Combining family and full-time work: Austria

This is the Austrian contribution to the topic report on combining family and full-time work, coordinated via questionnaire by Statistics Finland and Oxford Research, Denmark, for the European Working Conditions Observatory.

1. Methodological part

Please describe briefly the surveys – dates, coverage, size and response rates – used in answering the questions. By national surveys is meant nationally representative surveys.

Mikrozensus yearly results 2002
Supplementary programme on working time, June 2001
Supplementary programme Labour Force Survey, March 2003

The Mikrozensus survey started in March 1968 and is carried out on a quarterly basis. The survey focuses on topics such as population, qualification, education, professional position and working time. The answers to this questionnaire will refer to 2002.

Each Mikrozensus survey includes a supplementary programme (Sonderprogramm). That means that the questions of the Mikrozensus survey are asked on a quarterly basis, and the supplementary programme of the Mikrozensus changes every three months.

Since 1995, the first supplementary programme of each year has been a Labour Force Survey (Arbeitskräfteerhebung). The topics covered by this survey range from employment, working time, preferred working time and unemployment, to job search, education and second jobs. The answers here will refer to information from the Labour Force Survey of March 2003.

The third survey to mention is the supplementary programme of the Mikrozensus survey of June 2001, which focused on working time (Dauer und Struktur der Arbeitszeit). A similar survey was conducted last year, but was not to be published before June 2005.

The sample size of the Mikrozensus surveys of 2002 encompassed around 34,720 households each time the survey was conducted. These data were then extrapolated to provide information on either the total Austrian population or Austrian employees. The results of each of the four surveys were also extrapolated to provide data on the entire year of 2002. Around 60,000 people were interviewed each time the survey was conducted. On average (in each of the surveys), 27.3% of the contacted households could not be interviewed as nobody was at home.

The sample of the supplementary programme Labour Force Survey 2003 encompassed 33,500 households. In 22,500 households, people could be interviewed. The programme provides extrapolated data on 7,932,000 people. As the survey focuses on labour issues, 6.6 million people with a minimum age of 15 are covered by the supplementary programme. The Mikrozensus survey allows the interviewed member of the household to answer on behalf of all members living in the household. In March 2003, the proxy data obtained in this way accounted for 46.7% of survey data.

The extrapolated basic population of the supplementary programme on working time in 2001 comprises 3.4 million employees and 2.9 million wage and salary earners1.

Q1. In this part, the aim is to show how national surveys cover work–life balance of working parents in full-time work, from the aspect of certain working time arrangements. Thus, the national correspondents are asked to describe what questions are included in the national working conditions surveys on the following themes.

It is worth noting that the answers to these questions do not refer to the working conditions survey. What is called the ‘working conditions survey’ in Austria is a supplementary programme of the Mikrozensus survey, focusing on working environment risks and exposures. As mentioned above, the answers here refer to the

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1 As the results of this supplementary programme have only been published in two short articles, no additional information on the method of the survey can be provided.

a) Family situation/Household

What kind of information is available about the family situation/household: civil status of the respondent (whether the employee is living alone or with the partner); labour market status of the spouse/partner (employed/unemployed/student...work full time/part time...in permanent/fixed-term employment/self-employed); number and age of children living at home (is it possible to break down age groups by the age of the youngest child, e.g. 0-2 yrs, 3-5 yrs, 6-14)?

Unfortunately, the questionnaire of the Mikrozensus survey does not include questions on the labour market status of the spouse or partner. Nor can these answers provide information on the number and the age of the children.

How have the questions been formulated? If definitions are used in questions, give them.

Information is provided on marital status and on the size of, and the position in, the household.

Questions of the Mikrozensus survey:
‘Are you single – married – widowed – divorced?’
‘How many persons belong to this household and have their first residence here, even though they are momentarily absent (e.g. students, on holiday, etc)?’
‘Are you head of the household – spouse/partner of the head of the household – child of the head of the household – mother/father of the head of the household or his/her spouse – another person?’

Definition: First residence: In Austria, it is possible to have a first and a second residence. Students, for example, can be still registered at their parents’ place but live in an apartment of their own (their second residence) in another city.

b) Work–life balance / reconciliation of work and family life

As an example of this kind of question, see Q20 of the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS): ‘In general, do your working hours fit in with your family or social commitments outside work very well, fairly well, not very well or not at all?’ – Do you have similar question(s) in your national survey?

Yes, there are similar questions, but they do not really refer to the family situation.

How have the questions been formulated? If definitions are used in questions, give them.

