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Actual and Preferred Working Time
Regulations, incentives and the present
debate on working time in Norway

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Preface

In 1998 the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions initiated a major survey on Employment Options of the Future across the 15 Member states of the European Union and Norway. The Foundation commissioned Infratest Burke Sozialforschung to carry out the survey. Infratest Burke and a consortium of field research institutes completed 30,557 computer-assisted telephone interviews during the summer across the 16 countries.

Questions concerning *actual and preferred weekly working hours* played a central role in the survey. The main international findings on this and connected issues, based on data from the survey and other sources, are presented in a consolidated report by Bielenky, Bosch and Wagner (2001).

In Norway, the *Ministry of Labour and Government Administration* asked the *Institute for Social Research* to assist the *Foundation* with respect to the interpretation of the Norwegian results. In addition we were asked to produce a national report, to inform the consolidators and describe structures and national institutions which influence working-time arrangements in Norway. In this version of the national report we have included some results from the European survey. Thanks to colleague Pål Børing for valuable assistance and other colleagues who have read and commented draft versions of the report.

February 2001
Erling Barth and Hege Torp

Summary

This report describes structures and national institutions, which influence working-time arrangements in Norway. It also summarises some results from a survey initiated by the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.

Employment

On an international scale, Norway has a very high employment rate. According to the comparative survey on *Employment Options of the Future*, which were carried out in 16 European countries in 1998, the *employment* rate (of the population aged 16–64) is 80 per cent in Norway. This ranks Norway as number 1 in Europe in terms of employment. The high employment rates among men and women in Norway at present (83 and 77 per cent respectively) are due to a combination of high participation rates and fairly low unemployment rates.

Part-time

According to the European survey 43 per cent of all employed women in Norway work part-time. This rate, which is quite high compared to a European average of 37 per cent, is confirmed by national statistics. Cross section data reveals that the rate of part-time among employed Norwegian women is decreasing by education and increasing by age, while it is hardly affected by the presence of small children in the household. Employed women aged 20–34 with small children work longer hours than their older sisters aged 35–55. Thus, conditional on being employed, *cohort*

seems to be more important for working hours than the presence of small children in the household.

Preferred working hours

While full-time workers typically want *shorter* working hours, part-time workers want *longer* working hours. This holds for all European countries. According to the 1998 survey *part-timers* work at average 22.9 hours per week, while preferred working hours are 26.7 hours per week. Thus the difference is 3.8 hours (under-employment). *Full-timers* work at average 41.7 hours per week, but would prefer to work 35.9 hours per week; a difference of 5.8 hours (over-employment).

According to the national *Survey of Level of Living* in Norway 1995, 16 per cent of all employed men (aged 16–64) want *shorter* working hours than their present usual working hours. Among employed women 18 per cent want shorter working hours; among full-time working women the fraction is 29 per cent. Similar figures for *longer* working hours are 5 per cent for men, 9 per cent for women and 16 per cent among part-time working women. Among men and women with small children (aged 0–10) the fraction preferring shorter working hours is somewhat higher than the average – especially for women (28 per cent).

Working time arrangements

In Norway, a large and increasing number of people work outside standard working hours i.e. they work in the late evening, during the night and in the early morning. Ten years ago 80 per cent of all employed worked during ordinary daytime. Today this fraction is less than 70 per cent. In addition an increasing number are working regularly on Saturdays and Sundays.

About 15 per cent of all Norwegian employees work shift or have similar working time arrangements. This is more common among women than men (16 and 13 per cent respectively). The typical shift worker is a young woman, employed in service indus-

tries as hotels and restaurants, or in public health and social services.

Flexible working time arrangements (flexitime) are quite common in some administrative and business services, i.e. the employee may partly decide on her (his) own daily and weekly working time. National survey data show that the fraction of employed people stating that they have *flexible working time arrangements*, increased from 8 per cent in 1980 to 21 per cent in 1989. Ten years later as many as 50 per cent of all employed could “either perfectly or to some extent decide the start and the end of the daily working hours.”

Working time regulations

In Norway the Work Environment Act regulates daily and weekly working hours. Maximum working time is 40 hours weekly or 9 hours daily. However, according to *collective agreements* in all industries and sectors 37.5 hours per week is standard working time; usually 7.5 hours daily, Monday–Friday.

Overtime is regulated to be maximum 10 hours a week, 25 hours during 4 successive weeks, and 200 hours a year. A limited extension of overtime may be agreed with the union or approved by the *Occupational Environment Committee* at the company level. Additional extension has to be approved by the governmental *Directorate of Labour Inspection* at the local or national level.

Vacation is regulated by the *Vacation Act*. All employees are entitled to vacation for 4 weeks and one day, i.e. 21 working days (or 25 if Saturdays are included). Senior employees (60 years and older) are entitled to another week (26 or 31 days). By collective agreement the vacation will be extended with 2 days in 2001 and with another 2 days in 2002.

Income taxation

In Norway annual income below Nok 25,000 (i.e. about Euro 3,125) is not taxed, and income below Nok 60,000 (Euro 7,500) is taxed very mildly. Various minimum thresholds for income taxes

as well as *additional taxes* for labour income above certain limits, make the income tax partly *progressive*. The minimum thresholds may give incentives to work shorter hours, or to work for only a short period in the course of a year. The incentives are supposed to affect pupils and students who work during their leave from school or university. The progressivity may also affect women (and men) who work short hours during most of the year.

The *general tax rate* (after standard deductions) is 35.8 per cent (7.8 social insurance contributions paid by the employee plus 28.0 per cent tax). Wage income above Nok 280,000 (Euro 35,000) is taxed with an *additional tax* of 13.5 per cent, and income above Nok 760,000 is taxed with another tax of 6.0 per cent. Maximum marginal tax is thus 55.3 per cent. (The rules referred applies to 2000.)

Spouses are – as a point of departure – *taxed as independent wage earners*. They are both taxed for their own wage income. If one of the spouses has no income, they will benefit from – and they will be – *taxed as one unit*. A taxpayer with a dependent spouse (i.e. a spouse with no or little income) pays less tax than a single person with the same income. This is because one of the standard deductions in income (the family deduction) doubles and because the threshold for paying the first additional tax increases. Only 15 per cent of all married couples are taxed as one unit (1998). If one of the spouses works full-time and the other has a very low income, they may still profit from being taxed as one unit – rather than two independent wage earners. This holds even though the lower income meets the same (high) marginal tax as the major income, i.e. 49.3 per cent or 55.3 per cent. If the smaller annual income exceeds Nok 58,000 the household will profit from being (and they will be) taxed as two independent wage earners. This is because the total value (for the couple) of the standard deductions is larger, as they both have so high income as to take full advantage of the standard deductions.

Family welfare

The *Work Environment Act* states that workers are entitled to 12 weeks of leave in case of maternity. The mother is obliged to take 3 weeks off *before* the birth. *After* the birth she is obliged to take a leave of 6 weeks. A *father* living together with the mother is entitled to 4 weeks of welfare leave. In addition the parents are entitled to leave during the first year after birth. The total length of parental leave – including both mother and father – may add up to 12 months. Similar arrangements apply for adoption of children.

Payment during parental leave is established by the *Social Insurance Act*. Entitlement for payment during leave before and after the birth is dependent on employment and income: The mother (and the father) should be employed for at least six months during the last ten months before the birth – with an annual income of at least Nok 24,500 or Euro 3,060. The parents are compensated 100 per cent (of their former wage income) for a period of 40 weeks or 80 per cent for a period of 52 weeks.

The *Work Environment Act* also states that employees with responsibility for small children (12 years or younger) are entitled to leave during children's illness; 10 days per year per employee with one child, 15 days with more children. Lone parents get 20 respectively 30 days. According to the *Social Insurance Act* all employees entitled to benefits in case of own sickness (i.e. almost all employees) are also entitled to benefits for absence due to care for sick children.

The high rate of employment among women with small children in Norway is dependent on childcare facilities. The number of children aged 1–5 in *kindergartens* (i.e. public and private institutions with governmental subsidies) has increased from 19 per cent in 1980 to 61 per cent in 1999. In addition quite a lot of small children (aged 0–1) are taken care of by child minders etc. More than one third of all children aged 1–5 (37 per cent) are covered by *full-time* kindergartens, i.e. kindergarten with opening hours 41 hours or more per week.

Pensions

The old age pension system is part of the compulsory Norwegian *Social Insurance Scheme* and regulated by the *Social Insurance Act*. The pension age is 67 years (lower for some special occupations), and does *not* depend on present working hours or lifetime working hours. The old age pension consists of a *basic pension* which is income independent (but depends on the number of years living in Norway), and a *supplementary pension* depending on life time labour income and the number of years employed (only annual labour income above a minimum threshold gives “pension points”). Those not eligible for the income related supplementary pension get a *special supplement*. The same applies for persons who otherwise would have got a supplementary pension less than the special supplement.

All employers in public sector and many employers in private sector offer their employees *occupational* pension schemes. This pension is added to the compulsory public old age pension. All occupational pension schemes in the *public* sector (at the local, county and central level) are, however, “co-ordinated” with the public old age pension in such a way that most pensioners receive less than the sum of the two (but always more than the public old age pension).

In the *private* sector the pensions are *not* “co-ordinated”, and the employer and the employees may agree upon what ever pension scheme they like. However, to get a tax deduction for the contributions the scheme has to be designed according to specific rules. About one third of all employees in private sector are covered by such pension schemes. According to the tax rules the compensation rate has to be constant or decreasing by earnings or wage level, and the scheme has to cover all employees except part-timers and temporaries.

Education

In brief, the educational system in Norway consists of the following parts

- Compulsory school: 10 years (age: 6–16)
- Upper secondary school: 3 years (age: 16–19)
- College and university (bachelor): 2–4 years (in addition to 10+ 3 years)
- University (master): 4–6 years (in addition to 10+ 3 years)

In Norway 21 per cent of the grown population (16 years and above) have some education at college or university level; 22 per cent of all men and 20 per cent of all women. At the same time 32 per cent have only compulsory school; 28 per cent of all men and 36 per cent of all women. Thirty years ago similar figures were 7 per cent with education at university or college level (men 9 per cent, and women 5 per cent) and 69 per cent with only compulsory school (men 64 per cent, and women 76 per cent).

At present 97 per cent of all pupils leaving compulsory school at the age of 16 continues with some education at the upper secondary level. The fraction is the same for boys and girls. Among those completing upper secondary school (passing the final exams), 45 per cent continues their education. About half of them go directly to some college or university. The other half goes on with further education at the same level. Part of this group will, however, at a later stage go to some university or college.

Today more women than men start a university or college education. At the universities 53 per cent of all students are women. At the colleges (educating teachers, nurses, engineers etc) 61 per cent of the students are women.

