Between Paid and Unpaid Work:

Family Friendly Policies and Gender Equality in Europe

Edited by Jolanta Reingardiene

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Content

Introduction: Promoting Family Friendly Policies in Gendered Perspective

"It's cool to be a dad!" proved to be a convincing and catchy slogan for the "Modern Men in Enlarged Europe: Developing Innovative Gender Equality Strategies" project implemented in 2004-2005 in Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania and Malta with the support from the European Commission. The choice made by individual fathers in regard to paternity leave came to the heart of the project, as the inseparability of the private and public life was taken for granted.

Since progressive social change in regard to gender equality can only happen if men take due participation in the process, the latter slogan has acted well to present fatherhood as something to be enjoyed and spending more time with children as something for men to aim at. The fathers were being reminded that paternity leave is not only their obligation. It's their *right*.

Fathers on paternity leave interviewed for the research[1] purposes revealed that being a father for them by all means meant spending more time with their children. Despite the fact that the environment was not always positive towards the fathers' choice and they faced the burden of the prevailing gender stereotypes, these men felt that being with a child was very rewarding, although not necessarily easy at all times.

The latter approach has made a major impact on the change in public discourse as men started being ever more often presented in their role as fathers, and this has thrown a serious challenge to the prevailing norms of hegemonic masculinity. Having attracted the decision makers' attention, the project has also lead to changes in legislation. For example, in addition to the previous rights ensured by the legislation Lithuanian fathers can now enjoy 100% paid paternity leave until their child is 1 month old.

Despite the success of the project, new aspects had to be brought to the discourse as the statistics continued to show that childcare had a very different impact on women and men. While women engage in care activities (*reproduction*), men start spending much more time at work (*production*). The latter role division paving ground for the labour market segregation also affects the possibilities for the reconciliation of family and professional life.

Although work-life balance is often considered from a female perspective, this is no less an issue for men. Therefore, the second "Modern Men in Enlarged Europe"

[1] *Research reports are also available at: www.dadcomehome.org*

(2005-2006) project was developed to concentrate on family friendly policies stressing men's role in the process and presenting this as an effective tool for gender equality. By the means of qualitative and quantitative research, seminars and awareness raising initiatives, Danish, Icelandic, Italian and Lithuanian partners moved their focus from individual attitudes and choices of individual fathers to social, structural, cultural, institutional factors which facilitate or prevent men's higher participation in family-professional life reconciliation processes.

No effective work-life balance is possible without a sufficient contribution from the employers. It is them who were to be persuaded during the project to become family friendly not only because this is a question of social responsibility in terms of respect to rights and needs of their employers, but because providing possibilities to reconcile family and working life to employees might bring economic benefits to the employer by ensuring a more productive working environment with less stress, more loyalty of the employees, less absenteeism and, therefore, a higher return on investment. Companies in modern economies need to work more on building and withholding best competencies. Better work-life balance possibilities ensured to men and women might well serve as an appropriate tool for that.

This book is basically based on the common research methodology developed within the framework of the project ""Modern Men in Enlarged Europe II: Family Friendly Policies". The qualitative and quantitative research was carried out in all project partner countries: Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania. The research marked an attempt to focus on men's participation in work-family reconciliation processes and to develop better knowledge of how employed fathers fulfil their roles both within the family and at work and what mechanisms at political, institutional and individual levels could facilitate them to balance these roles and achieve more equal gender relationship at home. The research considered such questions as: To what extent do fathers and their partners encounter the conflict between work and family roles? What are good practices of father's role in creating gender sensitive work-family balance? What are employers' attitudes towards gender equal family-friendly policies? More generally, why is it important for men to become involved with gender equality?

In order to discuss these questions, chapters from two to four draw on the evidence gathered from the semi-structured interviews with working men and their female partners living with at least one child aged under ten as well as with employers. The interviews with employers aimed to reveal their attitudes towards family-friendly work organization, concrete measures introduced at their organizations, obstacles that impede to implement family-friendly principles at work and how welfare system and work organization can be constructed in order to promote gender equal reconciliation. Five to ten couples as well as ten to fifteen employers were interviewed in each country.

The chapters also present the data of public opinion surveys, carried out in all countries of the project. The surveys provided data on whether having children has had any repercussions for the respondents at work (reduced working hours, change of work place, limited professional upward mobility, increase in physical and psychological stress, increase in workload to meet the family's financial needs, etc.), the respondents' opinion about employers' general response to employees' family obligations, the preferable family model in the society and the most preferable measures for the national reconciliation policies.

The first chapter by Raminta Jančaitytė provides a conceptual discussion on the definitions and types of measures of family-friendly policies within different welfare state regimes. The author develops a framework for comparing family-friendly policies in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania. The author mostly focuses on leave arrangements, part-time work arrangements and childcare facilities in these countries, also showing how they impact women's employability and fertility rates in different countries.

In their study "Reconciliation of Work and Family Life in Lithuania: Challenges and Opportunities for Gender

Equality" Jolanta Reingardienė and Artūras Tereškinas focus on three thematic issues: the role of welfare state on gender distribution within labour force and care at home, objectives of different cross national strategies of work-life balance on the political level and their relation to gender equality as well as changing masculinity and its relation to paid and unpaid work. The theoretical discussion goes on beyond the boundaries between public and private to show that public intervention plays a central role in the regulation of social inequalities at work and in families. The structure and the role of the welfare state are influenced by and at the same time reinforce gender assumptions. The authors analyse parents' experience of 'double role' conflict and reconciliation strategies on interpersonal level as well as ideological, institutional and political obstacles of gender equal reconciliation policies.

The chapter by Giovanna Altieri, Eliana Como, Daniele Di Nunzio and Rossella Basile examines how far the Italian couples succeed in stimulating a dialogue aimed at negotiating new strategies of combining family and work roles in the changing society and how much they consider gender equality reconcilable within the old division of labour. The authors argue that significant efforts have been made to pinpoint novelties as well as critical areas in the modernization process leading to the redefinition of male and female roles in Italy. The research investigates if men have made new demands and if there are new labour division models within families, and what policies Italians demand for the diffusion of these new models.

Charlotte Kirkegaard in her article "Does Welfare State Guarantee Gender Equality?" analyses the survey results of the Danish nongovernmental organizations, labour unions and private companies about their strategies to promote family-friendly policies at work. The study also integrates the results of in-depth interviews with Danish couples, analysing how the situation at work is changing in relation to having children, what the employers' attitudes are towards family-friendly means at work and how they can be used to distinguish between different types of organizational culture related to family-friendly measures. The author also draws attention to the couples' role share at home and their expectations towards work, family and childcare. She argues that despite of the fact that the Danish welfare system provides a broad range of public caring facilities, which has enabled the development of the dual breadwinner model for more than 20 years, there is gender equality neither at the labour market nor in the private homes. It is evident that an effective and strong welfare system does not in itself guarantee gender equality.

The last chapter of the book "Policies of Reconciliation of Work and Family Life: Trends and Possibilities in the EU and Lithuania" by Algis Davidavičius focuses on the development of work-family/life reconciliation policies in their shifting relation to equal opportunities policies in both the EU-level and national (Lithuanian) contexts of public policy formation. However, the study raises the problem of discontinuity between the present EU-level reconciliation policy discourse and that of equal opportunities/gender equality. The chapter also examines the patterns in reconciliation of policymaking prevailing throughout the EU that may be of influence and importance to any national member-state context. The analysis deals with publicly accessible expert evaluation of the developments in the EU and Lithuanian public policy systems and their elements, such as policy documents, networks of various policy-making actors and modes of their interaction.

Finally, the authors want to extend thanks to all who contributed to the development of this book. We are particularly grateful to Aušra Maslauskaitė (Social Research Institute, Vilnius) and Arnoldas Zdanevičius from Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) for their conceptual insights and always valuable feedback, to Raimundas Vaitkevičius (VMU) for the advanced statistical analysis of the survey data, to Nemira Mačianskienė, an English editor, for her very effective work, and the students of Sociology Department at VMU for their research assistance and high interest in the project.

Indrė Mackevičiūtė, *Project coordinator*
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Family-friendly Policies and Welfare State: A Comparative Analysis

Raminta Jančaitytė

INTRODUCTION

Family-friendly policies, assisting employees in reconciling their family and work life, seem to have become a key issue in all European countries as well as on the EU level. Starting with the UNECE 1993 European Population Conference and Cairo's 1994 ICPD Programme of Action, the importance of *family-friendly policies* has grown significantly. The 2000 Lisbon Strategy[1], broadly aiming to make the EU the world's most dynamic and competitive economy by 2010, underlines gender equality and creation of possibilities for families to reconcile work and family life as important conditioning for active labour market policies. The European Employment Strategy[2], aiming at strengthening the coordination of national employment policies, is based on four pillars: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities. Namely the fourth pillar - equal opportunities – underlines commitments to strengthen equal opportunities policies, to tackle gender gaps in the labour market and to reconcile work and family life. The 2002 EU Employment Guidelines[3] recognize the need to reconcile work and family and stress the necessity of the member states to promote a wide range of family friendly working arrangements.