Questions of the Mikrozensus survey:
‘How many hours does your normal weekly working time amount to? (number is put down)’
‘How many hours did you effectively work last week? (number is put down)’

If these numbers are not the same, the following question is only asked in the Supplementary programme Labour Force Survey: ‘What is the main reason that the normal working time and the effective working time differ from each other?’

Categories of answers to choose from:
More effective working hours: ‘variable working time, paid overtime, time off in lieu for overtime’
Fewer effective working hours: ‘bad weather; short-time work (Kurzarbeit) for technical or economical reasons; further education, flextime; other variable working time; time off in lieu; illness, accident or temporary invalidity; maternity leave; personal or family reasons or other personal reasons; holiday; public holiday; start or change of job; end of job without starting a new job’

In addition, the same supplementary programme includes the following questions:
‘Would you like to work more hours? No – Yes, in a second job – Yes, in a new job with more working hours – Yes, more hours in my current job – Yes, no matter how’
‘Would you like to work fewer hours (even though you would earn less)? Yes – No’
‘How many hours do you want to work in general? (number is put down)’
c) **Overtime (paid, unpaid)**

Do you have question(s) about overtime work (paid or unpaid) in your national survey? Frequency? How many hours a week or month? For example, in the Finnish Quality of Working Life Survey, there are questions like: ‘Do you sometimes work overtime for which you receive compensation: a) In money b) In time off c) In both d) In neither.’

If a, b or c: ‘How often do you do such overtime: a) Almost every day b) Every week c) Every second week d) At least once a month e) or less frequently?’

‘Do you sometimes do overtime for which you receive no compensation: a) Yes b) No.’

If yes: ‘How often do you do such overtime: a) Almost every day b) Every week c) Every second week d) At least once a month e) or less frequently?’

The supplementary programme Labour Force Survey asks the following questions:

‘Do you regularly work overtime and, if so, how many hours on average a week? No – Yes (number is put down)’

‘Do you work this overtime mainly on weekends? Yes – No’

The supplementary programme on working time asks the following questions:

‘How many overtime hours – paid or unpaid – did you work last week? (number is put down)’

If yes: ‘How many hours are paid in what way? Paid at a higher rate – paid at the standard rate – Time off in lieu at a higher rate – Time off in lieu at the standard rate – Unpaid (number of hours for each category is put down)’

**d) Possibility of influencing start and finish times**

For example, in the EWCS, Q 18a_3 asks: ‘Do you work fixing starting and finishing times?’ – Do you have similar question(s) in your national survey? How have the questions been formulated? If definitions are used in questions, give them.

The supplementary programme on working time asks the following questions:

‘Is your working time in any way (daily, weekly or yearly) variable? Yes – No’

**e) Positive flexibility of working time**

For example, in the Finnish Quality of Working Life Survey, there are questions that indicate positive flexibility: ‘I can use flexible working hours sufficiently for my own needs.’ – Do you have similar question(s) in your national survey?

Yes, there are similar questions, but there is no clear distinction between positive and negative flexibility.

How have the questions been formulated? If definitions are used in questions, give them.

The supplementary programme on working time asks the following questions:

‘Is your working time in any way (daily, weekly or yearly) variable? Yes – No’

If yes: ‘Please indicate what kind of variable working time arrangement applies to yours? Flexitime/record of hours worked (Arbeitszeitkonto) – Contractually defined annual working time – Personal, contractually defined arrangement with the employer – Defined by yourself – Other.

If Flexitime/record of hours worked (Arbeitszeitkonto) or contractually defined yearly working time, see Question F.’

‘What options do you have in taking time off in lieu for overtime? Only hours at a time – Days or weeks at a time’

‘In some cases, the employer and employee can contractually define minimum working hours (per day, per week, per month). Under such arrangements, more hours can be worked without receiving any surcharges for these additional hours. Is this your working time arrangement?’ If yes (see Question F)

‘Another arrangement of working time is on-call work, which is contractually defined and which means that the employer defines working time and number of hours according to his needs without fixing minimum
working hours. The employee is available on call and is only paid for the performed hours. Is this your working time arrangement? If yes (see Question F)

Definitions:
Annual working time (Jahresarbeitszeit): Only the total number of hours that have to be worked in a year are fixed. Employers decide the allocation of these hours according to their needs. The advantages for the employers are preventing overtime work and short-time work.

Record of hours worked (Arbeitszeitkonto): Similarly to flexitime, employees can choose the start and finish times of their own working time, and reduce overtime by taking hours or days off in lieu. Due to its similarity to flexitime, both categories are combined in one category.

f) Negative flexibility of working time
For example, in the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey, there are questions indicating negative flexibility: ‘How often do you have to be flexible in your working hours, dictated by your tasks or your superior?’ ‘I have to do more overtime work than I would like to.’ – Do you have similar question(s) in your national survey? How have the questions been formulated? If definitions are used in questions, give them.

