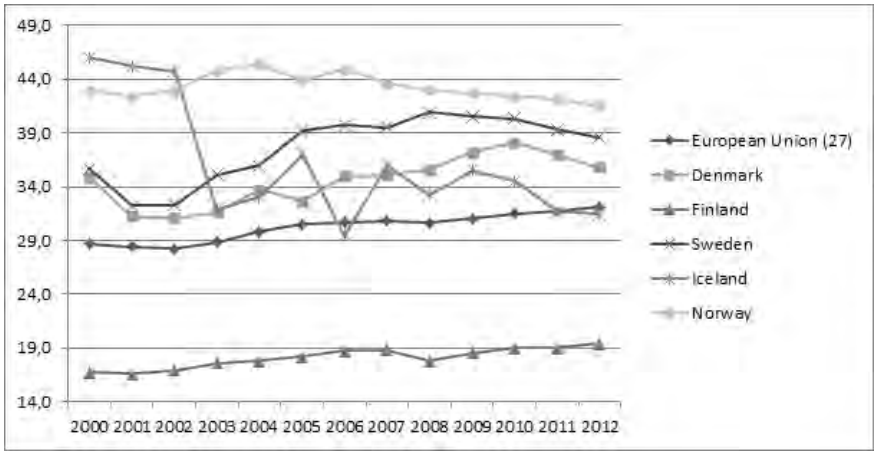
Source: The European Labour Force Survey.

Figure 3 below presents the share of part-time employed women aged 15–64 years. The share of part-time employees is calculated in relation to total employment in that sex and age group. In 2000, the highest share of part-time employed women is found in Iceland at about 46%. However, the rate drops considerably a few years later, from 45% in 2002 to 32% in 2003. Since 2003, the share of part-time employees has varied from 30 to 37%. Note that the vertical axis only displays the interval from 14 to 49%, making the pattern appear augmented.

The share of part-time employed women has been high and stable among Norwegian women at approximately 44%, yet has shown a declining trend since 2006. In 2012, the share of part-time employed women amounts to 42%. The shares in Sweden and Denmark have actually increased somewhat, and are higher in 2012 than in 2000. In 2002, the shares of part-time employed women were 36 and 35%, respectively, and in 2012 the corresponding numbers were 39 and 36%. There was a peak in part-time employment around 2008 and 2010 at 41% in Sweden and 38% in Denmark.

The share of part-time employed women is considerably lower in Finland than in the other Nordic countries and compared with the EU average. Yet, the share increased from 17% in 2000 to 19% in 2012.

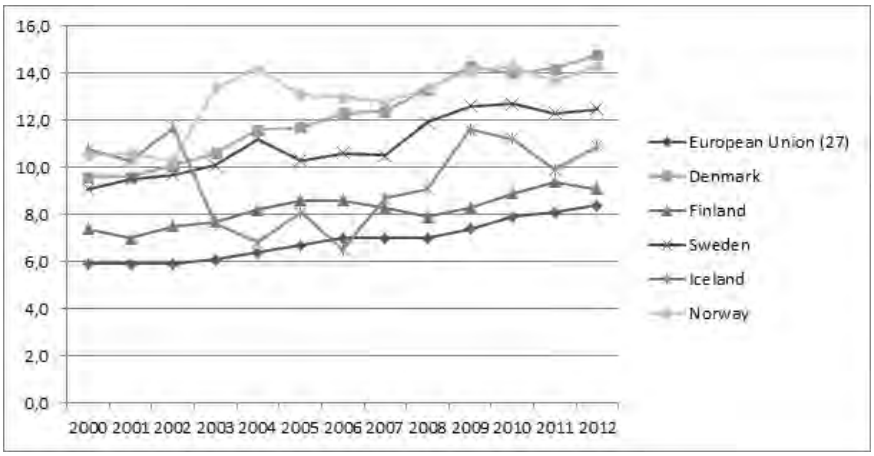
***Figure 3*: Part-time employment as percentage of total employment, women aged 15–64**



Source: the European Labour Force Survey.

Figure 4 shows the rate of part-time employees among men. As can be seen, all Nordic countries have a rate above the EU average. Norway and Denmark have the highest rates, and both countries show an increasing trend. In 2000, the rates were just above 10%, and 12 years later, they were four percentage points higher in both nations. The Swedish rate shows a similar increase, from 9% in 2000 to 13% in 2012. Iceland's rate fluctuates between 6 and 12%, while the Finnish rate rose quite steadily from 7% in 2000 to 9% in 2012.

***Figure 4*: Part-time employment as percentage of total employment, men aged 15–64**



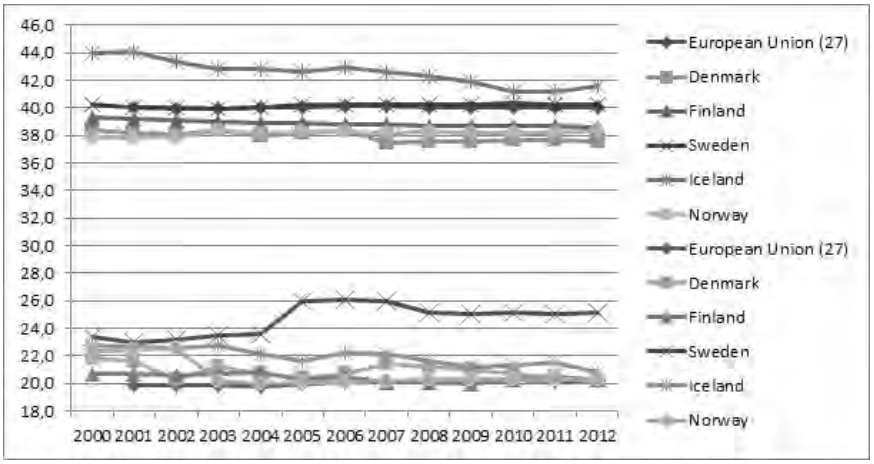
Source: the European Labour Force Survey.

The rates of part-time employment shown in Figures 3 and 4 are higher than the rates in Lanninger and Sundström (2013) even though both studies are based on the same data source. This discrepancy is due to the different age spans used. Lanninger and Sundstöm (2013) computed part-time employment for men and women aged 25–64, whereas the present report utilised the wider age span of 15–64. Part-time employment is more common in the youngest age groups as many young people combine education and part-time employment, biasing the statistics upwards.

Figure 5 shows the average typical number of hours per week worked in full-time and part-time employment for women. A standard work week is considerably longer in Iceland than in other Nordic countries and the EU average. In 2000, Icelandic women in full-time employment worked 44 hours a week; however, this number declined somewhat over the studied period, and in 2012 the typical number of hours worked in full-time employment was to 42 hours. In Norway, Denmark and Finland, women's full-time employment corresponded to approximately 38 hours a week, while Swedish women and women in the EU countries worked approximately 40 hours. These figures have remained stable throughout the period.

In contrast, the typical number of hours worked by women in part-time employment shows greater variation (see bottom of Figure 5). To begin with, the average number for Swedish women was the highest and increasing over the period. At an average from 24 to 26 hours a week, they work considerably more than other part-time employed women. Icelandic women in part-time employment work approximately 22 hours a week on average, while Finnish, Norwegian and Danish women work 20 hours a week.

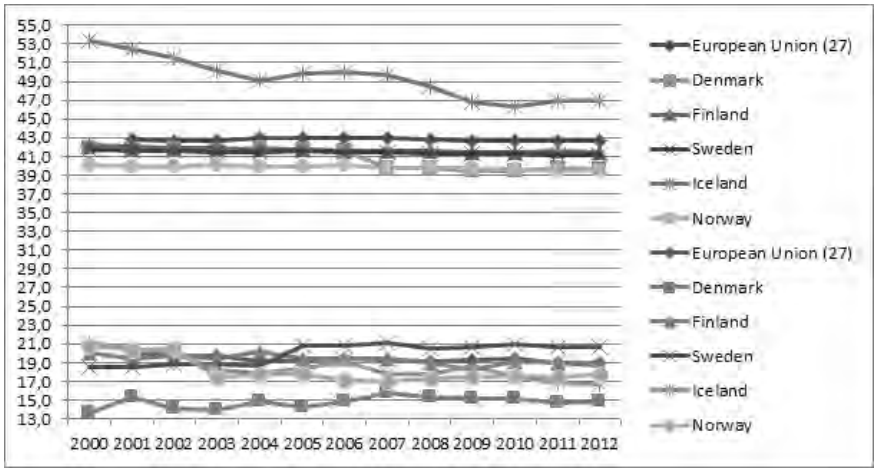
Figure 5*: *Average hours worked in full-time (top) and part-time (bottom) employment, women



Source: The European Labour Force Survey.

Figure 6 shows the corresponding numbers for men. Again, Iceland shows a "longer" average full-time workweek than the other countries. However, just as for the Icelandic women, the number of work hours dropped over the period: from 53 hours per week in 2000 to 47 hours per week in 2012. Interestingly, among men, the EU average number of hours worked per week is somewhat higher than in the remaining Nordic countries. A European man works approximately 43 hours per week if he is employed full time, while Swedish, Danish and Finnish men work between 41 and 42 hours per week. Looking at the entire period, Norwegian men had the shortest full-time workweek, with an average of 40 hours. As seen in the figure, Danish men seem to have followed suit in 2007.

Figure 6*: *Average hours worked in full-time (top) and part-time employment (bottom), men



Source: The European Labour Force Survey.

Men who work part time generally work shorter hours compared with women. Most men in part-time employment work 17–21 hours a week. In 2012, Swedish men worked the most hours at 21, followed by Finnish men and the EU average at 19 hours and Icelandic and Norwegian men at 17 hours per week. Danish part-time employed men have the shortest workweek at 15 hours on average.

3. Literature, methods and delimitations

Family responsibilities, health problems and workplaces/sectors not offering full-time positions to all employees are the main reasons for women's part-time work in the Nordic countries. But why? In this report we will probe into these three causes as they are analysed and explained in research-based literature.

But first some clarifications are needed as to what kind of literature we have reviewed and what thematic and conceptual boundaries we have applied in order to write a state-of-the-art report on part-time work. A description of the literature search, methods, keywords and screening is attached to this report.

Geographically, the search was limited to the Nordic countries. Part-time work is an international/global phenomenon, and much of the research in the area draws on perspectives and theoretical contributions from academics outside the Nordic countries and especially from academics focusing on work-family interference. However, since the empirical context of the assignment – i.e. to produce a report on the causes of part-time work among women in the Nordic countries – was defined to be part-time work in the Nordic countries, we initially limited the research to systematically including only the Nordic countries (empirically this could also include comparison with non-Nordic countries) and only part-time work as such. This yielded a result that was both too unfocused and at the same time too narrow in terms of *causes* of part time work. It became clear to us that in much of the reviewed literature, part-time work is considered to be part of or intersecting other social, political and economic aspects of women's labour market participation. We therefore decided to do a more strategic search focusing on literature that could provide more substance than the initial systematic search to the three main reasons for working part time. By doing this we ended up with research literature providing theoretical and empirical input from outside the Nordic framework.

In terms of *gender*, the search has been limited to women's part-time work, even if part-time work among men is also discussed in the literature. Men's part-time work is mostly addressed – when addressed

at all – in addition to, as a contrast to or as a complement to women's part-time work. An example of this is discussions on men's work time choices in relation to the so-called father's quota (Dommermuth and Kitterød 2009). While recognising the need for more knowledge about men's participation in the labour market (we will come back to this later), we have simply reasoned that our assignment to produce this report primarily concerns *women's* part-time work since:

- considerably more women than men work part time in the Nordic region
- what needs to be explained in terms of gender equality is why so many women in the otherwise equality-promoting Nordic countries work part time.

In terms of *literature*, we have focused on articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals. This is both a way to secure the scientific solidity and quality of the literature and a way to systematically delimit the range of available documents, reports and material on part-time work from unions and employer organisations, government agencies and project committees. Where we have considered it necessary, we have also included some references to decisive anthologies and summary reports from research summits. An example of the former is *Gender Equality and Welfare State Politics in Scandinavia* (2008) edited by Kari Melby, Anna-Birte Ravn and Christina Carlsson Wetterberg, and an example of the latter is the report *Underemployment and Part-Time Work in the Nordic Countries* (2011) by Anita Haataja, Merja Kauhanen and Jouko Nätti.

We have attached a schematised review of the disciplinary affiliations and citation frequencies of the main part of the articles reviewed in the three main parts of the report.

In terms of historical delimitation and *period* we initially searched for literature published within the last twenty years. In order to secure some thematic balance we had to include a few titles that date back a few more years. These titles are rather few, however.

Thematically, we have concentrated on *causes* for part-time work, as *Part Time Work in the Nordic Countries, Phase I* (reported in Lanninger & Sundström 2014) addressed issues pertaining to the economic *consequences* of part-time work, including pensions.

Conceptually, in addition to delimiting the review to causes or reasons for women working part time, we have also decided to concentrate on reasons for part-time work without going thoroughly into the debate

on the relation between part-time employment, involuntary part-time work and underemployment. This is mainly because we find this to be addressed thoroughly in Haatja *et al*.'s report *Underemployment and Part-Time Work in the Nordic Countries* (2011). Instead we will treat involuntary part-time work as a matter of what we call "organisation", i.e. as a matter pertaining to work organisation, work organising and work policy and politics developments in the Nordic countries. We will return to this.

In terms of *genre*, the report contains standard reviews of research literature on the three main reasons for women's part-time work in the Nordic region. In order to broaden the understanding of the context of the phenomenon and provide added explanatory power to the reasons already given and discussed for women's part-time work, we have included specific reports on particular issues pertaining to the debate or the political framing of part-time work in a selection of the Nordic countries. These reports from Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland build on a range of data sources (interviews, newspaper articles and government documents) and address how part-time work is understood and discussed in the media, by researchers, politicians and the social partners, and how it is framed as an issue of policy development.

In what follows we will address the three main reasons given for women's part-time work in the Nordic countries by reviewing relevant and accessible publications on the subject and by adding theoretical discussions and empirical findings that might broaden our understanding of the complexities of women's part-time work in an otherwise equality-promoting part of the world.

4. Part-time employment and the organisation of work and labour markets

4.1 Part-time work and underemployment

At the Nordic level, Haataja *et al.* (2011) divide the partially unemployed into three groups of approximately the same size, consisting of 1) involuntary part-timers only, 2) time-related underemployed only and 3) those with both characteristics. They find the division to exist only in Finland, however. In Haataja *et al.*'s report from 2011 based on different public registers involuntary part-timers and the time-related underemployed diverged most in Denmark, where only 18% overlapped (Haataja *et al*. 2011). The largest overlap was seen in Norway, where 44% were both involuntary part-timers and time-related underemployed. Compared with the other countries, in Sweden there were more persons who were involuntary part-timers only (44%). So, defining part-time unemployment as either involuntary part-time or time-related underemployment would lead to different outcomes in different countries, if their characteristics differ (Haataja *et al*. 2011).

The characteristics of involuntary part-timers also differ from those of time-related underemployed. They also differ in the individual Nordic countries. The time-related underemployed are in all four countries more likely than involuntary part-timers to work very short hours. The time-related underemployed are also more often less educated than involuntary part-timers, but the differences are not big. Both the time-related underemployed and involuntary part-timers are furthermore often more concentrated in certain sectors than comparable labour market groups.

According to Haataja *et al.* (2011), the probability of time-related underemployment is higher for women than men in the four Nordic countries included in their report (Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark). As regards involuntary part-time employment, the probability is also higher for women, low-educated individuals and non-natives. The probability of underemployment is highest among older age groups in all four countries except Sweden. The fact that involuntary

part-time employment and time-related underemployment are much more common among women than men is also reflected in the total unemployment rates (Haataja *et al.* 2011). Adding together the partially unemployed and the full-time unemployed more than doubles the unemployment rates, except in Finland, where the rate somewhat less than doubles. High total unemployment rates were a consequence especially of high total female partial unemployment. In full-time unemployment there are only small differences between women and men, but total unemployment rates are about two times higher among women than men (Haataja *et al.* 2011).

Haataja *et al.* (2011) conclude that the prevalence of part-time unemployment varies among the Nordic countries. The same goes for part-time work in general, but the phenomenon is persisting and women are more likely than men to encounter problems of partial unemployment. This being the case even if the share of part-time employees has been *increasing* slightly also among men (Haataja *et al*. 2011), and the share of *voluntary* part time work among women in the Nordic countries is high and stable, especially in Norway (Egeland & Drange 2014).

4.2 Part-time employment and the organisation of work

The literature on the organisation of work mainly addresses causes for part-time employment arising from the demand side and the political and legal system. However, in order to get the full picture of how the organisation of work and labour markets affects the use of part-time employment, one needs to consider the entangled effect of employers' and employees' demand for supply of labour and the system effects arising from laws, regulations and collective agreements (Jonsson 2011). This chapter therefore addresses explanations related to employers' demand for work, employees' supply of labour and the formal system of laws, regulations and collective agreements impacting the level of part-time employment both directly and indirectly.

4.2.1 Part time and labour market organizations – comparisons

Two contributions discuss part-time work and labour market organisation in a comparative perspective. Jensen (2000) addresses the development in part-time employment in the Nordic countries, while Rosenfeld and Birkelund (1995) investigate whether countries' labour market structures and policies are associated with the level of women's part-time across nine Western countries, including Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway and Denmark). Both contributions emphasise the importance of conducting comparative analyses to challenge the usual explanations given for women's part-time work.

In an article from 2000, Jensen reviews and compares the development in part-time employment in the Nordic countries, more precisely Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. These countries are characterised by high levels of female labour market participation, yet there is variation among them. Jensen (2000) discusses the variations in part-time employment across the Nordic countries in light of different historical contexts, labour market organisation, politics and the role of the family. According to Jensen (2000), the Finnish case is distinct from the Scandinavian countries. Finland saw an increase in female labour market participation in 1960, a decade before the Scandinavian countries. The 1970s marks the "housewife era" in the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian labour markets. Finland never had a "housewife era", however, and the author points out that this is likely why it is more common among Finnish women to work full time. In the Scandinavian countries, the growth in female employment in the seventies was high among married women and mothers, and part-time employment was seen as a way for women to combine employment and household work. The simultaneity of the expansion of part-time employment and female employment in most Western countries has led to part-time work being considered women's work, says Jensen (2000).

In terms of labour market organisation, Jensen (2000: 142) draws up three differences between the Scandinavian countries and Finland that might explain the different levels of female part-time employment. Firstly, the structural change in the labour market, from manufacturing industry to service industry, has been a central explanation for the relatively high levels of female part-time employment in Scandinavia in the seventies. Finland went from an agrarian economy to a service economy, and the expansion of the service industry did not entail part-time employment. The state of the Finnish economy after WWII and a low wage levels also implied that women worked full-time to sustain a

higher standard of living. Second, part-time employment is more common in the private sector and in unskilled work in Finland. In the Scandinavian countries, women's employment coincided with a large expansion of welfare services. The public sector both demanded part-time employment and organised for it. Yet, although the expansion of the welfare state has been considered important for the high levels of female employment in Scandinavia, countries with less extensive welfare state services, such as Finland, also have high levels of female employment, thus showing the importance of comparative analyses (Jensen, 2000). The fact that a large share of the part-time employed women are found in the public sector has consequences for the quality of part-time work for Scandinavian women, says Jensen (2000). The state or municipality offered decent working conditions, and part-time work had many of the same qualities as full-time work. The third factor that separates part-time work in the Scandinavian countries and Finland is union organisation. In the Scandinavian countries, the share of organised labour is high, but not in Finland. In Denmark, collaborative agreements removed the very limited part-time positions (less than 15 hours a week). Hence, part-time employment is more marginal in Finland, according to Jensen (2000).

At the time of her study, Jensen (2000) shows that women's part-time employment has decreased considerably in Sweden and Denmark; by 1999 the share of part-time employed women aged 20–64 had been reduced by 50% since 1983. The share of part-time employed women is higher in Norway than in Denmark and Sweden, and the reduction in the share of part-time employees has been weaker compared with those countries. The articles by Sundström (1992) on Sweden and by Lind and Rasmussen (2008) on Denmark discuss potential explanations for the decline in the respective countries. The fact that Norway continues to have high levels of female part-time employment in a Nordic perspective might be one explanation to why part-time employment is more debated and researched there than elsewhere in the Nordic region.

Rosenfeld and Birkelund (1995) compare women's part-time work across countries. They use cross-national survey data collected in the 1980s from West Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Canada, USA, Australia and Japan. Their point of departure is that although the reasons why women work part time might be similar across countries, i.e. caregiving, the levels of part-time employment among women vary greatly across countries. This is because the level of women's part-time work in a given country is related to the inter-connections of the family, market and state, which again depends on the economic,

political, ideological and historical contexts of the respective country (Rosenfeld & Birkelund 1995: 112). Hence, they set out to investigate how the labour market and institutional characteristics of a country affect the level of part-time employment. They use aggregated data on women's level of part-time work and relate this to country-level variables that are categorised in terms of (i) overall labour demand, (ii) structure of occupations and industries, (iii) costs, advantages and accommodation to women's work and (iv) political and ideological characteristics and outcome.

Their analytical strategy is to first test correlations between each country-level variable and the level of female part-time employment. This analysis reveals whether there are systematic variation in female part-time employment that is associated with the characteristic in question, for instance change in country GDP. As many of the country-level variables are strongly correlated, for instance high scores on decommodification go together with high scores on leftist party control of government, they go on to perform multivariate regressions to consider the partial correlations between the country-level variable of interest and female part-time employment. With reference to the example above, this method allows testing for correlation between decommodification and level of female part-time employment, independent of leftist party control. The cross-sectional data cannot make causal claims, but it can reveal patterns of co-existence of high and low values of certain characteristics with female part-time employment.

The results from the correlation analysis for overall labour demand show that female labour force participation and male unemployment rate are weakly positively and a weakly negatively correlated, respectively, with levels of female part-time employment. Stronger correlations are found for variables such as industrial segregation and state-sector employment. The Scandinavian countries, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, stand apart from the other countries with high levels of both part-time employment and female labour force participation. They also show positive correlations between state-sector employment and industrial sex-segregation, which the authors point out is consistent with the expansion of part-time jobs in female-dominated public sector occupations. Regarding costs, advantages and accommodation to women's work which covers family, employment and welfare policies such as availability of day care, parental leave and child transfers, marginal tax rates for employed women, decommodification, i.e. degree of market independence for retirement, illness and unemployment benefits. Decommodification and family transfers show strong, positive correlations

with female part-time employment, again with the highest levels recorded for the Scandinavian countries. Lastly, at the political level, organisational power of labour, leftist party control of government and scope of collective bargaining and corporatism show positive correlations with female part-time employment. Multivariate analyses reveal that male unemployment has little impact on female part-time employment, which shows that part-time employment is not an adaptation strategy. In other words, a low demand for male labour, measured by high male unemployment levels, does not indicate more part-time employment for women. Moreover, the share of women employed in the public sector has a significant impact on part-time employment after controlling for policy and benefits. The conclusion is therefore that the public sector affects part-time employment through demand for labour rather than by providing benefits that lower the costs of part-time vs. full-time jobs (Rosenfeld and Birkelund 1995: 127).

4.3 Demand-side explanations for part-time employment

Part-time employment is primarily found in the service industry in the public sector and in the retail and hospitality (hotels and restaurants) industries in the private sector. Several of the contributions discuss part-time employment arising from the demand-side of the labour market. Yet, only Abbasian and Hellgren (2012), Kauhanen (2008) and Branine (1999) present data on employers' view on part-time employment. The first article relies on qualitative data and the latter two on quantitative data. Abbasian and Hellgren (2012) interview employers in the cleaning industry in Stockholm, Kauhanen (2008) present data from Finland and Branine (1999) compares the public health services in Denmark, France and the UK. Kauhanen (2008) does not report the response rate for the employer survey used and the Branine (1999) study has low response rates, reducing the quality of the empirical investigation. Hence, there is a lack of comparative and rigorous scientific investigation of Nordic employers' perspective on part-time employment.

Kauhanen (2008) shows that the explanations given for employers' use of part-time employment vary across sectors. A survey given to Finnish employers revealed that the three most important reasons in the retail industry were long operating hours, profitability concerns and daily/weekly fluctuations in the need for labour. In the hospitality industry, the reasons were profitability and daily and seasonal fluctuations in

the need for labour, and in maintenance and cleaning the reasons were the needs of customers, seasonal fluctuations and the employees' own preferences. In security services, seasonal fluctuations, customers' need and easy availability of part-timers were the most important reasons (Kauhanen 2008).

Abbasian and Hellgren (2012) investigate the working conditions for cleaners in Stockholm County. The point of departure for their study is that the cleaning industry was largely privatised following a New Public Management reform in Sweden. Instead of employing cleaners, the municipalities call for bids on cleaning services. The privatisation of services has led to deteriorating working conditions with more part-time, involuntary part-time and temporary employment contracts. The increase in part-time employment is explained by demand-side factors such as clients' need for service, a constant pressure for lower prices and employers' need to replace labour and cut labour costs. The employers interviewed by Abbasian and Hellgren (2012) give similar answers as employers in other industries, for example that the employees prefer part-time and hence it is voluntary or that the working hours are set by the client. The high exposure to competition in this industry reinforces the employers' preference for part-time employees since they are easier to replace and cheaper to employ and hence the employer can offer lower prices. A central point for Abbasian and Hellgren (2012) is that women and non-European immigrants are disproportionally affected by the part-time regime in this industry.

