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Chapter 12

What Makes French Employees So Happy with their Balance between Family and Work? The Impact of Firms' Family-friendly Policies

Ariane Pailhé and Anne Solaz

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

A family-friendly environment is created through different mediums. By developing public childcare facilities, financial support for private childcare, parental leave, family allowances or advantageous taxation represent one well-established medium. French family policy is designed to help women to have the number of children they want while continuing to work (Toulemon et al. 2008). A second medium is that of social and cultural norms (Bernardi 2003) which ‘allow’ mothers to continue working full-time even with young children. France has an intermediate position in the ranking of countries according to traditional gendered family norms (see Figure 12.A.1 in the Appendix).

Another medium that may help families to balance family and work is the workplace. Employers may contribute to the balance between family and work by being flexible about hours, by offering benefits in kind and/or financial benefits. The literature on the role of firms in work–life balance has been growing in recent years (Evans 2001, OECD 2002–2005). It shows that family-friendly programmes may contribute to enhancing job performance, reducing lateness, absenteeism, turnover or low job involvement. From the family point of view, a family-friendly work environment may help parents to juggle work and family schedules (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran 2006) which will enhance satisfaction with work–family balance. However, there are huge differences between firms in terms of family-friendly benefits and services, according to the size and gender composition of the workforce and the economic sector (Lefèvre et al. 2008). These differences result in large inequalities between individuals depending upon where they work.

1 The aim of this chapter is to analyse the determinants of satisfaction with 1
 2 work–family balance. It focuses on the meso level – that of the firm. The chapter 2
 3 will analyse (1) whether employers’ family-friendly policies have an impact on 3
 4 individual satisfaction with the balance between work and family, (2) the relative 4
 5 impact of firms’ family-friendly policies compared to individual and family 5
 6 characteristics, and (3) which types of programme are the most effective in 6
 7 increasing satisfaction with regard to work–family balance. As the determinants 7
 8 of job satisfaction differ according to gender (Clark 1997), the analysis will be 8
 9 conducted separately for men and women. 9

10 The empirical analysis is based on rich information provided by the Enquête 10
 11 Familles et Employeurs (‘Families and Employers Survey’), a matched employer– 11
 12 employee survey carried out in 2004–2005 by the French Institute of Demographic 12
 13 Studies (INED). This cross-matched dataset offers a very rich source of information 13
 14 on both individual and family characteristics, as well as the characteristics of 14
 15 firms. It allows us to build a typology of firms according to their family-friendly 15
 16 policies, and to investigate the possible links between working in a particular type 16
 17 of establishment and the level of satisfaction with work–family balance. 17

18 The chapter is organised as follows. First, the previous research and 18
 19 background are described, followed by a typology of firms according to their 19
 20 family-friendliness. Some common factors affecting work–family satisfaction are 20
 21 then noted, before the method and the model’s results are presented. 21

22 22
 23 23

24 **Background** 24

25 25

26 There is a huge economics literature on self-perceived job satisfaction. The initial 26
 27 purpose was to link job satisfaction and observable phenomena such as resignations 27
 28 (Levy-Garboua et al. 2007), absenteeism or worker economic performance in 28
 29 management studies. The second purpose was to evaluate well-being, and then, 29
 30 indirectly, ‘utility’. Indeed, according to Argyle (1989), job satisfaction, family 30
 31 satisfaction and marriage are the three most important predictors of well-being. 31

32 Beyond overall job satisfaction, various components of job satisfaction are 32
 33 studied in the literature. These include satisfaction with the amount of pay, work 33
 34 responsibilities, the work itself, promotional opportunities or co-workers. Less 34
 35 research has been conducted on job satisfaction with work–family balance. Using 35
 36 a survey of federal government employees, Saltzstein et al. (2001) showed that 36
 37 the quality of the work–family balance is one determinant of job satisfaction, 37
 38 whatever the family situation (single/in couple, with children/childless), the age 38
 39 and the partner’s employment status (unemployed/employed). Our argument is 39
 40 that work–family balance may contribute to overall job satisfaction, and hence to 40
 41 well-being. 41

42 42

43 43

44 44

1 *Satisfaction and Gender* 1

2

3 Satisfaction indicators are always a mix of feelings about reality and expectations. 3
 4 Both are dependent on many factors and differ according to gender. The paradox 4
 5 of job satisfaction was pointed up by Clark (1997) in a pioneer work: 'though 5
 6 women's job content, wage and promotion opportunities are worse than men's, 6
 7 they report higher job satisfaction scores'. After controlling for selection bias, 7
 8 this paradox remains. It is assumed that the reason for this lies in the different 8
 9 expectations in well-being: women expect less from work, and will be more 9
 10 satisfied than men, all other things being equal. 10

11 According to the hypothesis of 'incompatibility of roles', women and men may 11
 12 perceive the problem of balancing paid work and family differently (Lehrer and 12
 13 Nerlove 1986). 13

14 The quality of the balance is essential in determining satisfaction with the 14
 15 work-family balance. In France, most women work full-time while having young 15
 16 children, and the 'dual burden' weighs mainly on their shoulders. As they bear the 16
 17 larger share of domestic and parental tasks while working, they are much more 17
 18 concerned about work-family balance. They may have more expectations than 18
 19 men because they may have more to gain from a better balance. As women bear a 19
 20 heavier share of the family tasks, they should be less satisfied than men. 20

