

<b>Institution:</b> University of Kent		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 20: Social Work and Social Policy		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Working with NGOs, Government Departments, and Other Stakeholder Groups to Develop and Enhance Flexible Working Policy and Practice		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2016-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>  Heejung Chung	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>  Reader in Sociology and Social Policy	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>  2014-2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Flexible working is used by many companies worldwide to address the work/life balance needs of workers and to attain gender diversity goals, while enhancing performance outcomes. Chung's research in this field has made a leading contribution to (i) UK Government policies on flexible working and shared parental leave; (ii) the introduction of flexible working rights, whilst protecting those who do work flexibly in the EU's work/life balance directive; and (iii) the policy direction and capacity-building of policy stakeholders and advocacy groups across the world.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Findings from the underpinning research are published in academic research articles and reports led by Chung from 2016. These studies demonstrate the benefits of providing flexible working arrangements to workers, and highlight the possible negative outcomes due to gender-role stereotyping and the long hours culture.</p> <p><b>Flexible working increases the work capacity of mothers:</b> Using UK longitudinal household data, the research found that women who were able to use flexi-time, and to work from home were, were much more likely to maintain their working hours and remain in the labour market after childbirth [R1]. Given that women's tendency to shift to part-time jobs or leave employment after childbirth is the most important cause of the gender pay gap, this study provides important evidence of the paramount need to guarantee flexible working rights if we wish to address gender inequalities [R1, R2].</p> <p><b>Flexible working makes workers work longer:</b> Analysis of longitudinal household data from Germany and the UK shows that when workers control where and when they work, they tend to work longer (unpaid) overtime hours [R3, R4]. This increase in overtime hours differs by gender; men increase their overtime hours more than women [R3, R4]. The research also shows that flexible working leads to higher income - but only for men. Flexible working can potentially lead to an increase in the gender gap in working hours and pay, reinforcing a traditional division of roles [R2, R3].</p> <p>One reason is that flexible working is not provided simply to improve work/life balance. Analysis of European comparative data shows that control over working schedules is not necessarily provided to workers with the greatest family and care demands, but instead to those who are most likely to (be perceived by employers to) increase their work intensity</p>		

and/or provide performance gains for the company. These tend to be higher-educated, higher-occupational groups [R5]. Furthermore, despite the popular belief that women tend to have more flexibility at their jobs, women were no more likely to have access to flexible working arrangements than men. In fact, female-dominated jobs and sectors provide worse access to flexible working arrangements [R5].

What is more, flexibility stigma is prevalent and hinders good practice in flexible working: Chung's results demonstrated that more than one-third of UK workers hold stigmatic views of flexible working. They believe that flexible workers are not as committed or productive as others, and that flexible working will lead to negative career outcomes [R6]. Although men are more likely to have stigmatising beliefs, women are more likely to have directly experienced negative career outcomes due to flexible working [R6]. The prevalence of flexibility stigma is a major reason why, despite the expansion of flexible working policies in the UK, the use of such arrangements has not increased as expected. Furthermore, the prevalence of stigma explains why workers may end up working longer rather than shorter hours when given more freedom at their work.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[R1] Chung, H., and van der Horst, M. (2018). 'Women's employment patterns after childbirth and the perceived access to and use of flexitime and teleworking'. *Human Relations*, 71(1): 47-72. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0018726717713828>

[R2] Chung, H., and Van der Lippe, T. (2020). 'Flexible working work life balance and gender equality: Introduction'. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(2): 365-381. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11205-018-2025-x>

[R3] Lott, Y., and Chung, H. (2016). 'Gender discrepancies in the outcomes of schedule control on overtime hours and income in Germany'. *European Sociological Review*, 32(6): 752-765. <https://academic.oup.com/esr/article/32/6/752/2525493/Gender-Discrepancies-in-the-Outcomes-of-Schedule>

[R4] Chung, H., and Van der Horst, M. (2020). 'Flexible working and unpaid overtime in the UK: The role of gender, parental and occupational status'. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(2): 495-520. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11205-018-2028-7>

[R5] Chung, H. (2019). 'National-level family policies and workers' access to schedule control in a European comparative perspective: Crowding out or in, and for whom?'. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*. 21(1): 25-46. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2017.1353745>

[R6] Chung, H. (2020). 'Gender, flexibility stigma, and the perceived negative consequences of flexible working in the UK'. *Social Indicators Research*, 151(2): 521-545. Open Access. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-018-2036-7>

### Grants awarded for the projects in the REF2021 period

[G1] ESRC project on flexible working, 2013-17. PI: Heejung Chung. Value: £247,504.80.