The employers' need for numeric flexibility is frequently stated as a cause for the high levels of part-time work in the female-dominated service and retail industry (Kjeldstad 2006). The reason for this is said to be the continuous hours and differentiated need for labour throughout the rotation scheme (Jonsson 2011). In healthcare, the majority of activities are undertaken during the daytime shift, thus more staff resources are required for the day shift than for evenings, weekends and nights (Jonsson 2011; Amble 2008). In the retail industry, opening hours affect the need for part-time jobs. Employers' preference for part-time employees is also due to the economic flexibility it provides (Branine 1999). Part-timers can work extra shifts without eliciting overtime payment.

Prospective employees have a degree of choice with respect to line of preferred business and employer. However, they cannot choose jobs. For instance, cleaners, nurses or auxiliary nurses cannot choose full-time employment if only part-time work is available. Kapborg (2000) describes Swedish nurses' experiences of being "forced" into part-time jobs. In the late 1990s, Swedish hospitals and municipalities advertised

more part-time jobs. Due to this policy, the number of unemployed nurses soared and the situation created involuntary part time. In order to find a full-time position, nurses had to combine multiple positions and often work unsocial hours because that was when the employers needed extra labour. The working conditions were stressful for the nurses and potentially harmful for their mental health and professional development, Kapborg (2000) shows. Abbasian and Hellgren (2012) report a similar situation in the cleaning industry. For many cleaners, a full-time job involved working in several different locations. Because the cleaners are not necessarily compensated for travel time, combining work at different locations to gain a full-time positon might not be feasible if the locations are far apart. Olsen (2002) hypothesises that the widespread use of part-time employment in the healthcare sector keeps the working conditions in this sector undisclosed. Because many employees use part-time as a strategy to master a strenuous work situation, and are hence "voluntary" part-time employees, employers need not make changes. Hence, a high share of part-timers makes it possible to continue the current work organisation.

4.3.1 A shift in the healthcare industry

Although the health service sector still dominates the part-time statistics, changes are underway as employers anticipate an undersupply of labour in years to come. Initiatives are taken to ensure that more women supply full-time labour. At first, these initiatives were taken to reduce the occurrence of involuntary part-time employment. The largest labour reserve is found among the "voluntary" part-time employees, however, and more attention is directed towards engaging this segment of the part-timers in full-time employment.

Jonsson (2011) describes the initiatives taken in the HELA project in Sweden. In order to reduce part-time unemployment and meet the needs for "more hands" in the healthcare sector, this could potentially be a *win-win* situation. The project was implemented by local municipalities, and strategies included time-scheduling, stand-in pools, testing and registering professional skills and on-the-job training to introduce more flexibility in the work force. The results were mixed. Although many employees attained full-time or longer part-time positions, experiences also showed that the employees returned to part time or withdrew from the project. The analysis by Jonsson (2011) is that the conditions pertaining to full-time positions were too strenuous, as the strategies required participants to be highly flexible with regard to the place of work

and to actively "chase" the extra hours needed to fill the full-time position themselves. Hence, Jonsson (2011) describes the outcome of this system as "precarious full-time employment".

4.3.2 More full-time employment in Denmark

As previously mentioned, the level of part-time employment among Danish women has dropped significantly. From 1983 to 2005, the reduction amounted to 22 percentage points for women aged 25–54 and 25 percentage points for women aged 55–64 years (Lind & Rasmussen 2008: 527). There are several reasons why part-time employment has gone down, but in terms of labour demand, Lind and Rasmussen (2008) emphasise that employers have become less positive towards part-time employment. Full-time employees are seen as better skilled and more loyal to the company, it is argued, with reference to a survey conducted among employers in the financial sectors. This shift in employer attitudes is supported by a long-run shortage of skilled personnel in Denmark (Lind and Rasmussen 2008), hence from the employers' point of view, part time implies an underutilisation of resources.

4.4 Supply-side explanations: worker preferences for part-time employment

The organisation of work in the service and retail sector might affect the supply of labour. Part-time employment might be preferred because of a strenuous work rotation scheme with frequent shifts between day, evening and night-time work or because a full-time position requires a combination of different workplaces or departments (cf. precarious full-time employment).

The workers' own preferences and choices made to balance labour market participation with family obligations, early retirement and educational activities in different life stages affect the overall level of part-time employment. A great deal of the literature provides data on employment outcome, but few studies directly address workers' preferences like Abrahamsen (2009, 2010).

Abrahamsen (2009) compares the part-time orientation of female physicians and nurses at two different points in time: in their final year of study and three years after graduation. A part-time oriented woman is a woman who expresses that the opportunity to work part time is very important to her. Abrahamsen (2009) shows that physicians and nurses have highly

similar scores on part-time orientation, despite being in occupations with very different opportunities for part-time employment. Analyses of whether part-time orientation predicts work hours show interesting results. Women's part-time orientation has no significant effect on subsequent employment, i.e. women who are part-time oriented in their final year of study are not more likely to work part time three years later. However, women's present part-time orientation significantly affects work hours. According to Abrahamsen (2009), the results show that women's preferences are adapted to their current working hour regime. The analyses also show that the opportunity structure significantly affects work hours.

Abrahamsen (2010) compares the employment preferences and practices of university-educated women across different professional bachelor programmes. She also compares the employment practices of three cohorts of nursing graduates from 1977, 1992 and 2003. Her results show that the youngest cohort of nurses are more likely than the two oldest cohorts to work full time. Six years after graduation, the share of part-time employed nurses in the 1977 and 1992 cohorts was 50%, compared with 25% in the 2003 cohort. Part-time employment is more common among women with children in all cohorts, yet the reduction in part-time employment also holds for women with children. Nevertheless, nurses from the 2003 cohort are more likely than other university-educated women in the same cohort to be part-time employees: the rates of part-time employees are 10 and 12% in female-dominated professions and gender-balanced professions, respectively. In terms of preferences, nurses are significantly more likely than other highly educated women to rate part-time employment as important, and they also report having the opportunity to work part-time to a significantly higher degree. Abrahamsen (2010) thus shows that nurses' employment practices are converging towards the average level of part-time employment for university-educated women. Yet, compared with women in other professions, nurses share a greater preference for part-time employment and rate their opportunities to work part-time as higher.

Research shows that part-time employment is more common at the margins, when one enters or leaves the labour market (Kjeldstad 2006). The ability to combine employment and pension benefits may cause many employees eligible for early retirement to choose a part-time position over a full-time position. For instance, Nätti (1995) connects the high shares of old part-timers in Norway and Sweden with the extensive part-time retirement schemes available. In Denmark, part-time employment is increasing among those below 25 years of age, likely because they often combine education and employment (Lind & Rasmus-

sen 2008). The decrease in part-time employment among Danish women is partly due to women's preference or need for full-time work. Lind and Rasmussen (2008: 533–534) point to structural changes like more single-headed households, more highly educated women, implementation of policies supporting women's full-time employment, i.e. kindergartens and parental leave schemes, and changes in the unemployment insurance system that have made part-time employment less lucrative.

The level of part-time employment in Finland is low compared with the Scandinavian countries, as previously shown. Yet, there is a trend in Finland towards more part-time employment, and this has partly been explained by an increase of students and part-time pensioners combining employment with education or early retirement (Kauhanen 2008). Nevertheless, the growth in part-time employment also covers "ordinary" workers whose main activity is employment. The percentage of involuntary part-timers as a share of all part-time workers has almost doubled from 18% in 1991 to 30% in 2005 (Kauhanen 2008). The level of involuntary part-time work in 2005 is thus much higher in Finland than in the Scandinavian countries. Kauhanen (2008: 223) goes on to show that the main reasons for working part time in Finland is "studies" and "could not find a full-time job", which is the most widely used definition of involuntary part-time employment. There is significant variation across sectors in this respect, as 59%, 55%, 43% and 50% of the part-time employed women in retail, hospitality, cleaning and building maintenance and security services give "could not find a full-time job" as their main reason. Moreover, only 9% of Finnish women state "childcare" as their reason for working "part time" in Kauhanen's (2008) study. In comparison, 21% of Norwegian women part-timers give "childcare" as the most important reason for their choice (Egeland & Drange, 2014). The reason for this is the earlier mentioned full-time culture in Finland and that Finland never adopted a male breadwinner model, says Kauhanen (2008).

4.5 A part-time culture?

To better grasp the reasons behind the various part-time employment levels across nations and across industries within nations, one needs to move beyond the question of demand versus supply of part-time labour to consider how these engage in mutually reinforcing processes that structure the organisation of work. The concept of a "part-time culture" can be useful in this respect.

In order to explain why part-time employment is more widespread in female-dominated occupations, scholars emphasise that female-dominated jobs are structured under the expectation that women will reduce their number of work hours in combination with having children (Figart and Mutari 1998). Abrahamsen (2009, 2010) describes workplaces in the caring sector as characterised by a part-time culture. The Norwegian part-time culture encompasses both vocational and professional employees because high shares of nurses and auxiliary nurses are employed part time in either short or long part-time positions. The part-time culture is characterised not only by a widespread practice of part-time employment but also part-time attitudes and expectations towards women's, or more precisely mothers', employment patterns. According to Abrahamsen (2010), the part-time culture transmits traditionalistic attitudes towards mothers' employment, implying that full-time work is incompatible with the expectations of being a "good mother". The traditionalist view of female employment likely has a stronghold in this sector as the public healthcare sector has employed large shares of women ever since the housewives' transition from full-time household duties to part-time employment in the 1970s, as previously described by Jensen (2000).

The practice of part-time employment is furthermore supported by the organisation of work as part-time employees largely have the same job tasks and career opportunities as full-time employed colleagues (Abrahamsen 2010). While part-timers in general experience a lack of career mobility and fewer opportunities for professional development, this is not the case for part-time employed nurses as shown by Abrahamsen (2001). The part-time culture in nursing is maintained through self-selection of part time-oriented women and the adaptation to part-time by mothers (Abrahamsen 2010). A culture that promotes, instead of discourages, part-time employment can cause more women to choose this form of work adaptation. In Abrahamsen's (2009) comparative study of nurses and physicians, approximately 50% of the physicians voice the opportunity for part-time as important for them, but only 4% work part-time and only 8% are in a job where there are good opportunities to work part-time (Abrahamsen 2009: 328). Moreover, the nurses, but not the physicians, become more part-time oriented if they have children. Furthermore, the results show that nurses are both part-time oriented and career oriented, which underscores that the "part-time friendly" organisation of this occupation as a career and as part-time employment is not contradictory. Among the physicians, however, the part-time oriented women are not career oriented, as it is difficult to

reconcile a career and part-time employment in the medical occupation, Abrahamsen (2009) concludes.

Branine (1999) discusses the organisational culture in health service in France, the UK and Denmark, and according to him the culture differs significantly across the three countries. In France, full-time employment is the norm, while part time is much more common in the UK and Denmark. However, among Danish healthcare workers, part time is used at all skill levels and the flexibility is regulated through collective agreements. In the UK, part time is more widespread at lower skill levels and the part-timers receive less training and have reduced opportunities for career mobility.

The organisational part-time culture can also affect the labour supply. Good quality part time (i.e. long hours and career opportunities) might increase employees' preferences for such employment, says Gash (2008), and countries that support mothers' employment are more likely to provide good quality part-time employment than countries that lack work-family policies. Jonsson (2011) links the family-friendly, female-dominated public sector jobs to the different outtake of parental leave between mothers and fathers. In Sweden, fathers usually take their parental leave all at once, while women tend to stretch the parental leave period by combining it with part-time employment (Jonsson 2011). Thus, the public sector, with generous opportunities for part-time employment, is attractive to mothers wishing to combine employment and caring for their children. Figart and Mutari (1998) reach a similar conclusion in their review of research that emphasises how policies have unintended consequences with regard to occupational gender segregation. Sweden's extensive parental leave provisions has been successful in terms of keeping mothers in the labour market throughout their working life, but it has not succeeded in changing the norms for male workers. In contrast, women in male-dominated sectors might be penalised for taking parental leave and asking for reduced hours, according to Figart and Mutari (1998). Hence, the policy reinforces the occupational gender segregation as women move to "female-friendly" public sector employment. An organisational culture that sets up for part time is consequently self-generating.

The gender-segregated labour market and the higher incidence of part-time employment in the female-dominated part of the labour market are often referred to as causes of the high female part-time employment. It is therefore interesting that Kjeldstad's (2006) analyses show there is no gendering of working time arrangements at the level of the job, as men in female-dominated organisations also have an increased

risk of being employed part time. Irrespective of gender, employees in female-dominated occupations or industries are subject to the same regimes. The gendering of atypical employment (Kjeldstad 2006, Leschke 2009) thus takes place at the industry and not job level. This point is also made by Figart and Murati (1998), who emphasise that workers cannot choose working time arrangements independent of jobs. Hence, women who actually prefer full-time employment may be restricted to part-time work in industries where part-time employment is the norm. The individual's preference is constrained by the widespread use of part-time among colleagues. Hence, the higher levels of part-timers in female-dominated industries are not necessarily a result of preferences, but rather of the opportunity structure in that occupation.

4.6 The implications of regulations and labour laws for part-time employment

A third set of explanations for part-time employment refer to system-level conditions that regulate employers' and employees' actions alike:

> The use of atypical or non-standard employment is influenced by how much the laws, collaborative agreements and the social security system allows, promotes and prevents the use of atypical working times and forms of work, and to what extent atypical working times and forms of work appeal to the employees. (Kauhanen 2008: 219)

High-quality part-time work, regulated by public policy and tripartite collaboration, can make part-time work more attractive from the employees' point of view (Lind and Rasmussen 2008). For instance, the Danish replacement rates for loss of income is considerably higher for low than for high incomes, which favours part-time employees (Buschoff and Protsch 2008).

In general, part-time employees are not marginalised. Part-time employment yields the same social rights as full-time employment to scale. The social security net makes part-time employment more attractive than it would be without these rights. As described earlier, there has been a significant decline in part-time employment in Denmark and a changed pattern of part-time employment to a youth phenomenon. The argument of Lind and Rasmussen (2008: 531) is that the "Danish model" of labour market regulation increasingly supports full-time employment.

Changes in economic incentives affect the labour supply. In Sweden, the changes in the marginal tax rate had an impact on the part-time employment rate. The marginal tax rate was reduced for full-time employ-

ment and raised for part-time employment, implying an economic incentive for full-time employment to which the part-timers responded (Sundström 1993). In Denmark, part-timers with unemployment insurance could claim part-time unemployment benefits, yet the access to benefits became more strongly conditioned in 1979 and restrictions to this arrangement in subsequent years significantly reduced the attractiveness of part-time employment (Lind and Rasmussen 2008). Kyyrä (2010) investigates whether partial unemployment benefits promote or hamper the transition from underemployment to full-time jobs in Finland. The results show large, positive findings for men in reduced full-time positions and smaller positive effects for men in part-time jobs. A similar effect is not found for women, and Kyyrä (2010) concludes that the partial unemployment benefits potentially have a lock-in effect on some involuntary female part-timers. The general picture, however, is that the partial unemployment benefit promotes transitions to regular, full-time employment (Kyyrä, 2010).

Labour laws and the regulation of work hours, i.e. the duration of a workday and rest periods, can affect the number of part-time positions offered by employers. For instance, Amble (2008) discusses the consequences of changes to the national collective agreement that reduced the length of a normal work week from 38 to 35.5 hours in shift work in Norway. The changes were implemented by taking a weekend out of the rotation scheme (from every second (1:2) to every third weekend (1:3)), which gave rise to a number of short part-time positions. Furthermore, to attract nurses and skilled personnel many municipalities have offered work rotations with 1:4 or 1:6 weekends. In addition to the changes to the rotation scheme, Amble (2008) also points to the structural changes in the municipal care sector that took place in Norway with smaller organising units. The combination of weekend vacancies and small organising units complicates the employers' ability to provide full-time positions. This leads to collateral damage as the positioning of the vacancies further complicates the employers' ability to merge small positions into a full-time position because of the regulations on unsocial working hours. According to Amble (2008), this has created a lock-in of short part-time in the care sector and hence involuntary part time. The part-time puzzle can be solved with full-time positions by returning to 1:2 weekends, Amble concludes (2008).

Buschoff and Protsch (2008) discuss conditions for non-standard forms of employment in Europe. Their point of departure is the increase in non-standard forms of employment such as part time, temporary employment, solo self-employment and mini employment, and they look into

the social protection laws pertaining to these kinds of employment. In terms of part-time employment, they write "The EU directive on part-time work requires member states to identify and eliminate potential obstacles of a legal or administrative nature that might discourage a transition to full-time working" (Buschoff and Protsch 2008). Yet, the employer shall accommodate the employees' wishes for working time. Swedish employees have a legal right to a temporary reduction in their regular working hours provided it is for "good reason", for instance undertaking education, illness, part-time retirement or parental leave (Jonsson 2011). Norwegian employees have a legal right to a temporary reduction in working hours, which is regulated in the Work Environment Act (WEA). Danish employees have no legal right, but the employer and employee can agree on work time reductions (Buschoff & Protsch 2008: 59).

In Norway, the employer organisations Spekter and KS have taken measures to reduce the use of part time. KS has recently mapped the use of §10 – 2 in the Norwegian WEA, which gives the right to claim reduced work hours among employees in the municipal healthcare sector. The provision is used only to a limited extent, partly because ordinary part-time employment is so easily available in this sector (Jensen, Olberg, Seip, Mühlbradt & Øistad 2014). It is not within the scope of this project to review the results of this report.

4.7 Part-time work, a typical form of employment?

Part-time work is sometimes referred to as non-standard form of employment. Yet, as this form of employment is so common, especially among women, there is reason to contest this notion (Buschoff and Protsch 2008).

Studies that question whether part-time employment in the Nordic countries can be considered a trap, a stepping-stone or a way of staying in contact with the labour market usually conclude that it is not a trap (Nätti 1995, Jensen 2000, Gash 2008). Gash (2008) studied mobility rates from part-time employment to full-time employment and compared this to full-time employees transition to a second full-time job. Gash (2008: 664) showed that the transition rates from part time to full time employment were equally high as for full-time employees transition to a second full-time job in Denmark. This shows part-time employ-

ees are not "locked in" in part-time work. Leschke (2009) finds the risk of transitioning from employment to unemployment to be equally high for Danish part-timers and full-timers,[1] and (Nätti 1995) finds that the transition rates from part-time to full-time employment is quite high and the transition from unemployment to full time is high in Finland. The situation is different in Finland, however, compared with the Scandinavian countries with more marginalised part-timers. In Finland, part-time employment is concentrated in the private service sector, among unskilled workers, fixed-term contracts and lower union density (Nätti 1995, Jensen 2000, Kauhanen 2008). In Sweden and Norway, part-time employment has developed to resemble full-time employment. In Denmark, collective agreements prohibit the most marginal forms of part-time employment (< 15 hours a week) (Jensen 2000). Nevertheless, sectors with high levels of part-time employment also have the highest rates of employees working part time involuntarily (Kjeldstad 2006). Jensen (2000: 145) says whether part-time employment is to be considered atypical is not a characteristic of part-time employment in itself, but rather depending on its organisation. Long part-time employment with normal working hours, wage and social rights to scale are not necessarily a-typical employment compared with part-time positions where employment conditions are more marginal with a-social working hours, poorer wage conditions, fixed-term contracts and poorer employment protection legislation.

4.8 Summary

The level and development of part-time employment vary across the Nordic countries. The level is highest in Norway and lowest in Finland. While the level of part-time employed women has been declining in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, the trend in Finland is towards more part time, and especially involuntary part time. The economic development is a contributing factor. Moreover, the level of part time varies between industries within a country. Part-time employment is more widespread in female-dominated occupations within the healthcare sector, hospitality sector, retail and sales sector and the cleaning sector.

[1] Denmark has high mobility and low employee protection legislation. The Employment Protection Legislation is the same for full-time and part-time employees.

Central explanations for the high level of part-time employment in the Scandinavian countries include the structural change in the labour market from manufacturing industry to service industry and the expansion of the welfare state services, which has attracted female labour. Public sector employment, in combination with the high trade union organisation, has resulted in high quality part-time jobs. In Finland, part-time employment is more marginalised and concentrated at lower skill levels. A cross-country comparison emphasises the role of the public sector, as an employer, for part-time employment.

Demand-side explanations emphasise the employers' need for flexibility as a factor that sustains a high level of part-time employment. In healthcare organisations and retail, cleaning and hospitality businesses, factors such as work scheduling, opening hours and client needs are contributing elements. The demand for more labour in the healthcare industry has shifted employers' focus to full-time employment. Many projects have been initiated in Norway and Sweden, but so far the efforts initiated to create more full-time positions have been carried out on the employer's premises, referred to as "precarious full-time employment". However, a different organisation of work with more manageable full-time positions is feasible. In some instances, law regulations and collective agreements can make organisational changes towards more full-time positions a difficult problem to solve.

Supply-side explanations emphasise that a high level of part-time employment is maintained through employee preferences. Cohort studies show that preferences for part-time work are declining, but that part-time oriented women choose educations leading to occupations that already have a high level of part-time work. Yet, the opportunity to work part time is strongly affecting the realisation of part-time employment. Women who are part-time oriented but work in a "full-time occupation" have a significantly lower chance of being part-time employed compared with equally part-time oriented women in "part-time" occupations. Studies on employment outcome show that more women than before supply full-time labour, a tendency that is put in connection with demographic changes such as a higher education levels among women and more single-households and lone-parent households.

Supply and demand mechanisms do not work in isolation, however. The concept of a "part-time culture" underscores that work organisation and supply are mutually reinforcing. In occupations where there are good opportunities for part-time employment and part-time employment has limited consequences for a woman's career, more women choose to work part time, especially after becoming mothers. It also attracts part-time oriented women. Yet, high shares of part-time employment also give rise to higher levels of involuntary part-time employment.

5. Part-time work and health

Health or health-related issues are reported to be important reasons for women's part-time work. As shown in Lanninger and Sundström (2014) "own illness or disability" is the third most frequently reported reason for working part time among women in all Nordic countries, and particularly in Norway, where 16.9% stated that their own illness or disability was the main reason for working part time.

As the choice to work fewer hours than a full average work week for different health reasons could be seen as challenging for the individual (who, in addition to a lower income due to the reduction in paid work hours, may have reduced quality of life due to illness or disability), it seems important to understand more about the health situations that lead some women to choose part time, their work-life situation and the consequences of their choice.

Health and health limitations as a cause for part-time work among women in the Nordic countries are only to a very limited degree addressed isolated or directly in the research literature reviewed for this report. While there is a vast literature on women's health issues pertaining to stress and/or well-being in work-family time-conflicts, there is close to nothing on why and how health problems or limitations as such lead more women than men to choose part-time work.

From the literature collected for this report, it is evident that health problems as a cause for part-time work are included and studied *primarily as either a negative bi-product of different kinds of work-family conflicts or as an effect of straining and health-impairing work conditions and work organisation e.g. in the female-dominated health and care sectors.* Health problems in relation to part-time work are thus understood as not separate from but as *intersecting* with other reasons for part-time work that can be explored in their own right.

5.1 Part-time employment as health protection

Part-time employment may thus be studied as a coping strategy for health protection among individuals who experience different kinds of work-family conflicts. The basic idea here is that for example worries about the work or home situation and feelings of insufficiency can affect a person's assessment of his or her work-life balance, and that stress reactions triggered by this perceived imbalance may disturb the person's physiological systems in a way that causes negative health effects (Lundberg 1996, ref. in Nylén, Melin and Laflamme 2007). Several single-country studies show that a poor work-life or work-family balance is associated with health problems (Allen *et al*. 2000, Frone 2000), and that both men's and women's health is affected by perceived work-life/family imbalances (Leineweber 2013). A recent study (Lunau *et al*. 2014) explored the association between poor work-life balance and poor health across a variety of European countries and found indications that a poor work-life balance is associated with poor health across 27 European countries (Lunau *et al*. 2014). They also found variation by welfare state regime as the best work-life balance was reported in Scandinavia and the worst in Southern and Eastern European countries (Lunau *et al*. 2014). Welfare regime differences were furthermore stronger influencing men's than women's work-life balance; the probability of reporting poor work-life balance among men was higher than among women in all welfare state regimes except the so-called Anglo Saxon regime, when compared with the Scandinavian welfare regime.

Studies of health problems and work-life conflict show that in order to help the physiological systems regain strength and functionality, they must be enabled to recover, e.g. through physical, mental or emotional unwinding where tension and stress are reduced. Unwinding can be regarded as a buffer between stressful working conditions and subjective health (Åkerstedt, Kecklund, Gillberg, Lowden & Axelsson 2000, Sluiter, de Croon, Meijman, & Frings-Dresen 2003, ref. in Nylén, Melin and Laflamme 2007). Nylén, Melin and Laflamme (2007) studied the extent to which the pressure experienced from negative work-home interference or from home-work interference impacts early signs of suboptimal health, such as impaired sleep quality, poor self-rated health, and the use of medications among Swedish men and women aged 25–64. They also considered the effect of adjustment for lack of unwinding for both women and men as earlier studies both have shown that women's total work load is heavier than that of men (Frankenhauser *et al*. 1989, ref. in Nylén *et al*. 2007) and that sex differences can be expected in coping strategies in stressful situa-

tions (Torkelson & Muhonen 2004, ref. ibid). Most important for our purposes is that Nylén *et al*. (2007) also distinguish between part-time and full-time work, although they make it clear that it is unresolved whether "time at work" has a direct effect on individual experiences of interference between work and home/life/family. The argument for this disaggregation is found in the gender-segregated labour market in Sweden with part-time work prevalent in particular sectors and segments, and the possibility that part-time work may offer more opportunities than full-time work to unwind (Åkersted *et al*. 2003, ref. ibid). The results indicate that work-home interference is associated with suboptimal sleep quality and self-rated health for both women and men. However, the significance of this association disappears among female full-time and part-timers when adjusting for lack of unwinding; this is not observed for men. Nylén *et al*. (2007) therefore suggest that unwinding might be a more pronounced health protector for women than for men.