The debate on working time arrangements

The main argument in favour of shorter daily working hours is that shorter working hours will promote equality between men and women – both in the labour market and in the household.

In Norway the work-family time conflicts are modified by state policy: Flexible working time arrangements (of which part-time especially in public sector has been the dominant one), public child care services, public care for the elderly, parental leave arrangements, and lately: the fathers own quota in the parental leave scheme. These arrangements and reforms have facilitated a flexible combination of time in employment and care among parents. The shared work-family practice remains largely a female model. One reason may be that this model conflicts with the structures and cultures in the private sector labour market – where most and mostly men make their career.

Flexibility

As in many European countries, demand for labour is high in Norway at present, and there is a shortage of labour in many occupations. The demographic structure predicts an ageing population in the years to come, and thus probably an even stronger shortage of labour – especially within health care and care for the elderly; but possibly also in other labour demanding and knowledge based industries. In addition, information technology, globalisation and increased competition are expected to increase the need for changes and a stronger adaptability of both businesses and their employees.

A careful liberalisation of some of the working time regulations will probably be wise. Well organised, more flexible working time arrangements (not necessarily longer working hours) – are also in the interest of the employees. Such reforms may thus encourage more people to join the labour force. Since many full-timers prefer shorter working hours, individual working time arrangements may, however, reduce average working hours.

General trends in employment and working hours

1.1 Employment

On an international scale, Norway has a very high employment rate. According to the comparative survey on *Employment Options of the Future*, which were carried out in 16 European countries in 1998, the employment rate (of the population aged 16–64) is 80 per cent in Norway. This ranks Norway as number 1 in terms of employment rate; see Table 1. Please notice that the employment rates presented, are calculated as per cent of total population, not as per cent of labour force.

The figures based on the European survey are in line with statistics published by OECD, typically based on national labour force surveys (LFS). According to OECD (2000) the employment/ population ratio in Norway reached 78.3 per cent in 1998 (persons aged 16–64) as compared with an average for the European Union of 61.5 per cent (persons aged 15/16–64).

Even if there are some discrepancies between data from the European survey and the national statistics for some countries, the survey seems to be pretty representative when it comes to employment rates and working time.¹

¹ Unemployed persons are over-sampled in the European survey. All figures from the European survey presented in this report are, however, based on weighted data as to give person-representative samples at the national level – with respect

Table 1. Employment rates in Europe, 1998. Per cent of population, men and women aged 16–64

| | All | Men | Women |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Norway | 80 | 83 | 77 |
| Denmark | 79 | 84 | 75 |
| Sweden | 78 | 82 | 73 |
| Luxembourg | 72 | 81 | 62 |
| Netherlands | 70 | 83 | 57 |
| Austria | 70 | 82 | 58 |
| United Kingdom | 69 | 77 | 62 |
| Ireland | 69 | 83 | 55 |
| Finland | 68 | 68 | 67 |
| Germany | 67 | 75 | 60 |
| Portugal | 66 | 75 | 56 |
| Belgium | 63 | 73 | 52 |
| France | 62 | 72 | 52 |
| EUR 15 + Norway | 61 | 71 | 52 |
| Greece | 49 | 62 | 37 |
| Italy | 48 | 60 | 36 |
| Spain | 45 | 61 | 27 |
| Difference: Max – Min | 35 | 24 | 50 |

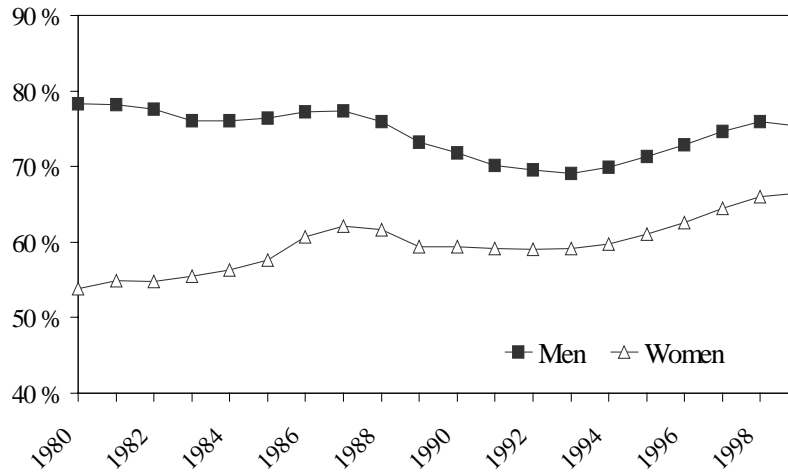
Note: Employment = Employees and self-employed.

Source: Survey data from the project *Employment Options of the Future*, by the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*

Figure 1 gives time series information on the employment level in Norway 1980–1999, according to the national Labour Force Surveys (LFS) conducted by Statistics Norway. As can be seen average employment level among men aged 16–74 is slightly decreasing. This is mainly due to reduced employment among men aged 60–74. In the same period average employment among women is increasing. Thus the gap between men and women is narrowing.

to gender, age and region as well as employment status. The national samples are also weighted to give a person-representative sample at the European level; see Bielenky, Bosch and Wagner (2001) for more details.

Figure 1. Employment in Norway 1980–1999, men and women aged 16–74. Per cent of population



Source: Labour Force Surveys (annual 1980-1999), Statistics Norway.

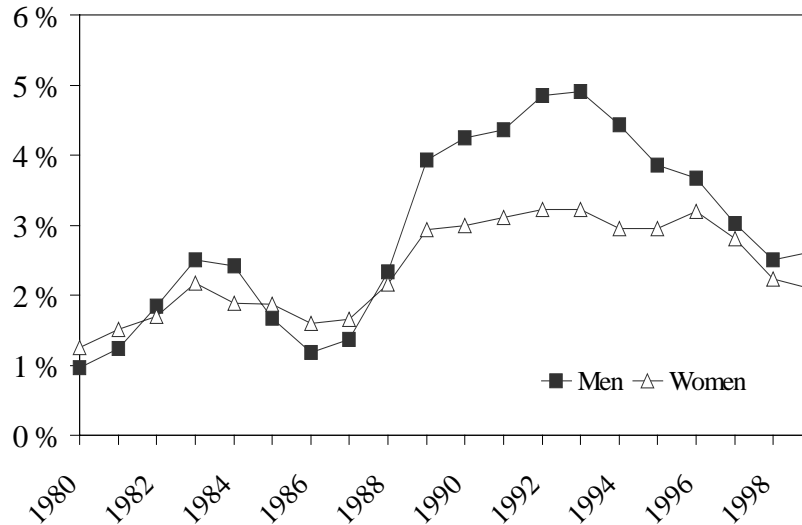
LFS 1999 reports an employment rate of 80 among men aged 16–66 (75 per cent among men aged 16–74); among women aged 16–66 employment rate was 71 per cent in 1999 (67 per cent for the age group 16–74).

The gender gap is narrowing for all age groups; also for senior workers. In 1990 almost 66 per cent of all men aged 55–66 were employed; in 1999 the rate was 68. Among women in the same age group the corresponding figures are 48 per cent and 66 per cent.

Women with small children (aged 0–7) have a lower employment rate compared with women with no children. The difference is however small and decreasing. For instance, 72 per cent of *all women* aged 20–34 were employed in 1996. Among women aged 20–34 *with small children* 70 per cent were employed. In 1972 the same figures were 49 and 35 per cent (LFS).

The high employment rates in Norway at present are due to a combination of high participation rates and fairly low unemploy-

Figure 2. Unemployment in Norway 1980–1999, men and women (aged 16–74). Per cent of population



Source: Labour Force Surveys (annual 1980–1999), Statistics Norway.

ment rates. Figure 2 shows the unemployment rate for each gender (population aged 16–74), 1980–99. During the recession 1986–93 unemployment among men increased more than unemployment among women. Again, please notice that the rates presented, are calculated as per cent of total population, not as per cent of labour force.

As in most European countries, unemployment rates are higher among young workers than among workers aged 24–54. According to LFS 1999 as many as 7 per cent of all teenagers (aged 16–19) were unemployed. Similar figures for the age groups 20–24, 25–54 and 55–66 were 5, 2 and 1 per cent of the population. As only half of the teenagers are in the labour force compared with 88 per cent of those aged 25–54, the difference is even larger when unemployment is measured relative to the labour force.

1.2 Working hours

In the European survey the respondents were asked about their actual average weekly working time. When the total volume of paid work is divided by the number of persons in working age 16–64, Norway ranks pretty high with 30 hours per week at average – against a European average of 24 hours per week. However, when it comes to average weekly working hours of all employed persons and working hours per employee Norway ranks low, and close to the bottom. Average working time is shorter in Denmark and in the Netherlands only; see Table 2.

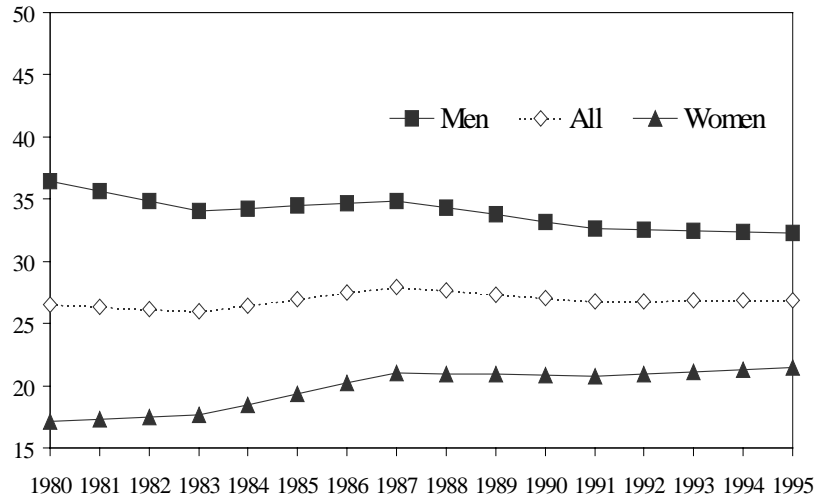
The total volume of work in Norway is high because a large fraction of the grown population is employed. The average weekly

Table 2. Actual average weekly working hours in Europe, 1998. Population aged 16–64, all employed and employees aged 16–64

| | Popula- tion | All em- ployed | Employees | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|------|-------|
| | | | All | Men | Women |
| Sweden | 30.2 | 38.9 | 38.1 | 41.1 | 34.9 |
| Norway | 30.0 | 37.4 | 36.7 | 40.9 | 32.1 |
| Austria | 29.7 | 42.4 | 41.1 | 45.2 | 35.7 |
| Denmark | 29.5 | 37.2 | 36.4 | 38.8 | 33.8 |
| Luxembourg | 28.1 | 39.2 | 38.6 | 41.4 | 34.3 |
| Ireland | 28.1 | 41.0 | 38.9 | 42.3 | 34.4 |
| Portugal | 27.1 | 41.4 | 39.7 | 43.1 | 36.1 |
| Finland | 26.9 | 40.0 | 39.1 | 41.5 | 37.3 |
| United Kingdom | 26.4 | 38.5 | 37.3 | 37.3 | 32.2 |
| Germany | 26.0 | 38.8 | 37.5 | 42.1 | 37.5 |
| Netherlands | 24.4 | 35.0 | 33.7 | 39.3 | 25.9 |
| Belgium | 23.9 | 38.4 | 37.5 | 40.4 | 33.5 |
| EUR 15 + Norway | 23.7 | 39.0 | 37.7 | 41.4 | 32.9 |
| France | 23.6 | 38.7 | 38.0 | 40.7 | 34.4 |
| Greece | 21.6 | 44.9 | 39.8 | 42.4 | 35.7 |
| Italy | 18.6 | 39.1 | 37.4 | 37.4 | 34.2 |
| Spain | 17.7 | 40.5 | 39.3 | 41.1 | 34.9 |
| Difference: Max – Min | 12.5 | 9.9 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 11.4 |

Source: Survey data from the project *Employment Options of the Future*, by the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.