21 However, satisfaction also depends on feelings about reality which are shaped 21
 22 by cultural factors and gender norms. The strong social pressure that allocates 22
 23 child-raising to women explains the division of labour between spouses (Shelton 23
 24 and John 1996). Role theory explains why women specialise in child-raising tasks 24
 25 by pointing to the substantial social rewards they receive when they participate 25
 26 in mothering, whereas men receive far fewer such rewards for fathering (Van der 26
 27 Lippe 1994). These social rewards may enable women to feel better about the way 27
 28 their employment and family life balance out. 28

29 However, this paradox is far from being universal in Europe. In a comparative 29
 30 study on 12 European countries using the ECHP data, after controlling for job 30
 31 characteristics, Davoine (2006) found that women were less satisfied in Portugal, 31
 32 whereas there was no gender effect in Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands, 32
 33 which are countries where the female labour force participation rate is very high. 33
 34 One explanation may be that with the emergence of almost universal female 34
 35 employment, holding a job is not seen as a privilege, so women are as demanding 35
 36 as men, or even more so. Another explanation might be that if female employment 36
 37 is the rule, then the institutional and business environment may have adapted to 37
 38 provide some help in terms of childcare facilities, work schedules and so on. 38
 39 39

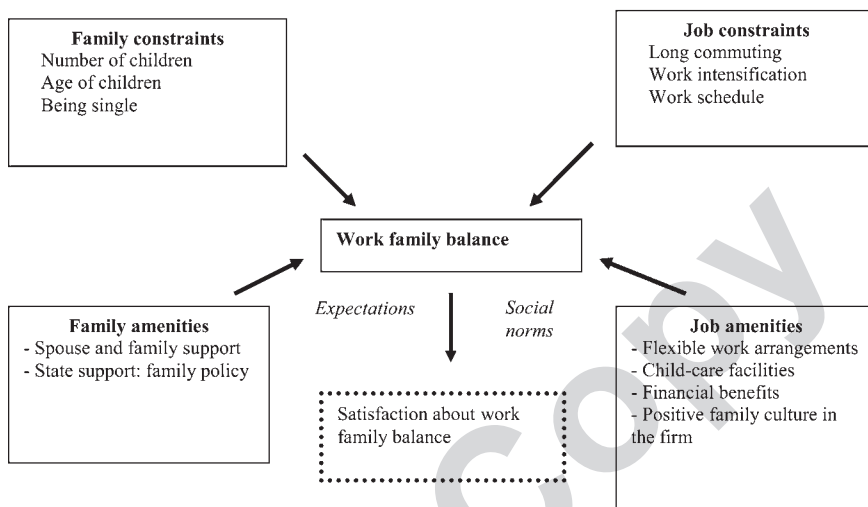
40 *Factors Affecting Satisfaction with Work-family Balance* 40

41

42 Time spent in paid work outside the family can therefore conflict with that 42
 43 spent with the family, at home. Perception of work-family balance derives from 43
 44 assessing the relative demands and resources associated with work and family roles 44

(Voydavnoff 2005). Work–family balance is at the intersection of two domains, family and work, which both have constraints and amenities (see Figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1 Components of work–family balance satisfaction



On the family side, one can assume that the larger the number of children and the younger they are, the higher the demands. The combination of work and family life may be eased through spousal and family support. Hence, according to Erdwins et al. (2001), spousal support is one of the largest determinants of work–family conflict. Grandparents or other relatives are also a resource for childcare. The availability of subsidised childcare facilities or subsidised childminders is also a key determinant. In France, collective and private care arrangements are well-developed for children under 3 years old, and 97 per cent of children are enrolled at school at the age of 3 (Blanpain 2006). As these facilities are available for most working parents, we do not focus here on the role they play.

On the employment side, work–family balance may be altered by long commuting, long or atypical work schedules and work intensification. Family-friendly programmes or policies may increase satisfaction with work–family balance. Those programmes and policies may include flexible working arrangements with regard to work schedule (for example, flexitime, telecommuting, compressed workweek, job-sharing), sick leave, childcare assistance (childcare referral services or on-site childcare) or cash benefits. A family-friendly culture at work may also play a key role concerning satisfaction with work–family balance. The perceptions of a supportive work/family culture and of supportive supervisors and co-workers may be determining factors, according to the literature on human resources management. Moreover, a condition for using family-friendly benefits

1 would be that there are no negative career consequences associated with the use
2 of such benefits.

3

4

5 **Method**

6

7 *Data*

8

9 The originality of our approach lies in the fact that it combines individual
10 determinants, household determinants and firm determinants thanks to a matched
11 survey of individuals and their employers. The dataset used here comes from
12 the Enquête Familles et Employeurs conducted by INED in 2004–2005.¹ The
13 objectives of this survey were to describe the work–life balance in France from the
14 point of view of both individuals and employers, and to understand the correlation
15 between the working lives and family behaviours of men and women. The
16 ‘Family’ section was carried out by means of face-to-face interviews on a sample
17 of approximately 9,500 respondents. The dataset contains rich sets of background
18 information on individuals and households as well as a detailed description
19 of the respondents’ current work situation. The ‘Employer’ section took the
20 form of a postal survey to the workplaces of the ‘Family’ survey respondents
21 (2,673 respondent establishments with over 20 employees). The questionnaire
22 covered the establishments’ human resources management (work organisation,
23 personnel management, working environment and general characteristics).

24 We use a matched sample: our sample was made up exclusively of men and
25 women in couples with at least one child under the age of 25 living at home (more
26 than half the week) working in an establishment with at least 20 employees. After
27 excluding individuals with missing information, the sample included 988 women
28 and 964 men. Sample characteristics are given in Table 12.A.1 (see Appendix).