A study among Norwegian school teachers exploring risk factors involved in teachers' partial withdrawal and exit from the labour market (Mykletun & Mykletun 2010) finds that in addition to age, gender is a critical factor in determining the risk of early exit from the teaching profession; women teachers reported more exhaustion and worked more part time, whereas male teachers were low in efficacy and more cynical. Working part time seemed to reduce the negative effects of stress stemming from work overload and conflicts with pupils. The study also addresses the work roles that female teachers are given, which may differ from those of their male colleagues. Neither the formal level of professional teacher training nor the gaps between level of training and teaching obligations showed any effect on the risk of early exit. However, sense of competence and the subjective feeling of being able to cope, was a predictor of that risk (Mykletun & Mykletun 2010).

5.2 Part time as a coping strategy

An important but clearly underexplored aspect of part-time work as a consequence of health problems in terms of own illness or disability concerns the problem of individualisation. Nicolaisen and Bråthen (2012) and Brulid (2011) ask whether some women's part-time work could be understood as an element in an everyday coping strategy. Moland and Gautun (2002) assume that the relatively large proportion of "voluntary" part-time work in the health and care sector can partly be explained as an individual adjustment to rigid and inflexible work time

regimes and work organisation. With a point of departure in studies where many respondents answer that they choose to work part time because they need time for restitution between shifts, Nicolaisen and Bråthen (2012) suggest that part-time employment can be understood as a strategy to avoid physical attrition and mental burn out. Here they refer to earlier studies (e.g. Nicolaisen & Olberg 2005). In their own study, which is based on qualitative interviews with health sector workers, they are however reluctant to determine the incidence of part-time work as a coping strategy in this sense.

In our study of voluntary part time work among health workers in Norwegian hospitals, we also find it problematic to determine the incidence of part-time work as a coping strategy. However, the understanding of part-time work as a strategy to prevent and protect the employee from sick leave was recognised and acknowledged among all our informants – also among those who did not refer to health problems or health limitations as their main reason for working part time (Egeland & Drange 2014 and forthcoming). Furthermore, all informants agreed that the choice of part time was a responsible, social choice as in this way the part-timer avoided being a social and economic burden to society through sickness-related absence. Some of the women we interviewed even suggested that the choice of part time could be understood as a "divorce-preventing" strategy as it reduces stress in the family and disharmony between the adults in a household. Even if our analyses of a large quantitative dataset showed that men with part-time working partners did not experience their marriage as more harmonious than men with full-time working partners, part-time work is nevertheless assumed to contribute to peace and harmony at home (Egeland & Drange 2014).

6. Part-time work and family

Considerations for the family and especially children are a major cause for women's part-time work in the Nordic countries. Here, family is the main reason for working part time among 20–25% of women.

The question is why and how. Why and how does family life influence women's labour market participation?

In the reviewed research literature we find four clusters of explanations that seem to explain part-time work caused by family considerations across the Nordic countries at the same time as they provide explanations for important differences between the countries:

- Demand-side explanations.
- Supply-side explanations.
- Explanations referring to culture, values, norms and discourses.
- Explanations referring to family politics and policies.

6.1 Demand-side explanations and considerations for the family

The Nordic debate over part-time work has been particularly concerned with demand-side explanations, i.e. with shifts and variations in labour demand in the aggregate and in different sectors, occupations and industries (e.g. Kjelstad 2006, 2009, Kauhanen 2008, Kjelstad & Nymoen 2012). Involuntary part-time work and underemployment are central concepts in demand-side explanations focusing on the structure of working time and the limited options that employees are often left with. In certain segments of the labour market, such as the health, care and hospitality sectors, there are employers (the demand side) offering few or no alternative to part-time employment. Consequently, employees and jobseekers primarily aspiring to work full time end up accepting part-time contracts merely in the hope of increasing their working hours as time goes by. It has also been suggested that labour laws and regulations impose constraints on employers (mainly in the health sector operating around the clock every day of the week), who would otherwise be willing to meet part-timers' demands for longer hours.

According to Kea Tijdens (2002), firms' demand for part-timers can arise from at least three motives. The first is that part-time jobs enable firms to better match the labour force to a changing work load. A second motive may be that employers prefer cheaper and/or more flexible labour, especially when statutory protection and/or hourly earnings are lower for part-time than for full-time work – "the secondary labour market model" (Tijdens 2002). The third motive mentioned by Tijdens is referred to as "the responsive firm model", i.e. firms may create part-time jobs because their labour needs would otherwise not be met. This applies in particular to female-dominated occupations for which firms seek to attract and retain female workers in life phases with extended family responsibilities. Kjelstad and Nymoen (2012) argue that "the responsive model" is best suited to explain part-time work in Norway, where employers arrange flexible work hours attracting female labour power in need of solutions to various work-family imbalances. The result looks like a "hand-in-glove" situation where the demand side is adjusting itself to an increasing supply of women and mothers seeking work hours conducive to a reasonable work-family balance. At the same time, supply and demand factors play somewhat different roles in explaining the existence and spread of various types of part-time work, i.e. short and long, voluntary and involuntary (Kjelstad & Nymoen 2012).

In an article on the relation between work-family culture and job satisfaction in light of gender and parenting status, Saija Mauno, Ulla Kinnunnen & Taru Feldt (2012) analyse responses from women and men in organisations in different sectors and occupations in Finland. The selected organisations represent both the public (social and healthcare) and private (paper mill, ICT company) sectors of the Finnish economy. The main occupational groups were nurses, physicians, dentists, childcare personnel and social workers. They find a consistent positive relationship between work-family support and job satisfaction across the different organisations as well as a positive correlation between managerial work-family support and employees' job satisfaction in each organisation. "Thus, it is obvious that managers' responsiveness and sensitivity to employees' family needs should be promoted in all kinds of organisations" (Mauno *et al*. 2012: 124). Mauno *et al*. (2012) suggest that this can be achieved e.g. by launching a family-friendly HR strategy and by training managers at different levels (top, middle, immediate supervisors) to think and behave in a more family-friendly manner. Moreover, work-family issues should be more visible in formal documents and strategies. At the same time, Mauno *et al*. (2012) stress that such visibility should

follow rather than precede more profound changes in the organisational culture. "Changes are needed at both the formal and informal level before we can speak about organisational culture change, of which work-family culture is part" (Mauno *et al*. 2012: 124).

6.2 Supply-side explanations and family considerations

An approach that is often mentioned, but just as often contested and dismissed, in the literature on part-time work in the Nordic countries is the so-called preference theory by Catherine Hakim (1998, 2002). Supply-side approaches like Hakim's stress the choices of individuals, presuming that women and men are not only capable of but also responsible for the free and reflexive choices concerning their employment and intimate relationships, including gender division of labour. Hakim's theory then explains women's and men's employment and unpaid care giving patterns as lifestyle preferences based on their genuine orientations towards employment or family life. The inequality between men and women in the labour market is, according to Hakim, a consequence of the heterogeneity of their preferences. Hakim argues that while men are mostly work oriented, only a small minority of women are seriously committed to working life. Some women are home oriented, preferring to stay out of the labour market if possible, and the majority are "adaptive" and want to work but at the same time try to arrange and adjust their work situation according to family needs. Part-time work is therefore perceived as a strategy of adaptive women to combine paid work with childcare responsibilities, or to be attached to the labour market without a planned career in mind (Hakim 2002). Hakim's theory is mentioned in almost all of the articles reviewed for this part of the report, yet seems mostly to serve a function as theoretical and political dubious antagonist; individualising explanations are almost unanimously rejected as insufficient for an understanding of why so many women in the otherwise equal-oriented Nordic countries work part time. We will return to this.

Another supply-side explanation that has gained more support concerns the family economy. Having a family and children requires some reciprocity between household members in dividing and distributing the responsibilities for care and unpaid work at home and for economic support of the family in the form of paid work. Theories emphasising the significance of the partner's relative resources assume that the female

partner – traditionally the one with the weakest labour market attachment and resources – will tend to work shorter hours in paid employment than the (male) partner, regardless of whether the work hour division is the outcome of a mutual assessment of family utility (Becker 1991) or of a bargaining process between the partners (Bittmann *et al*. 2003). In many cases the effect of gender is more or just as significant as the effects of the partner's relative resources in terms of time division within the family. In Sweden, the effects of intra-family economic bargaining over the most reasonable time division between unpaid family work and paid work in the labour market have been studied by Henz and Sundström (2001). They find, however, that mothers' labour market transitions showed own that their own earnings had a strong effect on all transitions studied and a larger and more significant effect than the spouses earnings. Higher own earnings induced women to increase their amount of paid work. In contrast, Egeland and Drange (forthcoming) find that the partner's income and earnings *do* have an effect on women's tendency to work part time in Norway.

In an article on highly educated dual-earner couples and the decision to reduce work hours, Rosalind Barnett and Lena Lundgren (1998) argue that theoretical attention needs to be given to the question of *how* the decision to work reduced hours is made. Typically, the focus has been on gender ideological considerations about the consequences of this option. The choice to reduce work hours is rarely framed theoretically. In their article, Barnett and Lundgren (1998) develop a model where they maintain that couples take several factors into account in their decisions. Gender or gender role ideology alone is not sufficient.

> The decision about whether one or both partners should reduce their work hours depends on the needs, desires, values, opportunities, and constraints of both partners as well as on their obligations and relationships to others in their work/life system. These others can include relatives and friends, as well as commitments to organisations and communities. Couples take these factors, as well as such macroeconomic, socio-structural and attitudinal factors as employment rate, living costs, cultural definitions of success, and workplace policies, into account in developing a work/life adaptive strategy that aims at integrating and optimising their work and family preferences. (Barnett & Lundgren 1998: 289)

6.3 Explanations referring to culture, values, norms and discourses

Many of those who are critical to the individualising explanations of women's part-time work as a matter of preference or free choice have drawn attention to the processes in which women's (and men's) preferences and orientations concerning work and family life are shaped. In a study from Norway, Sigtona Halrynjo and Selma Lyng (2009) describe the shift in highly educated and highly work-committed women's orientations from work to family life as a process where the women experience the primacy of the domestic sphere during their year-long family leave. As they return to work, they strive to maximise their involvement in both spheres of life, but end up adapting their previous work orientation to a more family-oriented lifestyle. They choose family-friendly jobs and explain their emerging home and family orientation as a choice more in accordance with the meaning, self-worth and identity that motherhood offers (Halrynjo and Lyng 2009). Contrary to e.g. Hakim, they draw on more culture-oriented theories developed by e.g. Duncan *et al*. 2003 and Blair-Loy 2003 stressing that individual women's and men's choices are embedded in social contexts in which different structural and cultural institutions create possibilities and constraints in people's lives. Cultural explanations thus accentuate normative aspects of individual actors' choices, such as gender roles, class and culturally and historically shaped expectations of mother- and fatherhood, femininity and masculinity (Ellingsæter 2005, Solheim 2007). Individual preferences are culturally and socially shaped, reproduced and ascribed meaning, and moral rationalities of motherhood include expectations from and negotiations with other actors and institutions, such as the partner or the employer, as well as with oneself (Halrynjo & Lyng 2009). This does not necessarily mean that expectations pertaining to mother- and fatherhood dictate individual women's and men's labour market choices; rather, *culture functions as a context and framing of their choices by providing individuals and families with cultural mandates for work as well as for family devotion.*

In a study of part-time work among parents in Finland, Johanna Närvi (2012), in a way resonant with the theoretical point of departure for this report, draws on Pfau-Effinger's theoretical attempt at combining structural with cultural approaches in explaining differences between women's and men's parental and labour market choices (Pfau-Effinger 1998, 2004). Pfau-Effinger's argument is that labour market and parental choices emerge in the intersection between gender cultures, gender

orders and gender arrangements. Gender culture refers to the common ideas, perceptions, norms and representations about gender relations and the division of labour in terms of paid work and unpaid care work shared by a group. Gender order refers to social structures and institutions, like the labour market and the family, within which the division of labour is organised and established. Gender arrangement denotes the relatively stable forms of action resulting from different actors' choices and practices pertaining to arrangements between institutions and the cultural context, or between norms and structures. Pfau-Effinger's conceptualisation thus highlights gendered practices as a process that is constantly formulated by negotiations and re-negotiations between individuals, structure and culture or discourse (Pfau-Effinger 1998, 2004). This makes it possible to explore a gendered practice like women's part-time work both in terms of individual choices and in a specific cultural and national context (Närvi 2012). Following Pfau-Effinger's conceptualisation, Järni thus finds that the choices of many Finnish families are made in the context of the father's stable versus the mother's unstable career. A gender arrangement where the mother makes more compromises about her career than the father, even in dual earner/career households, is negotiated in an environment of both practical and ideological conditions. In the Finnish context, the practical rationale partly relates to the gender order in which, notwithstanding the welfare state-supported goal of gender equality, the gendered structure of temporary employment and insecure careers in the labour market makes it rational for parents to adopt traditional parental roles and responsibilities (Närvi 2012). The ideological rationale relates to the gender culture that widely embraces the ideal of shared parenthood but at the same time emphasises the role of motherhood and mother care for the psychosocial development of small children, making it legitimate for women to prioritise care over career (Närvi 2012).

Pfau-Effinger has also herself examined women's employment over time in West Germany, the Netherlands and Finland (Pfau-Effinger 2004). She finds that cultural traditions interact with social institutions (including welfare policies) to shape and change women's employment over time. Policies cannot dictate women's employment or labour market attachment; instead they interact with the gender culture and the gender arrangement. Pfau-Effinger's argument is then that all three of these dimensions are dynamic and can help prevent or promote social change as regards women's employment (Pfau-Effinger 2004).

6.4 Explanations referring to family politics and policies

In recent years, concerns have been raised that specific welfare arrangements and public provisions pertaining to the welfare of dual earner families may have negative/unintended consequences in terms of gender equality and women's employment outcomes (see e.g. *Community, Work & Family: Special issue on work-family policy*, 2011). In the Nordic countries where these kinds of arrangements and provisions are relatively common and institutionalised, these concerns can be interesting to explore in relation to part-time work. In what follows we will give a brief overview of central features and arrangements that make up each of the Nordic countries' family politics and policies before we continue to review the research literature that both directly and indirectly discusses these policies in relation to women's part-time work. We think that this overview is important in order to show both differences and similarities in the Nordic countries' approach to both family life and work-family adjustments. A more thorough documentation of parental leave schemes and Nordic family policies are given in *TemaNord* 2010:539 on *Parental leave, Care Policies and Gender Equalities in the Nordic Countries* and *TemaNord* 2011:562 on *Parental leave, childcare and gender equality in the Nordic countries*.

7. Work and family policy in the Nordic countries

The level of part-time work among women varies a great deal across countries and over time within each country (Lanninger and Sundström 2013). In Denmark and Finland, the rate of part-time work among employed women was fairly stable over the period 1995–2012 at approximately 30 and 15%, respectively. In Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the rate declined from 50, 45 and 42% in 1995 to 25, 36 and 30% in 2012. Hence, in 2012, Norway had the highest share of part-time employment among women in the Nordic countries. It is likely that the distribution of women's employment across countries and over time is related to the work and family policy carried out in the different Nordic states as the work-family balance has a more profound impact on mothers than fathers. Even though the policy regulations likely have an impact, the work-family adaptation depends on other things as well, such as the structure of the labour market, industries, culture and norms.

Family policy can support dual-earner families through arrangements such as day care services, parental leave benefits, fathers' quotas and home care for the elderly. Policies that institutionalise tasks that would otherwise have to be carried out in the household make it easier to combine family responsibilities with paid employment. Family policy can also support a single-earner breadwinner model, for instance cash for care, cash child allowances and tax benefits to single earner households. The Nordic states provide high levels of dual-earner support and have high levels of women's employment (Crompton 2006). However, the countries' family policy encompasses arrangements in support of both models, and the weighing of the two alternatives varies across nations, as will be made clear in the review of each country's family policy status.

This chapter gives a review of family-friendly policy covering the period from pregnancy to when the children start school.

A few definitions are in order: "Daddy days" refer to the two to three (as in Finland) weeks reserved for the father immediately following the birth of his child. The term "maternity leave" refers to the part of the leave that is reserved for the mother prior to, and following, the birth of

her child. The terms "paternity leave" and "father quota" are used interchangeably for the part of the parental leave that is reserved for the father. Lastly, "parental leave" refers to the period that is transferable between the parents.

7.1 Denmark

Danish family policy has emphasised that families should have the freedom to choose the kind of childcare arrangements that are best suited for their needs. The point of departure is that the families "know best", hence, policy should not be interventionist but support the families' ability to choose the most suitable arrangements. Freedom of choice is strengthened by allowing the money to "follow the child" and families can apply for public or private day care or home care (Ministeriet for familie og forbrugeranliggender 2007). Danish fathers are encouraged to take parental leave, but there is no father quota. Instead, the government focuses on information and awareness-raising campaigns directed at fathers, the families, society and the social partners (Ministeriet for familie og forbrugeranliggender 2005).

Table 1 below gives a schematic view of the different family policy arrangements available for Danish parents.

Table 1: Danish family policy arrangements

	Years							
	0	**½**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6–9**
Parental leave								
Maternity benefits in 52 weeks	x	x						
An additional 32 weeks of leave without benefits			x	x	x	x	x	x
Cash for care								
Cash for care			x	x	x	x	x	
Day care								
All children older than 26 weeks are guaranteed a place in a day care facility		x	x	x	x	x	x	

7.1.1 Parental leave

Danish parents receive cash benefits in relation to pregnancy, maternity and adoption. Parents are entitled to parental benefits for a total of 52 weeks. During the first 14 weeks, normally only the mother may receive the benefits. During this period, the father is entitled to paternity leave with daily cash benefits for two weeks. The parents may decide how to

distribute the last 32 weeks of benefits, and an additional 32 weeks can be taken without benefits. The arrangement is thus 52 weeks (with pay) + 32 weeks (with no pay), or 60 to 66 weeks with reduced pay.

The 32 weeks of the parental leave (after the first 14 earmarked weeks) can be used until the child is 9 years old. The leave can be taken part-time or in periods. Work and leave can also be combined in consultation with the employer. Employees are entitled to daily cash benefits, and some get full pay depending on their agreements with the employer (Minister for ligestilling 2007).

7.1.2 Day care and cash for care benefits

The Danish municipalities have a vast degree of autonomy in their choice of policy measures and organisation of services, and the country has a range of different day care facilities, increasing parents' freedom of choice. All children older than 26 weeks and under school age are entitled to admittance to a day care facility, and the maximum legally established waiting period for a slot in child day care is four weeks (since 2005). Parents pay a maximum of 25% of the budgeted gross operating expenditure for day care services. Alternatively, a 75% subsidy is paid to parents opting for private childcare instead of municipal day care. The local council shall grant financially aided place subsidy based on the parents' financial situation. Parents can receive cash benefits for home care of children for one year if they choose not to utilise conventional day care arrangements.

A flexibility scheme called *familieflexordningen* enables parents to use the day care to different extents. The costs of day care are reduced correspondingly. The municipalities decide on available levels and the costs attached to each level. The goal is to improve freedom of choice for the families, to balance the use and costs for families and to save money for the municipality (Velfærdsministeriet 2009).

7.2 Finland

In cooperation with Anita Haataja

Finland's family policy aims to create a safe environment for children by making sure parents have the material and psychological means to raise children. Finland has undertaken many family policy reforms that likely have affected women's participation in the labour market. In recent years, the emphasis has been on reconciling paid employment and family life, strengthening fatherhood and ensuring an adequate income level. The former is the most important aim of the family policy. There are three aspects of this goal: (i) to improve the possibilities of parents to spend time with their children, (ii) to make working easier for parents and (iii) to encourage fathers to take more advantage of the family leave system (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2013).

Table 2: Finland's family policy arrangements

	Years							
	0	**½**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6–9**
Parental leave								
Maternity benefits 150 weekdays	x							
Parental benefits 158 weekdays		x						
Paternity benefits 54 weekdays			x	x				
Child care leave without benefits	x	x	x	x				
Cash for care								
Home care allowance	x	x	x	x				
Partial home care allowance					x	x	x	x
Flexible care allowance for part-time working parents	X	X	x	x	x			
Day care								
Children under school age are guaranteed a place at a day care facility or are given allowance for private day care	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

7.2.1 Parental leave

Expectant mothers in Finland are entitled to a maternity grant when her pregnancy has lasted for at least 154 days and she has undergone a health examination before the end of the fourth month of pregnancy. The maternity grant can be received as a cash lump sum or as a maternity pack, which includes products needed for an infant.

The duration of the maternity leave is 105 working days. Parental leave begins immediately after maternity leave and the duration is 158 working days with a 60-day extension per child in cases of multiple

childbirths. A parental allowance enables either the mother or the father to stay at home with the child. One parent can stay at home for the whole period, or they can split it. The opportunity to take parental leave is rarely used by fathers.

In Finland the not-transferable paternity leave consists of 54 week days. The father can use maximum 18 days simultaneously with the mother, when she is on maternity or parental leave, or after her leave period. The rest of the paternity leave (36 week days) always needs to be taken when the mother is not on leave. The father's quota must be taken before the child is 2 years old.

7.2.2 Day care and pre-school

A prerequisite for the active participation of women in the labour market has been the development of legislation, services and financial support relating to the care of small children and the job security of parents. After the parental leave period, parents have three government-assisted forms of childcare to choose from until the child starts school, usually at age 7:

- Municipal day care either at a day care centre or in the home of a family day care provider.
- Private day care either at a day care centre or in the home of a family day care provider, subsidised through a private day care allowance.
- One parent staying at home with a child home care allowance, if the child is under the age of 3.

All parents with children under school age have the right to place their child in municipal day care regardless of their financial situation and whether they are in paid employment. Local authorities have a legal obligation to provide a place in day care within two weeks of application (when urgent). Local authorities also provide evening, over-night and weekend care for children whose parents work shifts. Local authorities charge fees according to the size and income of the family. Families with very low income are exempt from fees. Fees cover approximately 14% of total costs. Families are entitled to one year of free preschool before the child starts school. This is voluntary, but almost every six-year-old attends preschool.

Alternatively, parents can apply to the Social Insurance Institution for a private day care allowance that is paid directly to the care provider. Lastly, a childcare leave system gives parents an opportunity to take

unpaid leave from work to care for a child until the child's third birthday. Either parent can take the leave, but not both at the same time. Employers have an obligation to "reserve" the jobs for parents on childcare leave, meaning that they must offer the same or a similar job as they had prior to the leave upon the parent's return to work. Parents can also take partial childcare leave by requesting a reduction in working hours. These arrangements are subject to agreement with the employer. Partial childcare leave is unpaid, but parents can apply for a partial care allowance for the duration of the leave for children under 3 years of age and for children starting school who are not currently in municipal day care. Child home care allowance is also paid for other children of the same family who are under school age. Both allowances depend on the size and income of the family. They are treated as taxable income and some municipalities pay a supplement.

Most families make use of all the government-assisted forms of childcare before their children reach school age. Typically, parents begin by caring for their children at home with the aid of a parental leave allowance, after which many families rely on a child home care allowance. In a next step, they place their children in a municipal day care centre or with a family day care provider. About 50% of the Finnish children under school age in Finland are in municipal day care. The older they get, the more likely they are to be in childcare.

7.3 Iceland

Iceland has emphasised the balance between work and family and the dual-earner model by developing policy that promotes gender equality. The extension of the parental leave scheme and expansion of public day care are policies intended to guarantee the child time with the father and the mother and to enable men and women to participate fully in the labour market (Eydal & Gíslason 2014).

7.3.1 Parental leave

The law of 2000 increased the parental leave from six to nine months – three for the mother, three for the father and three to share – and fathers were granted individual entitlements. The months reserved for the father were introduced incrementally, one per year until 2003. The taking of leave could be spread over 18 months (36 months since 2008)

(Eydal & Gíslason, 2014). This allows for flexibility to combine leave and work in periods or to work part time.

Initially, those who were active in the labour market were paid 80% of their average total salary and the payments had a floor, but no roof. Those not employed or employed less than 25% had the right to a birth grant. In 2004, the act changed. The intention was to strengthen the leave system and reduce the payments. As more fathers than expected took paternity leave, it became too costly and almost bankrupted the national parental leave fund. A roof was placed on payments, although at a very high level. After the onset of the financial crisis, the roof has been lowered twice (Eydal & Gíslason, 2014).

Parents on leave were protected by the law, so that no changes in employment could be made during the leave and/or pregnancy. Maternity/paternity leave is considered part of employment so salary raises and sick leave follow the usual rules and one accumulates social rights, e.g. sickness benefits, while on leave (Eydal & Gíslason, 2014).

7.3.2 Day care and pre-school

Iceland had a relatively low volume of public day care in the 1980s and 1990s, but the capacity has increased since. In 2010, 80% of 1–2 year olds and 95% of 3–5 year olds were enrolled in day care and in 2011, 80% of children had 8 hours of day care (Eydal & Gíslason 2014: 115). Day care is provided by local authorities and parents are not guaranteed services, as there is no universal right of children to day care (Eydal & Olafsson 2006, Eydal & Gíslason 2014). Day care is subsidised and in 2006, parents paid approximately 30% of actual costs (Eydal & Olafsson 2006).