Figure 3. Usual working hours per week, Norway 1980–1995. Population aged 16–64, men and women aged 16–64

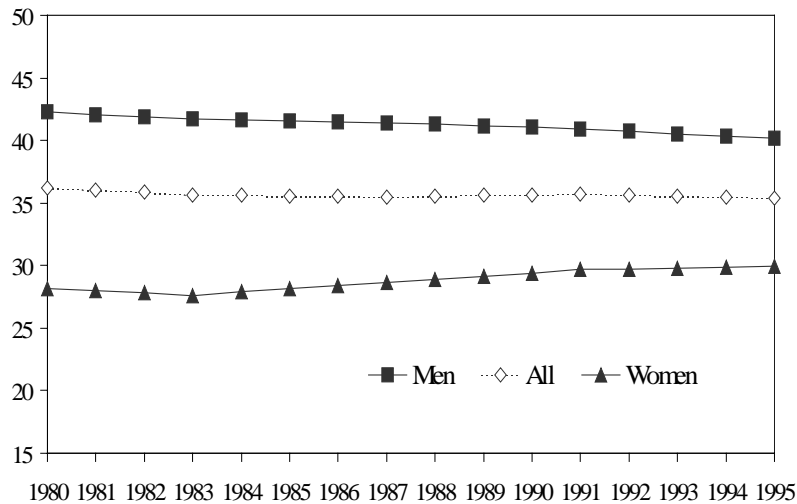


Source: Survey of Level of Living (1980, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995), Statistics Norway.

working hours is however rather short, partly due to a large fraction of part-timers and partly because working time of full-timers is relatively short. According to the European survey 43 per cent of all employed women in Norway work part-time. In Finland only 15 per cent work part-time, in Italy 24 per cent – while the European average is 38 per cent.

Time series statistics for average *usual working hours per person* 16–64 in Norway 1980–1995 based on *Survey of Level of Living* (Statistics Norway) are presented in Figure 3. Men work longer hours than women do. The difference between the populations of men and women is, however, decreasing – partly because more women are employed (cf. Figure 1) and partly because average working hours of men and women become more equal. Figure 4, which shows usual weekly working hours for *employed* persons (aged 16–64), confirms that the fairly stable pattern of average

Figure 4. Usual working hours, Norway 1980–1995. Employed persons aged 16–64, employed men and women aged 16–64



Source: Survey of Level of Living (1980, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995), Statistics Norway.

working time *for all persons* is a result of different trends for each gender. Employed men tend to work less and employed women tend to work more. Average working hours for employed men aged 16–64 has declined from 42 hours per week in 1980 to 40 hours per week in 1995. In the same period of time, average working hours for employed women aged 16–64 has increased from 28 to 30 hours per week.

As mentioned, the rate of part-time employment among women in Norway is relatively high. In 1997 as many as 45 per cent of *all employed* women aged 16–74 worked part-time; 21 per cent worked 1–19 hours per week and 24 per cent worked 20–36 hours per week. This refers to usual or contracted working hours, (*Labour Force Surveys*, Statistics Norway). The rate of part-time for em-

ployed women in the *core* age of 20–66 has decreased from 51 per cent in 1972 to 44 per cent in 1997. Short part-time (1–19 hours per week) has decreased from 27 per cent to 19 per cent.

Cross section data reveals that the rate of part-time among employed Norwegian women is decreasing by education and increasing by age, while it is hardly affected by the presence of small children in the household. Employed women aged 20–34 with small children work longer hours than their older sisters aged 35–55. Thus, conditional on being employed, age – or may be *cohort* – seems to be more important for working hours than the presence of small children in the household.

However, the *number* of children seems to affect the participation rate as well as working hours (at least in cross sectional data): According to the 1997 LFS, 82 per cent of all married women with one child (below the age of 16) participated in the labour force. Among those employed, 54 per cent worked full-time. Among women with 3 or more children 77 per cent participated in the labour force, and 32 per cent worked full-time.

Jensen (2000), who compares three cohorts, documents the importance of cohort: women born 1935–40, women born 1945–50, and women born 1955–60. At the age of 25–30 (the most fertile period) 70 per cent of the youngest cohort were employed, while only 55 per cent of the 10 years older cohort (born 1945–50) were employed at this age. Twenty years later – at the age of 35–40 – the difference is smaller, only 5 points; 80 per cent employed versus 75 per cent. At this age, the employment rate for the oldest cohort (women born 1935–40) is only 55 per cent. Similar cohort effects are found for working hours.

1.3 Preferred working hours

Some people would prefer shorter working hours than their usual or contracted working hours, and some would prefer longer. According to the European survey more people want *shorter* working hours, i.e. the average preferred working time is shorter than the

Table 3. Proportion of full-time workers in Europe 1998 (35 hours + per week), actual and preferred. Per cent of all employees aged 16–64

| | Men | | | Women | | |
|-----------------|--------|-----------|------------|--------|-----------|------------|
| | Actual | Preferred | Difference | Actual | Preferred | Difference |
| Norway | 91 | 66 | -25 | 59 | 40 | -19 |
| Netherlands | 82 | 58 | -24 | 36 | 26 | -10 |
| Finland | 96 | 73 | -23 | 86 | 60 | -26 |
| Sweden | 90 | 69 | -21 | 62 | 42 | -21 |
| Denmark | 89 | 69 | -20 | 65 | 36 | -29 |
| Belgium | 91 | 73 | -18 | 61 | 43 | -18 |
| EUR 15 + Norway | 91 | 76 | -15 | 60 | 45 | -15 |
| Germany | 92 | 77 | -15 | 59 | 43 | -16 |
| Luxembourg | 94 | 79 | -15 | 61 | 41 | -20 |
| Austria | 95 | 82 | -13 | 70 | 52 | -18 |
| France | 91 | 79 | -12 | 66 | 51 | -15 |
| United Kingdom | 89 | 77 | -12 | 54 | 36 | -18 |
| Ireland | 88 | 77 | -11 | 65 | 46 | -19 |
| Greece | 90 | 82 | -8 | 68 | 57 | -11 |
| Italy | 88 | 81 | -7 | 70 | 46 | -24 |
| Portugal | 93 | 88 | -5 | 81 | 66 | -15 |
| Spain | 91 | 87 | -4 | 75 | 71 | -4 |

Source: Survey data from the project *Employment Options of the Future*, by the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.

average actual working time. According to the same survey women work at average 32.9 hours per week; the average preferred working time is 30.4. Similar figures for men are 41.4 and 36.8 hours per week. The figures for preferred working time are based on answers to the following question:

"Provided that you (and your partner) could make a free choice so far as working hours are concerned and taking into account the need to earn for living: How many hours per week would YOU prefer to work at present?"

At average 60 per cent of the European, female employees are working full-time (i.e. 35 hours per week or more) while about 40 per cent are working part-time. Only 45 per cent prefer full-time, (relates to employees with preferred working hours > 0). Similar figures for male employees are 91 per cent working full-time, while 76 per cent prefer full-time. The difference between actual and preferred rate of full-time work is especially large in the Nordic countries, see Table 3. This holds for both men and women. In the Netherlands quite a lot of male employees want to work less than

Table 4. Preferred working time for full-timers and part-timers in Europe 1998, and the difference between actual and preferred working time. Average working hours per week for all employees aged 16–64

| | Full-time workers (35 hours + per week) | | Part-time workers (1-34 hours per week) | |
|-----------------|--|------------|--|------------|
| | Preferred | Difference | Preferred | Difference |
| United Kingdom | 35.9 | -7.6 | 24.5 | 3.7 |
| Sweden | 35.6 | -6.8 | 31.4 | 5.0 |
| Germany | 36.5 | -6.6 | 25.3 | 4.5 |
| Finland | 34.9 | -6.3 | 27.6 | 3.9 |
| Ireland | 35.9 | -6.3 | 27.7 | 3.5 |
| Norway | 35.2 | -6.2 | 25.1 | 2.1 |
| Austria | 38.4 | -6.0 | 25.6 | 1.3 |
| EUR 15 + Norway | 35.9 | -5.8 | 26.7 | 3.8 |
| Denmark | 34.5 | -5.6 | 24.8 | 1.8 |
| France | 35.1 | -5.4 | 30.6 | 3.4 |
| Netherlands | 36.2 | -5.3 | 22.4 | 3.3 |
| Spain | 36.2 | -4.9 | 35.5 | 6.2 |
| Greece | 36.9 | -4.8 | 33.7 | 6.1 |
| Belgium | 35.8 | -4.5 | 27.0 | 3.6 |
| Luxembourg | 36.8 | -4.5 | 25.4 | 2.9 |
| Italy | 35.3 | -4.0 | 27.5 | 2.9 |
| Portugal | 36.7 | -4.0 | 31.2 | 3.7 |

Source: Survey data from the project *Employment Options of the Future*, by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

they do. In Italy female employees distinguish themselves with a pretty high rate that prefers shorter working time.

While full-time workers typically want shorter working hours, part-time workers want *longer* working hours. This holds for all European countries; see Table 4. According to the 1998 survey *part-timers* work at average 22.9 hours per week, while preferred working hours are 26.7 hours per week. Thus the difference is 3.8 hours (under-employment). *Full-timers* work at average 41.7 hours per week, but would prefer to work 35.9 hours per week; a difference of 5.8 hours (over-employment). Thus the preferences of European full-timers and part-timers are pretty close, when it comes to working hours per week; the difference is less than 10 hours at average. While their actual working hours differ with almost 20 hours per week.