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

35 Therefore, we propose a single measure of job satisfaction in terms of work–
36 family balance which is a general satisfaction indicator. The following question
37 was used to build our variable of interest:

38

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

41

42 1. Very dissatisfied

43

44 ¹ See <<http://www-eft.ined.fr>> (accessed 8 May 2011).

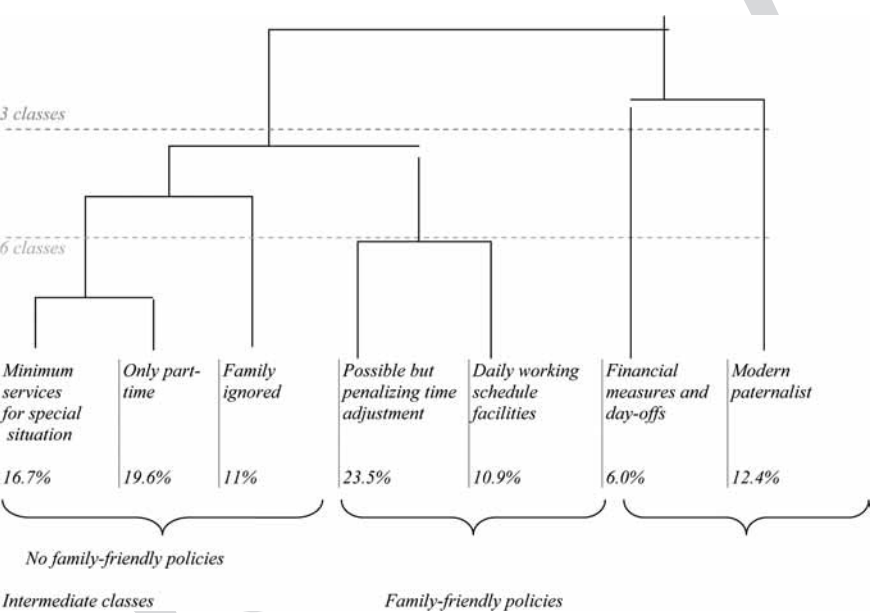
The establishment offers financial benefits for disabled children	Yes	26.5
Full wage during maternity and paternity leave	Yes	70.6
Work schedule adjustments for the start of the new school year	Yes	85.9
Work schedule adjustments for children (school, kindergarten)	Yes	39.1
Work schedule adjustments for a sick child	Yes	71.7
Work schedule adjustments for long commuting	Yes	23.6
Possibility to work at home for private reasons	Yes	11.9
Some jobs are defined as part-time	Yes	49.3
Part-time accepted at employee's request	No	8.3
	Sometimes	42.1
	Always	49.6
Possibility to choose days off (gained by French reform of working hours)	No	19.5
	Constrained	14.7
	Need agreement	53.7
	Free	12.1
Availability is a requirement for promotion	Never	2.2
	Sometimes	34.0
	Often	31.4
	Always	9.4
Holiday vouchers	Yes	50.0
The employer subsidises health insurance	For all	55.0
	For executives	8.0
	No	37.0
The employer provides health services	Yes	31.6

Note: Sample = establishments of 20 employees or more.

Source: Enquête Familles et Employeurs, INED, 2004–2005.

We used a mixed method of classification which consisted of using first a hierarchical upward classification, followed by a consolidation. The method of hierarchical upward classification involves grouping together classes successively by aggregation. At each step, the two groups formed by the preceding iteration were merged. At the first step, the aggregation consisted of creating $n-1$ classes, with n being the number of individuals. At the second step, $n-2$ classes were created, and so on. Seven classes were determined, which could be grouped into either six or three groups. We obtained the following three (see Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2 Classification tree



Two types of establishment provided extensive measures to help their employees. The class called ‘modern paternalist’ (12 per cent of establishments) included firms in which everything was done to keep employees at work. Almost all types of family-friendly measures were implemented more frequently by organisations belonging to this class. For instance, childcare centres in the workplace were available more frequently than on average (five times more), as were financial contributions to childcare (90 per cent, compared to 30 per cent on average). Additional pay for maternity and paternity leave was the rule. However, work schedule adjustments did not exist.

Additional covariates confirmed that this type of firm had strong schedule constraints: work schedules were extended; night and Sunday work were more common.

1 Six per cent of organisations belonged to the class called 'Financial measures 1
2 and days off'. It was characterised by an institutionalisation of the days off. The 2
3 duration of maternity leave was extended beyond the legal minimum. Paid days 3
4 off for looking after sick children were plentiful. Moreover, employees were free 4
5 to choose their days off obtained under the 'reduction of working hours' policy. 5
6 Part-time work was available on request. Moreover, half of these establishments 6
7 offered financial contributions for childcare or education. Measures in kind such 7
8 as holiday camps or holidays vouchers were also largely provided. 8

9 These establishments opened five days a week. The sectors represented were 9
10 finance (banking and insurance) and central administration. The firms were 10
11 relatively large (half had more than 500 employees, and one third more than 11
12 1,000) and were more likely to be in Paris and its suburbs. The proportion of 12
13 highly qualified employees was large. 13