Icelandic parents also have the option of family day care, i.e. is private childminders who look after children in their homes. This service is also provided by local authorities (Eydal & Gíslason 2010).

7.4 Norway

Table 3: Norway's family policy arrangements

	Years							
	0	**½**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6–9**
Parental leave								
49/59 weeks of parental benefits	x	x	x	x				
14+14 weeks maternity/paternity leave	x	x	x	x				
18/28 weeks parental leave	x	x	x	x				
Cash for care								
1+1 year of unpaid leave per parent			x	x				
CfC benefits			x					
Day care								
Guaranteed day care facilities			x	x	x	x	x	

7.4.1 Parental leave

The Norwegian paid parental leave is 49/59 weeks in total depending on whether the parents choose 100% or 80% compensation. Benefits can be received until the child is three years old. The benefits are usually set based on the wage level at the time of the beginning of the leave (www.nav.no).

The parents can share the leave and the period of benefits after the initial six weeks, which are reserved for the mother. The father's right to parental benefits presupposes that the mother is in employment or in education. A father's quota is in place, and the general rule is that this quota cannot be transferred to the mother. The quota has been increased several times, in 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011 and 2013. In 2005, the quota was four weeks. In 2013, the parental leave was divided into three parts, 14 weeks maternity/paternity leave and 18 or 28 weeks to share, depending on level of compensation. The reason behind the maternity/paternity leave was to make it clearer that the remaining weeks of parental leave are to be shared between the parents, i.e. it is not a father's quota and the rest is for the mother. In 2005, the fathers earned the right to income compensation based on their own employment rate and in 2010 also earned the right to parental benefit, independent of the mother's employment rate. If only the mother has earned the right to parental benefit, she gets the whole period for herself (46/56). If only the father has earned the right to parental benefit, he can take at maximum 37/47 weeks conditioned on the mother being in employment or education. Women who are not entitled to parental leave benefits get a cash lump sum (www.nav.no).

7.4.2 Day care and cash-for-care benefits

The public day care system was not particularly developed in Norway prior to 2009. The kindergarten act of 1975 caused some development, yet primarily for short time and part-time services. Around year 2000, the combination of extended parental leave, lowered school age (7 to 6) and the development of more day care spaces implied a better match between demand and supply of day care. Still, the majority used private arrangements, or relied on part-time employment for mothers.

The election promise of Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV), *barnehageløftet*, guaranteed every child age one year or older a place in day care. As part of the RedGreen government, this promise has been delivered. In 2009, a maximum fee was introduced. Prior to this, the fees were decided by the day care owner, however state transfers implied that the average fee was NOK 2,500 per month (St.meld nr. 29, 2002–2003).

A cash-for-care benefit was introduced in 1998 for one-year-olds and in 1999 for two-year-olds. Parents with children who were not currently in day care were eligible recipients for this benefit. A primary reason for its introduction was that parents were to choose the form of day care that best suited their needs. Second, a cash-for-care benefit for those who do not use day care equals out public transfers with families that do use such arrangements. The cash-for-care money either subsidises private childcare arrangements or the parents' stay at home. It is independent of labour market attachment, tax free and is graded in case of part-time use of kindergarten. The cash-for-care benefit is given per child.

The cash-for-care benefit has reduced the labour supply of mothers. The reductions are equivalent to 11,000 man-years among women and 3,300 man-years among men. When first introduced, 75% of eligible parents received cash-for-care. In 2010, only 25% of parents did. Several evaluations have pointed to negative side effects of the cash-for-care arrangement, especially for immigrants. In 2012, the cash-for-care for two-year-olds ceased. Part of the reason was that all children have the right to a day care spot. However, the conservative government (2013–) has reinstated cash-for-care for two-year-olds.

7.5 Sweden

Swedish family policy has undergone continuous changes to become more gender egalitarian. The policy presupposes dual-earner families and asserts the same rights and obligations regarding family and labour market participation for both women and men. Thus, regulations are gender neutral, except for women around time for delivery. Family and labour market policy is intertwined in Sweden, and with gender equality policy. Participation in the labour market is the general rule and is considered a basic right, i.e. to support oneself. The government at time of writing emphasises freedom of choice and individual solutions (Duvander 2008).

Table 4: Sweden's family policy arrangements

	Years							
	0	**½**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6–9**
Parental leave								
480 days of parental leave	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
60 days reserved for each parent	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cash for care								
Unpaid leave can be taken full time (2 years) or part time (8 years)			x	x	x	x	x	x
Day care								
A place in a day-care is guaranteed between ages 1 and 12			x	x	x	x	x	x

7.5.1 Parental benefit

Parental benefit is paid for a total of 480 days per child. Parents with joint custody are entitled to 240 days each, of which 60 days are reserved for each parent. Both parents can transfer the remaining 180 days to the other. Parents with sole custody can take 480 days. Parental leave extends to the end of the first year of school or until their eighth birthday whatever comes first.

Parental leave benefits are paid at different levels of compensation depending on work history prior to the pregnancy.

Since 2008, Swedish parents may also receive an equality bonus. The intention behind the equality bonus is to make it easier for partners to share parental leave equally. The bonus is only paid when the parental leave is shared; it is not paid when both parents are at home to take care of the same child and it is not paid in the 60 earmarked maternity/paternity leave days, just for the remaining 270 if shared (Faktablad från Försäkringskassan, 2012).

7.5.2 Day care

Day care in Sweden is divided between pre-schools for children aged 1 year or older and after-school care for children up to age 12 of parents who work or study. Day care services are provided by the municipalities. Day care services shall be offered within 3–4 months of parents' application. The fee depends on income, and there is a maximum rate in place. The fees amount to approximately 8% of the total costs for preschools. Six-year-olds have access to a year of pre-school free of charge (Duvander 2008: 8).

Since 2008, Swedish parents have also been able to apply for a cash-for-care benefit. The benefit is paid to parents of children aged 1–3 who do not use public childcare. The benefit can be taken part time (Tunberger and Sigle-Rushton, 2011).

8. The effect of family policies in relation to women's part-time work – a discussion

Following Pfau-Effinger's (1998, 2004) argument that individual labour market and parental choices emerge in the intersection between gender cultures, gender orders and gender arrangements, it is important to pay special attention to the meanings and practices related to the family politics and policies in the Nordic countries as these have an impact on both men's and women's actual possibilities and decisions in terms of working hour contracts. In this review of important arguments pertaining to the potentially positive or negative effects of specific family policies for women's labour market participation, in addition to literature addressing the issue in one or more or Nordic countries, we to some extent draw on literature not primarily focusing on the situation for women in the Nordic countries. The reason for this is that the discussion does not concern only empirical findings but also principles and theories.

Hegewisch and Gornick (2011) review research from OECD countries on the impact of work-family policies on women's employment, including part-time work. They observe that for the most part, concerns about negative consequences are focused on the public provisions that *enable workers to spend time out of the workplace* (with or without compensation) through various leave or part-time schemes (Hegewisch & Gornick 2011). The possibility that work-family policies could worsen some women's labour market outcomes is the subject of a growing empirical literature, and the core questions are, according to Hegewisch and Gornick: Do public provisions that grant leaves and other measures, such as the right to part-time work, worsen the prospect of women being employed in higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs/occupations? Do generous policies lower the glass ceiling and/or make it more impenetrable and thereby worsen the gender pay gap? Their review includes a study by Hadas Mandel and Moshe Semyonov (2006) suggesting that countries "characterised by progressive and developed welfare policies… tend to have high levels of female labor force participation, along with a high

concentration of women in female-typed occupations and low female representation in managerial occupations" (p. 1910). They assess the impact of three policy measures separately, i.e. leave generosity, public investments in childcare, and the size of the public sector, and find that the negative effect of the length of maternity leave on women's odds of attaining managerial positions is more pronounced than the impact of the other two components, which conforms to their argument that "*institutional arrangements that allow long absence from paid work encourage discrimination by employers*" (Mandel & Semyonov 2006, cited in Hegewisch & Gornick 2011). Family-friendly policies potentially limit women's occupational attainments by inhibiting their access to powerful and desirable positions. Mandel and Semyonov (2006) claim that the very policies that support mothers by protecting them from family-challenging time-consuming employment – for example by providing them with comfortable working conditions in the public sector or by enabling them to exit employment for substantial amounts of time – also imply the risk that the same women become less motivated or less attractive to private employers and thus less likely to obtain prestigious and privileged positions. Their claim is reinforced by other studies that point to the negative consequences of long absenteeism from work, particularly the harmful effect of long maternity leaves on women's earnings (Albrecht *et al*. 1999, Ruhm 1998). The general argument, then, is that "mother-friendly" state interventions may have unintended negative consequences for the labour market attainments of working women (Mandel & Semyonov 2006).

A more recent article by Hadas Mandel (2011) questions Mandel and Semyonov's conclusion, however, the main argument being that the previous preoccupation with the perverse effects of women-friendly policies and state interventions exposes a lack of *class* sensitivity. While the empirical findings from Mandel & Semyonov 2006 are not challenged per se, Mandel revisits the conclusions drawn from it and place it in a wider context. His arguments, and the empirical evidence that supports them, are twofold. First, he argues that the impact of work-family policies is conditioned by class (Mandel 2011). The negative implications of family policies for women's labour market attainments, which were found in previous studies, are, in fact, a consequence of their impact on highly skilled and highly educated women. Among lower-skilled women, these effects are not only diminished but also reversed. The argument about the perverse effects of mother-friendly policies for working women must be nuanced. Second, Mandel (2011) argues that when the focus is shifted from a single aspect of gender inequality and multiple aspects are analysed simultane-

ously, the implications of work-family policies for gender inequality no longer appear paradoxical. When class differences between women are taken into account, a more complex picture emerges. Specifically, countries that rank higher on the family policy factor, such as the four Nordic countries studied by Mandel, exhibit the greatest gender inequality in indicators pertaining to advantaged groups but are at the same time the most egalitarian in outcomes related to less advantaged groups (Mandel 2011). More liberal (politically and economically) countries, in contrast, reveal an opposite pattern. So-called conservative countries are situated in the middle of these two analytical axes. Mandel argues that the "welfare state paradox" therefore should be reconsidered:

> …since the paradoxical effect of the welfare state on gender inequality is revealed when a distinct dimension of inequality is highlighted or when class is disregarded. However, when several indicators are analysed together, or when the indicators are differentiated according to the group they benefit, the relationships between state interventions and gendered outcomes are in fact in line with the intentions of the respective state ideology. (Mandel 2011: 172)

Anne Lise Ellingsæter (2011, 2012), who characterises "mother friendly" policies as "ambiguous" in relation to women's labour market attainments, also highlights the class dimension by the fact that specific family policies in the Nordic countries have had positive effects for the labour market attainments of women with limited formal competence. To treat women as one homogenous group is thus highly questionable. At the same time, Ellingsæter (2012) calls for a better and more nuanced understanding of "class". A "translation" of variables from education to class has a tendency to blur the picture by making "working class" synonymous with women who have a marginalised attachment to the labour market and only compulsory education. This group has diminished over time however. Women with higher education, often labelled "middle class", is a relatively smaller but expanding group. Most mothers find themselves somewhere in between these two groups. Many mothers in working class occupations are well integrated, not marginalised, in the labour market and benefit from the same family policies and services as middle class mothers do. Ellingsæter (2012) therefore argues that preoccupation with what is believed to be fundamental contradictions of interest between the two groups would run the risk of producing a false contradiction.

"Mother-friendly" policies then still seem to be ambiguous with some women's part-time work as a possible unintended consequence.

In an article that compares family politics and policies, Sweden, Norway and Denmark, Tine Rostgaard (2010) broadens the picture in an interesting way by turning our attention to "father-friendly" policies and the way ideology and social constructions of the role of the mother and the father differ among these countries. In contrast to Denmark and Norway, Rostgaard argues, political support of fathers' rights has been significant in Sweden, where commissions, trade unions and local social insurance offices have repeatedly underlined the importance of fathers making use of the right to take leave. Moreover, in contrast to Norway and Denmark, fatherhood in itself enjoys a strong position in Sweden's leave policy, whereas equality goals stand more in the background (Rostgaard 2010). In Denmark, the sharing of care work and the prolongation of the period when parents have a right to parental leave seem to imply a view of parenthood based on a liberal conception of freedom of choice and neutral gender relations. In Norway, legislation has, to a larger degree than in the other countries, preserved and sophisticated the idea of the mother as the natural caregiver "…whose rights are then transformed to the father" (Sainsbury 1999: 2, ref in Rostgaard 2010: 360). Rostgaard points out that different governments have different political agendas and that elements in the Norwegian leave policy also enable the Norwegian families to decide that the father will stay at home. But overall "…safeguarding motherhood seems to be a central issue regardless of political orientation" (Rostgaard 2010: 361).

Rostgaard's comparison seems to support the idea that part-time work has a cultural mandate in particular in Norway in as much as family politics and policies resonate with a specific cultural association between women, mothers and caregiving, and men, fathers and breadwinner *where the basic point with the parental leave is to facilitate the balancing act between family and work that women as mothers are supposed and expected to experience as conflicting*.

9. Part time in the Nordic countries – similar but different contexts

With a point of departure in Pfau-Effinger's (1998, 2004) argument that individuals' labour market and parental choices emerge in the intersection between gender cultures, gender orders and gender arrangements – i.e. culture/discourse, structure and politics – we find that a productive way to make comparisons pertaining to these intersections is to include and sum up contextualising reports on particular aspects of the debate or the political and cultural framing of part-time work in a selection of the Nordic countries.

The reports from Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Finland, in addition to findings from our own report on voluntary part-time work in Norway, build on a range of data sources (interviews, newspaper articles and government documents) and address how part-time work is understood and discussed in the media, by researchers, politicians and the social partners, and how it is framed as an issue of policy development. The country-specific reports are attached to this report. Here we will present the main findings and point to the aspects that will add explanatory power to the state of the art of part time work among women already discussed in the previous sections.

Part-time work in the Nordic countries has undergone an economic, cultural and social "process of normalisation" since the 1960s. The process has been driven partly by an increase in the number of women working part time, partly by the idea that part-time work represents a relief for modern families with working mothers, partly by labour market policies and regulations preventing employers from discriminating part-time workers, and partly by family politics and policies (re)producing the idea that work and family life basically are antagonistic spheres (Ellingsæter 1989, 2006, Leira 2006, Sundström 1999, NOU 2004, Lanninger & Sundström 2013).

Nevertheless, both part-time work and the large chunk of it that may be defined as voluntary (around 80%) is a source of much public debate and concern in Norway (Egeland & Drange 2014, forthcoming). For as

long as the focus has been on the involuntary part-time work, e.g. at Norwegian hospitals, the differences between the social partners have been as one might historically expect. The trade unions and the state have been able to make the employers responsible for the part-time work and have channelled their concerns into issues of structural barriers and work organisations in specific sectors and traditional gender roles associating women's use of time with family life and men's use of time with work. In recent years, however, the voluntary part-time work has gained growing attention and has united the social partners – with the largest unions and employer organisations in the first row – in two common concerns. The first concern is the expected demographic development leading to more people on different kinds of pension arrangements and fewer young people to work and pay taxes. The second concern is gender political and addresses women's economic situation in both the short (income) and long (pensions) term. Against these two concerns, women's voluntary part-time employment emerges as a problematic choice because it looks like an *irresponsible* act against both society and the gender equality project, which traditionally is regarded as the twin sister of the social democratic welfare state model. The two concerns are expressed by all actors in Norwegian labour market policy and may be interpreted as *a reflection of the economic situation in Norway marked by only a small degree of unemployment and an oil-fuelled still growing wealth*. At the same time, the public discourse on women's part-time work goes in a whole other direction with the choice of part-time work being interpreted as a responsible choice for the family and for the children. Good mothers work less so that they can spend more time caring for their family. Women's part-time work has a *cultural mandate* in Norway and gives privilege to the mother as the family's natural and morally prime caregiver (Egeland & Drange 2014, forthcoming). As already mentioned, this mandate is also identified in Tine Rostgaard's article on fathers' leave in Scandinavia (Rostgaard 2010).

Compared with other Nordic countries, the share of part-time work has traditionally been modest in Finland. The trends in part-time work among men in the Nordic countries are quite similar, but in the 2000s the share of (voluntary) part-time working women has increased relatively more in Finland than in the other Nordic countries (Haataja *et al*. 2011: 27, Lanninger & Sundström 2013: 8–9). The Finnish development is partially due to *new regulations that have made it easier to combine part-time work with unemployment, care responsibilities and decreased work capacity*. Due to the recent introduction of the reforms, there is still a lack of research on their influence. However, increasing

labour market flexibility and employment rates and especially the reconciliation of work and family life seem to be affecting the occurrence of part-time work.

Even though most of the reforms and initiatives are gender neutral, in practise they concern mainly women. With the exception of the part-time pension for the elderly, all other benefits related to part-time work have been promoted and their eligibility regulations loosened during 2009–2014. Partial sickness allowance, part-time childcare benefit and flexible care allowance are mainly utilised by women. Despite the rather equal gender division in unemployment benefits in general, also the majority of unemployment benefit beneficiaries are women. Altogether, improving the reconciliation of work and family has in practise implied increasing part-time work opportunities for women in Finland.

In Sweden three interpretations of part-time employment seem to be prominent in the public and political debate; part-time work as a problem for *gender equality* or as a problem *affecting women* in particular, part time work as an *economic problem* and part time work as *involuntary*. In addition, an affirmative view on part time has also emerged presenting it as a way of achieving a *balance between work and private life*. As regards women, part-time work is also understood as a culturally or ideologically forced choice that is based on their responsibility for children, relatives and the household. The lack of childcare during inconvenient working hours is also seen as a cause of the involuntary part-time work. Considering these representations, it is possible to argue that the discussions on part-time work in Sweden to a large extent are based on *a structural understanding of what the problem is*. The main exception from this is the articles with advisory ambitions. Here, the financial consequences of part-time work, e.g. for pensions, are seen as a matter that individuals (often women) need to educate themselves on in order to make favourable decisions.

The Swedish discussion on part-time work *implies a norm of full-time employment*. The "right to full time" is one of the main solutions presented, both when it comes to part-time work in general and when women's part-time work is discussed in particular. The idea that everybody ought to work more – that women should "be given the right to work as much as men" – reduces the space for other ways of discussing part-time and full-time work. For example, it makes it more difficult to present a solution to the problem that proposes reduced working hours for men. The overshadowing solution is to facilitate increased working hours, regardless of whether it is by means of a "right to full time" or by increased opening hours in day care.

In contrast to Norway, the fact that Denmark is currently experiencing a relatively high *unemployment rate* is probably part of the reason why there is little public concern with the future Danish labour force in relation to part-time work. A relatively large part of especially the public debate on part-time work in Denmark touches on gender. The positions seem to fall into one of two camps: 1) Those who believe that the uneven distribution of part-time work between men and women is one reason why women are still not equal with men in the labour market and that part-time work among women should therefore be diminished and 2) those who believe that women should not be frowned upon for prioritising family life through part-time work and that the labour market should be designed to make this prioritisation easier. In public debates, these two kinds of women's rights protagonists are often called "redstockings" and "uterus/care feminists", respectively. Another gender equality perspective in the debate on part-time work is that the gendered difference in part-time work is emphasised as problematic for the public economy, based on research showing that women are far more expensive for society than men.

In Denmark, gender issues as the dominating theme in the debates on part-time work seem to be challenged by another dominant theme – specifically in the political debate, but also in the public: Part-time work as a tool for making the labour market *more inclusive in order to include citizens with a reduced working capacity, and as a step towards full-time employment*. In this regard, the Danish economic context once again seems to play a crucial role: Denmark has a relatively high share of citizens receiving welfare benefits, which might be part of the explanation for the extensive debate on how to strengthen these citizens' attachment to the labour market through part-time work.

In Iceland, part-time work among women is only to a limited degree addressed explicitly in public debates and political discussions, and by researchers and the social partners. In Icelandic media, most stories on part-time work are part of other stories, for example on unemployment. There have been some discussions on general rights for part-time workers within the labour and trade unions and e.g. the labour union SGS points out that they worry about the development of part-time work and its gendered outcomes. They express concern about the fact that part-timers are most often found in women-dominated occupations and that this may lead to increased economic differences between women and men. Iceland was hit severely by the economic crisis in 2008. Following the crisis, an act was passed in the Icelandic parliament stating that people could reduce their proportion of work and get paid unemployment

benefits to compensate for the reduced wage. The action was meant to prevent layoffs in the wake of the economic crisis. At first, more men than women made use of this opportunity, but as time passed this changed and more women than men have now chosen this alternative. The law was cancelled in early 2012. The general view of the labour and trade unions is that everybody should be able to work full time if they want to. As they accept arguments both in favour of more and less part-time work they stress the importance of employers offering both alternatives. They find it more important to secure the rights of part-time workers than to actively work against part-time employment as a phenomenon.

9.1 Summary of important discursive features in the debates on women's part-time work

The different reports summed up in this section on the ways part-time work is discussed by the social partners, in public and media debates and through law in specific Nordic countries underscore an important dual point. They show the importance of paying attention to cultural, economic and structural contexts both when analysing individuals' labour market and working hour choices, and when trying to understand differences as well as similarities pertaining to part-time work among women in the Nordic countries.

What we can see from the reports is that the historical, political and economic situation in the different Nordic countries, differences in cultural expectations and perceptions of motherhood, care and gender equality and the way these elements have influenced different aspects of legislation is *present in different ways in the debates and concerns about part time in the different countries*.

In Norway the economic situation has spurred the social partners to unite in a common concern about the social irresponsibility shown by women who voluntarily choose to work part time. At the same time women's part time work is ascribed a cultural mandate through an ideological privileging of the mother as the family's natural and morally prime care giver. In Denmark, the less favourable economic situation leads to the contrary discursive outcome. Here, part-time work is only to a small degree discussed in relation to the future of the labour force and to a greater extent as a matter of inclusion, flexibility and individuals' own labour market and family choices in an economy under pressure. In Sweden, the discussions on part-time work seem to revolve around pri-

marily structural understandings of the occurrence of part-time work among women. As part of this, a full-time work norm has gained discursive hegemony, thereby giving more focus to women's than men's working hour choices. In Finland, part-time work has been less normal than in the other Nordic countries. This is slowly changing, however, with a growing number of women working part time. Also this should be understood in light of the present economic situation, and the report from Finland indicates that increasing labour market flexibility, unemployment rates, and policies aiming at reconciliation of work and family life, seem to influence the occurrence of part-time work. In Iceland, part-time work is only to a small degree subject to public debate. It is also reported that the social partners are mostly concerned with the flexibility of the labour market and that the unions are more interested in ways to secure the rights of part-timers than to actively work against part-time work as a phenomenon with unwanted consequences.

10. Concluding summary, reflections and recommendations

With a point of departure in the assignment from the Nordic Council of Ministers, we have explored women's part-time work in the Nordic countries as the result of mechanisms played out at the individual, organisational, social, cultural and discursive levels. This is both in accordance with findings in Lanninger and Sundström's report from phase 1 (Lanninger & Sundström 2013) and theory developments addressing women's labour market choices as the result of complex and shifting and not simple and stable intersections between the individual, structural and discursive levels of women's and men's social life (Pfau-Effinger 1998, 2004).

We have found several points of similarities and differences that may serve as important causes for the relatively high occurrence of part-time work among women in the Nordic countries:

- the *economic situation*, and the way it influences the different Nordic countries in different ways, produces different frameworks of understanding part-time employment as a social and political phenomenon
- the different labour market structures, politics and policies in terms of regulations, agreements between the social partners, changes in sectors and organisational cultures result in different outcomes as regards women's part-time work in the different Nordic countries
- part-time work among women has a cultural mandate in some countries while gender equality plays a more important role in others
- family policy plays an important role in shaping women's labour market attachment and participation even if it is uncertain to what extent in the different national contexts
- a full-time work norm holds a discursive hegemony in many Nordic countries at the same time as a cultural mandate for women's part-time work also is in effect. This may result both in the reproduction

of the male breadwinner model and the putting of a lid on discussions about other working hour norms or politics.

What we have also found is a *lack* of knowledge on several important questions pertaining to women's choices of working hour contracts and the factors shaping them.

10.1 International research and experiences

Theoretically and empirically, our research review discloses that our knowledge about the phenomenon of part time work would benefit from the way part time is approached and addressed *outside* the Nordic countries. It seems that the idea of the Nordic countries' "paradoxical" situation with many women working part time in what is perceived to be gender equality-oriented and social democratic societies has resulted in *a certain degree of theoretical path dependency where the causes for part time is approached and sought in loops between involuntary part-time work and work-family conflicts*.

While involuntary part-time work and work-family conflicts are important aspects of many women's working life and labour market attainments, research suggest that other aspects of work itself, the intersections between work, class and gender, the socio-economic situation, culture and ideology in a broader sense should also be explored in efforts to explain why women work part time.

In the article *Part-Time Work and Work Norms in the Netherlands* (Wielers & Raven 2013), Rudi Wielers and Dennis Raven investigate the effects of the growth of part-time work on work norms in the Netherlands, the country that was labelled the "*first part time economy' in the world*" (Visser 2002, ref. in Wielers & Raven 2013). In the literature, the Netherlands is considered to be a country of *over-employment*, that is, a country where the preference for fewer work hours exceeds the preference for more work hours (e.g. Bielinski, Bosch & Wagner 2002, ref. in Wieler & Raven 2013). Compared with other countries, the willingness of Dutch part-time workers to work full time is low (OECD, 2011).