For full-time workers the country differences in preferred hours are quite small. The difference between maximum (Austria, 38.4) and minimum (Denmark 34.5) is only 3.9 hours. The country differences for actual working hours for full-timers are somewhat larger; 5.1 hours between maximum and minimum (not shown in Table 4). The country differences in preferred hours for part-time workers are larger. The difference between minimum (the Netherlands 22.4) and maximum (Spain 35.5) is as much as 13.1 hours.

Norway is positioned at the top of Table 3, as quite many of the full-time working males want to work less than 35 hours per week. In Table 4 Norway is positioned in the upper half, because the difference between actual and preferred working time is as large as 6.2 hours. Part-time workers in Norway seem pretty satisfied with their working hours – as opposed to part-timers in Spain, Greece and Sweden.

According to the national *Survey of Level of Living* in Norway 16 per cent of all employed men (aged 16–64) want *shorter* working hours than their present usual working hours (1995). Among employed women 18 per cent want shorter working hours; among full-time working women the fraction is 29 per cent. Similar figures for *longer* working hours are 5 per cent for men, 9 per cent for

Table 5. *Would you like to spend more time on this activity? Yes!*
Per cent of employed men and women, Norway 1989 and 1997

| Activity | Men | | Women | |
|------------------------|------|------|-------|------|
| | 1989 | 1997 | 1989 | 1997 |
| (1) Friends | 57 | 70 | 68 | 80 |
| (2) Family | 58 | 70 | 64 | 75 |
| (3) Leisure activities | 63 | 71 | 62 | 72 |
| (4) Domestic work | 25 | 29 | 26 | 30 |
| (5) Paid work | 19 | 11 | 19 | 13 |

Source: Berg (1998) based on ISSP 1989, 1997, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

working full time increased from 40 to 46 per cent. At the same time the fraction preferring shorter working hours increased from 21 to 29 per cent (Kitterød 1998).

Among employed women with children under the age of 6, a survey in 1998 shows that 61 per cent are satisfied with their working time, while 34 per cent would prefer shorter working time. The fraction of satisfied mothers decreases with actual working time. Among full-timers 54 per cent would prefer shorter working time (Kitterød 1998).

The International Social Survey Programme is another source of comparative statistical information. In 1989 as well as in 1997 the topic of this annual survey was working conditions (ISSP 1989, 1997). These surveys were also carried out in Norway and some of the repeated questions were on working hours and time preferences.

“What activities do you want to spend more time on?” In 1997 more than 70 per cent of those employed wanted to spend more time on (1) friends, (2) family, and (3) leisure activities. About 30 per cent wanted to spend more time on (4) domestic work, while only 12 per cent wanted to spend more time on (5) paid work. Since 1989 the fraction that wants to spend more time on paid work has decreased from 19 to 12 per cent. The fraction that wants to spend more time on the other activities has increased. The pat-

tern is very much the same for men and women, see Table 5 and Berg (1998) for more details.

1.4 Working time arrangements

A large and increasing number of people work outside standard working hours i.e. they work in the late evening, during the night and in the early morning. Ten years ago 80 per cent of all employed worked during ordinary daytime (Bø and Molden 2000). Today (1999) this fraction is less than 70 per cent. In addition an increasing number are working regularly on Saturdays and Sundays. The reason for this is that the service sector – both public and private – grow faster than the manufacturing sector. In addition business hours in many service industries (as for instance within the retail industry) are significantly extended.

About 15 per cent of all Norwegian employees work shift or have similar working time arrangements (LFS 1999, Statistics Norway) This is more common among women than men (16 and 13 per cent respectively). The typical shift worker is a young woman, employed in service industries as hotels and restaurants, or in public health and social services.

Flexible working time arrangements (flexitime) are quite common in some administrative and business services, i.e. the employee may partly decide on her (his) own daily and weekly working time. Flexible working time schemes differ a lot, but many of them have some common features: There is a *core working time*, for instance from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and then there is an extended working time from 6 or 7 a.m. – to 5 or 6 p.m. The employees have to be present in the core working time, and they have to work a certain number of hours during the month – *within* the extended working time, but at their *own* discretion. In some schemes employees – with a sufficient number of hours – may take a day (or half a day) off per month.

There is no time series statistics on flexible working time arrangements in Norway. Some major surveys contain, however,

questions on this subject. Three such surveys during the 1980s show that the fraction of employed people stating that they have flexible working time arrangements, increased from 8 per cent in 1980 to 21 per cent in 1989 (Statistics Norway). Ten years later, in 1997, as many as 50 per cent of all employed could “*either perfectly or to some extent decide the start and the end of the daily working hours*” (ISSP 1997). In this survey the question is framed in a somewhat different way; thus the rates are not quite comparable. Still it seems obvious the flexitime arrangements are growing.

Men have flexible working time arrangements more often than women do, this holds for the surveys both in 1989 and 1997. This mirrors the gender differences in occupations and industries; flexitime is hardly found in hotels and restaurants, in hospitals and old people’s home. Further, flexible working time arrangements is more common among highly educated workers than among unskilled.

Flexible working time arrangements are however highly valued among employees, and at an increasing rate. In the ISSP surveys 1989 and 1997 the respondents were presented a list of job attributes and asked if each of them is important or not. Both “an interesting job” and “a secure job” get a pretty high score in 1989 as well as in 1997. More than 90 per cent hold both these to be *very important* or *important*. Next comes “an autonomous job”. On a list of 8 attributes “a job with flexible working time arrangements” comes close to the bottom. This attribute is, however, the only with a significant increase in the fraction among both men and women – holding it to be *very important* or *important*. See Table 6; for more details see Berg (1998).

Table 6. Important job attributes. Per cent of employed men and women holding each attribute as "very important" or "important", Norway 1989 and 1997

| Job attribute | Men | | Women | |
|--|------|------|-------|------|
| | 1989 | 1997 | 1989 | 1997 |
| (1) Interesting | 97 | 98 | 98 | 97 |
| (2) Secure | 96 | 92 | 98 | 96 |
| (3) Autonomous | 84 | 85 | 86 | 81 |
| (4) A job where I can help others | 51 | 57 | 68 | 72 |
| (5) High income | 65 | 54 | 75 | 71 |
| (6) Important for society | 65 | 54 | 75 | 71 |
| (7) Good chances of advancement | 58 | 55 | 59 | 51 |
| (8) Flexible working time arrangements | 38 | 54 | 49 | 61 |

Source: Berg (1998) based on ISSP 1989, 1997, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Regulations of working time in Norway

2.1 The Work Environment Act

In Norway the *Work Environment Act* (Arbeidsmiljøloven) regulates daily and weekly working hours. Maximum working time is 40 hours weekly or 9 hours daily. *Collective agreements* in all industries and sectors states, however, 37.5 hours per week as the standard working time, usually 7.5 hours daily, Monday–Friday. Before January 1987 the collective agreements stated 40 hours per week as standard working time.²

The *Work Environment Act* gives several exceptions from the principal rule of maximum 40 hours: *more liberal rules* for managers, some special occupations and in cases of necessary readiness, and *more strict rules* for work during week-ends, evenings and nights, for shift work, dangerous work, young persons etc. For instance:

A union may make a contract on working hours beyond the maximum rules of the law. An individual employee may also make such a *written* contract, but only if the average annual working hours is 40 hours or less per week. Daily working hours must not exceed 9 hours. Concerning young persons, the rules are strict:

² About 65 per cent of all employees in Norway are unionised. In practice the collective agreements cover a larger fraction of the employees, approximately 75 per cent.

Only very easy work is allowed for persons 13–15 years. Persons 16–18 years are not allowed to work overtime and at night, i.e. from 11.00 p.m. to 06.00 a.m. In general working hours for young persons should be adjusted so as not to interfere with education.

The *Work Environment Act* also states an individual right to *reduced working hours* – temporary or permanent – due to medical, social and other important welfare reasons. The employer is obliged to comply with the need of the employee – or otherwise prove it will be of great inconvenience for the company.

Overtime is regulated to be maximum 10 hours a week, 25 hours during 4 successive weeks, and 200 hours a year. A limited extension of overtime may be agreed with the union or approved by the *Occupational Environment Committee* at the company level (Arbeidsmiljøutvalget). Additional extension has to be approved by the governmental *Directorate of Labour Inspection* at the local or national level (Arbeidstilsynet).

In general Sundays imply “rest from work” starting at 6 p.m. the day before Sunday and lasting till 10 p.m. the day before the first weekday. There are, however, several exceptions: transport, trade, hotel and restaurants etc, and all kinds of “necessary work”. In addition trade unions and employers may agree on special arrangements for working on Sundays. Sunday (and Saturday) working is, however, infrequent in manufacturing industries and most business services. Due to local regulations most shops are closed on Sundays. However, during the last two decades opening hours of stores is remarkably increased, both in late evening, all night (gas stations, cafés and snack bars), and Sundays (only special shops). Extended opening hours affects customers as well as employees.

2.2 Standard working time

The most common working time is *37.5 hours per week*. This standard is rather widespread. Many employees work 7.5 hours per day Monday–Friday all year, or 7.25 hours during summer time and 7.75 hours during wintertime.

However, many service workers in transport, retail, hotel and restaurant, childcare, medical and social care, etc have different working hours. Employees with shift work, long duties, or late and night duties usually have shorter weekly or monthly working time than the standard of 37.5 hours per week.

A daily break of 25 or 30 minutes is usually not paid and not included in working hours in manufacturing sectors. More often it is included and paid for in service and business sector.

There is *no explicit regulation* of minimum working hours or legal definition of *part-time work*. Employers and employees are free to agree on working hours within the legal maximum. There are hardly any legal rights associated with work and income that do *not* apply for part-time workers. Most rights and obligations in the labour market are *proportional to annual earnings* (labour income). Bjurstøm (1993) discusses the legal position of part-time workers in Norway – compared to Denmark, England and Germany.

Part-time work is rather widespread among women both in the private and public sectors, and among young persons combining employment with education or care for small children. In Norway part-time contracts in general are *not* considered as “atypical” or “non-standardised” contracts. There are of course cases where part-time workers have inferior working conditions compared with full-time workers. There is, however, no empirical evidence that part-time workers are paid less (per hour) than full-time workers are in similar jobs.

2.3 Vacation

Vacation is regulated by the *Vacation Act* (Ferie-loven). All employees are entitled to vacation for 4 weeks and one day, i.e. 21 working days (or 25 if Saturdays are included). Senior employees (60 years and older) are entitled to another week (26 or 31 days). According to the law, this vacation is compulsory! Public holidays (except Sundays) and festivals amount to about 10 days per year.

Payment during vacation is subject to wage income the previous year, and is paid by the employer at that time (who is obliged to deduct it from the wage).