14 At the other end of the scale, we found groups of establishments which 14
15 provided very few such services. 15

16 In the class called 'Family ignored', which represents 11 per cent of the 16
17 organisations, family constraints were completely ignored. All the measures 17
18 described above were less prevalent than elsewhere. None of these establishments 18
19 offered part-time work. Promotion was dependent on workers' availability. Some 19
20 benefits were available, but the links to work-family balance were not as strong. 20
21 For example, members of the managerial staff were more likely to benefit from 21
22 subsidised health insurance. Help with housing might also be provided. The 22
23 introduction of additional covariates showed that the proportion of men was high in 23
24 such establishments (half had more than 75 per cent male workers). The construction 24
25 sector and small businesses (half with 20–50 employees) were over-represented. 25

26 The class called 'Only part-time' was very similar to the previous one. It 26
27 differed essentially in the availability of opportunities to work part-time. A very 27
28 common measure, such as offering flexible schedules at the start of the new school 28
29 year, was not available. The construction and metallurgical industries were over- 29
30 represented. These firms had an international or European market. 30

31 The class called 'Minimum services for special situation' comprised 17 per 31
32 cent of the organisations. Employers in this category provided few measures 32
33 except in the case of a sick child or for the start of the new school year. In most 33
34 cases, days off were granted for sickness. The childbirth bonus existed in three- 34
35 quarters of these establishments. This category was quite heterogeneous. Large 35
36 French corporations, but also non-profit organisations were over-represented. 36
37 They might be open at night or on Sunday (25 per cent of cases). The retailing and 37
38 manufacturing industries were highly represented here. They were more likely to 38
39 have trade unions and a human resources department. 39

40 The intermediate classes provided only some kinds of services. 40

41 In the class called 'Possible but penalising time adjustment', work schedule 41
42 adjustments were more often possible to adapt to school or kindergarten schedules, 42
43 or for long commuting. For instance, 97 per cent of firms allowed this kind of 43
44 adjustment in the case of a sick child. Numerous firms allowed employees to take 44

1 part-time work, but employees who did so were penalised in terms of the progress 1
 2 of their career: promotion was linked to availability (in half of cases, 'often' or 2
 3 'always'). Twenty-four per cent of establishments belonged to this class, in which, 3
 4 on average, employees were relatively young. 4

5 Lastly, the 11 per cent of organisations belonging to the class 'Daily working 5
 6 schedule facilities' were characterised by schedules and working time facilities. 6
 7 Family measures tended to fit the employee's situation, and they were barely 7
 8 institutionalised. Daily working schedule facilities were provided to fit school and 8
 9 kindergarten schedules or for long commuting. This class was similar in numerous 9
 10 respects to the previous one, but offered some additional measures, like the 10
 11 possibility of working at home. Working at home for private reasons was allowed 11
 12 three times more than on average. The number of days off allowed in case of a sick 12
 13 child was higher (more than six days off in 70 per cent of cases). There was likely 13
 14 to be access to a health centre, but no health insurance subsidies were available. 14
 15 These establishments were mainly in the state public sector (60 per cent of the 15
 16 employers in this category were state organisations, whereas state organisations 16
 17 only accounted for 13 per cent of employers overall), and particularly in the 17
 18 education sector (45 per cent of the employers in this category were educational 18
 19 organisations, compared to 8 per cent of employers overall). Most employees were 19
 20 highly qualified. They often worked less than 35 hours a week (teachers). The 20
 21 majority of employees were women, including in managerial positions. 21

22 23 *Multivariate Analysis* 23 24 24

25 As mentioned above, roles and values are a huge factor in satisfaction with work– 25
 26 family balance, and the determinants are gender-specific. For this reason, two 26
 27 separate estimations were performed for women and men. 27

28 Our sample was made up exclusively of employees. For some people, and 28
 29 especially women, the probability of being employed was correlated with their 29
 30 potential satisfaction with work–family balance. In other words, work–family 30
 31 balance dissatisfaction might be a reason for quitting the labour market. In our 31
 32 original dataset, 36 per cent of housewives with children reported that their 32
 33 previous work frequently came into conflict with their family life. This proportion 33
 34 fell to 17 per cent among working women. Those who were not included in our 34
 35 sample – people not in the labour force – may be self-selected into this state, and 35
 36 hence not be representative.² Since only very few men are out of the labour force, 36
 37 we only corrected for selection bias for women. 37
 38 38

39
 40 2 Another self-selection process would be that the women's preference for 39
 41 one type of firm might be linked to the better conditions of work–family balance in this 40
 42 sector. While controlling for a maximum of characteristics of job status, we expected to 41
 43 minimise unobserved heterogeneity, and then this selection problem. Again, as in France, 42
 44 the unemployment rate is high especially for women, job mobility low, and job choice is 43
 44 rather limited. Moreover, work–family balance is not the first reason cited for choosing a 44

1 Since women who worked were selected non-randomly from the population, 1
 2 estimating the determinants of wages from the sub-population who worked might 2
 3 introduce bias. We tested for selection bias following the classical Heckman's 3
 4 two-step procedure (Heckman 1979). This procedure estimates, in a first step, the 4
 5 probability for being in work³ relative to being out of the labour force by introducing 5
 6 at least one specific covariate called an 'instrumental variable' or 'exclusion variable' 6
 7 (a variable that explains the probability of working, but not work-family balance 7
 8 satisfaction). The unemployed, students and retirees were excluded from our 8
 9 sample. The explanatory variables were age, age squared, education level, number 9
 10 of children, and a dummy variable if the person had at least one child aged under 10
 11 3 years, a dummy variable for living in a couple, and dummy variables for being 11
 12 a disabled person. We used two instruments – the mother's activity status during 12
 13 adolescence and immigrant status – as the exclusion variables. The estimations 13
 14 show the expected effects of education (higher probability of participation for 14
 15 the higher levels) and of children (negative and significant). Being an immigrant 15
 16 reduced the probability of being employed, while having a mother who worked 16
 17 continuously during the subject's own adolescence increased it. The detailed results 17
 18 of this first step are presented in Table 12.A.2 in the Appendix.⁴ 18