This rise of interest in family-friendly policies in the European countries is determined by a set of recent changes. At the socio-economic level, the feminization of the labour market, the intensification of work practices, and the increasing mobility of the labour force must be mentioned. The cultural changes embody the changes in attitudes towards gender roles and shifts in domestic division of labour, the shift from a male-breadwinner model to double-income households, the modern demands for self-determination and self-realization. The demographic changes involve the changes in family composition and structure, the falling fertility rates and the ageing population, etc.

Regardless the experienced common changes, all the nation states have their own development path of family-friendly policies. This means that despite the general guidelines of family-friendly policies in the EU documents, a great variety of measures are implemented on the national level. This article focuses on a cross-national comparison of the government policies in Iceland, Italy, Denmark and Lithuania that facilitate the reconciliation of paid work and unpaid care. As an in-depth analysis is clearly beyond the scope of this article, the focus is mainly on leave arrangements, part-time arrangements and childcare facilities, as part of policies supporting

parents to carry out obligations to family and work. The main aim is to examine the essential similarities and differences of these arrangements in Iceland, Italia, Denmark and Lithuania, studying relevant rules and regulations. The article is structured as follows. First, the definition and types of measures of family friendly policy are presented; then the issues of welfare state typology are discussed. This is followed by an analysis of the arrangements of family–friendly policies in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania.

DEFINING FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

The term *family-friendly policies* is widely used in the literature, but different authors do not agree on its definition. The term is quite complicated as it involves complex and ambiguous issues, such as family, labour or gender. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines *family-friendly policies* as those employment-oriented social policies that facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life by fostering the adequacy of family resources and child development, favour the parental choice about work and care and promote gender equality in employment opportunities. Hoyman and Duer (2004) point out that the definition of *family-friendly* is evolving and predicate that *worker-friendly* is now a more accurate term than *family-friendly,* as it covers all workers regardless of his or her familial status. There is another term, *work-life balance,* which is used talking about the needs of all employees and not only working mothers with young children. Leitner and Wroblewski (2006: 300) indicate that the term *work-life balance* "implies an aim that goes beyond the mere reconciliation of family life and employment and it is rather geared towards a 'balanced' relationship between these different areas". Mclnnes (2006) argues that the concept *work-life balance* is too vague for an adequate sociological analysis as "it reduces 'work' to employment, and confuses leisure in general, care of family members and specifically parenting with the meaning of 'life'" (Mclnnes 2006: 242). Nevertheless, in this article the attention is paid to the contemporary discussion of how to remedy 'work and family imbalance'. Therefore, *family-friendly policies* are understood as those that facilitate a better work and family balance for individual employees. These policies can include rights to parental leave, childcare arrangements, flexible working hours and the opportunity to work part- time.

Family-friendly policies can be implemented in a different way, using a wide variety of arrangements, each with somewhat different implications for helping parents to reconcile work and family life. Castles (2003) distinguishes between active and passive measures that facilitate maternity among female employees: active measures include maternity and childcare leave, passive – a variety of flexible workplace arrangements. Duyvendak and Stavenuiter (2004) categorize the arrangements to support the reconciliation of paid work and care into three components: time off (such as leave schemes and flexible working time patterns), monetary benefits (including, for example, tax allowances, social security and social assistance) and services (like childcare facilities). Den Dulk (2001) distinguishes four types of work-family arrangements: leave, childcare, flexible work and supportive arrangements (such as employee counselling or availability of information about existing facilities). Hardy and Adnett (2002) also present four categories of arrangements: leave from work for family reasons (maternity, paternity and parental leave, leave to care for elderly dependants or bereavement); changes in work arrangements for family reasons (job-sharing, home-working, flexi-time working, compressed working week, term-time only contracts and a facility to switch between full and part-time working exemplify this category of flexibility); practical help with child and elder-person care (affordable and accessible nurseries and play schemes in holidays); information, training and networking assistance (assistance for re-entrants and the active promotion of family-friendly benefits and entitlements). Table 1 summarizes the measures that are important in reconciliation of work and family life.

Summarizing it can be said that the issue of reconciliation of work and family encompasses a number of facilities from different policies, such as family policy,

gender equality policy, employment policy as well as fields, such as organizational management and culture. Only the whole package of measures with great emphasis on gender equality can be an effective response to the conflict of work and family spheres.

A FRAMEWORK FOR COMPARING FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

The exploration of family-friendly policies in different countries requires an analytical framework that can help to find out similarities and differences of the way that the state supports individuals to reconcile work and family life. A good theoretical background is presented in the literature on European welfare-state regimes, where European countries are grouped into distinct regimes according to different indicators, such as social rights, expenditures on social policy, intentions and principles of social policies, etc. A very famous typology of welfare-state regimes, highly influential within the comparative policy research as well as criticized a lot, is offered by Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999). According to Esping-Andersen, welfare regimes are defined as "the ways in which welfare production is allocated between state, market, and households" (1999: 73). Exploring the link between these institutional configurations – labour market, welfare state and family, Esping-Andersen (1990) proposed a three-world categorization: Liberal welfare states (Anglo-Saxon countries: the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada), Conservative welfare states (continental European countries: Germany, Austria, France, Belgium), Social democratic welfare states (the Nordic countries: Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway), and later (1999) distinguished the fourth regime – Southern-European welfare states (Mediterranean countries: Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal).

Many scholars have criticized Esping-Andersen's typology because of its theoretical neglect of gender. Neyer (2003) points out that feminist welfare-state research has demonstrated that this classification of welfare-state regimes becomes more diverse if the family, family policies and (female) commodification are taken into account. The author argues that namely the availability of social care services and the gendering aspects of welfare state policies stipulate the deviation from Esping-Andersen's (1999) welfare regimes typology. Borja (2001) underlines that gender is at present recognized as a fundamental variable in shaping welfare states. Korpi (2000) used gender as a key dimension distinguishing three broad ideal typical models of gendered welfare state: general family support (Continental and Southern Europe countries), dual-earner support (Nordic countries), and market-oriented policies (Anglo-Saxon countries).

The presented typologies of Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) and Korpi (2000) give some evidence about similarities and differences between countries. Nordic countries - Denmark, Sweden, and Finland – make a very clear distinct cluster, but it does not mean that these countries have a uniform social policy. As for Norway, Neyer (2003) points out that it diverges from the other universalistic welfare states. Typical countries of liberal welfare regime are the UK and the USA as representatives and then Australia, Canada and New Zealand. While classifying into regimes it is most difficult to classify Continental Europe countries. For example, France and Belgium have less familialism (Andersen, 1999) than other continental countries. Besides, France with the childcare facilities and reasonable support for mothers with children of all age hither Nordic countries than Continental ones (Neyer 2003). Nevertheless, these typologies of welfare regimes help to distinguish similarities, looking for good practices of reconciliation of work and family.

Liberal (Anglo-Saxon) welfare regime is characterized by three core elements – the narrow definition of who should be eligible to social guarantees, the narrow conception of what risk should be considered "social" and encouragement of the market to act as a co-provider of benefits and public services (Esping-Andersen 1999). Social welfare depends on market provisions and on familialism that is for the family as a provider of welfare. Low level of support for families is oriented towards tackling poverty and targeted at families in greater

Table 1. The work-family balance arrangements

Leave from work for family reasons	Provide employees with time off two care for dependents.	Maternity leave
		Paternity leave
		Parental leave
		Short-term leave
Practical help with child care	Help employees with their responsibilities for their children.	Childcare services
		On-site or near-site childcare centre
		School holiday/vacation service
		Get well care for mildly ill children
Changes in work arrangements for family reasons	Give employees some control in organizing their work schedule.	Shorter work week
		Part-time working
		A compressed working week
		Job-sharing
		Flexitime
		Flex-place (work at home)
Monetary benefits and services	Oriented towards the financial protection of the family.	Tax allowances
		Social security and social assistance
Information, training and networking assistance	Develop the human capital of the worker.	Assistance for re-entrants
		On-site education programs
		Seminars on family issues

Sources: Hardy, Adnett, 2002, Gornick, Meyers (2002), Duyvendak, Stavenuiter (2004), Koopmans, Schippers (2003).