They find that part-time working women and their partners adhere less to the work obligation norm than breadwinners and housewives, and that adherence to the work obligation norm among parents has decreased with the growth of part-time work (Wielers & Raven 2013).

They also find that the support for the norm has decreased among non-parents, too, but less than among parents. Their analyses show that,

due to the growth of part-time work, *the traditional division of labour is no longer predominant*, and, as a result, the traditional work ethic is declining (Wielers & Raven 2013). Against the backdrop of the often politician- and employer- driven argument about the future demographic development (with a steadily growing population of older citizens) and labour shortage in specific sectors, it is interesting that Wieler and Raven argue that, at least in the short run, their findings might imply that there will not be much support among the Dutch population for policies aiming to increase the number of working hours. In the long run, however, "For most people the specific combination of rewards work can give is much harder to realise outside the context of an employment relationship. Therefore, only a slow and limited decline of labour supply is to be expected" (Wielers & Raven 2013: 112).

We believe that systematic, comparative research on similar dynamics and processes pertaining to part-time employment in the Nordic countries would be highly useful for our knowledge about the phenomenon.

10.2 Empirical bias?

Most of the research we have reviewed concerns part-time working women from the ethnic majority living in standard heterosexual households. It is evident that this focus leaves out important aspects of the way e.g. globalisation influences part time as a social phenomenon. As we have noted, the privatisation of different public services has led to deteriorating working conditions with more part-time, involuntary part-time and temporary employment contracts. The increase in part-time employment is explained by demand-side factors such as clients' need for service, a constant pressure for lower prices and employers' need to replace and cut labour costs. The high exposure to competition in specific industries like cleaning reinforces the employers' preference for part-time employees as they are easier to replace and cheaper to employ and hence the employer can offer lower prices. A central point for e.g. Abbasian and Hellgren (2012) then is that women and non-European immigrants are disproportionally affected by the part-time regime in this industry. We believe that there is a lack of knowledge about the consequences of specific intersections between class and gender, as well as between gender, ethnicity and class in most research on women's part-time work in the Nordic countries.

10.3 The consequences of the economic situation

What is the relation between work, work norms, part-time work and the socio-economic situation in the Nordic countries? It has been suggested numerous times over the past years that the combination of a favourable economic situation and a gender segregated labour market in e.g. Norway could be an important cause for women's part time work (with high salaries in the male dominated parts of the private sector). This has not been shown by systematic research, however.

10.4 A full-time norm and its consequences

In the report written by Louise Grip on the Swedish debate on part-time work, it is suggested that the debate is dominated by a full-time norm and that this has consequences for the way we discuss part-time work and what we can do about it.

The "right to full time" is one of the main solutions presented, both when it comes to part time work in general, and when women's part time work is discussed in particular. The idea that everybody ought to work more – that women should be given the right to work as much as men – simultaneously reduce the space for other interpretations. For example, it makes it more difficult to present a solution to the problem that proposes reduced working hours for men. […]…the overshadowing solutions is nevertheless to enable increased working hours, regardless of whether it is by the means of a "right to full time" or by increased opening-hours at day care. This view encourage the idea that women will be more equal when they have the same working conditions as men, a notion which in turn makes it hard to challenge the appropriateness of these conditions (cf. Bacchi 1999:69). The fact that full time employment is conceived as the most desirable form of employment hence limits the space for propositions centred on structural changes like general reductions of work hours. It is full time, as it is organised today, which is reproduced as norm. With this framing of the problem it is likely that political proposals like a six-hour workday will be harder to recommend.

We share Grip's view on the problems attached to the full-time norm and believe it would be advisable to ask some new questions pertaining to women's part time work in the Nordic countries:

How and to what extent is women's part-time work in the Nordic countries a problem? Our review shows e.g. that long part time is the most common among women and that part-time working women in the Nordic countries can hardly be described as a marginalised group. Apart from the obvious gender equality aspect, in what way is women's part time work a political or social problem? And in terms of gender equality politics it also seems reasonable to ask: Is it important that women work more or that men work less, or is it a mix we want?

11. Literature

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11.1 Literature on labour markets and work conditions

There is an imbalance in the number of studies from the different countries. The majority of the articles are from Norway, and there are no studies on part-time and organisation of work and labour markets from Iceland. The period covered by the literature ranges from 1988 to 2013, a period with significant variations in the economic situation.

Table 1: Number of article citations

Author	Discipline	Citations
Jonsson, 2011	Economics	1
Rosenfeld and Birkelund, 1995	Sociology	122
Kauhanen, 2008	Economics	23
Branine, 1999	Management and organisation	17
Figart and Mutari, 1998	Economics	21
Buschoff and Protsch, 2008	Political Science	16
Gash, 2008	Sociology	81
Lind and Rasmussen, 2008	Economics	16
Kapborg, 2000	Health Science	3
Leschke, 2009		13
Sundström, 1993	Economics	43
Nätti, 1995	Social Policy	24
Amble, 2008	Sociology	9
Kjeldstad, 2006	Sociology	19
Abrahamsen, 2001	Sociology	2
Abrahamsen, 2009	Sociology	5
Abrahamsen, 2010	Sociology	-
Jensen, 2000	Sociology	-
Abbasian and Hellgren, 2012	Social Science	2
Kyyrä, 2010	Economics	35

Table 1 shows the number of citations for the articles on part-time employment and the organization of work. Citations are found via Google Scholar on the 14th of September 2014. Discipline is based on journal where author affiliation was not published.

The list shows that the quantitative papers with cross-country comparative analyses are most cited in this field, as the articles by Rosenfeld and Birkelund (1995) and Gash (2008). Next, quantitative papers that investigate the prevalence of part-time employment in a single country, i.e. Sundström (1993), Nätti (1995), Kauhanen (2008), Kjeldstad (2006) and Lind and Rasmussen (2008) also have a high number of citations. The papers that concern part-time in the health care industry or in nursing such as Jonsson (2011), Abrahamsen (2001; 2009), Amble (2008) and Kapborg (2000) have fewer citations in comparisons with the more general papers. The number of citations does not necessarily equate with a high impact in the field, in terms of understanding the reasons for part-time employment in

the Nordic countries. It is obvious that the number of citations to some extent reflect the relevance with regard to national contexts, statistics and industry.

11.2 Literature on part time work and health

There is a disciplinary bias towards medicine, psychology and other health sciences in the number of peer reviewed articles on health and work hours. Moreover, none of them present or analyse empirical data from Iceland. In order to broaden the disciplinary perspective on the ways health may be a cause for part time work we had to include some reports on part time work as a coping strategy. All of these were written from a sociological point of departure and all of them were Norwegian. The period covered by the literature ranges from 1989 to 2013, a period with significant variations in the economic situation.

Table 2: Number of article citations

Author	Discipline	Citations
Lundberg, U. 1996	Health Science	140
Mykletun, R.J & Mykletun, A., 1999	Organization studies, psychology	29
Nylén, Melin, Laflamme 2007	Health Science	32
Lunau *et al.*, 2014	Health Science	1
Leinweber *et al.* 2013	Health Science	12
Allen *et al.*, 2000	Health Science	1,454
Frone 2000	Psychology	475
Åkersted *et al.* 2000	Psychology	38
Sluiter *et al.* 2003	Health Science	201
Torkelson & Muhonen 2004	Health Science and Social Science	46
Frankenhauser *et al.* 1989	Organizational studies, psychology	352
Nicolaisen & Bråthen 2012	Sociology	3
Moland & Gautun 2002	Sociology	6
Brulid 2011	Sociology	1
Nicolaisen & Olberg 2005	Sociology	2

Table 2 shows the number of citations for the articles on health and work hours or part time work. Citations are found via Google Scholar on the 25th of September 2014. Discipline is based on journal title.

The list shows that the quantitative papers from natural science disciplines are most cited in this field, as the articles by Allen *et al.* (2000) and Frone (2000) The sociological papers, by e.g. Nicolaisen & Bråthen (2012), or Brulid (2011) which are actually reports, have almost no citations. The number of citations does not necessarily equate with a high impact in the field, in terms of understanding the reasons for part-time employment in the Nordic countries. It is obvious that the number of citations to some extent reflect the relevance with regard to national contexts and language.

11.3 Literature on part time work and family

Not surprising, there is a disciplinary bias towards sociology in the peer-reviewed articles on the relation between part time work among women and different social and cultural aspects of work-family balance or conflict. Moreover, none of them present or analyse empirical data from Iceland or Denmark alone. The articles range from quantitative over combined studies to purely qualitative studies. The period covered by the literature ranges from 1998 to 2013, a period with significant variations in the economic situation.

Table 3: Number of article citations

Author	Discipline	Citations
Kjelstad 2006	Sociology	19
Tijdens 2008	Sociology	78
Kjelstad and Nymoen 2012	Sociology	14
Mauno *et al.* 2012	Sociology	8
Henz and Sundström 2001	Sociology and economy	57
Barnett and Lundgren 1998	Sociology	28
Halrynjo and Lyng 2009	Sociology	25
Närvi 2012	Sociology	3
Pfau-Effinger 2004	Sociology	111
Hakim 2002	Sociology and economy	323

Table 3 shows the number of citations for the articles on work and family life and work hours or part time work. Citations are found via Google Scholar on the 25th of September 2014. Discipline is based on the authors' institutional affiliation or journal title. The table shows that non-Nordic, international contributions like Pfau-Effinger 2004 and Hakim 2002 are more often cited than contributions from Nordic authors. Moreover, quantitative analyses are given more attention than qualitative ones like Närvi 2012, even though e.g. Halrynjo and Lyng 2009 with considerable elements of qualitative data sources have been cited 25 times since it was published.

Country reports

12. Part-time work in Icelandic society

Edda Björk Kristjánsdóttir

The purpose of this report is to explore the presence of discussion/debate or actions regarding part-time work in Icelandic society, and also to look for trends in discussions found. How do the labour market partners see part-time work? Is part-time work viewed positively or as a problem?

To be able to form a view on that matter, we contacted labour unions, trade unions, employers unions and local governments[1] with questions about their view on part-time work. We asked them if they knew of any documents, reports or files concerning discussions or actions on part-time work in their respective organisations. We also searched for debates and reports on part-time work in the biggest newspapers in Iceland as well as in parliamentary documents.

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[1] The labour union contacted was Federation of General and Special Workers in Iceland (SGS). This is a union for general labourers and is one of the biggest Icelandic unions with over 50 000 members (one respondent was interviewed). The trade unions contacted were: the Union of Public Servants (SFR), with over 7000 members (two respondents were interviewed), the Reykjavik's municipal employees association (STRV), the public service union of the City of Reykjavík, with approximately 4000 members (one respondent was interviewed) the VR trade union (VR), a commercial and office workers' union with almost 30 000 members (one respondent was interviewed) and the Association of Academics (BMH), an umbrella organisation for 26 member unions with over 10 000 members (one respondent was interviewed). The employers' union contacted was SA Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA), a service organisation for Icelandic businesses. SA and its member associations include about 2000 businesses (two respondents were interviewed). The local governments contacted were the Directorate of Labour (Vinnumálastofnun), responsible to the Minister of Social Affairs and in charge of the country's employment service as well as the daily expedition of the Unemployment Benefit Fund, the Wage Guarantee Fund, the Childbirth Leave Fund and payments to parents of children with long term illness (one respondent was interviewed), the City of Reykjavík (Reykjavíkurborg), with over 8500 employees (two respondents were interviewed) and Municipality Hafnarfjörður, with about 2000 employees (one respondent was interviewed).

12.1 Discussions and actions regarding part-time work?

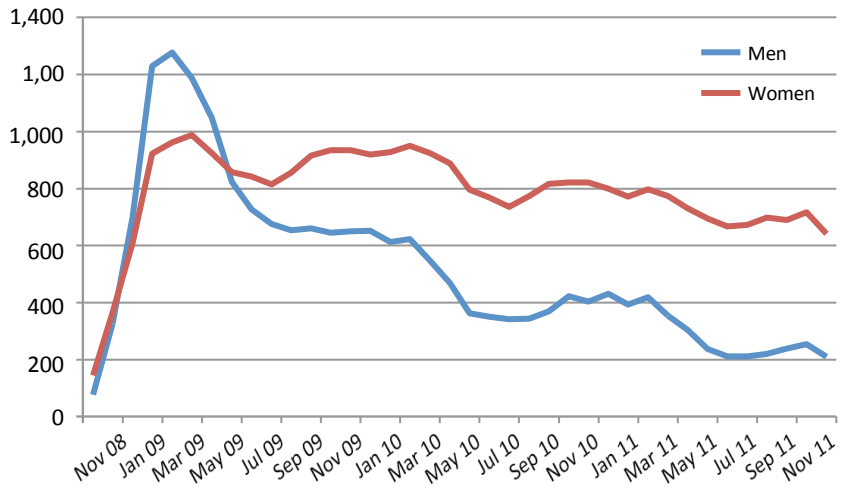
In all these organisations, there were hardly any reports or documents relating to discussions on part-time work. However, there had been many discussions within the labour and trade unions about part-time work. In many cases the discussions had concerned general rights for part-time workers. For example, some occupational groups are forced to work part time because the employer does not offer full-time employment. This can be found for example in the public sector, e.g. in social services where employees work in the homes of people with disabilities, in afterschool programmes and among unskilled employees in elementary schools. This can also be found in the private sector, for example in retail sales. The retailing environment has changed, and the employment structure in the sector goes hand in hand with the opening hours of the shops. Shops are opening later in the day than in the past, but are closing at the same time. Thus, people who used to work full days are now forced to work fewer hours.

Within SA, the employers' unions and the local governments, Reykjavík and Hafnarfjörður, the general view is that it is hard to offer some of the jobs as full time, such as in social services and after school programmes. There has also been discussion in Reykjavík that there is a lack of part-time jobs, for example for the disabled and people who are returning to the labour market after sicknesses.

The trade union SFR is promoting the right to full time if the employee so wishes, especially for people working in social services. This has been noted in demands for new collective bargaining, which will take place in 2014. Another trade union, STRV, is concerned about how employers deal with requests from part-timers to increase their employment toward full time, which is often hard or impossible. There are also some concerns about when people work part time but have the same work load as full-timers. The federation of General and Special workers in Iceland (SGS) point out that they worry about the development of part-time work and its gendered manifestations. They are concerned about the fact that part-time jobs are most often found in women's occupations, and that part-time workers are mainly women who get paid less than men. This will increase the economic differences between women and men. This, in addition to cultural and social factors, like the fact that women still bear the main burden of unpaid work in the home, is something that can explain women's weaker position in the labour market compared with men.

However, employers' unions and local governments did not seem to look at part-time work from that point of view. Some of the employers in the public sector, like Reykjavík, said that the trade unions had been talking to them about general rights of part-time workers, aiming at preventing discrimination against that group. However, most of the trade unions, local governments and employers' unions had not looked at part-time work as a problem from a gendered point of view. Nevertheless, there has been one action related to part-time work. During the economic crises in 2008, an act was passed in the Icelandic parliament, stating that people could reduce their proportion of work and get paid unemployment benefits to compensate for the reduction in income. This action was meant to prevent layoffs during the hard financial times. At first more men than women utilised this possibility, but the proportion turned around over time and women seemed to get stuck in this more than men. This law (no 131.2008) was cancelled in early 2012.

Figure 1: Employees in reduced proportion of work against partial compensations



Source: Vinnumálastofnun 2013.

When looking for discussions in the Althing, i.e. the Icelandic parliament, and in parliamentary documents from 1994 to 2014, there is fairly little to be found. However, in 1995 a committee working on development of gender equality proposed that the governments should make some arrangements to look at the gender differences in part-time jobs. These differences could be indications of indirect discrimination against women in the labour market. In 1997 it was put in the government's implementation plan for equality to look into part-time work, jobs without a

permanent contract and jobs performed outside traditional workplaces. The information was to be categorised by gender, sector and profession. In 2002 there were some discussions regarding high percentage ofwomen working part time that suggests that women takes on more family responsibility than men. It was however noted that this was most likely mainly due to women's free choice.

As mentioned, there were discussions in the parliament after the economic crisis in 2008 regarding the possibilities for employees to reduce their working time and get unemployment benefits correspondingly. In 2010 in discussions about gender equality it is noted that the majority of part-time workers are still women, indicating that family responsibilities have considerable effects on women's positions in the labour market. Also in 2010 there was an inquiry about the partial compensations that was set in 2008. The inquiry included questions regarding the experience with partial compensations. How many had used this possibility, broken down by gender, age, where they lived and labour market sector? Some other questions regarding the effects of the partial compensations were also asked. Answers from the social affairs minister followed and he for example said that the experience with partial compensations was generally positive, where employees were still active in the labour market instead of potentially losing their job entirely.

Fairly little information could be found in Icelandic newspapers. Most of the articles mentioning part-time work primarily dealt with another subject, like unemployment. There was some coverage of the action taken regarding the possibility for employees to reduce their working time and get unemployment benefits correspondingly in 2008. The coverage mostly concerned the transposition of the law and also how companies completed this commitment. In 2013 an article covered the findings from the project Part-Time Work, Gender and Economic Distribution in the Nordic Countries. The headline read "No man is working part time because of family reasons". This was the only article we found with a debate about part-time work per se.

12.2 Why so little discussion and actions?

When asked about why there is so little discussion and action regarding part-time work, the labour market partners referred to the low unemployment rate in Iceland before the crisis. Due to this, discussions about part-time work never arose. Most people could work as much as they wanted; it is only after the crisis that we realised that some people can-

not get a full-time job, and most of them are women. According to the interviews, the respondents' from BHM and VR thought that the most likely explanation for the limited discussion on part-time work was that the workers' movement had not looked at part-time work from the perspective that it is a problem, neither in general or from a gendered point of view. Most respondents from the employers' unions and local governments, like SA, Vinnumálastofnun, Reykjavík and Hafnarfjörður, had not thought of part-time work as a problem or from a gendered point of view. Their view was that there is general agreement about part-time work. The respondent from Vinnumálastofnun said that he doubted that the general view on part-time work was that it is a problem, and therefore few people thought there was a reason for developing a specific strategy on the matter.

12.3 Why do people (women) work part time?

According to the interviewees from labour and trade unions like BHM, SFR and STRV, their feeling is that there are mainly two reasons why people (mainly women) work part time. First there are the ones who work part time due to health problems or for social reasons, such as trying to combine work and other responsibilities or to increase leisure time. Second, there are the ones who cannot get a full-time job (involuntary part time). The interviewees believe that the first group is bigger, but they do not have any data to show the proportions of the groups.

The reason for the fact that most part-timers are women is according to the general secretary of SGS that, in the labour market, most part-time work is found in traditional "women's jobs and sectors", such as social services and cleaning. She also talked about economic reasons, i.e. it is cheaper for the family if the woman reduces her working hours in order to combine work and family responsibilities as women generally have lower income than men.

VR put an advertisement out for two part-time office work positions. One position was before noon and the other after noon. They received 400 applications for the position before noon, but only one for the position after noon. The explanation given for this was that the main reason for people and mainly women to work part time is to be able to combine work and family life.

The general view of employers' unions and local governments like SA, Vinnumálastofnun, Reykjavík and Hafnarfjörður concerning the main reasons people, mainly women, work part time is that part-time work is

a choice that women make in order to combine work and family life or for health reasons. Like one respondent said, "It is suitable for many people to work part time and compared with the structure and views of the western societies, this structure is suitable for women".[2] But he also said that it was not necessarily optimal that part-time work is as gender related as it is, as it will contribute to maintaining the gender wage discrimination. Other reasons were also mentioned, such as people working part time while getting their education and older workers wanting to reduce their working time.

12.4 Do many part-timers want to work full time?

When asked if they thought that many people work part time because they cannot get a full-time job, there were some concerns within some of the labour and trade unions. According to the general secretary of SGS, it is important to look further into the fact that even though there was a sharp rise in involuntary part-time work after the financial crisis in Iceland, which indicates that women and men have had to settle for reduced employment as part of cost-reduction plans, part-time work has not increased in Iceland after the economic crisis, but has rather decreased a little. The general secretary believes that part-time workers have had to settle for even less work than before.

Also within STRV and SFR there are some concerns about how employers deal with requests from employees who want to increase their working hours from part time to full time. This is most prominent in the social services. Within BHM there were beliefs that from 2009 the group of people who were working part time because they could not find a full-time job had increased. Still, however, BHM thought that the main reason people were working part time was that they chose to do so, or could not work full time because of health problems or for social reasons. All union representatives agree that the possibilities of getting a full- or part-time job depend a lot on the job and the sector.

Reykjavík acknowledges that they have had some discussions with the unions about the unions' concerns regarding involuntary part-time workers and the large share of women in this group. However, they have

[2] Icelandic translation'það er svo að það hentar mörgum og þá einkum konum í því skipulagi/viðhorfum sem er í vestrænum samfélögum, að vinna hlutastörf'.

not dealt with the issue actively and do not seem to recognise it as a problem.

12.5 Should we increase or reduce part-time work?

The general view of the labour and trade unions was that everyone should be able to work full time if they choose to. As they see demand for increased and decreased working time, they see it as important to be able to offer both. In this respect, the importance of guarding the rights of the part-time workers is essential. Drífa Snædal, the general secretary of SGS, said that the increase in full-time jobs for women has gone hand in hand with improved social care of children and the elderly. In a perfect world where part-time workers could live on their salaries, part-time work should be a realistic option, but this is not the case today.

The views of employers' unions and local governments on whether to increase or reduce part-time work is similar to the views of trade and labour unions. It is important to offer part-time jobs because there is demand for them. Part-time work can serve both parties, but it should be kept within reasonable limits. However, none of the respondents was able to more clearly specify what those limits might be.

12.6 Source for discussion on part-time work in Iceland.

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Félags og tryggingarmálaráðuneytið. (2009). *Skýrsla félags-- og tryggingamálaráðherraum stöðu og þróun jafnréttismála: Jafnrétti kynjanna í tölum*. Reykjavík: Félags og tryggingarmálaráðuneytið. http://www.velferdarraduneyti.is/media/Jafnrettisthing09/Jafnrth2009_net.pdf

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13. A mapping and description of recent actions and regulations pertaining to part-time work in Finland

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13.1 Introduction

Compared with other Nordic countries, the share of part-time work has traditionally been modest in Finland. The trends in part-time work among men in the Nordic countries are quite similar, but since the turn of the century the share of (voluntary) part-time working women has increased relatively more in Finland than in the other Nordic countries (Haataja *et al.* 2011, 27; Lanninger & Sundström 2013, 8–9). The Finnish development is partially due to new regulations that have made it easier to combine part-time work with unemployment, decreased working capacity and care responsibilities. Due to the recent introduction of the reforms, there is still a lack of research on their influence. Therefore, in this report we concentrate on reviewing the reforms per se and the debates around them.

The aim of this report is to identify and describe the essential actions and regulations concerning part-time employment during the past five years (2009–2014) in Finland. Throughout the report we aim at emphasising the gender aspect, which has been of particular interest in the discussion on part-time work. The report is based on reviews of the government programmes, reports and legislative initiatives connected to part-time employment, social security reforms and the views of the labour market organisations. In addition, we have interviewed different parties involved.

13.2 Policies and initiatives

During 2009–2014, Finland has had two governments. The Programme of Matti Vanhanen's second Government 2007–2011 (Finnish Government 2007) had no particular focus on part-time work, although small changes in the partial child home care allowance were introduced. However, Vanhanen's first Government 2003–2007 (Finnish Government 2003) had already extended the partial child home care allowance for children under age 3 to also cover children aged 6–8 years, and had also enabled both parents to share the allowance during a same time period. Due to these changes, the number of partial home care allowance recipients increased significantly (Aalto 2013). Furthermore, the partial sickness allowance was introduced in 2007 and the duration of the adjusted unemployment benefit was made indefinite. A possible exempt amount for the adjusted unemployment benefit was also discussed, but became introduced only by Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government in 2014.

The current Programme of Katainen's Government (Finnish Government 2011) defines part- time work as a possibility to prolong working careers, reconcile employment and social security, and facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. According to the current Programme, the flexibility of the Finnish day care system will be increased. The aim is to provide parents with more opportunities for reconciling work and family life. One of the means is to enhance part-time employment. The Programme underlines the importance of equally shared parenting and pays particular attention to fathers' use of parental leave and benefits. These recommendations are justified both by economic reasons and family wellbeing aspects.

In addition, the current Government Programme pays attention to reconciliation of work and disability, and of work and care of a close relative. All in all, the Programme states that the opportunities to work part time should be improved, especially by promoting the use of partial sickness allowance, partial rehabilitation allowance and partial disability pension. Furthermore, the employers are encouraged to advance operations models that support both part-time employment of those partially incapacitated for work and employees' return to work after any kind of leave.

In August 2013, Katainen's Government adopted an additional structural policy programme (Finnish Government 2013). For the most part, the policy programme follows the alignments stated in the current Government Programme. Particularly the breaks in parents' working careers are considered problematic as they create cuts in income development and decrease future employment opportunities. In addition, the

Programme underlines a particular need to improve the financial incentives of short-term, part-time and low-paid work.

In October 2011, based on the alignments of the Government Programme, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy nominated a tripartite working group to examine the ongoing trends and structural changes of employment and labour legislation (Working group on employment trends). The group runs until 2015, but in May 2012 it published an interim report (TEM 2012), summarising the results of several studies on temporary work, part-time work, temporary agency work and self-employment. The report acknowledges the contradictory nature of part-time work: While voluntary part-time employment can create positive opportunities and increase flexibility, the large share of employees who work part-time involuntarily is considered problematic. The working group does not aim at introducing legislative initiatives. However, the group recommended the appointment of a separate working group on part-time employment and suggested that the ongoing working group on child home care allowance and the day care system should pay attention to voluntary part-time employment.