[G2] Project with the Estonian Parliament on the future of work, 2017-18, PI: Heejung Chung. Value: £5,000.

[G3] Government Equalities Office-funded project on Shared Care and Family Wellbeing Outcomes. 2018-20. PI: Heejung Chung. Value: £33,000.

**[G4]** Research Council of Norway: 'Part-time Careers in Norway: The End of Normalization? Women's Working Time Adaptation in a Longitudinal Perspective', 2014-17. PI: Heidi Nicolaisen at Fafo; Co-I: Heejung Chung. Value: £850,000.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Chung's research and activities have influenced domestic and international government policies and associated implementation as follows:

##### UK Government

Chung's work highlighting the limitations of existing rights to request flexible working, and demonstrating the importance of shifting norms on childcare responsibility to improve the impact of flexible work policies, was used as evidence by the Women and Equalities Select committee in their 2018 report on fathers and the workplace **[a]**. Three significant outcomes have resulted from this. First, in 2019-20, working closely with Chung as an expert adviser, the UK Government department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) undertook a review of the right to request flexible working policy. Secondly, BEIS carried out employer and employee surveys in 2019-20 to take account of the limitations of the current policy – in particular, the prevalence of flexibility stigma, and certain groups' limited access to flexible working. These are issues highlighted in Chung's research and evidence submitted to the committee. Chung subsequently worked with BEIS in the development and analysis of the data **[b]**. Chung also helped BEIS on the development of their Maternity and Paternity Leave Survey of 2019, and sat on the advisory board of the Shared Parental Leave Review. Chung ensured the inclusion of data collection on how flexible working arrangements may help mothers return to work (earlier) after childbirth, and how different organisational cultures/flexibility stigma limit not only return to work but also the use of certain family-friendly arrangements **[b]**.

Chung also worked closely with the Government Equalities Office (GEO), under the UK Cabinet Office, to strengthen their policy capacity to tackle the gender pay gap. She helped draft an employers' action note **[b, c]**, and assisted GEO in improving employers' understanding of the role of family-friendly arrangements in increasing gender diversity through webinars and workshops (2018-20).

Senior departmental staff testify that Chung's work led to 'the development of the 2019 survey of parents which is being updated for the first time in a decade'; helped put 'the Government [...] in a strong position to better evaluate current policies and their implementation'; developed Government 'understanding of what may be encouraging or preventing take-up of labour market policies for workers across Britain and [helped] shape policy thinking'; formed part of 'the backbone of the Government's evaluation of Shared Parental Leave'; and has helped 'to shape the guidance [...] of the Workplace and Gender Equality (WAGE) Research Programme [... supporting] the 10,000 employers [...] required to submit gender pay-gap data annually'. They highlight 'the significant impact [Chung's] work has had on the development of [UK] policy' **[b]**.

##### Overseas Governments

Chung's research has influenced the development and implementation of the European Commission's work/life balance directive, affecting the lives of 229 million workers across Europe and their families. Specifically, it influenced adoption of the right to flexible working alongside anti-discrimination mechanisms for flexible workers. Chung's research shows the value of flexible working in improving work/life balance, without sacrificing performance outcomes. It also points to how flexible working can reinforce traditional gender roles and flexibility stigma. These points were fed in to the development of the EU directive in three ways. First, it enhanced the policy capacity of key European advocacy groups (European Trades Union Congress, Business Europe, and COFACE/Families Europe – the largest family NGO in Europe representing 58 national organisations) **[d]**. Chung met with all three organisations for regular policy discussions and provided policy briefings. Chung's 'forward-

thinking and ability to translate research outcomes into concrete policy recommendations was invaluable to guide European policy debates [...] and shaped the [...] European Commission's Directive on Work-Life Balance' (Director, COFACE) [d]. Secondly, the European Economic and Social Committee's paper supporting the European Commission's proposal uses Chung's research to highlight the value of flexible employment rights, while noting potential side effects, including stigma and discrimination [e]. Thirdly, Chung supported the Gender Unit of DG Justice in delivering the directive and helping member states' implementation. Her work included meetings with, and presentations for, the European Commission, and participating in organised workshops for government ministries, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Chung's work is recognised in the European Commission's 2019 gender equality report [f], and the European Parliament's Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies 2020 Report on encouraging parents to return to work [g].