19 In a second step, we estimate an ordered probit on the scale of satisfaction with 19
 20 work-family balance. The ordinal dependent variable required the use of ordered 20
 21 probit regression. 21

22 23 *Covariates* 23

24 25 In addition to individual characteristics (age and education), variables related to 25
 26 the four dimensions influencing satisfaction related to work-family balance were 26
 27 introduced as explanatory variables: 27

28 29 **Family constraints:** 29

- 30 • number of children under 18 living in the household 30
- 31 • a dummy variable indicating the presence of children under 3 in the 31
- 32 household 32

33 34 job. Usually, wages, geographical proximity, the interest of the job and job security come 34
 35 first. So we can assume that the family-friendly policy of a firm acts as a bonus, but does 35
 36 not influence the job search process directly, after controlling for some job characteristics. 36

37 3 Our sample included only wage-earners working in establishments with at 37
 38 least 20 employees. We did not control for potential selectivity of being employed in an 38
 39 establishment of more or less than 20 employees. We assumed that establishment size was 39
 40 a random process – in other words, that people do not choose to work in an establishment 40
 41 according to its size, especially in a context of high unemployment 41

42 4 The estimations show the expected effects of education (higher probability of 42
 43 participation for the higher levels), and of children (negative and significant). Being an 43
 44 immigrant reduces the probability of being employed, while having a continuously working 44
 45 mother increases it. The detailed results are presented in Table 12.A.2 in the Appendix. 45

1	• a dummy variable indicating that the respondent was single	1
2		2
3	Family resources:	3
4	• a variable indicating the proximity of the respondent's mother ⁵ – whether	4
5	the time taken to travel from the respondent's to his or her mother's home	5
6	was less than 90 minutes; this variable was a proxy for external help to take	6
7	care of the children	7
8		8
9	Employment constraints:	9
10	• number of hours worked per week	10
11	• schedules:	11
12	– non-standard work schedule – whether the respondent works on	12
13	evenings, Saturdays or Sundays (regularly or occasionally)	13
14	– strict control of working hours (clocking in and out)	14
15	– schedules fixed by employer	15
16	• commuting duration (less than 30 minutes/between 30 minutes and 1 hour/	16
17	more than 1 hour/no regular journey)	17
18	• quality of job:	18
19	– work under pressure	19
20		20
21	Employment resources:	21
22	• monthly wage (in logarithm)	22
23	• schedules:	23
24	– reduced number of working days (four days or less worked per week)	24
25	– regular time schedule (same schedule every day)	25
26	– the possibility to change the schedule	26
27		27
28	Employer characteristics:	28
29	• branch (transportation/finance and real estate/others)	29
30	• state public sector	30
31	• size of the firm (less than or more than 50 employees)	31
32	• work family culture (from the employee's family-friendly employer	32
33	classes' point of view)	33
34	– acceptance from female colleagues and supervisors of employee's	34
35	absence for family reasons	35
36	– acceptance from male colleagues and supervisors of employee's	36
37	absence for family reasons	37
38		38
39		39
40		40
41		41
42		42
43	5 We did not use information on the proximity of the mother-in-law since this	43
44	information was not available for all respondents.	44

1 Results

3 Descriptive Statistics

5 There was not much gender difference in satisfaction about work–family balance
6 (see Table 12.2).

8 **Table 12.2** Distribution according to the level of satisfaction (%)

	Satisfaction			
	Very dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
Female	5.0	14.7	54.5	25.7
Male	5.8	13.6	57.6	23.1
1 child under 18	4.1	15.8	55.7	24.0
2 children	6.4	13.5	57.0	23.1
3 or more children	6.7	14.1	54.9	24.3
Single	5.4	14	56.6	24.1
Couple	5.8	15.1	52.0	27.1
Private	6.1	15	57.8	21.1
Public	4.0	12.5	52.7	30.8
Classes				
Minimum services for special situation	5.4	15.8	57.7	21.2
Only part-time	7.8	15.6	55.4	21.2
Family ignored	9.2	10.8	60.8	19.2
Possible, but penalising time adjustment	8.0	13.7	56.7	21.7
Daily working schedule facilities	0.5	15.0	49.0	35.5
Financial measures and days off	2.5	10.5	58.2	28.9
Modern paternalist	4.7	14.4	55.3	25.6

Source: Enquête Familles et Employeurs, INED, 2004–2005.

This result confirms that work–family balance satisfaction is a large and complex concept. Respondents were not asked about their domestic or parental workload. If they had been, women should have been more dissatisfied than men because of the unequal division of work between women and men. Reconciling family and work does not involve partners in the same manner. The usual parental and domestic tasks are mainly performed by women (Algava 2002; Brousse 2000). In the case of

exceptional events such as a sick child, it is mainly the mother (58 per cent in our sample) who takes care of him or her, compared to 9 per cent of fathers. This gender-neutral result also shows that, since satisfaction is a subjective concept, it integrates prevailing social norms which are very strong and gender-oriented on this subject.