The supplementary programme on working time asks the following question: ‘Is this your working time arrangement because you have chosen it, or for some other reason? Chosen – Other reason’

g) Predictability of working times
As an example of this kind of question, see Q19a and Q18a_1 in the EWCS: ‘Usually, how many times a month do your schedule working times change?’ ‘Do you work the same number of hours every day?’ – Do you have similar question(s) in your national survey? How have the questions been formulated? If definitions are used in questions, give them.

The supplementary programme on working time asks the following question (see above): ‘Is your working time in any way (daily, weekly or yearly) variable? Yes – No’

2. National context
The focus group is working parents working full-time with children under 15 years old. Please give figures concerning working parents with children under 15 years old, in line with Q1 and the LFS convention. If this information is not available, please describe what kind of age limits in children’s ages have been used while answering the questions.

Q2. Please give the proportions of full-time workers in the following categories (you can use the Labour Force Survey):
a) all wage and salary earners (NOTE: no self-employed people);
b) men;
c) women;
d) fathers (with children under 15 years old);
(If possible, break down in age groups 0–2 yrs, 3–5 yrs, 6–14 yrs by the age of youngest child)
e) mothers (with children under 15 years old).
(If possible, break down in age groups 0–2 yrs, 3–5 yrs, 6–14 yrs by the age of youngest child)

Unfortunately, no figures can be provided for Austria concerning working parents whose children are under 15 years of age. Data are provided for women employed full-time who have children, including grown up children.

Mikrozensus survey 2002:
Number and percentage of wage and salary earners working full time, by sex, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N (in 000s)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>888.6</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1,710.5</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2. Give figures for Q1b–Q1g in your country according to what is available in national working conditions surveys.
a) all wage and salary earners working full time (NOTE: no self-employed people);
b) men working full time;
c) women working full time;
d) fathers (with children under 15 years old) working full time;
(If possible, break down in age groups 0–2 yrs, 3–5 yrs, 6–14 yrs by the age of youngest child)
e) mothers (with children under 15 years old) working full time.
(If possible, break down in age groups 0–2 yrs, 3–5 yrs, 6–14 yrs by the age of youngest child)
Unfortunately, no figures can be given concerning working parents, regardless of the age of their children.

Mikrozensus survey 2002:
Unfortunately, data cannot be provided on wage and salary earners working full time. Data can only be provided either on employees, including self-employed people and family workers, or on wage and salary workers, including part-time workers.

Supplementary programme Labour Force Survey of March 2003:
Unfortunately, data cannot be provided on wage and salary earners working full time. Data are only available for wage and salary workers, including part-time workers.

Supplementary programme on working time 2001:
Unfortunately, data cannot be provided on wage and salary earners working full time. Data are only available for wage and salary workers, including part-time workers.

Is it possible to provide information on trends? (For each question: Yes/No)
No.

Is it possible to link this information with the family situation/household? (For each question: Yes/No)
No.

For each question: Can you highlight the main sectoral/occupational differences about mentioned working time issues. Please summarise as briefly as possible.
No.

Q3. Give a short description about what issues seem to be the most relevant and/or problematic concerning work–life balance and working times among working parents currently in your country, according to major national surveys or qualitative research.
It is very difficult to provide information on full-time working parents. Most surveys focus on mothers employed part time or on reasons why mothers/women are not employed at all. The authors are not aware of any survey dealing with the dilemmas facing full-time working mothers. Thus, the following description refers to the situation of full-time working women/mothers as described by quantitative research, and deduces problems that might arise from their living and working conditions.
Most of the results of Austrians surveys refer to working mothers and do not distinguish between full-time and part-time employment. Besides, as reconciling family life and work is still seen as a problem of women and not of men, surveys focus on women, i.e. mothers, only in this regard.

Is the most prominent problem, for example:
- Availability of childcare facilities;
- No warm lunch at school;
- Opening hours of schools, kindergartens, shops, etc;
- Lack of flexible working time arrangements;
- Unpaid overtime work;
- Other?

Even though this topic report focuses on full-time working parents or single mothers/fathers, it is worth mentioning that – at least for women – part-time work is a common form of working time flexibility in Austria. In 2002, 36% of all female employees, and only 4% of all male employees, worked part time. In other words, 88% of all part-time workers are female and only 12% are male (Statistik Austria, 2004). In fact, the part-time employment rate of women doubled between 1975 and 2000 (BMBWK, 2002).