In August 2012, building on the recommendation of the "trend group", the Ministry of Employment and the Economy nominated a tripartite working group to examine issues on part-time employment from the perspective of labour legislation (Working group on part-time employment). The final report of the group was published in December 2013 (TEM 2013a). The report concludes that voluntary part-time work combined with flexible social benefits can support especially the reconciliation of work and family life. However, the problems of involuntary part-time employment are also acknowledged. Furthermore, the report pays attention to employers' liability to offer additional work to part-time employees, and underlines that the distribution of additional work should comply with equal treatment and non-discrimination. The working group did not, however, introduce any legislative initiatives, but noted that the principles of part-time employment should be openly discussed at workplaces.

In September 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health nominated a tripartite working group to examine how the employment opportunities of parents receiving child home care allowance could be improved (Working group on child home care allowance and day care system; STM 2013a). The aim was to make the childcare system more flexible and to decrease career breaks among employees with small children. In February 2013, the working group made a legislative initiative on a new flexible care allowance, which is reviewed more closely later on.

In 2012, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy nominated a tripartite working group to examine the so-called zero-hour contracts (Working group on zero-hour contracts). The final report was published in September 2013 (TEM 2013b). A zero-hour contract can be defined for, for instance, 0–40 weekly working hours, or the employee can be called to work when needed (e.g. seasonal or occasional work). Since the zero-hour contracts are not defined in Finnish law, there are many uncertainties concerning the rights and the responsibilities between the employer and the employee. If the employee is more tied to accepting the "calls" than the employer is tied to offering shifts, the employee cannot anticipate the working hours, which further complicates the reconciliation of work and e.g. family life. However, in the working group, the views of the different parties collided. Therefore, the group did not introduce any legislative initiatives, but made a final compromised conclusion that the legal rights of employees working on zero-hour contracts should be consolidated.

In February 2014, a Left Alliance MP introduced a legislative initiative with regard to the Working Hours Act (legislative initiative 2014). The initiative aims at preventing the misuse of zero-hour contracts by proposing a minimum limit of 18 hours per week. The initiative suggests that contracts with less than 18 weekly working hours could be established only with particular consent of the employee.

All the reviewed working groups are based on tripartite negotiations, and it seems that the negotiations are complicated by the different views of the parties. In general, employer organisations consider part-time work a positive way to raise employment rates, to increase productivity and to reconcile work and different life situations, particularly family life. Altogether, according to the employers' organisations, there is no clear need for legislative initiatives or reforms in regard to part-time employment (TEM 2013a).

Both the employers' organisations and the trade unions consider the social benefits supporting voluntary part-time employment to be positive. However, the trade unions have emphasised several issues concerning part-time employment, most of all the involuntary part-time work. Although voluntary part-time employment is seen as a way to reconcile work and other aspects of life, the trade unions are concerned about the income level and wellbeing of part-time employees. In addition, the unions are concerned about the realisation of employees' right to choose to work part-time.

Furthermore, the trade unions have brought forward the following labour legislative issues:

- In contrast to temporary work contracts, the reason for a part-time contract does not have to be justified. The trade unions are concerned that some employees might work part-time even when the nature of the work does not require it.
- Employee consent to accept possible additional work, as written in a contract, can be permanent (cf. zero-hour contracts). In contrast, the consent to work overtime must be enquired separately each time. The trade unions state that the permanent consent to accept additional work requires unreasonable flexibility from employees, complicates the reconciliation of work and other aspects of life and impedes acceptance of other, complementary, job offers.
- At present, updating of contracts to meet the actual established working hours is always resolved case-specifically. The trade unions are concerned that in practice, the actual working hours might not always be written in the contract.
- Employers' liability to offer additional work to part-time employees is considered positive, but the priority order of the liability is found problematic. Accordingly, the trade unions suggest that a priority could be given to employees with special expertise or a long employment history in the given workplace.

In addition, Service Union United (PAM) has recently commissioned a survey on attitudes to part-time employment among MPs and other political actors (PAM 2014a). The results reflect divisions between the political parties: the parties on the left tend to be more concerned about the rights of the employees, whereas the parties on the right emphasise the importance of incentives instead of legislative obligations. PAM has also emphasised that the large share of women working part time is one reason for income inequality in Finland (Lilja & Savaja 2013). Furthermore, PAM has recently launched a campaign under the title *Ulos pätkävankilasta* ("out of the part-time job prison") to underline the need to improve the situation of part-time employees (PAM 2014b).

13.3 Social security reforms connected to part-time work 2009–2014

13.3.1 Adjusted unemployment benefit

The partially (un)employed who work part time due to a lack of full-time or permanent work are eligible for the adjusted unemployment benefit. The benefit can be based on either earnings-related or basic unemployment allowance or on labour market subsidy. In 2013, the labour market subsidy ceased to be means-tested at household level and is now only individually means-tested. Furthermore, an exempt amount of EUR 300 for the recipients of the adjusted unemployment benefit was introduced in 2014. In other words, all recipients of adjusted unemployment benefits can earn up to this amount per month without suffering a reduction in the benefit. In practice, the mentioned reforms promote both temporary and part-time employment.

13.3.2 Flexible care allowance

The flexible care allowance came into effect on 1st January 2014. The allowance enables parents with children under age 3 to work part time and care for their children at the same time. The flexible care allowance replaced the part-time child care benefit for parents with children under 3 years of age. However, the part-time child care leave remained available for parents with school-age children (6–8 year olds) (STM 2013b).

To increase the attraction of the flexible care allowance, its level was set higher than that of the part-time child care benefit. Additionally, the amount of the flexible care allowance is payable at two rates depending on the weekly working time of the applicant. According to the motion, the main aim of the allowance is to shorten full-time absences from work among parents with small children. Furthermore, the motion emphasises the importance of equally shared parenting (STM 2013b). The combination of the allowance and part-time employment is seen as a way to equalise differences in career and earnings development, and even to prevent social exclusion (legislative initiative 2013). Even though the reform of the new allowance is gender-neutral, in practice the changes affect mainly women, as they are more likely to stay at home with the children.

13.3.3 Partial sickness allowance

In Finland, the partial sickness allowance was only introduced in 2007 (Hytti 2008; Kausto 2013, 8). In general, the conditions of the benefit are stricter in Finland than in the other Nordic countries. For instance, in Finland eligibility for the allowance requires that a person is officially fully incapacitated for work and thus is eligible for the full sickness allowance. Furthermore, neither the employee nor the employer has a legal obligation to utilise the partial sick leave.

When the partial sick leave first came into effect, applicants were required to have been fully incapacitated for work for at least 60 days before claiming either the full or partial sickness allowance. However, in 2010 the preceding waiting period was reduced to 10 days. In addition, an applicant switching from rehabilitation or full sickness leave to partial sick leave now became eligible for the partial sickness allowance without a waiting period.

Until recently, only people who were employed or self-employed on a full-time basis could become eligible for the partial sickness allowance. However, since 1st January 2014, also those working two or more part-time jobs totalling at least 35 hours a week can become eligible for the partial sick leave. In addition, the maximum duration of the leave was extended from 72 to 120 days (Kela 2014a). The reviewed reforms aim at promoting the use of the partial sick leave and thus part-time employment among persons incapacitated for full-time work.

13.3.4 Part-time pensions

There are two forms of part-time pension: the part-time pension (i.e. partial old-age pension), and the partial disability pension. If a pensioner's working capacity is likely to improve, the partial disability pension can be granted as a fixed-term rehabilitation benefit. Contrary to the part-time pension, the partial disability pension does not require working.

The recent developments of the part-time pension and partial disability pension differ considerably from each other. Contrary to the other reviewed social benefits, the requirements for the part-time pension have become stricter. The eligibility age for the part-time pension was raised from 58 to 60 in 2010. In 2013, the eligibility age was raised again from 60 to 61. At present, the part-time pension is available for insured persons aged 61–67. However, people born in 1953 or earlier can still claim the part-time pension already at a lower age.

Contrary to the retrenchment of the part-time pension, the employment opportunities for partial disability pensioners have been improved. In 2013, a change in law alleviated the regulations to accept short or occasional employment periods and to leave the pension in abeyance (Finlex 2013). The reform reflects the general aim to raise the employment rate of those only partially incapacitated for work.

13.4 Discussion

As the review illustrates, part-time employment has been widely discussed in Finland during the period 2009–2014. Of course, there are further discussions that are not covered in this report (e.g. media discussions, HR strategies and equality plans). As regards recent research on part-time work, the focus has been e.g. on reasons for part-time work in the Nordic countries (Kauhanen and Haataja 2010) and on the impact of job contract type on perceived job quality (Kauhanen and Nätti, 2014), and a research of labour market mobility of part-time workers is in process (Oinas 2014).

Since most of the social reforms linked to part-time work are very recent, their effects could not yet be evaluated. Therefore, it is rather difficult to name the most influential initiative during the observation period. However, increasing labour market flexibility, employment rate and especially the reconciliation of work and family life seem to be the most dominant themes throughout the review. Furthermore, there seems to be a substantive division between the favourable incentives of voluntary part-time work and the undesirable elements linked to involuntary part-time employment.

Even though most of the reforms and initiatives are gender-neutral, in practice they concern mainly women (see Appendix). With the exception of the part-time pension for the elderly, all other benefits related to part-time work have been promoted and their eligibility regulations alleviated during 2009–2014. The partial sickness allowance, the part-time child care benefit and the flexible care allowance are mainly utilised by women. Despite the rather equal gender division in unemployment benefits in general, also the majority of adjusted unemployment benefit beneficiaries comprise of women. Altogether, improving the reconciliation of work and family has in practice implied increasing part-time work opportunities for women.

13.5 We have consulted the following experts during the writing process:

- Ministry of Employment and the Economy: administrator Seija Jalkanen.
- Service Union United PAM: employment specialist Sirpa Leppäkangas.
- Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK: senior adviser Katarina Murto and attorney Minna Tanska.
- Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK): legal adviser Mika Kärkkäinen KT.
- Local Government Employers: labour market attorney Anne Kiiski.
- Finnish Institute for Occupational Health: researcher Johanna Kausto.
- Finnish Centre for Pensions: development director Marjukka Hietaniemi and researcher Mervi Takala.
- Kela (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland): senior researcher Pertti Honkanen.

Anita Haataja (senior researcher at Kela) and Merja Kauhanen (research coordinator at Labour Institute for Economic Research) have supervised the report.

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13.7 Appendix

Statistics about benefit beneficiaries
Adjusted unemployment benefit recipients in 2012:

- Earnings-related unemployment allowance: 66,000 (64% women, 36% men).
- Basic unemployment allowance: 13,320 (64% women, 36% men).
- Labour market subsidy: 26,700 (59% women, 41% men).

For comparison, the recipients of full unemployment benefits in 2012: earnings-related unemployment allowance – 274,500 (49% women, 51% men), basic unemployment allowance – 58,820 (47% women, 53% men) and labour market subsidy – 216,700 (45% women, 55% men).

Source: Kela 2012a.

Partial child home care allowance and flexible care allowance
Partial child home care allowance recipients:

- January 2013: 12,411 (94% women, 6% men), with children under 3 years – 4,931; with children 6–8 years – 6,980.
- March 2014 (when flexible care allowance in use): with children 6–8 years of age – 7,699 (93% women, 7% men).

Flexible care allowance recipients:
- March 2014: 6,801 (92% women, 8% men), children under 3 years of age.
- Both allowances in total in March 2014: 14,500 (92% women, 8 men).

Source: Kela 2014b.

Partial sickness allowance
Partial sickness allowance recipients:

- In 2012: 8,744 (74% women, 26% men).*
- January 2012: 1,303 (76% women, 24% men).
- March 2014: 2,925 (75% women, 25% men).

*Note: The average duration of partial sick leave was 45 days in 2012.
For comparison, recipients of full sickness allowance in 2012: 322,227 (58% women, 42% men).

Source: Kela 2012b; Kela 2014b.

Part-time pension
Part-time pension recipients:

- In 2011: 27,500 (>50% women).
- December 2013: 20,433 (58% women, 42% men).

Partial disability pension recipients:

- December 2013: 22,876 (66% women, 34% men)

For comparison, all recipients of disability pension in December 2012: 244,844 (women 48%, 52% men).

Sources: TEM 2013a; ETK & Kela 2012.

14. The Danish debate on part-time work

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This document presents an analysis of the dominant ways in which part-time work has been described, understood and represented in the Danish public and political debate during 2013 and the first months of 2014.

The analysis is primarily based on articles from newspapers and from labour union or employers' organisation journals, covering the public debate. The search within these sources was conducted through the media intelligence provider "Infomedia", which covers all relevant newspapers and journals (see list in Appendix A). We limited our search to articles of at least 1000 words. The number of articles that we found relevant for elucidating the debate was 33.[1]

To some extent, the analysis further covers the political debate in the Danish parliament concerning part-time work. This part of the analysis is based on a search in the Danish parliament's document database.[2]

Through both Infomedia and the parliament's document database, we have sought out articles or debates containing the words *deltid* (part time) and *arbejde* (work) dated 1st January 2013 and 20th March 2014.

In the following we present the dominant ways in which part-time work is represented and understood by different actors in the public and the political debate, respectively, as well as significant understandings that diverge from these dominant ways.

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[1] The search resulted in a total of 165 articles of which a large part merely stated that a given person had been or was working part time – mostly in relation to anniversary announcements or CVs of persons interviewed in an article.

[2] The search in the document parliament's database focused on written questions from members of parliament to a minister (so-called § 20 questions), draft bills (*lovforslag*), statements (*redegørelser*), committee questions (*udvalgsspørgsmål*) and meeting accounts (*referater*) in all parliament committees.

14.1 The public debate

The debates and articles in newspapers and journals cover five dominant themes:

- Part-time work as a problem for gender equality, as mostly women in Denmark work part time.
- Part-time work in relation to the work/life balance.
- Part-time work as a business management or labour market strategy.
- Part-time work as a possibility for those who cannot achieve full-time work.
- Part-time work as a problem for the Danish society and for individuals who are forced to work part time.

By far, most of the articles somehow concern gender equality, including equal pay, the work/life balance and the gendered distribution of parental leave. However, other themes are present as well, and part-time work is thus both problematised and emphasised as a "tool" for employers and employees. The actors dominating in articles, either as authors or interviewees, are journalists, debaters, researchers/experts, representatives from think tanks and labour unions, as well as individual employers and employees. Politicians are only present in the public debate on part-time work to a very limited extent.

14.2 Part-time work as a problem for gender equality, as mostly women in Denmark work part time

In many of the relevant articles, part-time work is somehow presented as a problem for gender equality. In six of these articles, the fact that mostly women in Denmark work part time – often appearing alongside the fact that women take by far most of the parental leave – is emphasised as increasing gender inequality in the labour market and, in some cases, as part of the reason for continued unequal pay (Brand, 2014; Gourani, 2014; Nielsen, 2014; Andersen, 2013b; Larsen, 2013; Odgaard, 2013). A good example of how part-time work is linked to parental leave and gender equality is the following extract from a feature article by a debater: "(…) *female values have long been dominating in large parts of the public debate. On the other hand, we still do not have equal pay* (…) *Women have responsi-*

bility for most household work, top executive or not. And it is women who take parental leave and work part time" (Larsen, 2013).

Two articles present the argument that women are far more costly for the Danish society than men (Nielsen, 2013a; Andersen, 2013c). In these articles, the fact that it is mostly women who work part time (and take most of the parental leave) is once again presented as a problem – both for gender equality and for the Danish public economy. In Denmark, most women work in the public sector and the economist behind the research argues in an interview in one of the articles that the problem might be reduced if more women worked in the private sector – among other things, she argues, because the possibilities for part-time work and long parental leave are limited here compared with in the public sector.

Regarding equal pay, two articles emphasise new research that concludes that the aforementioned facts about women's part-time work and parental leave do not mean that women have smaller pensions, and thus do not affect equal pay as much as assumed hitherto (Bonde, 2014; Thieman, 2013a).

14.3 Part-time work in relation to the work/life balance

This overall theme is represented by debaters, NGOs, labour unions, journalists and experts in several articles. Most of these consider part-time work an important tool for maintaining the work/life balance (Thorup, 2014; Brand, 2014; Holm, 2014; Højbjerg, 2013; Pedersen, 2013a). In these articles, part-time work is thus generally presented as a potential and an opportunity rather than a problem.

One example of this is a representative from an organisation for families with small children who argues in an interview that it should not be less valuable for women to stay home than to go to work, and that everyone should claim their "*right to an emotionally coherent working day*" including the right to part-time work and part-time day care for their children (Thorup, 2014). In this example and many others, the argument is gendered; it is primarily women who should work part time and the organisation even argues that we should not reserve more of the parental leave for fathers but instead offer even more parental leave to mothers. In the same article, an interviewed politician and a debater who is much involved in discussions on gender equality and women's rights both agree that it should be more legitimate to prioritise family life, for example

through part-time work – but that this should be the case for both men and women in order to avoid unequal labour market participation.

In two interview-based articles, researchers simply conclude that many women make an active choice to work part time in order to prioritise family life. In one article, this serves as an argument against gender quotas and other ways of "favouring" women in the labour market (another contribution to the debate on gender equality) (Bonde, 2013); in the other as a possible explanation for research finding that many people feel more attached to their mother than their father (Hvid, 2013).

In two other articles, however, female debaters rebel against the idea that women work part time in order to prioritise family life (Høberg, 2013; Bøttcher, 2013). One of them comments on the above mentioned research by a Danish economist, showing that women are far more costly for the Danish society than men. This debater asks the question: "*Do we Danish women really want to be labelled as "bad business" for the Danish society due to children, part-time work and parental leave?*" (Høberg, 2013). These are, yet again, at the same time contributions to the public debate on gender equality and gender roles.

Many of the discussions on both gender equality and the work/life balance are thus discussions between mainly female debaters with different values and priorities.

14.4 Part-time work as a business management or labour market strategy

This theme is only represented in two articles in two different labour union journals (notably not in the dominating newspapers), but it is an interesting comment to the described debate on part-time work in relation to work/life balance – among other things because these articles do not consider gender.

In one of these articles (Mølgaard, 2013), the manager of the private company Center for Work Life Balance argues that work/life balance "version 2.0" is not only about prioritising family life, but also about being able to work at higher ages, recharging and "being offline" – and that part-time work is an important tool to obtain this balance. She argues that part-time work should not be frowned upon, as she believes is the case in Denmark today: "A*ctually part-time employment is very efficient and there are many examples that individuals or entire departments have performed better than in full-time employment, because they have the time to recharge*".

Her argument is in line with the ideas of an American researcher who interviewed in the other article (Lønstrup, 2013). He argues that everyone should work less but for more years, and that working time should be distributed differently across a lifespan so that parents with small children work less and people above the age of 60 work more than is the case today.

14.5 Part-time work as a possibility for those who cannot achieve full-time work

In the articles representing this theme, part-time work is presented as a possibility for people with a reduced working capacity that prevents them from working full time (Thorup, 2013; Nielsen, 2013b; Sand, 2013) or people with a good educational background who take up part-time work in order to come closer to full-time employment – especially newly educated academics (Just, 2014; Stubager, 2014; Dahlgaard, 2013). In most of these articles then, part-time work is not presented as a voluntary choice.

Regarding the newly educated academics, a good example of the way part-time work is represented is in an interview in a newspaper with a private employer. He uses part-time employment to "test" academics in his company and through such testing has realised that the right academics can result in added value for the company – which might mean full-time employment for some of them. He says, "*Our now five academics work part time, but soon one of them will have a 100% well-paid, full-time job*" (Stubager, 2014). For employers, part-time work can thus be a tool to try out newly educated academics who experience difficulties finding work, and for the academics themselves, part-time work is a possible step towards full-time employment, though apparently not something to aim for in itself.

One article, in the journal of the Confederation of Danish Employers, focuses on the fact that many workers from abroad, especially from Eastern Europe, work part time because the available jobs for them are within business where uneven working hours and part-time work are common practice (such as cleaning and storekeeping) (Hansen & Elmer, 2013).

14.6 Part-time work as a problem for the Danish society and for individuals who are forced to work part time

The last theme is represented in eight articles, in which part-time work is problematised – but not in relation to gender equality (Andersen, 2014; Helbak, 2013; Jørgensen, 2013; Pedersen 2013b; 2013c; Thieman, 2013b; Østergaard & Mathiesen, 2013; Fyens Stiftstidende, 2014).

In four of these articles, part-time work is either mentioned in passing as an example of "precarious job conditions" (alongside with poorly paid jobs, contract work, jobs with no upper working time limit etc.) (Helbak, 2013; Jørgensen, 2013) or as something interviewees reluctantly have chosen in lack of better opportunities (Østergaard & Mathiesen, 2013; Fyens Stiftstidende, 2014).

The subject of one article is the research described above, which shows that working part time does not reduce an individual's pension significantly (Thieman, 2013b). The chief economist of a think tank problematises this, as it reduces the incitement to work full time and, he says, "*If too many people work part time, the working capacity will be reduced and so will our wealth. Our high public expenses demand that we all work a lot*". This is thus the only article in which part-time work is problematised in relation to the Danish working capacity.

Two articles in a labour union journal consider situations when day care institutions force employees to work part time in order to avoid layoffs as a result of economic difficulties (Pedersen, 2013b; 2013c). The labour union of the employees emphasises that in this type of relation-based work, working part time is not preferable. In this case, the problem with part-time work, according to the specific labour union, is both that it affects the quality of the service that these institutions offer, and that people who are forced to work part time have a reduced income and hence reduced standard of living.

14.7 The political debate

Three dominant themes can be found in the political debate in the parliament.[3]

- Part-time work as an important step towards full-time employment for citizens with limited attachment to the labour market.
- The opportunity for citizens receiving welfare benefits to take up part-time work and their economic incitement to do so.
- Part-time work as an important element in the Danish "flexicurity model".

These themes are in line with the active labour market policy, including different recent reforms aiming at ensuring that all citizens who can work do so – even if it is for a limited number of hours.[4]

Part-time work as an important step towards full-time employment for citizens with limited attachment to the labour market and, in relation to this: *The opportunity for citizens receiving welfare benefits to take up part-time work and their economic incitement to do so*.

The debates on part-time work in the parliament in 2013–14 mostly concern two draft bills, one of which was passed:

A change in the Act on Active Social Policy that came into force on 1st March 2014 aimed at strengthening the incentive for cash benefit receivers to take up part-time work by raising the deduction in the cash benefit for income from work (LF 116 of 22/01/2014). In the political discussion when the change was proposed, representatives from different political parties promoted part-time work as a means for the unemployed to strengthen their attachment to the labour market (e.g. Damsbo-Andersen, 2014; Bøgsted, 2014).

In 2013, a left-wing party proposed prolonging the time period in which citizens can work part time and receive a supplementary unemployment benefit, from 30 to 52 weeks (BF 106 of 06/04/2013). The proposal, which was not passed, was to a large extent based on the argument that part-time work is the best step on the way towards full-time em-

[3] Through our search in the parliament's document database, we found many debates where part-time work was mentioned in passing. In the analysis, we focus on debates where part-time work is a central element. Furthermore, we refer only to some of the contributions to these debates, as some debates are quite extensive and consist of many different contributions. The themes presented here are thus a simplification of a debate with many nuances.

[4] E.g. Act on Active Employment Effort, no. 415 of 24/04/2013 (*Lov om aktiv beskæftigelsesindsats*).

ployment (Juhl, 2013b). In spite of disagreement among the political parties concerning the specific proposal, part-time work is generally promoted as a means to achieve full-time work for citizens who need to strengthen their attachment to the labour market. It is thus not presented as something to aim for in itself, which is especially clear in an argumentation against the proposal, by a right-wing party representative, who argues that part-time work is a good access-way to the labour market, but that it should be temporary and that "*the goal should always be full-time employment*" (Andersen, 2013a). This focus on part-time work as preferably temporary was one reason why the proposal was not passed.

It is worth noting, however, that in the debate on raising the deduction in the cash benefit for income from work, the Minister of Employment emphasises that part-time work is a nuanced matter, as she says: "*There is a very big difference between wanting to work full time, but not being able to for one reason or another, and wanting to work part time*" (Frederiksen, 2013). The Minister thus points to the fact that part-time work is sometimes an active choice – and a choice that can be made by others than receivers of cash or unemployment benefit.

14.8 Part-time work as an important element in the Danish "flexicurity-model"

In relation to a third draft bill, suggesting that the rate of the unemployment benefit should be calculated in hours instead of weeks (BF 85 of 21/03/2013), the same left-wing party as above argued that this would strengthen the flexibility of the labour market by improving the possibilities for unemployed citizens to take up part-time work (Juhl, 2013a). Part-time work is here presented as a unique possibility for flexibility in the labour market, not least for employers: As long as citizens can receive the supplementary benefit and work part time, they can have a stable income and the labour market can be flexible so that "*the working capacity is available for employers when they need it* (…) *even if they only need someone to work 20 hours*" (Juhl, 2013a). In this regard, part-time work, combined with different types of welfare benefits, is presented as an important element in the Danish flexicurity model, which offers both flexibility and security for employers and employees.