New: As part of the collective agreement in 2000 for both private and public sector, vacation will be extended by 2 days in 2001 and by another 2 days in 2002. This is an extension of the vacation *by agreement*, not by law. Formally, employees who are not covered by these agreements will not have the right to this extension – unless they get an individual agreement of the same.

Incentives: Income taxes, pensions and benefits

3.1 Income taxes

In Norway annual income below Nok 25,000 (i.e. about Euro 3,125) is not taxed, and income below Nok 60,000 (Euro 7,500) is taxed very mildly. The tax rules referred in this section apply to 2000 (only the main rules are presented). All figures in Euro are calculated at an exchange rate of 1 Euro = 8 Nok.

Various minimum thresholds for income taxes as well as additional tax for labour income above certain limits, make the Norwegian income tax system partly progressive. The minimum thresholds are, however, relatively low. Still they may give incentives to work shorter hours, or to work for only a short period in the course of a year. The incentives are supposed to affect pupils and students who work during their leave from school or university. The progressivity may also affect women (and men) who work short hours during most of the year.

The *general tax rate* (after standard deductions) is 35.8 per cent (7.8 social insurance contributions paid by the employee plus 28.0 per cent tax). For single wage earners and for wage earners with a full-time working spouse, income above Nok 280,000 (Euro 35,000) is taxed with an *additional tax* of 13.5 per cent and income above Nok 760,000 (Euro 95,000) is taxed with another additional tax of 6 per cent. Maximum marginal tax is thus 55.3 per cent (35.8 + 13.5 + 6.0). About 25 per cent of all taxpayers in Norway pay

the additional tax, i.e. their annual earnings are above Nok 280,000, and their marginal tax is (at least) 49.3 per cent. Among full-time workers the fraction is significant larger.

There are no tax exemptions for short working hours or overtime. In general working hours is irrelevant; the basis for taxation and contributions is annual earnings.

The employer also pays social insurance contributions – proportional to the earnings, except for employees on very short-term contracts. Contributions paid by the employer used to be regionally differentiated, but this is going to be changed. Thus the Norwegian tax and social insurance system gives the employer very few (hardly any) incentives to create part-time jobs.

3.2 Taxation of spouses

Spouses are – as a point of departure – *taxed as independent wage earners*. They are both taxed for their own wage income. As the income tax is progressive for some income intervals, the household will profit from equalising the spouses' annual earnings. When it comes to taxation of capital and income from capital they are, however, regarded as one unit. Also as wage earners spouses may, however, choose to be taxed as one unit, as this is beneficial for the couple in some cases:

If one of the spouses has no income, the couple will benefit from – and will be taxed as one unit. A taxpayer with a dependent spouse (i.e. a spouse with no income) pays less tax than a single person with the same income. This is because one of the standard deductions in income (the family deduction) doubles and because the threshold for paying the first additional tax increases. Only 15 per cent of all married couples are taxed as one unit (1998).

If one of the spouses works full-time and the other has a very low income, they may still profit from being (and they will be) taxed as one unit – rather than two independent wage earners. In this case each of them is obliged to pay a part of the total tax – proportional to their income.

If the smaller annual income exceeds about Nok 60,000 (or Euro 7,500), the household will profit from being (and they will be) taxed as two independent wage earners. This is because the total value (for the couple) of the standard deductions is larger, as they both have so high income as to take full advantage of the standard deductions. As the lower income increases and reaches the threshold for the additional tax, the benefit from being taxed separately is even larger.

As the income tax is progressive for incomes above a certain limit, a small increase in household's wage income is heavily taxed, i.e. by 49.3 or 55.3 per cent. This is also the case if the household starts out with one of the spouses in full-time job and annual earnings above Nok 280,000 (or above Nok 760,000), and the other spouse with no job – but considering to start to work part-time. The *marginal tax rate* for the second spouse will be just as high (or even higher in some special cases) as the marginal tax rate of the full-time working spouse (i.e. 49.3 per cent or 55.3 per cent) – when the income of the second spouse increases from Nok 30,000 to Nok 60,000. Beyond this level the spouses will be taxed independently and the marginal tax rate of the smaller income will be 35.8 per cent.

Thus, the tax system may discourage married women considering to start part-time working. Taking account of the fixed costs associated with starting to work (childcare, travelling costs etc), the household may find it more beneficial that the husband works overtime or takes a second job.

Any progressive income tax systems that treats wage earners with a dependent spouse more generously than single wage earners (at the same income level) have “traps” like this.

3.3 Family Welfare

The *Work Environment Act* states that workers are entitled to 12 weeks of leave in case of maternity. The mother is obliged to take 3 weeks off *before* the birth. *After the birth* she is obliged to take a

leave of 6 weeks. A father living together with the mother is entitled to 4 weeks of welfare leave. In addition the parents are entitled to leave during the first year after birth. The total length of parental leave – including both mother and father – may add up to 12 months. Similar arrangements apply for adoption of children.

Payment during parental leave is established by the *Social Insurance Act* (Folketrygdloven). Entitlement for payment during leave before and after the birth is dependent on employment and income. The mother (and the father) should be employed for at least six months during the last ten months before the birth – with an annual income of at least half of the *basic amount* in the *Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme*.³ This basic amount (= B.a.) is regulated annually; at present it is Nok 49,090, – or Euro 6,136. Thus to be entitled to payment during parental leave, minimum annual income is Nok 24,500 or Euro 3,060.

Both parents are compensated 100 per cent of their own wage rate, but maximum 0,5 B.a. per month. The parents are entitled to this payment for 42 weeks in total; or they may choose 80 per cent compensation for 52 weeks. Four of the compensated weeks are *reserved for the father*. Fathers may also have a 2 weeks *unpaid* daddy leave. About 80 per cent of all fathers take paid leave. Most of them only the fathers quota.

Recently a *time-account* system was introduced (1994), which means that the parents may combine the parental leave compensation with part-time work for a period of maximum two years. Dependent on an agreement with the employer(s) the parents may combine 10–50 per cent of the compensation with working hours corresponding to 50–90 per cent of full-time. The 3+6 weeks re-

³ All persons resident or working in Norway are compulsorily insured under the Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme. The scheme covers old age, survivors' and disability pensions, as well as benefits in case of disablement, rehabilitation, medical and occupational injury benefits. It also covers benefits to single parents, cash benefits in case of sickness, maternity and unemployment, and family allowances.

served for the mother as well as the 4 weeks reserved for the father are exempted from the time-account system. Only about 4 per cent of the parents use the time-account system.

The parental leave arrangements have improved significantly recently; 10 years ago maximum duration of paid parental leave was 18 weeks, today it is 42 weeks – with full compensation.

After return to work the mother is entitled to take one hour per day off (or 2 x half an hour) to give breast, according to the *Work Environment Act*. Generally she will not get paid for the time off. This may, however, be the case according to a local agreement. According to the collective agreement for the public sector, full-time working women giving breast may have two hours off per day.

The *Work Environment Act* also states that employees with responsibility for small children (12 years or younger) are entitled to leave during children's illness; 10 days per year per employee with one child, 15 days with more children, lone parents 20 respectively 30 days. According to the *Social Insurance Act* all employees entitled to benefits in case of sickness are also entitled to benefits for absence due to care for sick child (for the mentioned number of days per year). Entitlement for sickness benefits is conditioned on minimum annual income of 0.5 B.a. and occupational activity for at least 14 days before the absence.

Thorough analyses of care policies in Norway and their potential effects on womens' and mens' employment as well as on family care, is given by Ellingsæter and Hedlund (1998).

New: All families in Norway with children aged 1–3 years (i.e. 13–36 months) who do *not* have a governmentally subsidised child care arrangement (kindergarten), may receive a *cash benefit* amounting to Nok 3,000 per months (about the same as the governmental subsidy). If the child has a part-time governmentally subsidised childcare arrangement, the support is proportionally reduced.

This cash benefit for families with small children was introduced in August 1998 for children aged 1–2 years (13–24 months)

and extended in January 1999 to cover all children aged 1–3 years (13–36 months).

The purpose of the benefit is to (i) encourage parents to spend more time with their children, and to (ii) treat all families equally – when it comes to governmental support. Thus, the supposed effect is that working hours for parents with small children will be reduced.

At the time being, about 80 per cent of all children 1–3 years receive the cash benefit. This far it seems as if only mothers and hardly any fathers have reduced their working hours. The reduction in working hours is not very strong. It amounts to an equivalence of 3,500–4,500 full-time workers. Before the reform mothers with children aged 1–3 years worked equivalent to 60,000 full-time workers (Langset, Lian and Thoresen 2000).

3.4 Childcare

The high rate of employment among women with small children in Norway is dependent on childcare facilities. The number of children aged 1–5 in *kindergartens* (i.e. public and private institutions with governmental subsidies) has increased from 19 per cent in 1980 to 61 per cent in 1999. In addition quite a lot of small children (aged 0–1) are taken care of by child minders etc. Some figures for the coverage of kindergartens and child minders etc are shown in Table 5. More than one third of all children aged 1–5 (37 per

Table 7. Users of kindergartens and child minders etc, Norway 1998. Per cent of all children

| Age group | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years |
|-------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Kindergarten | 26 | 51 | 70 | 77 | 80 |
| Child minders etc | 20 | 15 | 10 | 8 | 8 |

Source: Register data and survey data from Statistics Norway.

cent) are covered by full-time kindergartens, i.e. kindergarten with opening hours 41 hours or more per week.

Since 1998 the number of small children (aged 1–2) in kindergartens has decreased slightly while the number of small children taken care of by child minders etc has increased (approximately 5 per cent points). This is in accordance with the expected impact of the new cash support for families with small children.

3.5 Old age pensions

The old age pension system is part of the compulsory Norwegian *Social Insurance Scheme* and regulated by the *Social Insurance Act* (Folketrygdloven).

The pension age is 67 years (lower for some special occupations), and does *not* depend on present working hours or lifetime working hours. The old age pension consists of a *basic pension* which is income independent (but depends on the number of years living in Norway), and *supplementary pension* depending on life time labour income and the number of years employed (only annual labour income above a minimum threshold gives “pension points”). Those not eligible the income related supplementary pension get a *special supplement*. The same applies for persons who otherwise would have got a supplementary pension less than the special supplement.

At present (2000) the *minimum old age pension* (i.e. basic pension plus special supplement) amounts to about Nok 88,000 (Euro 11,000) for single pensioners and to Nok 151,500 (Euro 19,000) for couples.

When it comes to the *supplementary pension*, annual earnings above Nok 589,000 (i.e. 12 B.a. or Euro 74,000) do *not* increase the future old age pension at all. Until 2000 annual earnings above Nok 294,500 or Euro 37,000 (i.e. 8 B.a.), had less impact on the future pension than lower annual income. Thus for high-income earners the compensation rate is decreasing with previous income.

For low and medium wage earners the old age pension compensates about 50–60 per cent of the previous income.