	Is granted only to mothers for a limited period around the time of childbirth and during the first weeks and months of infancy. May be paid or unpaid.
	Is granted only to fathers, also for a limited period around the time of childbirth. May be paid or unpaid.
	Refers to longer-term leaves available to both mothers and fathers, typically granted in addition to, and following maternity and paternity leave. Parental leaves grant parents time to care for their children up until about the age of preschool-entry. May be paid or unpaid.
	May also be granted in the event of *emergencies,* such as: the death of a spouse, domestic partner, child or parent; illness of a spouse or child requiring hospitalization; death or serious illness of a brother or sister; death of an in-law; serious illness of a spouse, child or parent away from the normal duty station.
	Public or private, subsidized or payable childcare facilities.
	Located at or near the work site, the childcare facility may be operated as a division of the parent company, a subsidiary corporation, an independent non-profit corporation, or as a contract with a day care provider. Or it can be a support of community-based childcare centre (in-kind donations or cash donations).
	These are the times which create special work/family stresses. For example, companies can sponsor day camp/field trip programs to address this particular problem.
	Companies may decide to provide a subsidy to help pay for the care of sick children, or establish a program for mildly ill children (either by organizing a site and staff for the care, or by hiring professionals to go into the family's home when there is an illness). Companies might also consider joining with other employers to form a consortium in order to offer this benefit.
	There are several arrangements that employers can make to allow employees to work less than a 40-hour week with pro-rated benefits. Examples are permanent part-time employment and voluntary reduced work time which allows full-time employees to reduce work hours for a specified period of time.
	Basically means working fewer hours than a comparable full-time worker in the same organization.
	This arrangement allows for an employee to complete the required number of hours for a pay period in less than the full pay period. For example, the employee works a 40-hour week in four 10-hour days, rather than the traditional five 8-hour days per week.
	This is an arrangement to divide one full-time job or to share work between two people with the responsibilities and benefits of the job being shared between them.
	This is an arrangement whereby employers and employees negotiate hours of work that are of advantage to both. It usually involves defining 'peak' hours when all employees must be at work. Starting and finishing times, on the other hand, are normally flexible and there is usually provision for taking leave in lieu of additional hours worked.
	An arrangement in which employees work from home or an external location and may communicate via a computer link.
	Through tax regulation the state can provide incentives to enter or leave the labour market.
	Benefits and services for families.
	Counselling and practical support for re-entrants, for example, employee training.
	Skill acquisition, personal development.
	Family support services provide expert assistance and supporting materials to help staff members (and their families) adjust to relocation or cope with other transitional difficulties and hence focus time and energy on their work. They may include: advice on childcare, schooling and housing in a given location; the provision of childcare facilities; counselling retired staff.

needs; social benefits are usually minimal, means-tested and poverty-related. Poor qualities of benefits carry a negative public stigma. The state intervenes in family life only in extreme cases as family is considered to be a private sphere.

Anglo-Saxon countries can be described as having a market-oriented gender policy model, where families should rely on market recourses or family relationships for the supply of childcare (Korpi 2000). Poorly developed maternity and parental leave is compensated by highly flexible labour markets. Flexible working arrangements in the private sector (i.e. flexi-time work and voluntary part-time work) help women easily re-enter the labour market, after rearing children (Bovenberg 2005). Employment rates of women are high. Nevertheless, the residual social support and absence of public childcare services marginalize unskilled workers and single mothers. The possibilities for mothers to maintain employment depend on their individual capacities (Neyer 2003).

Social democratic (the Nordic countries) welfare regime is characterized by universalism and egalitarianism. Universal coverage of social risk and high replacement values of income are guaranteed and paid for by the state. Social support system underlines an individual (not a family) and policies are targeted at social equality and individual independence. Other characteristic like the aim of upholding high living standards for everyone, social benefits and extended social services are granted on the basis of individual social-citizenship rights, high commitment to gender equality, high level of decomodification[4] and defamilialization[5] – are all known as constitutional features of a social democratic regime.

Nordic countries rely heavily on the public sector to help parents reconcile family and work. The state supports dual earner family model encouraging not only women's participation in the labour market but also the redistribution of social care work in society and within the family (Korpi 2000), in such a way contributing to gender equality. A great emphasis is placed on public services for childcare, therefore, women do not leave labour market for childbearing (Borja 2001). The employment rate of women is very high, as there are generous maternity programs and flexible work hours with job security and good job prospects after childbirth, well developed day care services for the children from the very young (0-2 years of age) till school age, provided on full day, full week. Active labour market policies encourage young women to be employed before bearing children, ensure an inclusive labour market, and help to exploit the reserves of unskilled labour and to prevent social exclusion (Bovenberg 2005).

Conservative (Continental) welfare states are characterized by considerable social stratification directing their welfare-state policies towards preservation of status differentials and traditional family forms. Social support is targeted at families (not individuals) and is related to work performance of family members, that is to say, benefits depend on contributions to social-security systems as well as on marital status.

Continental European countries implement general family support measures: cash child allowances to minor children, family tax benefits to minor children and economically non-active spouse and public day care services for somewhat older children (from 3 years up to school age) (Korpi 2000). Public childcare services offer half day care and are not developed for children under 3 years of age. So it can be said that the reconciliation between work and family is partially encouraged. Female participation rate is middle/low and women usually choose to work part time as their contribution to family budget is of secondary importance (Borja 2001). The state supports the breadwinner's system, leaving the main responsibility for care as women's prerogative and protecting traditional male breadwinner's career and status through employment legislation.

Mediterranean (Southern European countries) welfare-state regime is characterized by strong familialism, a mix of universal and private services and benefits. There is a lack of measures to support female employment; therefore, working mothers have to rely on informal family support. Flexible working arrangements are scarce in the countries of Southern Europe (Borja 2001), as they are

viewed as a threat to the protected position of the male breadwinner (Bovenberg 2005).

The Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) do not fit into any of these typologies. Newly emerging welfare systems of CEE usually present one cluster because of their common past, experienced in the Soviet system. These countries are considered to be more influenced by a model presented by international financial organizations such as the International Monetary fund or the World Bank than by the European Welfare Model (Manabu, 2005). Transition countries experience very similar demographic, economic and social challenges, but the way they respond to these challenges differs slightly according to their social, political and cultural context.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN DENMARK, ICELAND, ITALY AND LITHUANIA

The countries compared in this particular analysis belong to different types of welfare regimes. Denmark and Iceland represent the Social democratic regime (Esping Andersen 1990, 1999) or the dual-earner support model of gendered welfare state (Korpi 2000). Italy represents Southern-European welfare states (Andersen, 1999) or general family support model (Korpi 2000). Lithuania is a post communist country from the block of the Central and Eastern European countries and, as Guogis (2002) points out, can be characterized as something in-between the conservative and liberal welfare regimes. In the following section family-friendly arrangements (family leaves, childcare services and flexible working arrangements) in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania are compared.

Leave schemes

Leave schemes together with childcare facilities and flexible working arrangements frame the system of measures that enable parents to reconcile work and family life. Leave schemes include maternity leave, paternity leave, parental or childcare leave, sick leave and other leaves for family reasons and vary considerably between countries. There are four key factors in comparing different leave schemes (NACEW 1997). The first is coverage and eligibility that determine the total number of people entitled to provisions. Coverage may be universal or sectoral and eligibility is often determined by the factors such as length of service and the number of hours worked. To be covered by leave provisions a parent initially needs to work in an area of the labour force where either statutory or contractual parental leave provisions apply. The second factor is duration - the length of leave that may be taken under various parental leave provisions. The third important factor is job protection, which involves provisions that allow a parent to return to the same or a similar job with their original employer. This is what makes any leave effective as if there is no job protection; there is very little effective entitlement. And the last key factor is payment that varies according to different schemes in different countries and may range from nothing to flat rate benefits to partial or full earnings replacement.

Possible objectives of leave provisions differ from country to country (Kamerman and Kahn 1991; COE 2005): protection of maternal health - allowing time off to recover from the birth of a child and establish breast feeding; protection of child health and development through parenting/parental care of child; support to the family unit as the source of ongoing child (and human capital) development; the promotions of gender balance and equity in the labour market for women and men; pronatalist policies to encourage mothers to combine employment with procreation and facilitate women remaining in the labour market; labour market interventions to reduce unemployment (by encouraging parents to exit) or increase employment (by retaining parents after childbirth); women's economic independence; involvement of fathers in family/home life.

Maternity leave

Neyer (2003) emphasizes that maternity protection and parental-leave, being the oldest family-related welfare-state policy, is the core element of family policies in Eu-

rope. Del Boca (2003) points out that maternity leave is likely to have a positive impact on women's employment rate. The generosity of compensation of maternity leave has an impact on women's economic independence.

In European countries maternity leave is granted for women in case of childbirth and may be divided in periods before and after delivery. Women are also granted a maternity allowance for the period of maternity leave; they have the right to return to the same job and are protected from dismissal. Special regulations in the case of premature or multiple births may also be applied.

Iceland, Denmark, Italy and Lithuania have quite well developed schemes for maternity leave. Table 2 provides an overview of the statutory maternity leave in the analyzed countries. Lithuania and Denmark have the same duration of maternity leave - 18 weeks. In Italy, working women have the right to five months' maternity leave (two months before and three months after giving birth). In Iceland, each parent has an independent not assignable right to maternity/paternity leave of up to three months and additional three months which may be either taken entirely by one of the parents or else divided between them.

All the analyzed countries have payable statutory maternity leave but entitlement to maternity leave is generally based on the criteria of employment or contributions paid to social insurance. Only in Lithuania maternity leave is compensated in full amount (100%) of salary; in Denmark – 90 %, in Iceland and Italy - 80% of all the pay.

