Introduction

Parents have long been confronted by the demands of participating in paid work and providing care for their children. A number of policies and legal measures focusing on addressing the work/life balance conflict are gradually emerging at both domestic (UK) and international (EU) level.

This research argues that, whilst valuable, these measures do not place enough consideration on the welfare of children. The aim of this research is to fill this gap. It is proposed that one of the possible ways to do so is through the regulation of the role of grandparents who are directly facilitating work/life balance by providing informal childcare.

Research Questions

To what extent does the regulation of the role of grandparents contribute to place the welfare of the child at the heart of the reconciliation of work and family life principle?

1. To what extent is the consideration for the welfare of children lacking within the reconciliation discourse given the traditional theoretical framework?

2. Do the relevant reconciliation policies and legal measures at both EU and UK level take into consideration the welfare of children?

3. What reforms can be proposed to address the disregard for the welfare of children and to what extent does the regulation of the role of grandparents put the welfare of the child at the heart of the reconciliation principle?

Impact on the Law and Society

- Enhance social and economic well-being across all sections of society.
- Contribute to the understanding of policy issues and further debates.
- Encourage the development of policy and legislation.
- Of interest to charities, the European Commission and the UK government.

Methodology

- Doctrinal

To illustrate the extent to which consideration for the welfare of children is lacking within the reconciliation policies and legal measures.

- Socio-Legal

To evaluate the social impact of the existing and proposed reconciliation policies and legal measures on the welfare of children.

Grandparental childcare contribution is estimated at £3.9 billion per year

1 in 3 working mothers rely on grandparents for childcare

Grandparents provide childcare on average for 10 hours per week

½ of UK’s 14 million grandparents are under the age of 65