Women (and men) working *part-time* for 20 years or less, will seldom get more than the basic pension plus the special supplement. 41 per cent of the present pensioners in Norway get this minimum pension; 59 per cent of all female pensioners and 15 per cent of all male pensioners. The large difference between male and female pensioners will of course decrease as cohorts born after 1950 – with a more equal life time labour market participation – reach the age of 67.

3.6 Occupational pensions

All employers in public and many employers in private sector offer their employees *occupational* pension schemes. This pension is added to the compulsory public old age pension. All occupational pension schemes in the *public* sector (at the local, county and central level) are, however, “co-ordinated” with the public old age pension in such a way that most pensioners receive less than the sum of the two (but always more than the public old age pension).

In the *private* sector the pensions are *not* “co-ordinated”, and the employer and the employees may agree upon what ever pension scheme they like. However, to get a tax deduction for the contributions the scheme has to be designed according to specific rules. About one third of all employees in private sector are covered by such pension schemes. According to these tax rules the compensation rate has to be constant or decreasing by earnings or wage level, and the scheme has to cover all employees except part-timers with short working hours and temporaries.

In the private sector workers on temporary contracts and workers with a working time of less than 50 per cent are in most cases excluded from the scheme. In the public sector, the cut is set at 35 per cent of a full-time job. A new set of regulations is presently being passed in the legislative system (Ot. prop 47, 1998–1999), setting the cut-off at 20 per cent of full working time. This

change will include more part-time working women into the occupational pension schemes – both in private and public sector.

3.7 Early retirement

Early retirement from the age of 62 is part of *collective agreements* in private and public sector (since 1989 from the age of 64, later expanded). The early retirement scheme (*avtalefestet pensjon*, AFP) is subsidised by 40 per cent by the central government. Entitlement does not depend on working hours, but on employment during 10 years since the age of 50. About 60 per cent of all employees are covered by the AFP scheme. The compensation level depends (as the old age pension) on lifetime earnings. The number of persons receiving early retirement is increasing; from 2,500 in 1990 to 25,000 in 1999.

The number of people with *disability pension* (part of the *Social Insurance System*) is also increasing. In 1980 about 6 per cent of the population aged 16–66 received disability pension. In 1999 as many as 9 per cent or 270,000 persons aged 16–66 received disability pension; 10.5 per cent among women and 7.7 per cent among men.

3.8 Unemployment insurance benefits

Unemployment insurance benefits (UIB) are regulated by the *Social Insurance Act* (Folketrygdloven) as a part of the Norwegian *Social Insurance System*. All employees in Norway are automatically covered by this UIB-system. The compensation amounts to about 65 per cent of the previous income (before taxes). Annual income above Nok 294,000 (i.e. 6 B.a.) is, however, not compensated. Thus for high-income earners the compensation rate is below 65 per cent. To be entitled to UIB, the annual earnings *last year* have to exceed Nok 61,000 (i.e. 1.25 B.a. or Euro 7,700), or Nok 147,000 (i.e. 3 B.a.) during the last *three* years. Maximum duration of unemployment benefits is 156 weeks, independent of previous working time and income level.

Working hours in previous jobs are irrelevant – both for the entitlement and for the compensation and duration. Due to the minimum threshold labour market entrants and returners as well as part-time workers with low income will not be eligible for UIB. In 1999 about 56 per cent all unemployed registered at the Local Employment Office received unemployment benefits. In 1990 as many as 73 per cent received UIB. The drop is mainly due to a change in the composition of the unemployed: the unemployment level is low, but there are relatively more young people, other entrants and returners among the unemployed.

Education and training in Norway

4.1 The educational system

In brief, the educational system in Norway consists of the following parts

- Compulsory school: 10 years (age: 6–16)⁴
- Upper secondary school: 3 years (age: 16–19)
- College and university (bachelor): 2–4 years (in addition to 10+ 3 years)
- University (master): 4–6 years (in addition to 10+ 3 years)

For the upper secondary school the difference between what used to be called *gymnasium*, preparing the pupils for college and university, and *vocational training and apprenticeships*, preparing the pupils for work, is still present, but not as distinct as 20 years ago. Today both are called *secondary or comprehensive education*. Some schools offer both kinds of education, and you may go to the university with 3 years of vocational training, conditional that you pass some additional exams. 57 per cent of all pupils in the upper secondary school (1997) read subjects so as to be directly qualified for the university.

In Norway 21 per cent of the grown population (16 years and above) have some education at college or university level; 22 per

⁴ Before 1997 compulsory school was 9 years, from the age of 7.

cent of all men and 20 per cent of all women (1997). At the same time 32 per cent have only compulsory school; 28 per cent of all men and 36 per cent of all women. Thirty years ago (1970) similar figures were 7 per cent with education at university or college level (men 9 per cent, and women 5 per cent) and 69 per cent with only compulsory school (men 64 per cent, and women 76 per cent).

At present (1997) 97 per cent of all pupils leaving compulsory school at the age of 16 continues with some education at the upper secondary level; the fraction is the same for boys and girls. Among those completing upper secondary school (passing the final exams), 45 per cent continues their education. About half of them go directly to some college or university. The other half goes on with further education at same level. Part of this group will, however, at a later stage go to some university or college.

Today more women than men start a university or college education. At the universities 53 per cent of all students are women. At the colleges (many of them educating teachers, nurses, engineers etc) 61 per cent of the students are women.

Compared to the European Union, public expenditures on higher education is quite high in Norway, measured both relative to GDP, relative to the number of students and relative to the number of young people (Røed and Barth, 2000).

Student support is also fairly generous in Norway. The percentage of students receiving financial assistance is close to 100. The main part of the student support consists of subsidised loans. Loans and grants are made available to all students fulfilling school requirements, but given conditional on *own* income not exceeding an upper limit of Nok 5,000 per month.

Access to higher education is limited in most fields, as the number of applicants exceeds the capacity. In most fields students are ranked by their marks in upper secondary school and/or by additional education. Still the enrolment rate is among the highest in Western Europe. With the exception of a very few private institutions, there is *no tuition fee* for higher education in Norway.

4.2 Continuing training

Continuing training for *adults* is sparsely developed in Norway. Some public schools and training centres put up special courses for adults, and quite many courses are run by popular educational organisations – sponsored by local and central government. Unemployed persons are offered training by the public employment service.

Recently the social partners in Norway have agreed upon a system of further education, both for *maintenance* of competence needed in the present position and for qualifying the employees for *new and more demanding* tasks in the company (*Etter- og videreutdanning, EVU*). The purpose is to promote life long learning. The central government will sponsor the EVU-scheme and has already granted some money to develop the reform.

The EVU-agreement signed by the social partners states the right to sabbatical leave for training, if necessary. A law on this is also passed by the Parliament. The partners have, however, not yet agreed upon the financial questions, as for instance: Who is going to pay for what kind of training?

The present debate on working time

5.1 Part-time

In principle Norwegian working life legislation does not discriminate between full-time and part-time work (Bjurstrøm 1993). By minimum conditions and thresholds some rights and obligations are, however, dependent on duration of employment and more seldom on working hours. The major pensions and benefits within the Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme are proportional to annual earnings, ensuring proportional rights for full-time and part-time workers.

Trade unions are traditionally not in favour of part-time working; especially not the large blue-collar union, The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO). Unionisation is usually lower among part-time workers than among full-time workers; partly because part-timers mainly work in service industries with a generally low union density (retail trade, hotels and restaurants, personal services etc). Gradually since 1970 LO and other unions have included part-time work in their negotiating strategies. In this way the unions have contributed to *normalising* part-time work. Still the rate of union members among part-timers is quit low; about 45 per cent compared with almost 70 per cent among full-timers.

5.2 Shorter working hours

The debate on working hours and working time arrangements has been on the political agenda in Norway since workers and employers formed their organisations one hundred years ago. During the last century the *standard* annual working time in Norway is cut by half – from 3,500 hours per year in 1890 to 1,725 hours in 2000. Thus a substantial part of the economic growth during the 20th century is realised as leisure.

The present debate about working time covers many subjects: not only the daily, weekly and annual working time, but also working time flexibility and the age of retirement. Among those advocating working hours reductions, welfare arguments are dominating: The welfare of families with small children, equal opportunities of men and women, as well as the health and welfare of employees in general. Traditionally men (and their trade unions) have been in favour retirement reforms, while women have been more concerned about the daily working time. Attitudes towards working time reforms are, however, not only a gender issue. Such attitudes seem to reflect occupational characteristics as well. A study by Birkelund and Øverås (1997) found that women in male-dominated occupations are more concerned with retirement reforms than hours worked per week.

The main argument in favour of *shorter daily working hours*, for instance 6 hours per day, is that shorter working hours will promote equality between men and women – both in the labour market and in the household. However, if such a large reduction is not compensated by higher wage per hour (as has been the case with previous reductions in standard working hours), it is supposed that very few men will choose the shorter working day. Without compensation many families will not be able to afford the shorter hours. Full compensation is – on the other hand – very expensive, and similar to a 20 per cent increase in wages.

In addition, some argue for shorter daily working time in order to achieve *job* sharing. At present this argument is not very strong

in Norway, as unemployment is rather low and there is a shortage of labour in many sectors and occupations. In 1983–84 and 1989–93 when unemployment was high (see Figure 2), job sharing – by reduced daily working hours, less overtime etc – were more in the forefront of the debate; see Hansen (1995).

5.3 Flexible working arrangements

Reforms directed towards more flexible working hours – concerning both the total number of hours per week and its location in time – seem to be supported by all partners and parties in Norway. With a great deal of scepticism at the hand of the employee federations, however. More flexibility is supposed to be a *welfare gain* for the employees. In addition it may probably increase their *productivity*. Thus working time flexibility is also – and may be mostly – *employer friendly*. Flexible working hours may decouple hours of work from operating hours and opening hours. Thus, by longer use of fixed capacity such arrangement increase the capital cost efficiency.

Flexible working time arrangements are also supposed to enable more persons to join the labour force and to take part in paid work. Thus such reforms may mobilise some of the *labour reserves*. With shortage of labour in many occupations this is a quite important issue at present in Norway. Since many *full-timers* would prefer shorter working hours (see Section 1.3), individual working time arrangements may, however, reduce *their* supply of labour.

To alleviate the shortage of labour (as well as for the concern of public finances) it has been suggested to make some minor changes in the early retirement pension and old age pension schemes. The purpose is to give elderly people economic incentives to work more and beyond the age of 62 – as well as beyond the age of 67.