Two important comments diverge from these dominant themes in the political debate in the parliament: One member of parliament, representing a left-wing party, emphasises part-time work as a problem for gender equality, in a comment to the yearly statement from the (now former)

Minister of Gender Equality (Arbo-Bæhr, 2014). Another member, from a right-wing party, emphasises the choice to work part time as a way to prioritise family life – a choice that will be easier to make, he argues, if the taxes are reduced (Ammitzbøll, 2013). These comments are thus both more in line with the dominant themes in the public debate.

Somewhat surprisingly, a large debate in the parliament during especially September and October 2013 on whether a larger part of the parental leave should be reserved for fathers did not include any discussions on working time, according to our search.

14.9 Conclusions

In this final section we draw some conclusions from the above analysis of the way the Danish debate on part-time work unfolded during 2013 and the first months of 2014.

An interesting – and somewhat surprising – conclusion is that discussions on the Danish working capacity are hardly present in the debates. However, this might be partly due to the Danish context: The fact that Denmark is currently experiencing a relatively high unemployment rate is probably part of the reason why we only find one article in which an interviewee is concerned with the Danish working capacity in relation to part-time work – and no articles that specifically consider the expected future lack of working capacity (as a result of a reduced work force due to smaller generations entering the labour market compared with the growing group of e.g. elderly in need of public support).

Another conclusion is that a large part of especially the public debate somehow concerns gender. The debaters in these discussions – who are mostly female – generally seem to fall in one of two camps: 1) Those who believe that the uneven distribution of part-time work between men and women is one reason why women are still not equal with men in the labour market, and that part-time work among women should therefore be diminished and 2) those who believe that women should not be frowned upon for prioritising family life through part-time work, and that the labour market should be designed to ease this prioritisation. In public speech, these two kinds of women's rights protagonists are often called "redstockings" and "uterus/care feminists", respectively. Another gender equality perspective is when the gendered difference in part-time work is emphasised as problematic for the public economy, based on research showing that women are far more costly for society than men.

However, gender issues as the dominating theme in the debates on part-time work seem to be challenged by another dominant theme – specifically in the political debate, but also in the public: Part-time work as a tool for making the labour market more inclusive in order to include citizens with a reduced working capacity, and as a step towards full-time employment. In this regard, the Danish context once again seems to play a crucial role: Denmark has a relatively high share of citizens receiving welfare benefits, which might be part of the explanation for the extensive debate on how to strengthen these citizens' attachment to the labour market and the focus on part-time work as a means to this goal.

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14.11 Appendix. List of relevant newspapers and journals

Table 1

National newspapers	Regional newspapers	Labor union and employers' organisation journals
Aktuelt	Fyns Stiftstidende	Agenda
Børsen Tillæg	JydskeVestkysten	Arkitekten
Jyllands-Posten	Århus Stiftstidende	ASE Nyt
Arbejderen		Berlingske Nyhedsmagasin
Dato		Danske Kommuner
Kristeligt Dagblad		Datatid
Berlingske		DetailBladet
Effektivt Landbrug		djøfbladet
Licitationen – Byggeriets Dagblad		ErhvervsBladet
BT		Fagbladet 3f
Ekstra Bladet		Fagbladet FOA Kost og Service
Politiken		Fagbladet FOA Pædagogisk
Børsen		Fagbladet FOA Social og Sundhed
Information		Fagbladet FOA Teknik og Service
Weekendavisen		Fagpressen
Børsen Lørdag / Søndag		Frie (Magasinet om dit individuelle arbejdsliv)
		Frie Skoler
		Friskolebladet
		Fysioterapeuten
		HK Handelsbladet
		HK Kommunalbladet
		HK Privatbladet
		HK Statbladet
		Ingeniøren
		Journalisten
		Juristen
		KOM magasinet
		Kommunen
		Krifa Magasinet
		Lederne
		Magisterbladet
		Mandag Morgen
		Mandag Morgen Månedsmagasinet
		Markedsføring
		Metal Magasinet
		Nyhedsinformation og social og sundhedssektor
		Offentlig Ledelse
		Prosabladet
		Samfundsøkonomen
		Socialpædagogen
		Socialrådgiveren
		Sygeplejersken
		Ugebrevet A4
		Økonomisk Ugebrev Ledelse

15. A mapping of actions and regulations pertaining to part-time work in Sweden 2009–2014

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15.1 A few words on method and material

This document builds on reports, committee directives, official letters, evaluations and press releases that have been downloaded from the websites of the Swedish Government, Swedish authorities, research institutes, labour unions, employer organisations and employers. Media reports have also been included to some extent, for the purpose of clarification. In some cases, I have included measures initiated by the government that were introduced before the period of investigation. The reason for this is that I thought they were especially significant in order to understand "what is going on" in the Swedish labour market policy in relation to gender equality and part-time work. The translation from Swedish to English is my own, and any misinterpretations and mistakes therefore fall back on me. The internet search has been conducted using the following key words:

- Part-time work/part-time unemployment (*deltidsarbete/deltidsarbetslöshet*).
- Percentage of full-time employment (*tjänstgöringsgrad*).
- Underemployment (*undersysselsättning*).
- Labour market participation (*arbetskraftsdeltagande*).

15.2 Gender equality in working life

Initiatives and efforts made by the government with relevance to part-time/full-time work are grounded in the policy for gender equality and particularly in the governmental strategy for gender equality in the labour market and economy.[1] In October 2011, the Swedish government appointed a delegation for Gender Equality in Working Life. The overall mission for the delegation is to compile and disseminate knowledge about the unequal terms and prospects for men and women in working life, as well as knowledge about the causes of this inequality. The delegation is to stimulate the debate on how gender equality in working life can be encouraged and to make suggestions on means and actions to promote gender equality and reduce gendered income disparities. The delegation is to report to the government on the 24th October 2014.[2]

However, there seems to be tension in the directive regarding the explanatory causes and mechanisms (structural or individual) behind gender inequality in working life. Among others, the directive states that:

> If gender equality is to be the main objective, the analysis of factors causing gender inequality must go beyond the choices made by individuals. Structural explanations as to why certain choices are made must be sought for.[3]

However, half a page later the directive states that:

> Individual choices of for instance education, part-time work and occupation are significant to gendered income disparities and inequality in working life. The choices are made by free individuals, but have an impact on wages, pensions and the life income of each individual. The delegation has an important role to play in informing the debate about [how] individual choices regarding education, occupations and forms of employment [affects gender equality/inequality].[4]

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[1] Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198.
[2] Dir. 2011:80. Kommittédirektiv, Delegationen för jämställdhet i arbetslivet.
[3] Ibid, p. 3.
[4] Ibid, p. 3.

Thereby, the ideological standpoint and connecting thought of the Alliance government's politics becomes clear.[5] Individual liberty (and responsibility) is placed at centre stage. As we shall see, all governmental measures and actions that I have been able to "dig out" have aimed at influencing the individual and not the employer, to make her act as a (economically) rational being.

15.3 Tax credits for gender equality?

Part-time work is sometimes framed as a means to reconcile work and family. One way for women to increase their participation in paid work is to spend less time doing unpaid reproductive work, and instead to buy these services in the market. This has also been recognised by the Alliance government.[6] Measures taken to facilitate for men and women to reconcile work and family include a tax deduction on domestic services (2007) and a gender equality bonus (2008):

> How tasks are distributed within the family unit is beyond the scope of political action. Instead, policymaking can create the conditions to enable men and women to take equal responsibility for the unpaid, reproductive work. Both the possibility of tax deductions for domestic services [*RUT-avdraget*] and the gender equality bonus connected to the Parent's Insurance […] represent measures supporting such a development.[7]

The use of the tax deduction is more common among households with high incomes, and women tend to use it more often than men. A big group of buyers of domestic services are found among the retired, many of whom are women. Another important group of consumers are married/cohabiting people working full time, i. e. people who are already working long hours.[8] The tax deduction for domestic services does not seem to have influenced the division of labour in a gender-equal way, in the sense of furthering men's efforts in this area. In the words of Anita Nyberg:

> On the contrary, in families where RUT services are used, the demand on men's participation in household work most likely diminishes. It is often

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[5] The Alliance government consists of the Moderate, the Centre, the Liberal and the Christian Democratic Parties.

[6] Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198. Prop. 2013/14:1

[7] Regeringens skrivelse 2011/12:3, p. 23

[8] Nyberg, Anita (2012).

> claimed that one reason for buying domestic services is to limit the arguing about who should do what in the household. This measure fits very well into a model of conditional employment for women. That a limited number of women with relatively high incomes but limited time are able to buy domestic services has nothing to do with a weakening of the gender order, but with increased income and class differences between women and in general.[9]

The gender equality bonus, which was introduced in 2008, allowed tax credits to parents sharing the parental leave equally. The bonus is higher where the sharing is more equal. According to a report that investigates the effects of the bonus on parental leave:

> The analysis does not reveal any significant effect of the introduction of the gender equality bonus on parental leave use, for either mothers or fathers. This absence may be the result of a complicated system, lag in tax credit/and or less attention in the media and public debate. In addition other factors influencing the leave division between mothers and fathers may dominate the pattern and a bonus at the economic level of the present one may be too marginal to have any influence.[10]

Overall, the results from the study indicate that the reserved days (introduced in 1995 and 2002) had more impact on the use of parental leave than did the gender equality bonus.

The so-called earned income tax credit (*jobbskatteavdraget*) represents another governmental measure that was introduced already in 2007 and then reinforced in 2008, 2009 and 2010. The stated motive of the reform was to boost employment, in particular to provide incentives for individuals to go from unemployment to, at least, part-time work.[11] It is also supposed to act as an incentive for women to choose full-time rather than part-time work.[12] According to a report from the Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU), the effects of the earned income tax credit on employment and labour supply is very difficult to evaluate.[13]

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[9] Ibid, p. 77.
[10] Inspektionen för socialförsäkringen (2012), p. 12.
[11] Regeringskansliet (22 September 2009).
[12] Regeringens skrivelse 2008/09:198, p. 52.
[13] Edmark, Karin *et al.* (2012).

15.4 The issue of supplementary unemployment benefit for part-timers

In 2012, the Committee for Sustainable Insurance in Connection with Illness and Unemployment[14] was assigned to assess the regulation regarding the geographical and occupational search area that part-timers are to consider when searching for full-time employment. Another task of the Committee was to assess the regulation concerning supplementary unemployment benefits during part-time unemployment. The existing regulation was introduced in April 2008 and was regarded as an incentive for employers to offer employees full-time positions and for part-time employees to look for full-time employment. The current regulation allows part-timers to receive supplementary unemployment benefits for 75 instead of the earlier stipulated 300 days (450 for parents with children under 18). The Committee will report their work on 31st January 2015.[15] The design of the supplementary unemployment benefit has also been inquired into by the Long-Term Survey 2011 (*Långtidsutredningen 2011*).[16]

Several labour unions have protested repeatedly against the new regulation, which is claimed to be counterproductive: instead of decreasing part-time unemployment, it increases full-time unemployment. Moreover, there are signs that part-time workers continue to work part time, but without the supplementary unemployment benefit. The Swedish Municipal Workers' Union (*Kommunal*), which organises municipal care workers, has interviewed 200 of their members working part time. The report shows that 70% of the interviewees have continued their part-time work after their period of supplementary unemployment benefit has expired. A little less than 20% are unemployed or are participating in labour market policy measures and training initiatives**.** Only 1% have been offered a full-time position**.**[17] The Swedish Municipal Workers' Union demands that the pressure on employers to offer employees regular contracts and full-time employment should increase. Municipalities, regions and any other form of establishment delivering publicly financed services should be forced by law to offer employees full-time positions.[18]

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[14] Kommittén om hållbara försäkringar vid sjukdom och arbetslöshet.

[15] Dir. 2012:90. Tilläggsdirektiv till Kommittén om hållbara försäkringar vid sjukdom och arbetslöshet.

[16] Bilaga 10 till LU2011. Deltidsarbetslöshet och arbetslöshetsförsäkring i Sverige.

[17] Hotell och restaurangfacket (2014). Kommunal (2010).

[18] Kommunal (2014).

15.5 The issue of labour supply in elderly care

Employers are obliged to offer part-time workers full-time positions if circumstances allow. According to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL), offering part-time workers full-time positions is not only an obligation, it is also a matter of presenting oneself as an attractive employer. It is important that employers organise work in such a way that employees chose to work a higher percentage. Due to demographic pressures (a growing proportion of elderly people and a shrinking labour force), it has become an urgent issue for both public and private employers to frame themselves as "attractive". SKL estimates that 225,000 care workers need to be recruited the next ten-year period. Out of these, nearly 130,000 assisting nurses are required to meet the predicted labour demand.[19]

A recent report on employees in the public elderly care shows that a little more than 20% of the hourly staff combine several part-time employments to increase their work hours and pay. Among employees on fixed-term contracts and regular contracts, 10% stated that they combine several employments. Approximately 25% of the hourly staff state that they want to leave public elderly care within 3 years, and another 20% remain indecisive. Among employees with fixed-term contracts and regular contracts, 20% state that they want to leave within 3 years.[20]

15.5.1 Can be solved by offering full-time positions

There are numerous examples of municipalities that already have or are in the process of reorganising work and timetabling in order to influence part-time work, mainly in public elderly care. Some have been successful, yet others, such as the municipality of Hofors in the county of Gävleborg, have gone back to part time, with reference to the municipal budget.[21] The municipality of Avesta in the county of Dalarna has been identified by SKL as a good example when it comes to increasing the number of employees working full time. Today, more than 90% of the employees work full time in Avesta.[22]

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[19] Sveriges kommuner och landsting (2014).
[20] Kommunal (2014).
[21] Kommunalarbetaren (2013-04-18).
[22] Sveriges kommuner och landsting (2014).

The turning point came with the decision by the local government in 2007 to offer their employees full-time positions. In 2008, the municipality of Avesta and the local division of the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union (*Kommunal*) signed an agreement that would guarantee all union members full-time positions by the end of 2010. A "full-time project" was initiated in 2008/2009 with the purpose of offering all employees with permanent employment full-time contracts but combined with the possibility for individuals to choose part-time work in line with the motto "the right to full-time employment with part-time as a possibility". The full-time project was, in essence, based on four components: a) a yearly check-up with employees regarding their desired percentage/part-time leave of absence, b) a new timetabling method, c) the adoption of software supporting the new timetabling method and d) the creation of a pool of permanent care employees who could act as stand-ins.[23] As such, Avesta's "full-time project" shows strong similarities with other municipal initiatives launched during the HELA project (2002–2006).[24]

The new timetabling method implies that employees themselves are responsible for the timetabling at their workplace. Each employee first indicates the desired, individual timetable using the Time Care software. The second step consists of a collective process of negotiation, which involves the reciprocal adjustment of every individual's desired timetable into a coherent, functioning whole. This has presented a challenge to employees, since it requires them to consider and balance both the work and the workplace as such, yet also each individual's desired timetable and percentage. Furthermore, the timetabling has to be conceived as fair and just to everyone. Employees have been encouraged to develop rules suitable to their work and workplace in order to handle these matters.[25]

From the employer's perspective, the timetabling method and the reorganisation of (primarily) public elderly care is expected to solve the issue of labour supply, and, reading between the lines, there are also hopes that it is cost-saving. One effect of the timetabling method was the establishment of a pool of permanent care employees who can be flexibly used as stand-ins within the organisation. If the employee's desired percentage and work hours exceed the labour demand in her/his own

[23] Avesta kommun (2011).
[24] Arbetsmiljöverket (2006).
[25] Avesta kommun (2011).

unit/workplace, she or he is available as a stand-in to other units. The requirement of being mobile between units/workplaces is held by employees to be a downside of the new timetabling method and organisation. The critique concerns for instance the need to adopt and remember the specific routines of different units/workplaces and to meet clients whose healthcare needs and habits the employee has little knowledge about. On the positive side is the abolishment of divided shifts[26] (*delade turer*) and the possibility to control and influence the working time percentage, thus also the wage level.[27] To facilitate the functional flexibility and mobility of staff, the municipality initiated a project with the aim of up-skilling employees. The project ran from 2011 to 2013 and was financed by the European Social Fund.[28]

As already mentioned, Avesta's "full-time project" is very similar to other municipal initiatives. One of these was launched in the municipality of Piteå in the county of Norrbotten already in 2002. The project was successful in terms of shifting from part-time to full-time positions, and in a similar way to Avesta the staffing responsibility was handed over to the employees themselves. However, to the staff, the timetabling process represented a time-consuming and *new* work task to be accomplished within regular working hours. In some units/workplaces with a high share of staff of the same age, the timetabling process involved not only the consideration of work, colleagues and individual choices, but the schedules and recreational activities of children and partners were also brought into the puzzle. In those units, nobody wanted the late shifts, which created a lot of discussion. In some units/workplaces, timetabling created a pressure on individuals to adjust their individual desires regarding percentage or timetabling to what was perceived as best for the team. For instance, if the norm of the unit was to keep the team intact (i.e. to avoid that somebody had to work in another unit due to a surplus of labour), individual choices were adjusted in line with that norm.[29] Thus, what seems to be a free, individual choice might in fact be enmeshed in a complex web of consideration. Before moving on to the final section, I would like to make a short comment on the search for a "best practice" among measures influencing part-time work: That clearly

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[26] A divided shift, in Swedish *delad tur*, means that the employee works a shift that is divided into two periods, with an unsalaried break of several hours in between the two periods. For instance the employee may work 7-11am, then have a break 12-4pm and work again 4-7pm.

[27] Avesta kommun (2011). P4 Dalarna Sveriges radio (18th January 2014). Kommunal Bergslagen (2013).

[28] Wolf, Sara (2013).

[29] Zampoukos, Kristina (2005).

depends of both perspectives and objectives. If the perspective is that of the employer, and the objective is to solve the existing and future labour supply, then the "full-time project" of Avesta and its siblings represents such a "good example". If the perspective is that of the employee, there is still some doubt.

In the final section, we will connect the strings laid out in this "notat", by turning to an intervention by the Union of Commercial Employees concerning the provision of welfare services and women's labour market participation.

15.6 The provision of welfare services and labour market participation

The Union of Commercial Employees (*Handels*) has claimed that the deteriorating quality of and access to welfare services are preventing their members from working full time. The argument is that a poor quality of welfare services affects the willingness to use these services, and also affects women's labour market participation.

The report builds on interviews with over 580 members. Nearly 25% of the interviewees state that the opening hours of the preschool and after-school recreation centre prevent them from working full time. The childcare opening hours of is of course of specific significance to employees who are increasingly demanded to work unsocial hours. Furthermore, 16% of the interviewees state that they, on a regular basis, assist an older relative. The report voices strong criticism against the market orientation that currently guides the provision of welfare services, which presupposes that the individual take all the more responsibility for his/her welfare, for instance by making the "right" [rational] choices and by purchasing additional homecare or childcare services.[30]

For the part of the population among which part-time work is common and income is low, there is only one option – you do the work yourself. You pick up your children from preschool a little earlier, you help your old mother with window cleaning, and you continue to work part time in order to manage both the paid and unpaid work. Women workers pay a high price for the evaporation of the welfare state.[31]

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[30] Handels utredningsgrupp (2013).

[31] Ibid, p. 36.

15.7 References

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16. The Swedish debate on part-time work

Louise Grip. Master of Arts in Gender Studies

This text presents an analysis of the dominant ways in which part-time work is described and understood in a Swedish context during 2013 and the first months of 2014. The analysis also includes important views diverging from these dominant ways. Furthermore, special attention is given to the way part-time work is represented by politicians, researchers and working life organisations.

16.1 Point of departure

The material for analysis is the public debate as it is represented in the Swedish daily press. The search for articles has been conducted through the Swedish search service "Mediaarkivet/Retriever". According to the consulted research librarian, this is the most comprehensive digital search service available.[1] The search resulted in 436 articles, of which 138 have been selected for analysis.[2] The main selection criterion has been that the articles, to some extent, must illustrate how part-time work is understood. This criterion has resulted in a wide range of texts; shorter informative articles, columns, polemical articles and reports.[3] The search was based on the word "part time" (*deltid*) and a date range

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[1] The service includes full text articles and has a clear categorical system that is helpful in the selection of newspapers.

[2] The search resulted in 499 hits, of which the search service automatically eliminated 63 articles due to "similarity" (at least 80% of the text was identical to another article and published within 24 hours).

[3] Very short paragraphs or news items have not been included in the analysed material. Given that the search was conducted in the daily press where many articles are quite short, it has nevertheless been necessary to include shorter articles if they were relevant in relation to the aim of this study (for example if one of the groups of special interest commented on the topic).

from 1st January 2013 to 25th March 2014.[4] The search included national newspapers as well as the largest provincial newspaper in each region.[5] It was also limited by the fact that the search word had to be mentioned in the headline or preamble. The material was then processed in different stages. All articles were read, and different recurring themes were marked in a table with page references. Searches for words that proved to be relevant – like "kids", "pension" and "involuntary" – were also made in order to get a picture of the most recurring themes.

The point of departure in the study is Carol Bacchi's approach "What's the problem represented to be" (Bacchi 1999). This means that the text has a discourse – analytical focus on how part-time work is represented and, possibly, constructed as a problem. The analysis also asks questions about what is excluded when part-time work is framed in certain ways. A short discussion on this aspect can be found in the concluding part of the text.

16.2 Themes and disposition

This text is outlined through the recurring themes in the Swedish debate. In this section, the most frequent representations of part-time work are accounted for in an overview. The section *Partakers in the Debate* covers a short exposition of the most frequent, as well as absent, participants in the debate. The remaining text is illustrative of the most repeated depictions of part-time work. The text is structured in a manner where the different themes are discussed in order by how frequently they occur in the articles, with the most dominating themes first. It is important to note that the frequency-based disposition mainly concerns the headlines (listed below). In the text following each headline, considerations in terms of readability have also affected the structure. This disposition shall furthermore by no means be perceived as a statistical definite, but it does provide the reader with a sense of which issues are being discussed at length and which are only present in a few articles.

The articles in which part-time work is discussed show a broad variety of themes, although there are a few dominating discourses. An initial

[4] The search therefore included a wide range of suffixes to part time. Some, that proved to give irrelevant hits, were excluded through an advanced search (the actual words in Swedish were deltid* ANDNOT deltidsstud* ANDNOT deltidsutbild* ANDNOT deltidsboend* ANDNOT deltidsbrand* ANDNOT *räddningstjä*).
[5] The newspapers included in the search are listed in Appendix A.

division of the representations of part-time work can be made: a critical versus an affirmative view of part-time work. The critical view is much more prominent. Hence, it will be the problem-oriented statements that introduce and overshadow the report. *The three dominating problem-oriented representations concern*:

- Part-time work as a problem for *gender equality* or as a problem that *affects women* in particular.
- The negative *economic effects* of part-time work – especially on income and pension.
- Part-time work as *involuntary*.

The themes listed above are discussed one at a time in the section *Part-Time Work as a Problem*. In addition to these dominating subjects, there are several *minor problem-oriented representations* in the material. Here, part-time work is understood as:

- A disadvantage in the *competition for staff*.
- A more insecure form of employment.
- Something that can be negative for the career development.
- *A result of a bad work environment* wherein people cannot manage working full time.
- Something that can have a *negative effect on the health* of the employees.

These representations are given a small amount of attention in the end of the section *Part-Time Work as a Problem. The more affirmative representations of part-time work* are discussed in the section *Part-Time Work as an Opportunity.* Two themes are present in this section:

- Part-time work as a way of achieving a balance between work and family/spare time.
- Part-time positions as a strategic tool for employers.

Several of these representations concerning what part time is are naturally tied to discussions regarding both the causes of, as well as solutions to, the problems formulated. The causes and solutions are discussed in connection to each of the formulated problems. One example of a recurring solution in the Swedish debate is the proposal to decide on a "*right to full-time*". The last section, *Conclusions and Analytical Openings*, presents a short summary and discussion concerning the implications of the representations of part-time work.

16.3 Partakers in the debate

It is clear that politicians and representatives from different unions are overrepresented in the articles. Most frequently involved in the discussions are politicians. The articles include representatives from the entire political spectrum, even if left-wing parties are more regularly involved in the debate. The politicians are present both in interviews concerning different proposals as well as in polemic articles that they themselves have written.

Representatives from the unions are also active. They mainly argue for the members' right to work full time. Two unions appear more frequently than others in the articles: Handels (the Commercial Employees' Union) and Kommunal (the Swedish Municipal Workers' Union). These unions mainly organise employees in retail and the public sector (primarily in nursing and healthcare). A majority of the members are women.

The third group of special interest in the report, researchers, are only present in 4 of the 138 articles. Therefore, it seems as if researchers do not play a large role in the public debate regarding part-time work in Sweden.

Public administrators are also relatively present in the debate on part-time work. Their involvement can for example include project managers working at a municipal level to facilitate all employees' right to full-time work. They also appear in interviews where they, as representatives for different governmental authorities, comment on the effects of part-time work. Public administrators, as well as advisers such as economists and career experts, are therefore an additional group of agents that affect the discussions on part-time work in Sweden. The articles also include interviews with part-time working employees, as well as journalists and columnists debating the issue in e.g. the editorial pages.

16.4 Part-time work as a problem

A majority of the articles present part-time work as an implicit or explicit problem. The three main headings in this section are: *Part-Time Work, Women and Gender Equality*; *The Negative Economic Effects of Part-Time Work* and *Involuntary Part-Time Work*. These problem representations are brought to the fore in relation to specific social groups, but are also discussed in a more general context. Even though the stated problems are discussed separately in this text, one should bear in mind that they often occur in an interconnected manner. Debaters critical of part-time work tend to enumerate several of the negative effects in their argumentation.

