



Work family Conflict in Anglo-Saxon and European  
Cultural Context:  
The case of Australia



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# Female Labor Participation

- 65 % of Australian women are in the paid workforce
- Australia has the second highest participation of women in the part-time workforce of the OECD countries at 44%
- 53.9% of women are employed as clerical, sales & service workers
- Women are mainly found in 4 industries:
  - Retail 17.8%; Health & Community services 18.5%;  
Property & business services 11.1%; Education 12%
- 33.4% of all women were born overseas

# Institutional Context

- *Unpaid* leave on a shared basis for the care of a newborn or adopted child for 12 months.
- Government policy is to allow parents the choice to stay home & look after their families.
- Main forms of childcare are:
  - Outside school hours care
  - Long day care in centers (75% provided by the private sector)
  - Family day care (care provided by carers in their own home)
- Formal childcare capacity is relatively limited, particularly for children aged 0-2yrs.
- Government Work and Family Unit

# Previous research

- **Government Funded Studies**
- **Australian Council of Trade Unions** (peak union body) has a number campaigns based on its own research
- **Australian Institute of Family Studies**
- **Work and Family Unit**
- **OECD**
- **Academic research**

# Culture-specific issues in WFC

- **Pressure to be a “proper mother”**
- **Guilt** felt by women in not being able to do it all
- **Pressure to be a Super-Mum**
- **Hidden costs of work on love and relationships**
- **Choosing a career versus “just a job”**