Paternity leave

Paternity leave is explicitly directed to fathers to take care of newborn children. By offering this statutory right countries seek to promote gender equality in the private sphere. Table 3 provides an overview of the statutory paternity leave in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania. In Denmark fathers have a statutory right to

Table 2. Statutory maternity leave arrangements – end 2003

Country	Statutory /other	Maximum duration (weeks)	Paid	Paid for full duration	Payment	Paid by	Job guarantee
Denmark	Statutory	18	Yes	Yes	90 % up to maximum (3115 Dkr per week)	Employer	Yes
Iceland	Statutory	12 weeks (3 months) + 12 weeks (3 month) divided as the parent chooses	Yes	Yes	80% of all pay (for parents participating in labour market) for others – flat rate payments		Yes
Italy	Statutory	21 (5 months)	Yes	Yes	80%	HI	Yes
Lithuania	Statutory	126 calendar days = 18 weeks (in case of complicated delivery or multiple birth 140 calendar days).	Yes	Yes	the full amount (100%) of salary	HI	Yes

HI: health or social insurance
Sources: EIRO (2003); Eydal (2003); Lietuvos statistikos departamentas.

2 weeks of paternity leave to be taken within 14 weeks after birth and compensated 90% up to maximum. In Iceland fathers have quite a long paternity leave – 3 months compensated 80% of all pay. Since 2002 Italy fathers have had the right to maternity (not paternity) leave only in very restricted cases: if the mother has died, is severely disabled or has abandoned her child, or the couple has separated or divorced and the father has custody of the child. Lithuania has recently introduced a 1 month paternity leave for fathers who are married with the child's mother. This regulation has come into force since the 1st of June, 2006. The payment for the leave is 100% of compensated wages. It is really generous, but discriminates fathers who live in cohabitation.

Parental leave

The main concern of parental leave is not the health of the mother, as in the case of maternity leave, but the care and upbringing of children, making both parents eligible (COE, 2005: 16). Parental leave comes after maternity and paternity leave. All the analyzed countries have statutory provisions on parental leave. As it has been mentioned above, the main aspects of parental leave is eligibility, duration, job protection and payment. Usually the entitlement to parental leave depends upon the employment status and period, but other aspects of parental leave schemes differ in each country. Parental leave can be organized along *family* (parents can decide between themselves who shall make use of the leave) or *individual* (both can claim the individually assigned period of leave lines), or a mixture of both (Koopmans, Schippers 2003). Table 4 provides an overview of the statutory parental leave in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania.

Denmark offers 32 weeks per child to be shared between parents (in continuation of maternity, paternity or even another parent's parental leave), and individual right to postpone 8-13 unpaid weeks in one block before the child is 9. In Iceland each of the parents has the right to 13 weeks of leave (13 weeks for mother and 13 weeks

Table 3. Statutory paternity leave arrangements – end 2003

Country	Statutory	Criteria	Duration	Paid	Paid for full duration	Level of payment	Job guarantee
Denmark	Statutory	EMP	2 weeks to be taken within 14 weeks after birth	Yes	Yes	90% up to maximum	Yes
Iceland	Statutory	EMP	3 months divided as the parent choose	Yes	Yes	80% of all pay (for parents participating in labour market) for others – flat rate payments	Yes
Italy	Limited cases	EMP + Only if lone father or if mother is ill. Income related	Total leave or the part which mother is ill for	Yes	Yes	80% by health insurance also in case of adoption	Yes
Lithuania[6]	Statutory	EMP + being married with child's mother	1 month	Yes	Yes	100% of pay	Yes

EMP: has to be working/employed to be eligible
Sources: EIRO (2003); Eydal (2003); Lietuvos statistikos departamentas.

for father). It is also permissible to divide the time off into individual chunks, but never less than one week at a time and till the child reaches the age of eight years. In Italy the duration of parental leave is 11 months per child to be shared between parents as follows: 6 months maximum for the mother and 6 months for the father before the child is 8. In Lithuania parental leave is called childcare leave. Both parents have the right to childcare leave and can decide between themselves who shall make use of the leave. The duration of the leave is till the child reaches 3 years of age.

The compensation of leave varies between countries. Denmark has the highest compensation rate - 32 weeks of leave are compensated 90% of pay. In Iceland parental leave is unpaid. In Italy the compensation is 30% of pay for the first 6 months but only when the child is under 3. When the child is 3 and till he/she reaches the age of 8 the leave is unpaid. In Lithuania the compensation is 70% of the compensated pay before the child is 1 year of age. Some changes in compensation have been introduced recently: from the 1st of January 2007 the compensation will be raised to 85% and in the case of multiple births when the children are under 1 year of age the compensation has already been raised to 100% of compensated wages since the 1st of July 2006. The rest of the leave is unpaid.

In all the analyzed countries parents can return to their workplaces after parental leave.

Benefits and shortages of leave schemes

The contribution of leave provisions is twofold: it helps parents to reconcile work and family life and guaranties the efficient operation of the labour market. Leave with job guarantee enables parents to return to their previous job after the birth of a child and maintains labour market attachment. There are some other benefits such as retention of skills within the labour force; maintenance of employers' human capital investment; productivity; reduced incidence of unemployment; government revenue and benefit payments; reduced uncertainty for employers; improving women's life-time earnings; encouraging men to participate in child-rearing; balancing the demands of work and family life; bonding parental - child relationships (NACEW 1997).

Leave is useful, but under certain conditions. A long leave, especially when it is combined with financial benefits, is particularly attractive to less skilled women or women in precarious job situations who subsequently find it most difficult to return to work (Durand 2006). An extended leave often carries opportunity cost in terms of foregone earnings, degradation of human capital and missed opportunities for promotion (Gauthier 2004). Allowances that enable mothers to stop work for a considerable time without job protection may have a negative impact on employment trajectories (Durand 2006). Leave provisions themselves (even of the best quality) may not be sufficient in assisting people to successfully combine parenting and paid work. Thus leave provisions need to be seen in the context of other policies and practices, such as childcare and flexible work arrangements, which support working families (NACEW 1997).

Childcare services

Childcare services are one of the major measures for parents to reconcile work and family life. These services can be private or provided by a state, formal or informal, either paid or unpaid. Very important aspects of childcare services are accessibility, price, quality, working hours and child's age limit. Those policies that are directed at reducing the cost of children by increasing the availability, quality and affordability of childcare may affect fertility and participation rates (Del Boca 2003).

In Denmark childcare facilities are developed very well. Parents can choose among various childcare options: public day-care facilities, subsidies to choose a private care scheme or looking after the child themselves. This enables parents to select the form of childcare that best suits them. Publicly supported crèches for children between the ages of six months and three years are mainly available in towns, but kindergartens are available all over Denmark.

Table 4. Statutory parental leave arrangements – end 2003

Country	Statutory type	Duration	Child's age limit	Payment	Other	Job guarantee
Denmark	Parental leave	32 weeks per child to be shared (in continuation of maternity, paternity or even another parent's parental leave) + individual right of 8 unpaid weeks (possibility to spread 32 weeks payment over total 40 weeks leave)	9 (possibility to postpone 8-13 weeks in one block before the child is 9)	A total of 32 weeks 90% up to maximum (3115 DKR per week) to be shared.	Only if no use of right to place in childcare Possibility to work part time with reduced payment accordingly	Yes
Iceland	Parental leave	13 weeks for mother 13 weeks for father	18 month – 8 years	No payments		Yes
Italy	Parental leave	11 months per child to be shared between parents as follows: 6 months maximum for the mother and 6 months for the father, extended to 7 if the father claims at least 3 months. 10 months if lone parent	8 (6 if adoption)	Child under 3: 30% for 6 months maximum. 30% over 6 months only if incomes below a maximum. Child aged 3-8: unpaid	Also for adoption. Duration of paid leave up to 3 years for severely handicapped child. Also 3 months 30% paid leave for self employed during first child year	Yes
Lithuania	Childcare leave	From the end of maternity leave until the child reaches 3 years of age: > Child under one year of age > When child reaches 1 year till he/she reaches 3 year s of age	3 year	70% of the compensated wages (from the 1st of January 2007 the compensation will be 85%), and in the case of multiple birth -100% (this new amendment has come into force on 1st of July, 2006) unpaid	Also for adoption	Yes

Sources: EIRO (2003); Eydal (2003); Lietuvos statistikos departamentas.

In Iceland children can enter pre-primary schools from the age of 0 to 5 or until they start primary school at the age of 6 (Mósesdóttir 2005). Differently from other Nordic countries, there is no guarantee or universal right of children to day-care (Eydal 2003); nevertheless, more than 90% of 3-5 year old and about 38% of 0-2 year old children are in public day care. Childcare is facilitated by the municipalities (around 88% of all pre-primary schools), NGOs, hospitals and a private home care registered by the municipalities if the facilities and quality of the care meet their minimum standard (Mósesdóttir 2005). Parents pay monthly fees for each child, and this differs from one municipality to another. There are some discounts for single parents and students with children. Childcare provisions for younger age groups are less extensive and quite expensive. Public childcare is in some cases only available to two year old and older children.