16.5 Part-time work, women and gender equality

This section captures the descriptions that connect part-time work to gender or gender equality. It illustrates how gender comes to matter both in problem presentations and in discussions on the causes of and solutions to the defined problems. A quote that is representative of this theme states that "part-time work is often occupied by women who acquire a poorer economy both now and in the future when it is time to collect the pension" (p. 69).[6] Articles that mention gender – i.e. that in some way refer to how part-time work is distributed between women and men – amount to slightly more than 60% of the articles. Part-time work is often tied to women and the negative consequences of it is e.g. discussed as something that "happens to women" (in Swedish the verb *drabba*, with an obvious negative connotation). In 11 of the articles, part-time work is also said to be a "pitfall for women" (*kvinnofälla*). In turn, the debate concerning the uneven distribution of part-time work between women and men leads up to an interpretation where part-time work is perceived as a problem for gender equality. Even though this representation is not articulated every time gender and part-time work is debated, one can conclude that the word gender equality is mentioned in 30% of the articles.

[6] This is a page reference to the printed document containing all analysed articles. This reference system was chosen in order to quickly be able to find articles if they were of interest for the final report. All articles cited are listed in the end of the report, with this page reference included. A document with a list of *all* analysed articles will furthermore be provided with this report.

The articulations concerning what the problem of part time is are in many cases more or less identical, both when part-time work is discussed in a general manner and when this form of employment is tied to women. Hence, the same issues are made visible over and over again; the lower income and pension, part-time work as involuntary and the fact that part-time work is seen as a more insecure form of employment.

Some representations attached to part-time work are however more common in the articles covering argumentation on gender differences and gender equality. For example, some articles state that the low income of part-time work makes women dependent on a partner. The fact that women work part time is also connected to discussions on the wage gap between women and men. The problem with a low pension due to part-time work is also, in a marginal percentage of the articles, constituted as a question of knowledge. In these examples, people, predominantly women, are seen as unknowing or uneducated regarding the economic effects of their voluntary part-time work.

In the articles covering argumentation on gender differences and gender equality, there is also more focus on certain sectors. Here, part-time work is seen to be more common in certain lines of business: "In several female-dominated workplaces, involuntary part time is standard and the insecure types of employment have increased" (p. 90). In this line of reasoning, female-dominated professions – for example healthcare – is said to be organised around part-time instead of full-time work. This is a line of thought that debaters, arguing against involuntary part-time work, make use of: "We dare to say that the high occurrence of part time within the county council would not have been accepted within more male-dominated professions", as it is claimed by local politicians representing the parties currently in government (p. 42). Quotes like these touch upon the question of how women's and men's work and working conditions are valued.

Another theme closely tied to the discussion above is the connection between part-time work, gender and class that is made in a few articles. The following quote illustrates this theme: "Women in working class occupations work part time to a much higher extent than other groups" (p. 196). Here, the problem with women's part-time work is further nuanced through a class perspective.

The discourses that characterise part-time work as a problem also include discussions on the causes of, as well as solutions to, the problem. The lack of full-time employment is perceived as the main cause of women's part-time work. The primary solution – which is discussed further under the section *Involuntary Part-Time Work* – is therefore for-

mulated as a "right to full time". The main idea is that women also need the opportunity to work full time in order to avoid problems such as low income and pension. This solution is, among other perceptions, seen as a step towards gender equality.

Another solution specific to the discussions evolving around part-time work and gender is for example the question of shared responsibility. Part-time work is discussed as something that women choose, or are forced to, because they take a bigger responsibility for children, relatives and the household than men do. "Society is built on the fact that women work part time and take care of children and family" in the words of a unionised woman (p. 188). As evident here, some of the debaters argue that women's part-time work can be understood in relation to their care responsibility. With this framing of the problem, one solution is naturally that women and men share the reduced working time evenly between them. This is for example recommended in articles discussing the problem of women's low pensions.

From the notion of women's care responsibility, the question of childcare is also brought to the fore. Articles discussing a report from the union Handels (retail occupations) claim that part-time work is in some cases due to the fact that workers do not have access to day care during unsocial work hours. This account of the problem is in some articles connected to women in particular, whereas some are gender-blind. Another solution, in addition to the "right to full time" and a more even division of part-time work, is therefore to increase the opening hours of day care; "If there is no good care for our children and elderly, it will be harder for those who work part time [to increase their working hours]" (p. 154).

As this section has shown, part-time work is seen as a problem that affects women to a higher extent, which in turn makes it a problem for gender equality. The causes of the problem is mainly said to be the lack of full-time employment, but also women's care responsibility. The solutions presented are therefore a "right to full time", a more even division of part-time work, as well as increased opening hours of day care.

16.6 The negative economic effects of part-time work

As stated above, part-time work is often connected to questions concerning private finances. The main attention in the debate is directed towards monthly income and pension, but journalists, public administrators, politicians and union representatives also discuss the negative effects of part-time work on sickness benefits and parents' allowance to some degree. The problem is said to be that people are forced to work in part-time jobs that do not generate sufficient income. Even when part-time work is voluntary, it is sometimes understood as a problem, particularly because it is said to lead to a low pension: "Part-time work for a number of years is a practical solution. The lack of balance in income that will arise from this is obvious and temporary whereas the effect on the pension is hidden and lifelong" (p. 18). In this quote, part-time work is to a high degree represented as a matter of economy or finances. Both politicians and union representatives commonly repeat this discourse, often when defending the right to economic independence. Public administrators, journalists and experts also repeat the theme, warning people about financial risks or giving recommendations on how to avoid a low pension.

The main solution offered to the problem of a low income and/or pension is to work more – preferably full time.

16.7 Involuntary part-time work

The problem-oriented representations of part-time work mainly focus on the cases where it is *involuntary*, even though some debaters also conceive *voluntary* part-time work as problematic. In short, involuntary part time is said to be a result of a lack of full-time jobs, thereby making it a problem that employers need to attend to. Involuntary part-time work is mentioned both in relation to certain professions and in news articles covering part-time work as a (criticised) way for companies to downsize.

In the debates concerning involuntary part-time work, one solution is commonly petitioned, namely the previously mentioned "right to full time". This is a proposal that both politicians and union representatives advocate in different polemical articles. For example, the discussions can revolve around whether or not a municipality should introduce a "right to full time" for their employees. A left-wing party member states, "The employers can advance even without legislation. That's what we are

showing in Borås, where the right to full time for public employees is being introduced […] The result is a better financial position for thousands of people who were forced to work part time before" (p. 61).

Parallel to the many articles discussing the "right to full time" are those where this "right" is not as certain. Some local newspapers report on decisions where politicians are more hesitant to the concept of a right to full time. In some articles, where employees or union representatives are interviewed, the right is conceived as a distant rhetoric rather than an attainable reality. In addition, the debates on involuntary part-time work and the "right to full time" are in a majority of the articles centred on the public rather than the private sector. This, in turn, is linked to the fact that politicians often discuss these questions in relation to their position as public employers.

16.8 Other problem-oriented representations

Three key themes have now been discussed – *part-time work, women and gender equality*; *the negative economic effects of part-time work* and *involuntary part time* – but as stated in the beginning there are other representations where part-time work is seen as a problem. One of these depictions claims that part-time employment is a problem when employers want to secure their supply of staff: "Part time employments [is] also a disadvantage in the competition for personnel. The county council faces a large number of retirements, especially among nurses. If we are to replace the competence that is lost, we have to offer more of our co-workers full time" (p. 42). In accounts like this, part-time work is seen as a problem that could lead to a shortage of labour.

An additional theme is that part-time work is said to decrease the opportunities for career development. Part-time work is also connected to a sense of insecurity in general, or seen as an insecure form of employment in particular; "[Full time] gives a more secure employment and the higher income it brings will affect sickness benefits, parents' allowances and pensions" (p. 191). The connection between full-time employment and security is in turn often related to the statements claiming that involuntary part-time work can lead to a negative effect on employees' health, for example in terms of stress. Part-time work is in some articles also seen as a way of coping in professions with a poor work environment.

16.9 Part-time work as an opportunity

Four of the analysed articles present predominantly affirmative views on part-time work. It is however important to note that some of the positive statements on part-time work occur even in the articles that mainly problematise the phenomenon. The positive accounts of part-time work can primarily be said to revolve around the fact that it provides time for other aspects of life – especially children and family life. This is foremost the case when part-time work is discussed as voluntary; "Families with small children where the fathers have decreased their working hours are less stressed" as it is stated in the article freely translated *Dad with Time for the Children* (p. 26). Part-time work is in these cases understood as a way to reduce the stress of everyday life and achieving a balance between work and a private life including family and hobbies. An interviewed researcher actually defined part time as "time-based welfare" (*tidsmässig välfärd*) (p. 86).

Additional aspects that could possibly be categorised as affirmative are the instances where part time is seen as an instrument for employers, for example in the process of scheduling. By contracting staff on part-time basis, it is said to be possible to streamline the business and schedule many employees during the most intense parts of the day. This interpretation of part-time work is however criticised by union representatives who claim the right to full time.

16.10 Conclusions and analytical openings

This exposition has illustrated some of the dominating representations occurring in the Swedish media debate on part-time work. As previously stated several times, these accounts are primarily problem-oriented. Three problem-oriented representations have been discussed as prominent in the debate: part-time work as a problem for *gender equality* or as a problem that *affects women* in particular, part-time work as an *economic problem* and part-time work as *involuntary*. The affirmative view on part time was mainly said to concern part time as a way of achieving a *balance between work and private life*.

The representations connecting part-time work to women and gender equality is, as shown, palpable in the Swedish debate. Some articles explicitly frame part-time work as a problem for gender equality. Others can be said to dispute questions of gender equality without mentioning the word, for example when critically discussing how the structures of

the labour market affect women and men in different ways. It is however interesting to note that the frequently recurring connection between the problem of part-time work and women tends to create representations where women are made an implicit part of the problem. In a few articles, women's choices are even explicitly discussed as a cause of the problem of part-time work.

As regards the discussions on women and gender equality, it is also interesting to explore the question of whether women are seen as "equally unequal". In most of the articles, men and women are understood as homogenous groups, mainly due to a lack of discussion on the subject. In turn, this particular framing of the problem of part-time work tends to ignore for example the race and ability difference among women (cf. Bacchi 1999:69). One exception from this rule can be found in the articles where class is mentioned as an important axis of difference.

Involuntary part-time work has also been highlighted as one of the evident problem representations in the articles. Employers' inability to offer full-time jobs is frequently discussed and criticised. In regard to women, part-time work is also understood as a forced choice, which is based on their responsibility for children, relatives and the household. The lack of child care during unsocial working hours is also seen as a cause of the involuntary part-time work. Considering these representations, it is possible to argue that the discussions about part-time work are based on a structural understanding of what the problem is. The main exception from this imperative is the articles with advisory ambitions. Here, the financial consequences of part-time work are seen as an issue that individuals (often women) need to educate themselves on in order to make favourable decisions.

Irrespective of who is working part time, the main problem seems to be the financial consequences. The ability to provide for oneself is a theme that the debaters frequently address, both when discussing part-time work in general and when it is connected to gender equality. When the discussion is aimed at women's right to economic self-sufficiency, the debate can furthermore be seen as closely tied to one of Sweden's political goals on gender equality; "Women and men shall have the same opportunities and conditions with regard to education and paid work that provide them with the means to achieve lifelong economic independence" (www.government.se). The emphasis on part-time work as a problem for gender equality is hence in line with Sweden's official ambitions regarding gender equality.

One noteworthy outcome of the report is that politicians and union representatives are regularly present in the articles, while researchers

are more absent in the debate. Instead, public administrators have been pointed out as one of the agents affecting the descriptions of part-time work. The presence of the administrators can perhaps be understood when considering Sweden's large-scaled public administration, which in turn makes public administrators important agents in the processes of the political system. It can also result from the fact that the proposition to introduce a "right to full time" is primarily discussed in relation to the public sector, often at the level of municipalities. This focus can in turn be explained by the fact that the public sector is a major employer in the female-dominated professions where part-time work is said to be most common. A consequence of this representation is however that the discussions on part-time work to a great extent exclude, for example, the private sector.

The Swedish problem-oriented representations of part-time work have one important implication; the norm of full-time employment is forcefully repeated. The "right to full time" is one of the main solutions presented, both when it comes to part-time work in general and when women's part-time work is discussed in particular. The idea that everybody ought to work more – that women should be given the right to work as much as men – reduces the space for other interpretations. For example, it makes it more difficult to present a solution to the problem that proposes reduced working hours for men. Having said that, the proposal that men should work less *is* in fact presented in a few articles. But the overshadowing solution is nevertheless to enable increased working hours, regardless of whether it is by means of a "right to full time" or by the increased opening hours of day care. This view encourages the idea that women will be more equal when they have the same working conditions as men, a notion which in turn makes it hard to challenge the appropriateness of these conditions (cf. Bacchi 1999:69). The fact that full-time employment is conceived as the most desirable form of employment hence limits the space for propositions centred on structural changes like general reductions of working hours. It is full time, as it is organised today, that is reproduced as norm. With this framing of the problem, it is likely that political proposals like a six-hour workday will be harder to recommend. Notably, this representation is not seen as a solution in any of the studied articles.

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16.12 Appendix

List of newspapers included in the search. The newspapers in cursive are those actually represented in the analysed material.

Table 1

National newspapers	Provincial newspapers
Aftonbladet	100% Östersund
Aftonbladet – Bil	18 minuter
Aftonbladet –Det goda live	*Barometern Bohusläningen*
Aftonbladet – Hannah & Amanda	*Borås Tidning*
Aftonbladet – Historia	Bygden Mellan Städerna
Aftonbladet – Härligt Hemma!	*Dagbladet Sundsvall*
Aftonbladet – Klick!	*Dala-Demokraten*
Aftonbladet – Mat&Vin	Dala-Demokraten – Avesta Hedemora Säter
Aftonbladet – Paolos Mat	Dala-Demokraten – Falun
Aftonbladet – Resa	Dala-Demokraten – Leksand Gagnef Vansbro
Aftonbladet – Sofis mode	Dala-Demokraten – Rättvik Mora
Aftonbladet – Special	Dala-Demokraten – Södra
Aftonbladet – Söndag	*Eskilstuna Kuriren*
Aftonbladet –TVtidningen	*Falu Kuriren Folkbladet*
Aftonbladet – Wellness	*Folket*
City Malmö	Företag Nordsverige
Dagens Industri	Gotlands Allehanda
Dagens Nyheter Expressen	Gotlands Tidningar
Expressen – Extra	Hallands Affärer
Expressen – Leva & Bo	*Hallands Nyheter*
Expressen – Leva & bo på landet	*Hallandsposten*
Expressen – Mitt kök	Hallå Helsingborg
Expressen – Specialbilagor	Hallå Höganäs
Expressen – Söndag	Hallå Landskrona
Expressen – TV	Hallå Ängelholm
Expressen – TV14	Halmstad 7 Dagar
Extra EK GT	*Helsingborgs Dagblad*
Göteborgs-Posten	Jord & Skog (T.N. Tidningar)
Kvällsposten	*Jönköpings-Posten*
Metro – Göteborg	*Katrineholms-Kuriren*
Metro – Riks	*Kristianstadsbladet*
Metro – Skåne	*Landskrona Posten*
Metro – Stockholm	*Linköpings-Posten*
Metro Weekend	Lokaltidningen
Metro WeekendGöteborg	Lokaltidningen Krokom
Metro Weekend Skåne	Lokaltidningen Strömsund
PunktSE Göteborg	Länstidningen Östersund
PunktSE Malmö	Magazinet i Växjö
PunktSE Stockholm	Mera Finspång
ST-journalen Stockholm City	Mera Linköping
Svenska Dagbladet Sydsvenskan	Mitt Dalarna
	Motala & Vadstena Tidning
	Nerikes Allehanda
	Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar
	Nordöstran
	Norran
	Norrbottens-Kuriren
	Norrköpings Tidningar
	Norrländska
	Socialdemokraten
	Nyheterna
	Oskarshamns-Tidningen
	Piteå-Tidningen

National newspapers	Provincial newspapers
	Skånska Dagbladet
	Smålands Näringsliv
	Smålandsposten
	Sundsvalls Tidning
	Sydöstran Södermanlands Nyheter
	Tidningen Härjedalen
	Tidningen Ångermanland
	Trelleborgs Allehanda
	Ulricehamns Tidning
	Upsala Nya Tidning
	VLT
	Värmlands Folkblad
	Västerbottens Mellanbygd
	Västerbottens-Kuriren
	Våning & Villa
	Ystads Allehanda
	Ölandsbladet
	Örnsköldsviks Allehanda
	Östergötlands Näringsliv
	Östersunds-Posten
	Östgöta Correspondenten
	Östran
	Åre idag

Sammanfattning

Kvinnor i Norden arbetar deltid i högre utsträckning än män. Närmare 40 % av de anställda kvinnorna på den nordiska arbetsmarknaden arbetar deltid, undantaget Finland där andelen är lägre. Deltidsarbete påverkar kvinnors ekonomi på både kort och lång sikt. Argumenten för att arbeta deltid är vanligtvis kopplade till kvinnors önskan om att förena arbete med familjeliv, samtidigt som krav om flexibilitet ofta uttrycks av arbetsgivare. Graden av frivilligt och ofrivilligt deltidsarbete är likaså en viktig förklarande faktor i diskussionen om kvinnors deltidsarbete. Samtidigt måste deltidsarbete förstås som en del av jämställdhetspolitiken i Norden och särskilt frågan om kvinnors ekonomiska självständighet. Hur kunskapen om orsakerna till deltidsarbete för kvinnor i Norden ser ut är i fokus för denna rapport som Nordisk information för kunskap om kön, NIKK, har tagit fram på uppdrag av Nordiska ministerrådet. Rapporten är skriven av Ida Drange och Cathrine Egeland, forskare vid Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet (AFI), Senter for velferds- og arbeidslivsforskning, Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus.

I ett lite längre perspektiv kan deltidsarbete i Norden sägas ha genomgått en ekonomisk, kulturell och social normaliseringsprocess sedan 1960-talet. Processen har drivits av flera olika förändringar, av vilka den faktiska ökningen av antalet kvinnor som arbetar och arbetar deltid är en, liksom tanken om att deltidsarbete är en lättnad för moderna familjer med arbetande mödrar. Vidare har arbetsmarknadspolitiken och lagar och regler som hindrar arbetsgivare från att diskriminera deltidsarbetande bidragit till dess normalisering. Familjepolitik och arbetsmarknadspolitik kan även ses som viktiga skäl till såväl förväntningar på kvinnor att deltidsarbeta som framväxten av idén om att arbete och familjeliv i grunden är antagonistiska sfärer i sig. Betydelsen av föräldraförsäkring, barnomsorg, organisering av arbete, arbetsgivares krav om flexibilitet, samt föreställningar om heltids- och deltidsarbete i de respektive nordiska länderna är viktiga bitar i ett kunskapspussel som försöker förklara betydelser av deltidsarbete för kvinnor i Norden

Rapporten består främst av en forskningsöversikt som i huvudsak baseras på nordisk forskning om kvinnors deltidsarbete i fackgranskade vetenskapliga tidskrifter. Översikten visar att det finns tre huvudsakliga orsaker till varför kvinnor arbetar deltid i väsentligen större utsträckning än män, trots de nordiska ländernas starka politiska vilja att uppnå jämställdhet i bland annat detta asveende.

- *Organisering av arbete och arbetsmarknadens organisering*.
  En särskild deltidskultur har vuxit fram kring kvinnors arbete i framför allt kvinnodominerade sektorer som vård och hälsa. Denna kultur skapar en förväntan om, och en acceptans av, kvinnors deltidsarbete. Samtidigt är kvinnors ofta ofrivilliga deltidsarbete en konsekvens av att viljan att arbeta heltid inte motsvaras av möjligheten att arbeta heltid. Effekter av lagstiftning, kollektivavtal och arbetets organisering är en viktig förklaring till just detta. Vidare är den kvinnodominerade välfärdssektorns sätt att organisera arbete i sig en mer specifik orsak till kvinnors ofrivilliga deltidsarbete. Arbetsgivares behov av flexibel arbetskraft och arbetstagares behov av flexibla arbetstider är ytterligare förklaringar till kvinnors högre andel av deltidsarbete.
- *Generell ohälsa och hälsoeffekter av deltidsarbete*.
  Två huvudskäl anges som grund till denna orsak och det är dels effekter av konflikter som uppstår i spåren av försöken att förena arbetsliv med familjeliv, dels effekter av arbetets organisering i den kvinnodominerade välfärdssektorn. Kvinnors upplevelser av otillräcklighet och oro för både familj och arbete är likaså viktiga förklaringar till relationen mellan kvinnors sämre hälsa och deltidsarbete. Vidare påverkas kvinnors hälsa av att deras deltidsarbete i kombination med ett huvudsakligt omsorgsansvar, utöver negativa effekter för exempelvis löneutveckling och pension, skapar sämre möjligheter till avkoppling och återhämtning i vardagen.
- *Familje- och omsorgsansvar och deltidsarbete*.
  Argumenten kring kvinnors deltidsarbete är slutligen starkt kopplade till kvinnors generellt sett större familje- och omsorgsansvar. Här återfinns tidigare givna förklaringar, men nu mer tydligt kopplade till barn och familj. Det är förklaringar som bland annat betonar arbetsgivarsidan, arbetets organisering och kvinnors egna val att prioritera familj och hem, vilka sammantagna får såväl frivillig som ofrivillig deltid till följd. Här anges också att en tydlig deltidskultur med särskilda normer och värderingar styr såväl arbetsgivares som kvinnors förståelse av deltidsarbete. Därutöver

påtalas också betydelsen av välfärdspolitiken och särskilt system för föräldraförsäkring och barnomsorg. De senare aspekterna visar sig ha stor betydelse för i vilken utsträckning kvinnor arbetar deltid. De förklarar i viss mån skillnader mellan de olika nordiska ländernas deltidskultur, liksom skillnader mellan de kvinnor som är ensamstående och de som lever i parrelationer. Sammantagna innebär argumenten kring familje- och omsorgsansvar och deltidsarbete också att en särskild berättelse skapas som handlar om att kvinnor, till skillnad från män, förväntas uppleva en konflikt mellan att arbeta och utöva ansvar för hem och familj. Därtill skapas också en heteronormativ förståelse av deltidsarbete, i betydelsen ett särskilt problem för kvinnor med barn i heterosexuella parrelationer, vilket gör att andra kvinnors deltidsarbetande liv tenderar att försvinna ur bilden.

Rapporten inkluderar även specifika delstudier, författade av nationella experter, vilka sammanfattar argument kring deltidsarbete för kvinnor i några av de nordiska länderna. Fokus i dessa delstudier är dels vilka politiska reformer och initiativ som genomförts i de olika länderna, dels vilka argument som framförs av forskare, politiker och arbetsmarknadens parter i media. En jämförande analys av delstudierna visar bland annat betydelsen av att utgå från skillnader i historiska, kulturella och sociala villkor i de olika nordiska länderna när deltidsarbete diskuteras. Det gäller särskilt frågor om arbetsmarknads- och arbetstidsregler, men även hur likheter och skillnader mellan nordiska kvinnors deltidsarbete förklaras. Skillnader i kulturella förväntningar på moderskap, omsorg och jämställdhet, och hur dessa faktorer har påverkat olika aspekter av lagstiftning, är tydliga när debatter i de olika nordiska länderna jämförs. Mer gemensamt är däremot en historiskt och kulturellt skapad heltidsnorm, framsprungen ur en manligt kodad arbetsmarknad, och dess effekt att skapa särskilt kvinnors deltidsarbete som både kulturellt förväntat och problematiskt.

Avslutningsvis mynnar rapporten ut i en rad olika påpekanden om vilka faktorer som i huvudsak förklarar den relativt höga andelen deltidsarbetande kvinnor i Norden. Här framhålls särskilt den rådande ekonomiska situationen, betydelser av arbetsmarknadspolitiska överenskommelser, jämställdhets- och familjepolitikens inverkan, samt tidigare nämnda heltidsnorm och dess effekter. Därtill ger rapportförfattarna ett par rekommendationer till hur den nordiska arbetsmarknads- och jämställdhetspolitiken kan fortsätta att utvecklas när det gäller frågan om kvinnors deltidsarbete. Bland annat föreslås fördjupade komparativa analyser av de nordiska länderna, en mer intersektionell förståelse av kvinnors deltidsarbete (som särskilt tar hänsyn till betydelser av kön, klass och etnicitet i samverkan), samt att ett mer problematiserande förhållningssätt används i diskussioner kring kvinnors deltidsarbete i sig – vill den nordiska jämställdhetspolitiken att kvinnor ska arbeta mer, att män ska arbeta mindre, eller både och?

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Part-Time Work in the Nordic Region II

Gender equality in the labour market is a key topic in the Nordic cooperation on gender equality. The Nordic Council of Ministers has asked NIKK, Nordic Information on Gender, to coordinate the project Part-Time Work in the Nordic Region. The aim of the project is to shed light on and analyse part-time work in the Nordic region, develop reports and arrange conferences.

During the Icelandic presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2014, the project followed up the earlier study Part-Time Work in the Nordic Region: Part-time work, gender and economic distribution in the Nordic countries. This second report is a research overview on the arguments used to explain the relation between part-time work and gender in the Nordic countries. Further, the report describe relevant measures taken by different actors in the labour market and the political sphere in order to reduce foremost women´s part-time work. The researchers Ida Drange and Cathrine Egeland wrote the report on a request by NIKK.

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