Chung's research influenced the German, Estonian, and South Korean governments' policy-making. Her findings and recommendations on potential negative outcomes of flexible working are cited in the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs White Paper on the Future of Work (2016) [h], and presented in a report by Chung for the Estonian government that contributed substantially to their 2018 future of work agenda [i]. Chung's stakeholder engagement activities (see below) generated meetings with the Korean Parliament concerning the introduction of a four-day week [j]. This was based on Chung's research on the limitations of existing family policy and flexible working measures in addressing work-/ife balance and gender equality issues in the context of a long-hours work culture.

### **Shaping the Agenda and Building Stakeholder Capacity**

Chung's impact activities have not only involved influencing governmental and supranational policy development, but also informing the activities of key stakeholders in lobbying for, and implementing, better flexible working practices. In the UK, this has involved working directly with an extensive range of NGOs and key stakeholders, including Working Families, workingmums, Time Wise, King's College Global Institute for Women's Leadership, the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD), the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), and the TUC [k]. Specific impacts from this work comprise helping the CIPD and CMI to develop their policy stances on flexible working and equality, recognised by Chung being referenced in the CIPD's 'Business Case for Flexible Working' (2018), and their 'Working from Home Report' (2020), as well as the CMI's White Paper on the gender gap (2016-18) [k]. Outside of the UK, particular examples of Chung's stakeholder work and impact include her extensive work with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), which its Director attests led to a 'huge impact on our policy thinking' regarding the '35 hour a week policy', and a 'paradigm change in our campaign [...] on] gender equality in the labour market' [j]. The work with the KCTU was also the catalyst for the aforementioned series of meetings with Korean parliament policy-makers. In addition, Chung's work with think tanks and lobbyists in Washington, D.C. led to her research being cited in 'The Better Work Tool Kit' of the Better Life Lab (a top US think tank) (2016) [k]. In Australia, Chung's research on how flexible working enhances mothers' labour market participation has also been used by the Australian Work Family roundtable's election benchmark document (2019) to push the government to expand their current flexible working policy.

In summary, through extensive engagement with departments of national governments, the European Union, and other key stakeholders involved in policy development and implementation, Chung has used specific research findings to achieve a significant global impact on flexible working policy and practice, with far-reaching implications for employers and workers across the world.

### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)**

[a] Women and Equalities Select Committee Report, 'Fathers and the Workplace' (2018). Chung's work is referenced in footnote 122.

**[b]** Letters from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Government Equalities Office, evidencing Chung's work on UK flexible working policy and policy implementation.

**[c]** UK Government Equalities Office action note guidance for employers. (Chung has provided numerous feedback on drafts of this guidance note and launched it with GEO.)

**[d]** Letter from the Director of COFACE/Families Europe on the influence of the WAF project on their proposal and work influencing the European Commission's social pillar/directive on work/life balance.

**[e]** Citation of report in the European Economic and Social Committee's report response to the European Commission's proposal of a directive on work/life balance (section 4.4, p. 8, footnote 19 (only reference used in the entire section on flexible working)).

**[f]** European Commission's 2019 Report on equality between men and women in the EU. Chung's work referenced in text on p. 11 and in footnotes 23 and 24.

**[g]** Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies report on incentivising parents with young children to return to the labour market (2020). Chung's work is referenced on pp. 24, 93, and 99.

**[h]** German Labour Ministry's White Paper. Chung's work is referenced on p. 78.

**[i]** Estonian Government Future of Work papers, including the 2018 commissioned report authored by Chung. <https://www.riigikogu.ee/arenguseire/tooturu-uurimisprojekt/>

**[j]** Video evidence of 2020 South Korean parliamentary meetings and letter from the Director of Policy of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=TBfbGrTWZNM&t=2s>

**[k]** Catalogued stakeholder engagement and outcome evidence. (Owing to the extent of these activities, this has had to be summarised in a single source document.)