In Italy services for childcare are very scarce and expensive (in comparison with other European countries prices paid by families for public crèches are the highest in Europe) (Ponzellini 2006). There are very few crèches for infants aged 0-2 and they are only part time. While 98 per cent of children from ages of three to six are minded in kindergartens, the service supply for children aged up to three is only about 9 per cent (Table 5). Besides that, priority in municipal crèches is given to certain groups (low-income families, disabled children) (Kontula, Miettinen 2005). A large proportion of Italian mothers have to rely on family support system because of low availability of childcare and limitation in daily hours (Del Boca 2003).

Lithuania had quite a well-developed childcare system during the soviet times, but at the beginning of the transition family policy measures were turned to support a breadwinner's family model. The family policy of 1990-1994 was costly and quite complicated (Mikalauskaite, Mitrikas, Stankuniene 1999). Women were encouraged to raise their children at home and many childcare institutions, primarily in rural areas, were closed. The closedown of childcare institutions was also related with the very limited financial possibilities of the country. As a consequence, nowadays there is a shortage of crèches and kindergartens, especially in rural areas of Lithuania, necessitating difficulties for parents in reconciling family and work life. Although the number of pre-school age children has been decreasing, the number of those willing to attend pre-school establishments has been rising. One of the solutions for parents is to use family ties or take a babysitter.

Low-cost, high-quality, available child-care services are an important shift in helping parents to reconcile work and family life. Durand (2006) noticed that there is a positive relationship between women's participation rates and the availability of formal child-care arrangements.

Flexible working conditions

Flexible working conditions together with family leaves and childcare services make a package of measures

Table 5. Population of children in public childcare system

Country	Day nursery, crèche (children aged 0-2), %	Kindergartens (children aged 3 to school age), %	Compulsory education, starting age
Denmark (1999)	82	94	7
Iceland (2003)	38.0	93.7	6
Italy (2000)	8.6	98	6
Lithuania (2004)	19	63	7

Source: Kontula, Miettinen (2005); Duyvendak, Stavenuiter, 2004; Eydal, 2003; Mósesdóttir, (2005). Lietuvos statistikos departamentas.

that enable parents to reconcile work and family life. Koopmans and Schippers (2003) indicate that the reconciliation of work and family is not the only motive for working part-time, neither it is for introducing flexible working arrangements. The authors notice that flexibility has been introduced for different reasons (for example, securing the necessary operational flexibility by reducing costs and boosting productivity and competitiveness); the provisions do not always have the intention to benefit employees with children. Nevertheless, all the analyzed countries have some part-time working arrangements (other flexible working arrangements are not studied because of narrow extent of the chapter), though different in scope.

In June 2002 Denmark introduced the new legislation which abolished restrictions on the use of part-time work in collective agreements and made access to part-time work easier as well as labour market more family-friendly (Todd 2004). In Denmark a parent on parental leave may work part-time and prolong the leave from 32 to 64 weeks. The benefits are prorated during this entire period of leave. Notwithstanding the possibilities to work part-time, as Leitner and Wroblewski (2006) notice, acceptable childcare options allow mothers to go back to work in full-time jobs.

The Icelandic labour system is mainly based on collective agreements as Labour Law lays down only certain minimum rights for all employees. Mósesdóttir (2005) points out that the Gender Equality Act (95/2000) only gives recommendations to employers, what necessary measures (flexible work organization, working hours and a support to those returning back to work after leave due to family obligations) they should take to enable men and women to reconcile their occupational and family obligations. But these measures are not obligatory and this law does not offer much protection, as Icelandic employers may fire employees without stating a valid reason (Mósesdóttir 2005). Parents can take the 9 months parental leave on a flexible basis: divided into a number of periods and/or that taken concurrently with a reduced work-time ratio, until the child reaches 18 months. But this should be agreed with an employer. Part-time work or reduced work hours is common among mothers with young children in order to reconcile work and family life.

Ponzellini (2006) points out that flexible scheduling (different forms of part-time work: half a day part-time, weekend work, annualized part-time) has become very common in Italy in white-collar environment (public administration, health care, banks and insurance, telephone companies, call centres) as well as in the fast-food and large-scale retail trades. There are also some efforts to offer company crèches and baby-parking that is usually less expensive than the existing ones, either public or private. But Ponzellini (2006) regrets that these arrangements are not enough to fill the gap with countries having welfare provision (like Nordic countries) and to ensure women a full participation to paid work and equitably shared care work.

In Lithuania flexible working arrangements (part-time, tele-working, flexible-place) are legitimated. For example, Labour Law allows pregnant women, women rearing a child under 1 year of age, breast feeding mother, an employee rearing a child under 3 years of age or employee who alone rears a child under 14 years of age or 18 if a child is disabled, to demand part-time work. This part-time can be arranged as shortened working hours per day, shortened working days per week or both. Working part-time does not have an impact on other employee's rights (the duration of sabbatical leave, promotion, etc.), but it conditions a considerable decline of income. There is some confusion in legislation regarding labour relations and this impedes its implementation.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES, WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND FERTILITY

Today women have more choice and possibilities to enter labour market than they had several decades ago. Since the middle of the last century women's employment rate has increased in all studied countries. These changes have brought about new challenges for public services in adjusting to increasing requirements for reconciliation

of work and family life. The inadequacy of the welfare system in some countries has caused problems for women in reconciling work and child rearing, making them choose between a career and family. This has had a great impact on fertility. The arrangements that help parents in combining work and family belong to one of three categories of fertility policy; the others are financial incentives and broad social change supportive of children and parenting (McDonald 2000). The cross-national comparison shows a variety of options for parents to be chosen in reconciling work and family life in the analysed countries.

Denmark, that represents Social democratic welfare regime and dual-earner support family model, is far beyond other analyzed countries in implementing family-friendly policies. This country has a high female employment rate and a high fertility rate (Table 6). Todd (2004) points out that Denmark's policy approaches have supported women's and men's participation in the labour force through measures (universal childcare coverage, extensive leave rights and generous individual benefits) that accommodate parents' need to care for their children and employees' desire to take leave from work to pursue educational goals and other interests. These measures determined a high degree of equity in employment – Denmark ranks third of all the EU countries, with almost equal participation rates between men and women (Todd 2004). Regardless the equality in the labour market and that men participate more in housework and family duties than the men in other EU member states, it is still mostly women who are responsible for unpaid labour (Leitner, Wroblewski, 2006).

Iceland, which also fits into the same cluster of welfare regimes as Denmark and pursues family-friendly policies, distinguishes itself for women's high employment rate as well as high fertility rate (Table 6). This country has the longest non-transferable (not very generous) parental leave for men. With the help of relatives and as a result of extensive public childcare Icelandic women continue to have more children and to work longer hours than other women in Europe (Mósesdóttir 2005). The male breadwinner model still dominates in the private life of family. Mothers usually choose to work part- time as men increase hours of work to compensate for the drop in the income of the partner. Mósesdóttir (2005) points out that Icelandic employees appear to enjoy considerable flexibility in terms of hours of work, temporary reduction of working hours, leave of absence and work from home, but most firms do not have a more formal reconciliation policy such that employees are often unaware of the different strategies available to combine work and family life.

Italy, as a representative of Southern-European welfare regime and a general family support model, has not well developed family-friendly policy arrangements to reconcile work and family life. Italy has a low female employment rate and a very low fertility rate (Table 6). Parents and, first of all, women have difficulties to exit and reenter the labour market. Expensive and insufficient childcare services, undeveloped leave schemes, a lack of part-time employment opportunities impede parents' reconciliation work and family obligations. Ponzellini (2006) points out that the lack of part-time jobs in Italy may be one of the obstacles for women with family responsibilities to reenter the labor market as they cannot transform their full-time job into part-time after maternity. Generous maternity leave and scarce possibilities for a man to take a parental leave supports a breadwinner model. Ponzellini (2006) regrets that in Italy the gender asymmetry in care work have not changed in recent years as well as the issue of work-life balance appears to be a private female problem rather than a real social problem. Neither public nor private sphere promotes gender equality, as a breadwinner family model is still vital in both spheres.