To improve the *competitiveness* of Norwegian industry it is also argued that some of the strict working time regulations have to be relaxed; especially those concerning maximum overtime and maximum monthly working hours. To have a closer look at these

regulations was also the main suggestion from a committee appointed by the *Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development* in 1999; see NOU 1999:34. The majority of the committee – all members except the unions' representatives – suggested a relaxation of the rules regulating work on Sundays and during nights. The majority also suggested to reconsider the rules of *employment protection*. The purpose is not to weaken them, but to make them more clear especially when it comes to employees with fixed term contracts and in the case of outsourcing, and to make it more easy (for marginal groups) to get *into* the labour market.

In connection with the 1998 wage negotiations LO (the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions) and NHO (the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry) agreed to consider a *time account system*. The system under consideration seems to be a mix of an individualised *time banking system* and a collective *annualised hours scheme*, where extra hours are compensated either by time off or by money (Ellingsæter 2000). The purpose of such a system is to meet the workers' needs for time flexibility in different stages of life and employers' need for flexibility in production in light of the increasing competition. The time account system is supposed to secure the employer sufficient work capacity when needed, while employees may take time off when needed. By working long hours for a period to help the company completing large contracts or covering up for vacant positions, the employee put hours to her time account – to be spent later when she wants.

Different time account arrangements have been tried out at the local level in many European countries. The experience seems to be that workers to a little extent take more time off. If possible, they prefer money before time (Ellingsæter 2000). Union representatives in Norway are sceptical to the time account system; they seem to prefer collective agreements that *force* the employees to take time off. The head of the female dominated union for municipal workers argues that these kind of flexible arrangements may hamper women's struggle for the 6 hours standard working day (Ellingsæter 2000).

5.4 More vacation – but not less holidays

As mentioned, during the 2000 wage negotiations the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) gave priority to more vacation – rather than shorter daily working time and other working time reforms. As part of the collective agreement in 2000 for both private and public sectors vacation will be extended by 2 days in 2001 and by 2 days in 2002. This is an extension of the vacation *by agreement*, not by law. Formally, employees without an agreement will not have the right to this extension.

This reform was *not* supported by all. Some unions – especially female dominated unions – would rather have a larger wage increase or shorter daily working time. Employers, for instance the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO), argued that the reform was too costly – and especially today, as there is shortage of labour in many sectors and occupations. It was also suggested – both by employers and politicians – to take away one or more festivals and holidays in exchange for the extended vacation: for instance Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday – and /or 1st of May (not very popular among the union representatives). These suggestions never reached the negotiation table.

5.5 Care and work: The time conflict is still a gender issue

In Norway the work-family time conflicts are modified by state policy: Flexible working time arrangements (of which part-time especially in public sector has been the dominant one), public child care services, public care for the elderly, parental leave arrangements, and lately: the fathers own quota in the parental leave scheme. These arrangements and reforms have facilitated a flexible combination of time in employment and care among parents. Thus Norway has taken considerable steps away from a traditional *male breadwinner family model* towards *dual breadwinning* (Ellingsæter 1998). A problem with these reforms is that they have constructed

a two-tier model of parenthood in work life (Ellingsæter 1999). That is, one model for mothers and one model for fathers. The shared work-family practice remains largely a female model. One reason may be that this model conflicts with the structures and cultures in the *private sector labour market* – where most and mostly men make their career. Female work patterns, the shared career, seem to be difficult to practice in private sector (Hansen 1995). The public sector accommodates a greater flexibility in its work force. That is may be why it is easier for women to make their career in public sector. Still, even in public sector women are heavily underrepresented in the top and intermediate management (Storvik 1999, 2000).

Concluding remarks

Norwegians seem to work a lot, at least a large number of the Norwegians are gainfully employed: 80 per cent of all persons aged 16–64. This is the highest rate in Europe – according to the survey conducted by *the European Foundation for the Improvement of living and Working Conditions* in 1998. However, the average weekly working time of Norwegian employees is below the European average: less than 37 versus almost 38 hours per week. Part of the explanation is a high part-time rate among employed women in Norway. However, since so many are employed, the number of hours worked *per person* aged 16–64 is as high as 30 hours per week versus an European average of less than 24.

As in many European countries, demand for labour is high in Norway at present, and there is a shortage of labour in many occupations. The demographic structure predicts an ageing population in the years to come, and thus probably an even stronger shortage of labour – especially within health care and care for the elderly; but possibly also in other labour demanding and knowledge based industries. In addition, information technology, globalisation and increased competition are expected to increase the need for changes and a stronger adaptability of both businesses and their employees. Thus employment policy will have to change focus:

It must still combat unemployment, provide job opportunities for all who would like to be in paid work, and increase the employability of marginal groups. However, it must also develop measures to mobilise labour force reserves, encourage people to stay longer in the labour force, and develop more flexible forms of

work organisation. A careful liberalisation of some of the working time regulations will probably be wise. Well organised, more flexible working time arrangements (not necessarily longer working hours) – are also in the interest of the employees. Such reforms may encourage more people to join the labour force. However, since many full-timers would prefer shorter working hours, individual working time arrangement may reduce *their* labour supply.

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Norwegian summary

I denne rapporten beskrives institusjonelle forhold av betydning for arbeidstid og arbeidstidsordninger i Norge. Rapporten gir også et sammendrag av resultater fra en survey i regi av *The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*.

Syssetting

I internasjonal sammenheng har Norge en meget høy sysselsettingsrate. I følge den komparative studien *Employment Options of the Future*, som ble gjennomført i 16 europeiske land i 1998, er sysselsettingsraten (for personer 16–64 år) 80 prosent i Norge. Dette plasserer Norge som nummer 1 i Europa. Den høye sysselsettingsraten blant menn og kvinner i Norge i dag (hvv. 83 og 77 prosent) er et resultat av høye yrkesfrekvenser og relativt lave arbeidsløshetsrater.

Deltid

Den europeiske surveyundersøkelsen viser at 43 prosent av alle sysselsatte kvinner i Norge jobber deltid, – mot et europeisk gjennomsnitt på 37 prosent. Den høye andelen bekreftes av nasjonal statistikk. Tverrsnittsdata viser at deltidsandelen blant kvinner i Norge avtar med utdanning og øker med alder, mens den praktisk talt ikke er påvirket av om det er små barn i husholdningen. Sysselsatte kvinner 20–34 år med små barn har lengre arbeidstid enn sine eldre søstre 35–55 år. Gitt at man er i jobb, ser det ut til at *kohort* (generasjon) betyr mer for arbeidstid enn om det er små barn i husholdningen.

Ønsket arbeidstid

Mens fulltidsarbeidende typisk ønsker kortere arbeidstid, ønsker deltidsarbeidende lenger arbeidstid. Dette gjelder for alle land i Europa. Surveyundersøkelsen i 1998 viser at deltidsarbeidere i gjennomsnitt arbeider 22,9 timer per uke, mens de ønsker å arbeide 26,7 timer. Dette gir en forskjell på 3,8 timer (undersyssetting). Fulltidsarbeidende arbeider i gjennomsnitt 41,7 timer per uke, men ønsker å arbeide 35,9 timer, en forskjell på 5,8 timer (oversyssetting).

Den norske *Levekårsundersøkelsen* (1995) viser at 16 prosent av alle menn (16–64 år) ønsker kortere arbeidstid. Blant sysselsatte kvinner er det 18 prosent som ønsker kortere arbeidstid; blant heltidsarbeidende kvinner er andelen 29 prosent. Tilsvarende tall for lengre arbeidstid er 5 prosent blant menn, 9 prosent blant kvinner og 16 prosent blant deltidsarbeidende kvinner. Blant kvinner og menn med små barn (0–10 år) er andelen som ønsker kortere arbeidstid noe høyere enn blant gjennomsnittet – særlig for kvinner (28 prosent).

Arbeidstidsordninger

Et stort og økende antall mennesker arbeider utenfor standard arbeidstid, dvs de arbeider om kvelden og natten og tidlig om morgenen. For ti år siden arbeidet 80 prosent på ordinær dagtid. I dag er denne andelen mindre enn 70 prosent. I tillegg kommer at et økende antall arbeider jevnlig på lørdager og søndager.

Om lag 25 prosent av norske arbeidstakere har skiftarbeid eller liknende arbeidstidsordninger. Dette er mer vanlig blant kvinner enn menn (hhv. 16 og 13 prosent). Den typiske skiftarbeideren er en ung kvinne, sysselsatt i servicesektoren, dvs i hotell- og restaurantbransjen eller innenfor offentlig helse- og sosialomsorg.

Fleksible arbeidstidsordninger (fleksitid) er ganske vanlig innenfor administrasjon og forretningsmessig tjenesteyting, dvs at arbeidstakeren til en viss grad kan bestemme daglig eller ukentlig arbeidstid selv.

Representative undersøkelser viser at andelen som sier at de har en fleksibel arbeidstidsordning økte fra 8 prosent i 1980 til 21 prosent i 1989. Ti år seinere er det så mange som 50 prosent av alle sysselsatt som "enten helt eller delvis selv kan bestemme start og stopp på daglig arbeidstid".

Arbeidstidsreguleringer

I Norge er arbeidstiden regulert av *Arbeidsmiljøloven*. Maksimal arbeidstid er 40 timer per uke eller 9 timer per dag. Kollektive avtaler innenfor alle bransjer og sektorer setter imidlertid 37,5 timer per uke som standard arbeidstid, vanligvis 7,5 timer per dag, mandag-fredag.

Overtid er regulert til maksimum 10 timer uke, 25 timer per 4-ukersperiode, og 200 timer per år. En begrenset utvidelse av overtiden kan tillates etter avtale med de lokale arbeidstakerorganisasjonene eller etter anbefaling av det lokale Arbeidsmiljøutvalget. En ytterligere utvidelse må godkjennes av Arbeidstilsynet.

Ferie er regulert av Ferieloven. Alle lønntakere har rett til ferie i 4 uker og 1 dag, dvs 21 arbeidsdager (25 dersom vi tar med lørdager). Arbeidstakere over 60 år har rett til en ekstra uke (26 eller 31 dager). Ved lønnsforhandlingene i 2000 ble det besluttet å utvide ferien med 2 dager i 2001 og med ytterligere 2 dager i 2002.

Inntektsskatt

Inntekt under 25 000 kroner (dvs. om lag 3 125 Euro) beskattes ikke, og inntekt under kr 60 000 er svært forsiktig beskattet. Ulike typer av minstegrenser for beskatning og en tilleggsskatt for inntekt over en viss grense innebærer at inntektsskatten i Norge er delvis progressiv. Minimumsgrensene er relativt lave, men kan likevel gi insentiver til å arbeide kort deltid eller til bare å arbeide i en kortvarig periode. Det er i det minste antatt at dette kan være av betydning for studenter og elever som arbeider i feriene.

Den generelle skattesatsen (etter standardfradrag) utgjør 35,8 prosent (7,8 prosent i trygdeavgift og 28,0 prosent skatt). Lønnsinntekt utover kr 280 000 beskattes med en ekstraskatt på 13,5

prosent, og inntekt over kr 760 000 med en ytterligere ekstraskatt på 6,0 prosent. Maksimal marginal skatt er dermed 55,3 prosent.