As shown in the Table above, 64% of all female employees work full time. The female proportion of all full-time working employees in Austria amounts to only 34.2%. It is important to note that the largest share of full-time working women are in the wholesale and retail trade sector (17.4%), 15.4% in health and social work, 14.2% in manufacturing and 12% in education (Statistik Austria, 2004).

The highest full-time employment rate can be found among women who do not have children (75.6%). The full-time employment rate of mothers is 64.5% for single mothers and 47.5% for mothers living with a partner2. Thus, more single mothers than mothers living with a partner tend to work full time (BMBWK, 2002).

Additionally, the number of children influences the number of working hours: the more children women have, the more likely they are to work part time. This correlation is true for both single mothers and also for women living with a partner, but it is more pronounced among single mothers (BMBWK, 2002). Thus, the existence of a partner (and his income) and the number of children influence full-time employment of mothers.

For 60% of all women employed part time, the reasons for working part time can be found within the family (childcare, care for elderly/disabled people and other family reasons). With regard to the distribution of childcare and housework responsibilities among (part-time or full-time) working couples, 57% of employed parents care for their children together, but, in 32% of all partnerships, mothers care for their children by themselves. Some 31% of all couples perform housework together but, in 54% of all partnerships, women do it by themselves.

In respect of housework, data are also available concerning full-time working women whose partner is also employed: nearly 50% of them perform housework by themselves and only 36% do it together with their partners (BMSGK, 2003). Another survey emphasises these results: the time women work in their jobs and at home is the highest for full-time employed mothers, amounting to 10.5 hours daily (non-employed mothers: nine hours). These 10.5 hours exceed the total working time (at work and at home) of their full-time employed husbands or partners by 1.5 hours a day. Men only spend 15 minutes more on work, housework and childcare if their wife or partner works full-time than when she is not employed. The extent of their spouse’s or partner’s employment does not influence men’s commitment to performing housework or taking care of their children (BMBWK, 2002). From these findings, it can be assumed that women working full time are more or less left on their own to manage childcare and/or housework, and cannot count on the support of their partners.

Before turning to childcare, it is useful to describe briefly the Austrian situation for childcare facilities and its problems. As childcare lies within the remit of Austrian provinces, the situation is different in each of the nine provinces, with Vienna offering the best day-care facilities in all of Austria. Day-care centres differ, for example, by number, type and opening hours. For children not old enough to attend kindergarten, there are few possibilities of formal childcare. This situation is even worse for children in rural areas. The opening

2 These numbers include children who are older than 15 years of age.
hours of kindergartens also cause problems in some regions: either kindergartens are not open in the afternoon or they are not open for more than four hours (for example, from eight to 12) so that it is impossible for mothers to work more than three hours a day and to pick up their children in time. Afternoon day-care is a problem for children going to school. Primary schools close around noon, but afternoon childcare is not guaranteed in Austria. Additionally, day-care centres are closed during school holidays, which exceed statutory holidays of most of the working population by eight weeks a year.

According to parents, there is need for day-care facilities for nearly 90,000 children. Some 42,000 of them are already cared for in day-care facilities, but additional childcare is needed. Another 48,000 children need a day-care facility as they are not attending such a facility at all. More than half of these 90,000 children attend school and need afternoon care. For 25,000 children, parents want an (additional) place in kindergarten and, for 18,000 children under three years of age, (additional) childcare facilities are also requested by their parents (BMSGK, 2003).

There is a correlation between the employment of mothers and childcare facilities: the more hours mothers work, the higher the childcare rate of their children. The childcare rate of full-time working mothers living with a partner amounts to 30%, whereas the childcare rate of those working up to 10 hours is only 20%. These numbers are higher for single mothers. The childcare rate of full-time working single mothers is 40%, while that of single mothers working less than 10 hours amounts to 24.5% (BMSGK, 2003). Full-time working mothers seem to be dependent on childcare facilities to a greater extent than mothers working part time.

It is still the case that 70% of all children (198,300) whose mothers (single or living with a partner) are working full time do not attend childcare facilities at least once a week. For 93% of them (183,500), it is not considered necessary. For the other 7% of children, parents give a number of reasons for not sending their children to a childcare facility: either they are too expensive (23%), too far away (18.5%), have no available places (6%) or for some other reasons (51%) (BMSGK, 2003).