Lithuania, which can be characterized as something in-between the conservative and liberal welfare regime, provides some possibilities for parents to combine work and family obligations. Lithuania has a middle female employment rate and a very low fertility rate (Table 6). Stankuniene, Jasilioniene and Jancaityte (2006) underline that Lithuania has quite well developed and generous leave schemes. The lack of childcare services and underdeveloped flexible working arrangements

cause some difficulties for parents to reconcile work and family. Although working part-time is not very popular as it has a great impact on income, Stankuniene (2003) points out that usually women take care about children and choose to work part time. Women are still considered to be primary caregivers as well as work and family balance problems are still seen as women's problems. The patriarchal attitudes of employers impede women's possibilities to make a career and to reconcile work and family life (Kanopiene 1998). It can be said that economic and social environment is not favorable for flexible working arrangements. There are quite well developed leave schemes but implementation of flexible working arrangements faces difficulties in practice, partially because of patriarchal attitudes of employers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis of family-friendly arrangements like family leaves, childcare facilities and possibilities to work part-time shows that they are very important in enabling parents to reconcile work and family, but they can be insufficient to promote gender equality. While state provisions to the families are of greatest importance employers also play a crucial role in helping parents to reconcile work and family. Whiteford (2005) points out that national policies will be much less effective if firms implement them unwillingly. The analysis of family-friendly arrangements in Denmark, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania confirm some important aspects of family-friendly policies in reconciling work and family:

- The reconciliation of work and family is not only women's business. The attention should be also paid to men's possibilities to balance work and family responsibilities. Family-friendly arrangements should be "friendly" to both parents.
- Stereotypical attitude towards gender roles hampers both men and women to reconcile work and family.
- Employers play a great role in creating an organizational culture where work and family are integrated as well as encouraging men to use work-family balance arrangements more actively.
- Society and especially employers should be educated about the benefits of family-friendly arrangements.
- Dealing with the reconciliation of work and family the whole package of measures such as family leaves, childcare services and flexible work arrangements should be implemented. Leave schemes should be fairly generous, of proper length and promote gender equality; childcare services should be cheap or subsidized, flexible and available for all age preschool children. Flexible work arrangements should not penalize parents in their future perspectives.
- Inadequate conditions of parental leave can even strengthen the male-breadwinner model. Encouraging men to take parental leave it is important to give them a non-transferable right to parental leave as well as generous compensation since their income is frequently higher than mothers' income. Therefore,

Table 6. Women's employment rate and total fertility rate

Country	Women's Employment rate 15-64 years, 2005 (%)	Total fertility rate, 2004
Denmark	71.9	1.78
Iceland	80.5	2.03
Italy	45.3	1.33
Lithuania	59.4	1.26

Source: Eurostat

receiving a lower income mothers are more likely to exercise the right to parental leave than men.

- Parents, especially mothers, have difficulties in reconciling work and family in the countries where the state does not supply relevant childcare services (Italy, Lithuania). In Denmark well-developed childcare services allow mothers to work full-time, securing sufficient income and independence.

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Reconciliation of Work and Family Life in Lithuania: Challenges and Opportunities for Gender Equality

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INTRODUCTION

The ongoing basic social transformations of the recent period in Lithuania have brought about very important changes in the employment and family structures and gender roles within these institutions. The increasing women's participation in the labour market, decline of the traditional family model, and work intensification and extensification in an ever expanding global competitive market require new ways to regulate the employment-family relationship and to share caring responsibilities at home. The ways in which the transitions between the employment and care are handled and socially protected impact not only the employment rates of women, but also the number and timing of births. If it is difficult to reconcile work and childcare women often find themselves in a situation where they have to make either/or choices. Those who attempt to combine both are likely to be faced with discrimination. The experiences in the Central and Southern European countries have shown that higher integration of women will result in lower birth rates as long as it does not become easier to reconcile work and family life. Leitner and Wroblewski (2006, 296) argues that women – and mothers in particular – carry great potential with regard to the increase of employment and, consequently, the competitiveness of European economy and stable demographic development, but only in favourable socio-political and working conditions that facilitate work-family balance for both women and men.

Much cross-national research on gender inequality have suggested that state policy towards women, work and childcare is one of the main explanatory variables of unequal gender relations at work and at home. A range of reconciliation strategies has been developed in post-industrial democracies, greatly reinforced by economic reasons to increase employment and population growth[1]. They mostly focus on the extent to which the state can liberate women's time for employment by assuming some of their childcare duties. The division of domestic labour and parenting work between women and men is not given primary importance. Moreover, policies for combining paid work and family care are undermined by the persistent assumption made by managers at all levels, by colleagues and by many of the parents themselves, that these are primarily policies for women. The whole question of the extent to which women's participation in the labour force brings about a change in men's participation in domestic labour and parenting work, or redistribution of care at home, is a vexed one. This is despite the fact that an unequal domestic division of labour and childcare between mothers and fathers has long been acknowledged as one of the major impedi-

ments to women's equal participation in the labour force (Windebank 2001).

The overview of the research on women's and men's reconciliation of family and work roles in Lithuania shows that the increasing women's employment rates and their more active role in public life have not led to decisive changes in the gender division of unpaid work so far. During the last decade of social and economic transformations the social support that enabled women to combine paid employment with care under the soviet regime has been reduced and the double burden of women has been even increasing. The public policies mostly target at women's economic empowerment, while there has been no specific policy to develop more equal parenting roles between women and men so far. The political as well as academic discussions on how to get men involved more in caring and gender equality are generally very scarce.

This research marks an attempt to focus on men's participation in work-family reconciliation processes and to develop better knowledge of how employed fathers fulfil their roles both within the family and at work and what mechanisms at political, institutional and individual levels could facilitate them to balance these roles and achieve more equal gender relationship at home. The study considers such questions as: To what extent do fathers and their partners encounter the conflict between work and family roles? What are good practices of father's role in creating gender sensitive work-family balance? What are employers' attitudes towards gender equal family friendly policies? More generally, why is it important for men to become involved with gender equality?

In order to answer these questions, the chapter draws on the evidence gathered from a qualitative study of reconciliation strategies of working men and their female partners living with at least one child aged under ten as well as employers of the private sector. The study also presents the data of the national public opinion survey, carried within the general framework of the research. The research aims to reveal the extent to which partners encounter the conflict between work and family roles, the good practices of fathers' reconciliation strategies as well as the obstacles at political, cultural, institutional and interpersonal levels that impede to create a balance of work-family responsibilities and more gender equal distribution of roles at home.

First, the chapter outlines the conceptual approaches of the research, mainly focusing on three thematic issues: the role of welfare state on gender distribution within labour force and care at home, objectives of different cross national strategies of work-life balance on political level and their relation to gender equality as well as changing masculinity and its relation to paid and unpaid work. The following summary of the post-soviet research on reconciliation and family friendly policies in Lithuania provides the general context to grasp the severity of the problem and the national specificity of social change. Second, the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research on partners' experience of 'double role' conflict and reconciliation strategies on interpersonal level as well as institutional and political obstacles of gender equal reconciliation policies will be analyzed; and finally, the recommendations on how the welfare system and work organization can be constructed in order to promote gender equality through reconciliation will be discussed.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES

Welfare state, paid and unpaid work

The processes of restructuring within labour markets, the welfare state and the family have profound gender outcomes. Changes in the demographic structure and family relations, and increasing women's participation in labour market place modern welfare states and dominant 'gender contract' under growing constrains and underline the necessity of gender-sensitive welfare state policies. The rapid growth in women's employment, the popularity of dual earner families and ageing of the population imply that the demand for extra-familial care is increasing and the traditional supply of women's labour is less available for providing informal, private, and unpaid care for family members. These processes

indicate that the gendered division of unpaid family-related care and welfare provisions can not be taken for granted in the future (Boje, Leira 2000).

However, increasing women's employment rates have not led to decisive changes in the gender division of unpaid work so far. Women in Lithuania continue to carry the double-role burden they were socialized for during the soviet past. They are still doing the major part of unpaid caring work in the family and in the society as a whole. This results in their unequal career opportunities, pay gap between genders and economic dependence on their partners. Feminist analysts construct studies that show the direct connection between the dominant notions about women's alleged natural role as mother and family caretakers, the duties that come from these expectations, and women's inferior positions not just in paid labour but in all spheres of society, including social provisions (Mazur 2002). Lewis (1992) highlighted the assumptions regarding the role of women that lie embedded in welfare policies. She compares a number of welfare states on the basis of whether they recognize women solely as wives and mothers and/or also workers. According to her, the general tendency has been to conceive women's ties to welfare states in terms of their family role rather than on the basis of their status as individuals. From this framework, Lewis argued for understanding gendered welfare regimes in terms of their relation to traditional family structures of male breadwinner/female caregiver and derived three categories of European welfare states: those with strong, moderate and weak breadwinner models. She identified Britain and Ireland as strong breadwinner states by their tendency to draw a firm dividing line between public and private responsibility and to treat married women as dependent wives with low labour market participation. By contrast, Sweden's and Denmark's weak male-breadwinner regimes of post-1970s encouraged a rapid rise of women's employment through the changes in taxation policy, child care provision and support for parental leave. Diane Sainsbury (1996) proved the need to distinguish between women's welfare entitlements through marriage from the entitlements through motherhood. She uses the entitlement as wives, mothers/caregivers and paid workers to analyze women's position in a range of welfare regimes. Pascall and Manning (2000, 242) argues that the deconstructing breadwinner/caregiver family relation in this way offers a useful strategy for Central and Eastern Europe where male breadwinner families were challenged during the soviet regime.