Ektefeller er i utgangspunktet beskattet som *individuelle* inntektstakere; de skattlegges for hver sin arbeidsinntekt. Hvis en av ektefellene ikke har inntekt, vil de ha fordel av å bli – og de vil bli – beskattet som *en enhet*. En skattebetaler som forsørger ektefelle betaler mindre skatt enn en enslig lønnsaker med samme inntekt. Forklaringen er at standardfradraget fordobles og at innslaget for ekstraskatten er høyere. Bare 15 prosent av alle ektefeller i Norge har fellesbeskatning (1998).

Hvis en av ektefellene arbeider fulltid og den andre har meget lav inntekt, kan de også tenkes å ha fordel av fellesbeskatning. Dette til tross for at den laveste inntekten beskattes med den samme høye marginalsakten som hovedinntekten (49,3 eller 55,3 prosent). Hvis den laveste årsinntekten overstiger kr 58 000, vil husholdningen ha fordel av at de beskattes hver for seg. Forklaringen er at den samlede verdien av standardfradragene blir større og at de da begge har så høye inntekter at de fullt ut kan utnytte fordelene ved disse fradragene.

Familievelferd

Arbeidsmiljøloven fastslår at lønnsakere har rett til 12 ukers permisjon i forbindelse med fødsel. Av dette må moren ta ut (minst) 3 uker før fødselen og 6 uker etter fødselen. En far som lever sammen med barnets mor, har rett til 4 ukers permisjon. I tillegg har foreldrene rett til permisjon i barnets første leveår. Samlet permisjon – for mor og far – kan være opp til 12 måneder. Tilsvarende ordninger gjelder ved adopsjon.

Inntekt i permisjonstiden er regulert av Folketrygdloven. Rett til ytelse under permisjon før og etter fødsel avhenger av yrkesaktivitet og pensjonsgivende inntekt. Moren (og faren) må ha vært sysselsatt i minst seks av de siste 10 månedene før fødselen med en årsinntekt på minst kr 24 500 (eller 3 060 Euro). Foreldrene kan velge mellom permisjon i 40 uker med 100 prosent

kompensasjon av tidligere inntekt, eller permisjon i 52 uker med 80 prosent kompensasjon.

Arbeidsmiljøloven gir også arbeidstakere med omsorg for små barn (under 12 år) rett til permisjon (fravær) under barns sykdom: 10 dager per lønnstaker med ett barn, 15 dager for lønnstakere med flere barn. Enslige foreldre har rett til hhv. 20 og 30 dager. I følge Folketrygdloven har alle lønnstakere med rett til sykepenger (i praksis nesten alle) også rett til sykepenger ved fravær som følge av syke barn.

Den høy sysselsettingsraten blant kvinner i Norge avhenger av tilgang på barnetilsynsordninger. Antall barn 1–5 år i barnehage (dvs private og kommunale barnehager med statlig støtte) har økt fra 19 prosent i 1980 til 61 prosent i 1999. I tillegg er det ganske mange små barn (0–1 år) som passes av praktikanter og dagmammaer. Mer enn én tredel av alle barn 1–5 år (37 prosent) er i fulltidsbarnehage, dvs i barnehager med mer enn 41 timers åpningstid ukentlig

Pensjoner

Alderspensjon er en del av den obligatoriske Folketrygden. Pensjonsalderen er 67 år (lavere for noen yrkesgrupper), og avhenger ikke av arbeidstid på pensjoneringstidspunktet eller av livsarbeidstid. Alderspensjonen består av grunnpensjon som er inntektsuavhengig og en tilleggspensjon som avhenger av livsinntekter og antall år som sysselsatt (bare årsinntekt over et visst minimum gir pensjonspoeng).

De som ikke har rett til tilleggspensjon, får et særtillegg. Det samme gjelder for dem som ellers ville fått tilleggspensjon som er mindre enn særtillegget.

Alle arbeidsgivere i offentlig sektor og mange arbeidsgivere i privat sektor tilbyr sine ansatte tjeneste- eller yrkespensjon – som kommer i tillegg til den offentlige Folketrygden. Tjenestepensjoner i offentlig sektor er samordnet med Folketrygden slik at de fleste får utbetalt mindre enn summen av de to pensjonene, men alltid mer enn Folketrygden alene ville gitt. I privat sektor er det ingen

samordning, og arbeidsgiver og arbeidstaker kan avtale et hvilket som helst pensjonssystem. For å få skattefradrag for innbetalte premier, må imidlertid pensjonssystemet tilfredsstillende visse krav. Om lag en tredel av alle ansatte i privat sektor er dekket av denne typen yrkespensjoner. Reglene sier blant annet at pensjonens kompensasjonsgrad må være konstant eller avtakende i forhold til inntektsnivå, og at ordningen må dekke alle ansatte med unntak av deltidsansatte og midlertidig ansatte.

Utdanning

Utdanningssystemet i Norge består – i korte trekk – av:

- obligatorisk grunnskole: 10 år (alder 6–16)
- videregående skole: 3 år (alder 16–19)
- høyskole eller universitet (cand mag): 2–4 år (i tillegg til 10+ 3 år)
- universitet (høyere grad): 4–6 år (i tillegg til 10+ 3 år)

I Norge har 21 prosent av den voksne befolkningen (16 år og eldre) utdanning på høyskole- og universitetsnivå; 22 prosent av alle menn og 20 prosent av alle kvinner. Samtidig har 32 prosent bare grunnskole; 28 prosent av alle menn og 36 prosent av alle kvinner. For tretti år siden var de tilsvarende tallene 7 prosent med høyskole- og universitetsutdanning (menn 9 prosent og kvinner 5 prosent) og 69 prosent med bare grunnskole (menn 64 prosent og kvinner 76 prosent).

97 prosent av alle elevene som forlater grunnskolen i en alder av 16 år fortsetter med en eller annen utdanning på videregående nivå. Andelen er den samme for gutter og jenter. Blant dem som fullfører videregående skole, fortsetter 45 prosent med utdanning. Halvparten går direkte til høyskoler og universiteter. Den andre halvparten fortsetter med annen utdanning, men mange av dem vil seinere ta en høyskole- eller universitetsutdanning.

I dag er det flere kvinner enn menn som begynner på en høyskole- eller universitetsutdanning. På universitetene er 53

prosent av studentene kvinner. På høyskolene (som blant annet utdanner lærere, sykepleiere og ingeniører) er det 61 prosent kvinner blant studentene.

Debatten om arbeidstidsordninger

Hovedargumentet i til fordel for kortere daglig arbeidstid er at det vil fremme likestilling mellom kvinner og menn, både i arbeidslivet og hjemme.

I Norge er tidskonflikten mellom jobb og familieliv avdempet gjennom offentlige tiltak: fleksible arbeidstidsordninger (der deltid spesielt i offentlig sektor har vært det viktigste), barnehager, eldreomsorg og fødselspermisjon – og nå også fedrekvoten av fødselspermisjonen. Disse tiltakene har gjort det mulig for småbarnsforeldre å kombinere yrkesaktivitet og familieomsorg. Delt karriere – jobb-familie – synes imidlertid å forbli en kvinnemodell. En mulig forklaring kan være at denne modellen kommer i konflikt med normer og kulturer som gjelder i arbeidslivet i privat sektor, der flest – og de fleste – menn gjør karriere.

Fleksibilitet

Som i mange andre europeiske land er etterspørselen etter arbeidskraft høy i Norge, og det er mangel på arbeidskraft innenfor mange yrkesgrupper. Den demografiske strukturen tilsier en stadig aldrende befolkning og trolig enda større mangel på arbeidskraft i årene som kommer, særlig innenfor helse og omsorg, men også innenfor andre arbeidsintensive og kunnskapsbaserte næringer. Dessuten er det forventet at informasjonsteknologi, globalisering og større konkurranse vil øke behovet for omstilling og kravet om tilpasning både for bedrifter og for ansatte.

En forsiktig liberalisering av arbeidstidsreguleringen vil trolig være klokt. Mer fleksible arbeidstidsordninger (noe som ikke nødvendigvis gir økt arbeidstid) vil også være i arbeidstakernes interesse. Slike ordninger kan dermed bidra til å øke yrkesdeltakelsen. Men siden mange heltidsarbeidende ville foretrekke kortere

arbeidstid enn de har, kan individuelle arbeidstidsavtaler føre til at *deres* tilbud av arbeidskraft reduseres.

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| <p><i>Title/Tittel</i> Actual and Preferred Working Time.</p> |
| <p><i>Summary</i> On an international scale, Norway has a very high employment rate. According to the comparative survey on <i>Employment Options of the Future</i>, which were carried out in 16 European countries in 1998, the employment rate (of the population aged 16-64) is 80 per cent in Norway. This ranks Norway as number 1 in Europe. High labour force participation among women is partly due to the family welfare system based on compensated maternity and paternity leave and subsidised childcare services. While full-time workers typically prefer shorter working hours, part-time workers prefer longer working hours. This applies to all European countries. Technological development and increased competition are expected to increase the need for changes and a stronger adaptability of both businesses and their employees. More flexible working hours arrangements would probably benefit both parties. Such arrangements may thus increase labour force participation. More individual working time arrangement may, however, decrease the supply of labour from full-time workers.</p> |
| <p><i>Index terms</i> Working hours, regulations and incentives, Norway and Europe.</p> |
| <p><i>Sanmendrag</i> I internasjonal sammenheng har Norge en meget høy sysselsettingsrate. I følge den komparative studien <i>Employment Options of the Future</i>, som ble gjennomført i 16 europeiske land i 1998, er sysselsettingsraten (for personer 16-64 år) 80 prosent i Norge. Dette plasserer Norge som nummer 1 i Europa. Høy yrkesaktivitet blant kvinner i Norge er dels et resultat av blant annet gode permisjonsordninger for småbarnsforeldre og relativt høy barnehagedekning. Mens fulltidsarbeidende typisk ønsker kortere arbeidstid, ønsker deltidsarbeidende lenger arbeidstid. Dette gjelder for alle land i Europa. Teknologisk utvikling og større konkurranse vil øke behovet for tilpasningsevne og omstilling i arbeidslivet. Mer fleksible arbeidstidsordninger vil være både i bedriftenes og de ansattes interesse. Slike ordninger kan bidra til å øke yrkesdeltakelsen. Mer individuelle arbeidstidsavtaler vil imidlertid kunne føre til redusert tilbud av arbeidskraft fra dem som i dag arbeider heltid.</p> |
| <p><i>Emneord</i> Arbeidstid, reguleringer og insentiver, Norge og Europa.</p> |