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

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

Multivariate Analysis

The results of the multivariate analysis are shown in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3 Determinants of satisfaction with work–family balance

	Men			Women		
	Parameter		T student	Parameter		T student
Individual characteristics						
Age	0.079		1.34	0.067		0.94
Age ²	-0.001		-1.02	-0.001		-0.80
Education high (ref. = no)	0.008		0.06	0.217		1.03
Education medium	0.002		-0.01	0.091		0.54
Education low	-0.111		-1.04	0.166		1.10
Family characteristics						
Constraints						
Single	0.251		1.47	0.018		0.16
No. of children	-0.028		-0.64	-0.148	*	-1.66
Child < 3	0.124		1.25	-0.258	*	-1.45
Resources						
Parents close	0.122		1.47	0.137	*	1.72
Job characteristics						
Monthly wage log	-0.011		-0.09	0.069		0.63
Weekly hours	-0.026	***	-4.45	-0.014	**	-2.22

Non standard schedule	-0.251	***	-2.75	-0.273	***	-3.22
Regular time schedule	0.389	***	4.66	0.278	***	3.50
Schedule fixed by employer	-0.324	***	-3.41	-0.282	***	-3.30
Check-in control by time clock	0.222	***	2.37	-0.117		-1.33
Availability to change	0.256	**	3.06	0.259	***	3.18
Work less than 4 days per week	0.198		1.45	0.216	**	2.33
Commuting < 30 minutes (ref. >90 minutes)	0.436	***	3.22	0.536	***	3.78
Commuting = 30–90 minutes	0.287	**	1.95	0.316	**	2.11
Commuting = no usual trip	0.254		1.24	0.687	***	3.27
Managerial responsibilities	-0.099		-1.14	-0.094		-0.91
Working conditions						
Work under pressure	-0.496	***	-6.1	-0.5	***	-6.45
Family-friendly work environment						
Female colleagues and supervisor family-friendly	0.158		1.42	0.245	*	1.89
Male colleagues and supervisor family-friendly	0.225	**	2.23	0.027		0.28
Firm characteristics						
Minimum services for special situation (ref. = only part-time)	-0.167		1.36	0.121		0.89
Family ignored	0.270	*	1.66	0.002		0.01
Possible, but penalising time adjustment	-0.004		-0.03	0.605		0.42
Daily working schedule facilities	-0.064		-0.36	0.442	**	2.57
Financial measures and days off	-0.031		-0.21	0.268	*	1.64
Modern paternalist	-0.086		-0.57	0.158		1.03
State public sector	0.234	*	1.86	0.027		0.25
Firm size < 50 employees	-0.137		-1.31	0.113		1.17
Finance and real estate sector	0.487	**	2.06	0.163		0.88
Transportation	-0.321	**	-2.02	0.147		0.60
Lambda				0.203		0.63
Pseudo R2	0.1243			0.1048		
N	964			988		

Note: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%.

1 **Individual characteristics** Whatever the gender, work–family balance 1
 2 satisfaction was not sensitive to individual characteristics such as education or 2
 3 age. The amount of the variance explained by a model containing only individual 3
 4 variables is very small.⁶ The traditional u-shaped relation between age and job 4
 5 satisfaction was not found for work–family balance satisfaction. This may be 5
 6 explained by the restriction of our sample to working parents aged 20–49, and 6
 7 its homogenous nature. Education level was significant without controlling for 7
 8 selection bias (the more educated were more satisfied), but this no longer applied 8
 9 once selection bias had been controlled for. 9

10
 11 **Family characteristics** Being a single parent had no impact. For women, as 11
 12 expected, having a very young child (under 3 years old) had a negative impact on 12
 13 satisfaction with work–family balance. Indeed, family constraints were highest 13
 14 with very young children. Work–family balance satisfaction also depended on the 14
 15 number of children under 18 living in the household. For men, neither the number 15
 16 of children nor having a young child played any role in their level of satisfaction 16
 17 with work–family balance. This reflects the fact that fathers’ involvement with 17
 18 children is still low in France. 18

19 For men and women, family resources increased satisfaction. Having a 19
 20 grandmother living nearby – that is, external help to take care of the children – 20
 21 increased satisfaction. It was a bonus for reconciling family and work. 21

22
 23 **Job characteristics** Introducing job characteristics in the model significantly 23
 24 increased its explanatory power. While wage level had no direct impact on 24
 25 satisfaction, the number of hours worked was a major factor. Long working hours 25
 26 decreased satisfaction with work–life balance for both sexes. However, as Harriet 26
 27 Presser emphasises: ‘it really matters which hours people work, not just the 27
 28 number of hours people work’.⁷ Indeed, having non-standard schedules (working 28
 29 at night or at weekends) is really prejudicial for work–family balance. Although 29
 30 some studies show that parents can replace each other in case of a non-standard 30
 31 schedule, and thus reduce costly childcare, satisfaction is reduced. Working only 31
 32 four days a week was also a means to improve work–family balance for women; 32
 33 it was not significant for men (and also less common). Commuting time was also 33
 34 important. The shorter the commuting time, the higher the level of satisfaction 34
 35 with work–family balance. 35

36 Conversely, having regular schedules was a bonus in terms of work–family 36
 37 balance. Schedules might be fixed by the employer or by the employee, depending 37
 38 on the type of job. Obviously, if the employer fixed the working schedules, 38
 39 satisfaction was reduced. Interestingly, clocking on and off had a positive effect 39
 40 on male satisfaction. It allowed employees to track the exact amount of hours 40

41
 41

42 6 This table is not presented here. 42

43 7 This passage comes from Prof. Presser’s lecture: <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2004/05.27/15-24_7.html> (accessed 8 May 2011). 43
 44 44

