Dagmar Kutsar Marjo Kuronen *Editors* 

# Local Welfare Policy Making in European Cities



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### **Preface**

EU welfare policy relates to the promotion of employment, lifelong learning and gender equality. This is the case especially in the field of childcare where the target to improve formal childcare provision in the EU member states is connected with the political agenda to increase the involvement of women in the labour market. Care for older people is also of particular importance as ageing populations are an issue across the world. Ageing populations create new challenges internationally, nationally and locally, not only in terms of how to organise care, but also how to keep both older men and women healthier and working for longer.

The European Union 7th Framework Programme funded research project, "Impact of local welfare systems on female labour force participation and social cohesion" (FLOWS, EU grant SSH-CT-2010-266806 for the years 2011–2014, coordinated by Professor Per H. Jensen from the University of Aalborg, Denmark), aimed to analyse (1) how local welfare systems support women's labour market participation and (2) the extent to which (and under which conditions) female labour market integration has contributed to strengthening social cohesion in 11 European cities. More information about the FLOWS project, including additional publications, can be found at www.flows-eu.eu.

This book presents findings from the FLOWS project and focuses particularly on local welfare policy making and its relation to women's labour market integration. It includes theoretical discussions, empirical findings and comparisons between 11 European cities — Aalborg in Denmark, Bologna in Italy, Brno in the Czech Republic, Dublin in Ireland, Hamburg in Germany, Jyväskylä in Finland, Leeds in England, Nantes in France, Szekesfehervar in Hungary, Tartu in Estonia and Terrassa in Spain. Local welfare policy making in the different cities is compared and also considered in relation to the respective national welfare policies. In comparative welfare research, the focus has been on national welfare systems and policies. Our aim is to fill the gap in understanding local welfare policy making that is shaped by sociocultural settings, historical traditions and governance patterns. Our objective is to demonstrate the local nature of policy choices and thus extend the existing cross-country explanations.

We are very grateful to the FLOWS Consortium members from the University of Aalborg in Denmark, the University of Hamburg in Germany, the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, Trinity College in Ireland, the University of Masaryk in the Czech Republic, the Central European University in Hungary, Politecnico di Milano in Italy, the University of Tartu in Estonia, the University of Leeds in England, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Ange-Guépin in France, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona in Spain and the Danish Red Cross for their commitment and contribution to the project. Thank you to all the authors who contributed to this book, sharing our joint academic journey. We wish to thank Derettens OÜ (www.derettens.com) who offered expertise in language editing. Last but not least, we thank the Estonian Research Council (PUT499) for supporting the preparation of this book after the FLOWS project formally ended on April 30, 2014.

Tartu, Estonia Jyvaskyla, Finland 15th November 2014 Dagmar Kutsar Marjo Kuronen

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

Marjo Kuronen and Dagmar Kutsar

### 1.1 Local Welfare Policy Making

This book focuses on local welfare policy making and service provision in 11 European cities with special emphasis on care policies for children and older people in relation to women's labour market integration. We ask whether local welfare policies might either support or discourage women to enter, re-enter or remain in the labour market, the extent to which local policy actors recognise women's labour market integration and their care responsibilities as important policy issues, and what their actual possibilities to influence these issues are within the national policy framework. Local welfare systems are further studied in conjunction with local production systems and women's labour market opportunities in their specific socio-cultural contexts.

Welfare policies, as well as research in this field, have traditionally been state-centred and focused on the redistributive features of income security systems. How welfare is produced at the local level has, though, played a secondary role in social policy analysis (Burau and Kröger 2004). However, nation states are facing new 'glocal' (local in the global) steering and legitimation challenges and pressures that they cannot handle with the conventional modes of legitimate domination (Beck et al. 1994; Webster 2002). Therefore, the states must increasingly rely on the effectiveness of their policies and the steering capacities of the governing institutions 'above' and 'below' them (Heffen et al. 2000). Thus, in welfare policy

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