The emancipation of soviet women was perceived to be related to women's work outside the home, identifying women's exclusion from paid employment as a key to their oppression. The soviet emphasis on labour participation led to the social policy regime which can be seen as a system of support for women as paid employees and as mothers. There seems to be no history of social entitlements to benefits through male breadwinners. Social benefits and taxation then tended to be attached to women's own employment. But this implied neither women's economic independence nor any higher level of men's participation within the home. There was no women's movement to support women's reproductive autonomy, to challenge the state-imposed gender division of labour or to challenge men's power over women through domestic violence. And the constraints of poverty, conversely, created a relationship of extreme interdependence among family members (Pascall, Manning 2000). During the last decade of social and economic transformations, the social support that enabled women to combine paid employment with care has been reduced and the double burden of women have been certainly increasing. Declining social provisions for motherhood and the move towards the familialization of social services (cuts in social support for health, education, housing, public child care) have increased women's unpaid care work, thus dependence on their families (mostly male partners) to survive their individual low wages and the losses of social support. There has been no specific policy to develop more equal parenting roles between women and men so far. Moreover, the neoconservative forces have pushed the regulation of social welfare provisions to be more closely linked to individual family status, and to privilege those in marriage, as a reaction to the decline of a traditional family model in Lithuania. The outcomes of such regulations are most evident in the case of women outside marriages with increasing poverty among lone

parents and their children.

Paid employment remains critical to women's survival in the country. Due to economic transformations, women's labour market participation has declined, whereas pay gap and gender segregation of labour market have remained intact. Therefore, women need families and family networks to survive. The inequality of marriage is illustrated by high rates of domestic violence, division of labour at home, women's economic and psychological dependence on their partners. As noticed by several feminist analysts, the space created for women's action within the new regimes has had little impact on domestic relationship. The emergence of religious and cultural identity brings further pressures towards 'refamilialization' of care (Buckley 1997; Boje, Leira 2000; Pascall, Manning 2000). This approach does not offer a viable solution to the problems raised by the ongoing demographic change, increasing mobility of labour force or economic necessities of families (need for two incomes). However, families still do provide care and have 'successfully' sustained deeply traditional patterns of unpaid work. These pose increasing challenges for welfare states on how to solve the problem of 'caring deficit' (Hochschild 1995) and reduce the gap between official declarations and the reality of unequal relations between genders.

On the broader level there are two main questions for feminists concerning the provision of unpaid work: how to value it and how to share it more equally between women and men. These concerns brought care to the centre of analysis of welfare states. Modern welfare states have shaped the needs and rights of caregivers and care receivers and have done so in the ways that contribute to gender inequality in citizenship rights (Knijn, Kremer 1997). Welfare policies that exclude the unpaid work provided within the private sphere from the social citizenship rights contribute to gender inequality in the informal sector (care and reproduction) and maintain the inequality between women and men in the formal sector (paid work) (Boje, Almqvist 2000, 45). According to Marshall's influential conceptualization of citizenship, care-giving and care-receiving were supposed to be provided by family and social networks rather than by welfare states. This domestification of care formed the basis for its exclusion from citizenship rights and thus contributed to gender inequality in citizenship rights. In contemporary welfare states work and care have normally been constructed as mutually exclusive and as opposites. For men this means that the concept of paid work is completely internalized in the male concept of citizenship, but for women this conceptualization leads to an irresolvable dilemma between unpaid caring work in the private sphere and their search for economic and political autonomy in the public (Knijn, Kremer 1997). Lewis (1997) argues that in recognising social rights of citizenship, based on both paid employment and care giving, women's complicated relationship to paid employment, unpaid work and welfare may be solved.

Perhaps the most fruitful direction for questioning contemporary welfare provisions is offered by the concept of 'defamilialization', which focuses on welfare regimes' impact on people's relation to families rather than on their relation to the labour market ('decommodification'). In the situation common to all industrialized countries, where family obligations rest on a smaller circle of family members and on more fragile family ties, the extent of defamilialization might be as crucial to the welfare of individuals and families as is the strength of family obligations themselves. Defamilialization does not imply breaking family bonds (Saraceno 2000, 149). McLaughlin and Glendinning have suggested that we might think about defamilialization not in the sense of simple individualization, which has often been harnessed to the aim of getting women into the labour market, but rather in the sense of the terms and conditions on which people engage in their families as well as their ability to live outside them.

> *The issue is not whether people are completely 'de-familised' but rather the extent to which packages of legal and social provisions have altered the balance of power between men and women, between dependents and non-dependents, and hence the terms and conditions under which people engage in familial or caring arrangements (1994, 66).*

Lister defines defamilialization as a criterion of social rights by "the degree to which individual adults can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living, independently of family relationships, either through paid work or through social security provisions" (Lister 1997, 173). This definitions comes close to Orloff' proposal to add two new dimensions to Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes that she feels will help to capture the effects of state social provision on gender relations: access to paid work and capacity to form and maintain an autonomous household (Orloff 1993). She strongly argues for the criteria for social rights to focus on the right to personal autonomy and self-determination in both the public and private domains. The consequences of welfare provisions on gender relations should also be evaluated on their capacity to give women access to paid work and to form and maintain an autonomous household (Boje, Almqvist 2000).

The concept of defamilialization promises to bring the focus back to the constituent concerns of a gender-centred approach and to promote voluntary choices for both genders. As Lewis put it:

> *It is possible to construe the concept in such a way that the vexed question of what is 'good' for women is avoided; it is not assumed (as is the case with decommodification) that defamilialization is necessarily desirable. The aim of social policy must be to promote choice. This is recognized in the concept of decommodification as applied to men: the extent to which they are permitted not to engage in paid work. The problem is that women's complicated relationship to paid work, unpaid work, and welfare means that we have to consider their right not to engage in paid work (decommodification) and by extension their right to do unpaid work, and also their right to do paid work and by extension their right to not to engage in unpaid work (1997, 173-174).*

Sainsbury argues that by focusing on both decommodification and defamilialization in defining social citizenship rights it is implied that paid work no longer has a privileged status compared with unpaid work and care (Sainsbury 1996). This provides one uneasy answer to the questions, concerning the provision of unpaid work, we started from: how to value it and how to share it more equally between women and men.

As shown in the scholarly debate and political discussions, the restructuring of the provision of care as the main source of gender inequality is going to be multifaceted and complex. Under the complex influence of economic, political, social and cultural context factors it varies in form, content and outcomes across the region. As Saraceno (2000) observes, 'refamilialization' or 'defamilialization' might imply very different policy strategies depending on the political context. Feminist scholars advocate the necessity of examining all forms of care given together, whether private or public, formal or informal, and to study the gender effects of different forms of care provision.

Work-Family Balance and Gender Equality

Reconciliation of family and work roles has recently gained a particular popularity in research and public policy debates across Europe[2]. The concept refers to a number of qualitative changes in contemporary societies, such as increasing labour market participation of women, changing family forms or the demographic decline, which play a crucial role in social organization of work. John MacInnes (2006) argues that the origins of the reconciliation debate in Nordic countries can be linked to the concerns about falling fertility rates and population aging. It is believed that a better reconciliation of work and family would help to increase birth rates in these countries. The feminist scholars discuss the reconciliation of work and family obligations as a gendered issue and link it with the debates about gender equality. The interplay between the welfare sector, economy, family and individual choices is particularly important in this respect as well as its gendered or generational impact. Secondly, the transformation of labour in society creates new social risks and problems on the individual and social level and, again, not without its specific gendered dimension, which gains a particular focus in this study.

The definition of the work-family balance at first sight seems obvious. In his analysis of the work-life balance in Europe, MacInnes asserts:

> *While this definition suggests that 'life' is no longer dominated by 'work' in the way it may once have been, it says little about work's continued importance for most people's income (either immediately or in the form of future pension or benefit rights) and verges on the vacuous. It downplays objective constrains on working arrangements and foregrounds 'choices' (2006, 225).*

Secondly, the work-family balance is often normatively charged (as a family friendly strategy or a tool for women's empowerment). However, not all externalities of 'work-family balance' oriented arrangements at work are positive. For example, greater flexibility can enable parents to manage multiple roles and enhance well-being in the short-term but can also enable parents to work more, with paid work intruding into family life (Transitions 2006). Moreover, as noted by many feminist analysts, 'part time work' or 'flexible work' is not necessarily used for feminist purposes as well:

> *In the sixties and seventies it [the concept of reconciliation] was understood as reconciling women's roles in paid and unpaid work to promote equality. Today, it tends to be associated with work force strategies used by individual firms to promote part-time work or flexible work rather than with any larger goal of equality between men and women (Mazur 2002, 102).*

It should be noted that the concept 'work-family balance' implies an aim that goes well beyond the mere reconciliation of work and family life and is rather geared towards a 'balanced' relationship between these different areas (Leitner, Wroblewski 2006). From the feminist perspective, it implies women's ability to sustain their economic independence and an equitable share of household shores between partners.

The objectives of the 'balance' or family-friendly policies that have been developed to achieve this balance are also diverse. MacInnes (2006) summarizes six rather varied objectives. One is the reduction of long working hours incompatible with parenting and family life. Such reductions may take a wide variety of forms, be based on statutory provisions or locally bargained agreements as well as have different implications for pay, working conditions and gender. The second goal is to facilitate different leave schemes and arrangements (paternity leave, maternity leave, parental leave, etc.). These two time-related provisions imply a reduction in the labour supply (at least in the short term) and are usually granted to parents to facilitate their caring responsibilities. The next two goals of work-life balance and reconciliation policies are, conversely, aimed at increasing labour supply through provision of 'flexible' working time arrangements and childcare services. One more probably the most frequently cited goal of reconciliation policies is to overcome gender segregation of labour market and unequal share of domestic labour. Hantrais (2000) uses the term 'reconciliation' to describe feminist work and family policies that promote a more equal sharing of paid and unpaid work. She argues that there has been an important shift in the EU member countries from the measures designed to bring women into line with men as workers to gender policies aimed at tackling socially constructed gender inequalities at work and at home. The pervading feminist policies explicitly address the relationship between work and family to improve women's situation and ensure their economic independence.