1 worked; it objectified the hours worked in a country where the number of hours 1
 2 spent at work, rather than productivity, is a sign of job involvement. Moreover, 2
 3 some days off could be obtained in compensation for extra hours worked. Lastly, 3
 4 being able to change the working schedule to cope with an unexpected event 4
 5 significantly increased satisfaction. 5

6 The indicators of stress on the workplace also played a role. Working under 6
 7 pressure significantly reduced the level of satisfaction, particularly for men. For 7
 8 men, a poor work atmosphere also had a strong negative impact, whereas it did not 8
 9 matter for women. More objective indicators, such as the indicator for managerial 9
 10 position, had no significant impact. 10

11 11
 12 **Family-friendly work environment** Gender differences may stem from social 12
 13 norms prevailing in the workplace and the family-friendly climate at work. To 13
 14 control for possible social norms, we introduced some indicators of the attitudes 14
 15 of peers and supervisors towards parental involvement. The results show that 15
 16 peers' attitudes were crucial. When male colleagues or supervisors thought that 16
 17 an absence for a family reason was normal, men were more satisfied with their 17
 18 work–family balance. The result was the same for women with female colleagues 18
 19 and supervisors. 19

20 20
 21 **Firm characteristics** Since our regression contained many covariates, we 21
 22 limited the firm control covariates to those which were significant: state public 22
 23 sector, real estate and financial sector, and transportation sector. Other things being 23
 24 equal, the establishment size was not significant. As Lang and Johnson (1994) 24
 25 conclude on job satisfaction, 'firm size, contrary to prevailing wisdom, only acts as 25
 26 a moderator,' and then indirectly through other characteristics of the job and firm. 26

27 The family-friendly classes of establishments were significant overall for 27
 28 women. The reference class, 'Only part-time', was the group of establishments 28
 29 which offered the lower family-friendly benefits and services. For the male 29
 30 regression, the class 'Family ignored' was the only significantly different one. In 30
 31 that class, some benefits were available, such as subsidies for health insurance, but 31
 32 these were less closely linked to work–family balance. Thus, in their appreciation 32
 33 of work–family balance, men seemed to take into account some factors not directly 33
 34 linked with family or children. For them, working in the state public sector had 34
 35 a positive impact, and working in the finance and real estate sectors was even 35
 36 more positive. For women, working for the much more family-friendly types 36
 37 of employers did play a role. Working in firms where both benefits in kind and 37
 38 flexible working schedules were available was positive. This emphasises the fact 38
 39 that a family-friendly environment increases the satisfaction of mothers, but not 39
 40 that of fathers. One explanation may be that women are the main users of such 40
 41 amenities, since mothers assume the majority of parental tasks. 41

42 42
 43 43
 44 44

1 Conclusion 1

2
3 Recently, French companies have become aware of the need to introduce measures 3
4 to enhance their employees' work-life balance in order to improve both their well- 4
5 being and their involvement in work. Employers wish to get involved, sometimes 5
6 even beyond the expectations of the employees. Many intend to invest more than 6
7 they do at present. Their participation is very diverse, as shown by the family-friendly 7
8 typology of firms. However, the measures chosen are not always well targeted, and 8
9 only rarely constitute a coherent and deliberate policy on the part of companies. 9

10 Work-family balance satisfaction may be explained by a multitude of factors. 10
11 Among those assessed in this chapter, the characteristics of the job were the 11
12 most important, whether the respondents were men or women. Aspects of family 12
13 life – both constraints and positive factors – played a small part, whereas job 13
14 characteristics, especially working conditions, were essential. All the schedule 14
15 flexibility covariates (regularity, opportunities to change working hours, and so 15
16 on) were highly significant. 16

17 To capture the possible additional effects of the family-friendly atmosphere 17
18 of a firm, we constructed a typology of seven classes of firms using objective 18
19 indicators about the family measures they provide to their employees. We also 19
20 derived subjective indicators of the family-friendly atmosphere using a question 20
21 about the absence of negative judgement of peers (colleagues and supervisors). 21
22 The results showed that the judgement of one's same-sex peers was a key aspect 22
23 of work-family balance satisfaction for both women and men. Only some family- 23
24 friendly objectives introduced into firms' practices played an additional role. The 24
25 classes characterised by benefits and services were found to have little effect on 25
26 work-family balance satisfaction, whereas the classes characterised by flexible 26
27 schedules were significant for women's satisfaction. Since women assume the 27
28 majority of parental tasks, they are also the main users of such amenities (for 28
29 example, scheduling arrangements). 29

30 The debate about work-family balance usually focuses on parents' 30
31 responsibilities, and in particular on mothers of young children. The increasing 31
32 importance placed on firms' practices usually focuses on this infant period, both 32
33 in the public debate and in employers' discourses. The provision of childcare by 33
34 firms often appears as *the* solution to help parents to reconcile work and family. 34
35 However, this chapter shows that parents need help all along the life cycle – not 35
36 only when they have children under the age of 3 – and that childcare provision is 36
37 not the unique solution. Schedule flexibility plays a far greater role in work-family 37
38 balance satisfaction than financial or in-kind facilities. 38

39 Thus, further deep thought needs to be devoted to changing work organisation, 39
40 workload and schedules in order to improve work-life balance effectively. The 40
41 flexibility of work styles and schedules needs to be improved, as does French 41
42 corporate culture, which interprets long working hours as a sign of motivation. 42
43 This is a point put forward in the OECD report on work-life balance (OECD 43
44 2007). Thinking about and taking coherent measures at the level of the company, 44

