Chapter 9
Difficulties in Work–Family Reconciliation in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT
In order to extend the understandings of work–family reconciliation patterns and following problems in Taiwan, this chapter reviews the development of employment and childcare trends in Taiwan to show how these changing phenomena affect Taiwanese families and contribute to families’ difficulties in work–family reconciliation. This chapter includes three main sections. The first section demonstrates the changes of household structure and employment in Taiwan. The second section focuses on childcare arrangements to demonstrate Taiwanese families’ decisions between work and childcare. Finally, there is a concluding section to sum up the implications of these phenomena.

INTRODUCTION
In many countries, there have been noticeable changes in female employment and family structure in recent decades. These changes bring many new challenges to welfare systems and one of the significant issues is how to help families to reconcile work and family responsibilities (OECD, 2007). Some scholars have identified difficulties in work–family reconciliation as one of the new social risks that contemporary welfare states have to deal with (Bonoli, 2006; Taylor-Gooby, 2004). However, given the diverse circumstances and welfare institutions around the world, it is debatable to what extent the patterns of these difficulties are similar in different countries. Under the influences of various welfare institutions and cultures, similar challenges may be translated into very different problems (Taylor-Gooby, 2004).

In order to extend the understandings of work–family reconciliation patterns and following problems in Taiwan, this article reviews the development of employment and childcare trends in Taiwan to show how these changing phenomena affect Taiwanese families and contribute to families’
difficulties in work-family reconciliation. This article draws upon official datasets to explore these issues including Women’s Marriage, Fertility and Employment Survey (WMFES) and Manpower Utilization Survey (MUS). In addition to official datasets, this article also draws on statistical data from government agencies to provide an overview of changing employment and childcare patterns in Taiwan. Moreover, in order to compare the patterns of Taiwan and other countries, this research also employs statistical data from international organisations and related publications and literature for a international comparison. This article includes three main parts. The first section demonstrates the changes of household structure and employment in Taiwan. The second part focuses on childcare arrangements to demonstrate Taiwanese families’ decisions between work and childcare. Finally, there will be a concluding section to sum up the implications of these phenomena.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

There have been dramatic changes in terms of families’ employment patterns in recent years. These changes contribute to the potential difficulties of families in dealing with work and family responsibilities. The following sections will demonstrate important employment characteristics in Taiwan and the implications of these characteristics on work-family reconciliation.

General Trends in Female Labour Market Participation

In the past several decades, the development of female employment in Taiwan displays an upward trend but the pace appears relatively slow compared to OECD countries (OECD, 2007). Figure 1 shows that the overall labour market participation rate in Taiwan was very stable in the past 30 years. It was kept at about 60% and there was