The question is why day-care facilities are not necessary for so many children whose mothers are working full time. One explanation might be the occupation of the mother. A lot of women working full time are employed in the education or health and social work sectors. If mothers of these children are teachers, full-time employment represents teaching 21 hours a week only. Therefore, they can take care of their school-age children in the afternoon themselves. Doctors who run their own practice can also structure their working hours according to the needs of their children. However, it may also be the case that mothers prefer family members to take care of their children rather than sending them to day-care centres. Another explanation might be that these children are already going to school and either do not need to be cared for in the afternoon, as they are old enough to look after themselves, or some family member is taking care of them after school. The OECD survey Babies and Bosses supports this explanation: as the supply of formal childcare is insufficient in Austria, parents who want to or have to work full time need to have informal care arrangements (OECD, 2003).

However, 30% of children of mothers in full-time employment (84,100) attend a day-care facility. Some 90% of them go there five days a week, 7% less than five and 3% more than five days a week. Some 45% stay at the day-care facility all day, 24% only in the mornings and 20% only in the afternoon. In all, 35% start before eight a.m. and 44% between eight and 10 a.m. Some 32% leave between two and four p.m., 24% between and five p.m. and 14% after five p.m. (BMSGK, 2003). In view of these hours, it seems to be impossible for mothers of these children to be really working full time. This seems to strengthen the notion stated above that full-time working mothers rely on informal care. In this respect, it has to be mentioned that informal care is much more difficult to organise and coordinate than formal childcare, especially if one of the informal carers gets sick, for example.

Nonetheless, formal care can also create problems3: nearly 30% of parents who are not content with the opening hours of the day-care facility their children attend would like it to be open during summer vacation, 14% want it to open earlier in the morning, 23% to close later in the afternoon, and 10% to open in the afternoon. Besides opening hours, nearly 50% of parents who are unhappy with the day-care facility think it is too expensive, 23% are not content with the quality of care, and 15% feel it is too far away (BMSGK, 2003). Interestingly, the dissatisfaction of non-employed mothers and mothers working part time is much higher.

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3 The following numbers refer to children whose mothers work full time.
higher than that of full-time working mothers. An explanation could be that women working full time are happy to have found an appropriate day-care institution that meets their requirements. Another possibility, taking up the above-mentioned argument, might be that full-time working mothers have devised a satisfactory model in which informal care is structured around formal care, and thus are not as dissatisfied with formal care as women working part time or non-employed mothers.

In summary, housework and childcare still remain the responsibility of women, whether they work part time or full time. Children of women who are employed full time are more likely to attend childcare facilities than those of mothers working part time. At the same time, the insufficiency of day-care facilities in Austria forces mothers working full time to (also) rely on informal care, which requires additional organisational efforts. Opening hours, quality, distance and costs of day-care facilities cause the biggest problems for mothers working full time.

3. Best practices

Q5. Give an example of best practice of good working time arrangements from the aspect of work–life balance among working parents, preferably in small and medium-sized companies in your country. Are best practices collected as part of a governmental policy programme?

Worth mentioning in this respect is the ‘Family and Work Audit’, which was introduced by the responsible Austrian Ministry in 1998. Its goal is to help companies to create a family-friendly environment for employees. For this purpose, the Audit analyses the family-friendly measures taken by the company in question. The first step is a conversation with management to ascertain the needs of the company. This is followed by a workshop attended by employees to identify their needs. The consultant of the Audit proposes a range of measures which are discussed with management. The next step is to define practical goals that have to be achieved within the next three years. After this period of time, the achievement of these goals is reassessed and, if the practical goals have been met, the company is awarded a certificate (Dörfler, 2004).

Working time flexibility is one area covered by the measures. A small car-selling company (30 employees), for instance, offers its employees the possibility of flexitime with family-oriented core hours. A hairdresser with 11 employees offers flexitime without core hours. Most of the small companies, however, offer flexible working time arrangements according to the individual family needs of their employees (Dörfler, 2004).

Since 1998, the responsible Austrian Ministry certifies, on an annual basis, the ‘Most Women and Family-Friendly Companies’ of Austria. Companies receive an award if they implement measures towards a women- and family-friendly working environment. The focus is on reconciling family and work. Companies take part in a competition at provincial level, before the winners compete at federal level. The certificates are granted to small, medium-sized and large companies, to non-profit companies, and to companies governed by public law. Criteria concerning working time are the flexibility of working time, on the one hand, and proportion of part-time jobs, on the other. Working time flexibility covers flexitime and individual working time arrangements. Proportions of part-time jobs are analysed at management level and executive staff level. The option of changing from part-time work to full-time work and vice versa are further indicators (BMSGK, 2004).

References

BMBWK, Geschlechtsspezifische Disparitäten (Gendered disparities), Vienna, 2002.