1 in collaboration with civil unions and social partners, is then necessary to improve 1
 2 working parents' well-being. 2
 3 Companies can help to improve their employees' well-being by proposing 3
 4 diverse measures and scheduling arrangements. However, it is difficult, and 4
 5 doubtless ineffective in the short term, to force organisations to bear the whole 5
 6 responsibility for achieving progress in this area. The state has an important role 6
 7 to play, especially since the practices of companies are so diverse. It is important 7
 8 to pursue the development of formal childcare arrangements beyond those 8
 9 organised by firms. Fighting against the traditional norms regarding parental 9
 10 roles, both at work and within the family, is a more difficult issue which needs 10
 11 time to address. In this domain, public policies have an important role to play in 11
 12 helping to break the trend. 12

13

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1 Appendix

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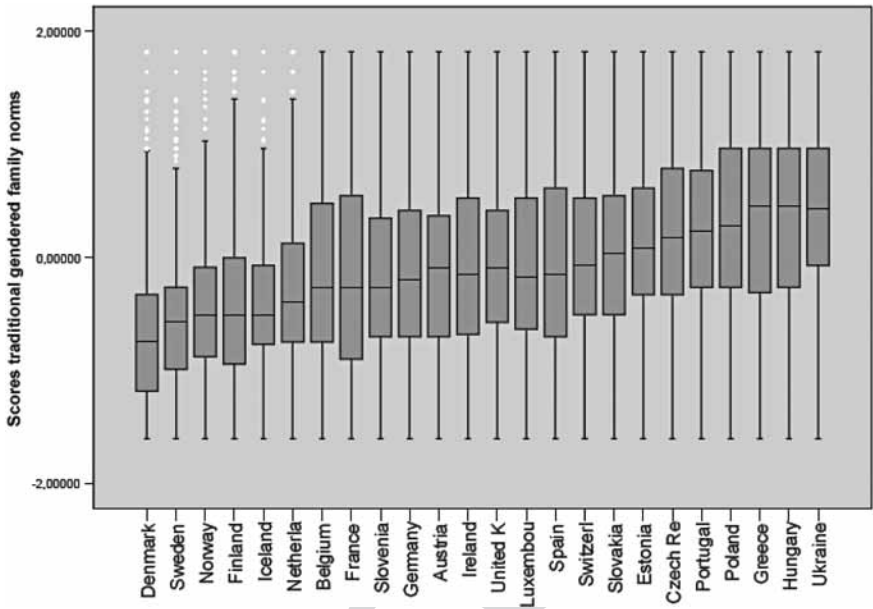


Figure 12A.1 Factor scores on traditional gendered family norms, box plot by country

Source: Van Bavel (2007).

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Table 12.A.1 Description of variables

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Work-family balance satisfaction	2.99	0.78	1	4
Individual characteristics				
Age	38.36	6.67	20	49
Age2	1,,516.31	496.67	400	2401
Education high	0.33	0.47	0	1
Education medium	0.17	0.38	0	1
Education low	0.32	0.47	0	1
Education = no (ref.)	0.32	0.47	0	1
Family characteristics				
Single	0.11	0.31	0	1
Number children	1.59	0.9	0	8
Child < 3	0.23	0.42	0	1
Parents close	0.66	0.47	0	1
Job characteristics				
Monthly wage (log)	7.27	0.55	0	10.03
Weekly hours	36.29	8.49	1	75
Non-standard schedule (night, evening, Saturday, Sunday)	0.63	0.48	0	1
Regular schedule	0.52	0.5	0	1
Schedule fixed by employer	0.61	0.49	0	1
Check-in control by time clock	0.28	0.45	0	1
Availability to change	0.56	0.5	0	1
Work less than 4 days per week	0.2	0.4	0	1
Commuting < 30 minutes	0.64	0.48	0	1
Commuting =30–90 minutes	0.22	0.41	0	1
Commuting >90 minutes (ref.)	0.14	0.35	0	1
Commuting = no usual trip	0.06	0.23	0	1
Managerial responsibilities	0.27	0.44	0	1
Work under pressure	0.45	0.5	0	1
Family-friendly work environment				
Female colleagues and supervisor family-friendly	0.83	0.38	0	1
Male colleagues and supervisor family-friendly	0.72	0.45	0	1

Firm characteristics				
Minimum services for special situation	0.19	0.4	0	1
Only part-time (ref.)	0.11	0.32	0	1
Family ignored	0.06	0.24	0	1
Possible, but penalising time adjustment	0.16	0.36	0	1
Daily working schedule facilities	0.1	0.3	0	1
Financial measures and days off	0.12	0.32	0	1
Modern paternalist	0.22	0.42	0	1
State public sector	0.27	0.45	0	1
Firm size < 50 employees	0.19	0.39	0	1
Finance and real estate sector	0.04	0.2	0	1
Transportation	0.04	0.21	0	1

Table 12.A.2 Probability of being employed (Probit model)

	Women	
	b	t
Variables		
Age	0.178	3,220***
Age2	-0.003	-3,460***
No. of children	-0.463	-10,560***
Child < 3	-0.927	-9,610***
Education high (ref. = no)	1.061	10,700***
Education medium	0.609	5,570***
Education low	0.518	5,370***
Single	0.243	2,170**
Exclusion variables		
Working mother during adolescence	0.167	2,220**
Immigrant	-0.712	-5,640***
Disability	-0.117	-1,160
Constant	-2.017	-2,060**
Pseudo R2	0.227	
N	1,640,000	

Note: * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%.