Finally, the sixth goal, discussed by MacInnes (2006, 226), "has been to secure the long-term labour supply and to avoid the fiscal and economic consequences of 'population ageing' by facilitating specifically *fertility sustaining* family life. <…> states hope that WLB [work-life balance] might deliver both *more* working mothers now, and by supporting fertility, *more* workers for the future." The OECD (2001, 130) argues that "the work/family balance is also important for longer-term trends in population … it is plausible that improvements in the work/family balance could help to increase both current employment rates and fertility rates". As several analysts have observed, these economic arguments had a greater effect than similar demands to ease women's difficulties in combining their jobs with family duties, which had

been voiced much earlier under the normative aspect of gender equality (Leitner, Wroblewski 2006, 296).

Feminist policies are striving for women's 'economic independence', which may be treated as a common ground of diverse feminist views on reconciliation policies. Mazur (2002, 104) has defined it as "any policy that seeks to promote women's economic independence within the purview of the predominant division of labour between work and family". She summarized three feminist approaches to achieving women's economic independence in reconciling work and family obligation for both men and women. All three can exist side by side in a specific country or in the same set of policy reforms. Reconciliation policy that takes a traditional gender role stance has to provide social security benefits for stay at home mothers or housewives to ensure their economic independence of husband's salary. According to the second policy approach, the traditional gender roles' model is only slightly shifted. The assumption is that women are more or less compelled to take on a primary parenting role, but it should not prevent them from entering the labour market on the same footing as men. The third approach aims to redefine traditional gender roles so that men and women share family caretaking. Nordic countries have well progressed in promotion shared parenthood through helping both parents or extending incentives to men to accept more responsibility in care giving. To sum up, policies may work within the established division in a gender neutral way, they may recognize gender inequality but put no efforts to change it or they may seek to change it through the reconstruction of traditional models and reinforcement of alternative ones.

The extent to which it is manageable to achieve social change through reconciliation policies depends on the variety of factors: state regulated provisions, the involvement of employers and labour unions, family structures as well as individual attitudes (attitudes towards gender roles, career orientation, etc.). Social norms and values also have a profound effect on women's integration in labour market, their income, employment prospects as well as distribution of roles within the family. Empirical findings have shown that "as long as the increasing employment participation of women does not go hand in hand with re-distribution of unpaid labour, and especially care work, the pressure will always be unevenly distributed. Women will continue to be faced with greater challenges and limitations in the working world despite the fact that they may appear to have equal opportunities on the labour market" (Leitner, Wroblewski, 2006, 301). Consequently, women still bear more pressure than men in the effort to obtain the work-family balance and pay much higher price of gender inequality.

Men and Masculinities: Between Paid and Unpaid Work

For a long time, work-family issues were either ignored or considered a "woman's problem." Skepticism that family-supportive policies are relevant to men is still strong in Lithuania. However, as Fine-Davis and Fagnani argue,

> *The challenge which still faces even the most advanced of the EU member states is how to facilitate a more egalitarian sharing of roles, that is – how to relieve women of the double burden of employment and domestic duties, while encouraging men to take an active part in family and domestic life" (2004, 219).*

Lithuania faces the same challenge. Therefore, the issue of the work-family or work-life balance must be increasingly placed in the context of gender equality that concerns both women and men. Balancing of work and family must become a problem of both women and men, families and the state in Lithuania. This calls for more attention to the issues of men and masculinities.

Focusing on men and masculinities, the following questions are usually asked: Why is it important for men to become involved in gender equality issues? What is men's relation to paid and unpaid work? Why do men resist increasing pressures to assume a larger share of the family responsibilities?

First of all, let us look at the gender equality policies

in Lithuania. Lithuanian laws guarantee *de jure* equal opportunities for men and women. In March, 1999, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the first of its kind in the Central and Eastern Europe, entered into force. Furthermore, in order to realize legal regulations in practice, the National Program for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2003-2004) was prepared and adopted on June 7, 2003, in Lithuania. This Program was fully oriented towards the implementation of a gender mainstreaming strategy and gender equality *de facto*. The main objectives of this program are to create equal opportunities for men and women in all areas of public life, e.g. to increase the number of female and male representatives in the areas in which they were underrepresented and to achieve equal redistribution of services and financial resources.[3]

The National Program is based declaratively on the principle of equal rights, responsibilities and possibilities for both genders in any life sphere. This program emphasizes that equal opportunities for men and women mean the absence of obstacles for both genders to participate equally and fully in economic, political and social life. The policy of gender equality strives for the equal sharing of power and influence among genders in economy, social life and decision-making processes. It declares publicly that the physiological gender differences cannot be the basis for discrimination of different genders and cannot have any negative influence for the living conditions of men and women. The above resolutions conform to the international obligations of Lithuania and the legal norms of the EU.

According to the National Program, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour took upon itself the task to improve, during 2004, conditions for women and men that would allow them to reconcile their work and family responsibilities better. One of many measures to achieve this objective was to prepare projects and legal acts establishing conditions for paternity leave and to discuss them with social partners. This measure had to encourage working fathers to take a paternity leave and share family responsibilities with their wives and partners. However, the concrete results of this measure have not been achieved yet.

Different obstacles impede the transformation of institutional and gender relations. Gender experts treat the implementation of this program ambiguously and often very critically. During the 2004 research "The EU Enlargement and its Impact on Women in Lithuania" experts of gender policy in Lithuania (representatives of the Lithuanian Parliament, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, international organizations, women's NGOs and scholars) were asked to evaluate the implementation of the policy of equal gender opportunities in Lithuania. Although the experts evaluated the formal side of this policy positively, its implementation received a great number of critical remarks. According to the experts of gender policy, this program is fragmentary and lacks a consistent strategy, stable financing and inter-institutional cooperation; officials that supervise this program are rather incompetent and insensitive to gender problems and to the social-structural reasons of gender inequality. Another research on gender equality and gender mainstreaming emphasizes that there are many obstacles impeding the achievement of gender equality: frequent governmental changes, the absence of solidarity among women, stereotypical and very patriarchal attitudes of responsible officials, among others, were mentioned (Taljūnaitė, Bandzevičienė 2004, 12-13). One of the major obstacles for institutionalizing gender sensitive policies is the lack of continuity since often changing political fortunes influence such policies. When governments change after the Parliament elections, gender analyses and related political processes frequently stop. Summarizing the experts' evaluations, it is possible to conclude that even if we have a necessary judicial base conforming to the EU standards and directives, in the current context, gender equality *de facto* remains a vision that is difficult to fulfil (Reingardienė 2004).

When we discuss the issues of gender equality with regard to work-family issue, the problem of paid and unpaid work comes to the forefront. First of all, work and masculine identity is closely connected. Work and "bread-winners" role is regarded as a major basis of hegemonic masculinity and masculine identity in

general. The hegemonic ideology of fatherhood reflects the "traditional" notion of the breadwinning role that defines a good father as a good provider whose wife does not have to work (Griswold 1993). A good provider has a separate role in the family and may not engage in the activities associated with child care or motherhood (Wilkie 1993).

According to Jeff Hearn, paid work for men "is a source of power and resources, a central life interest, and a medium of identity. It is also a means of ordinary *everyday yet structural resistance* to gender equality" (Hearn 2001, 11). The facts concerning male and female employment patterns in Lithuania confirm this statement. Women are still inferior to men in the Lithuanian labour market. They are discriminated against and segregated by occupation: a high degree of horizontal and vertical segregation and growing wage differential still exist in Lithuania. Men and women are engaged in different areas of activities indicating that the traditional patterns of men's and women's jobs are still prevailing. The dominant negative stereotypes – women's tendency to quit their jobs, shorter career spans, greater absenteeism, preference for part time work, low availability of overtime or long working hours – differentiate women's employment patterns from men and are based on the predominant gendered division of labour, in particular women's obligations towards family and child care. All of the above lead to the outcome that women are concentrated in jobs with lower salaries and stability. For example, gender asymmetry is very explicit in the increasing proportion of women in part-time employment, part of the feminization of this market segment.

Men still dominate mainstream political and business organisations in Lithuania. They remain in control of the most powerful organisations, whether state, capitalist or third sector. The Lithuanian Parliament may be cited as one of the most evident examples of this male dominance: it consists of 79.43% of men and 20.57% of women. Furthermore, political and business organisations „are typically intensely gendered, by management, formal and informal hierarchies, divisions of labour, sexual structuring and the structuring of sexuality, relation to the 'private' and 'domestic' worlds, and constructions of relations of centre and margins (by membership, employment, physical space, and symbolic meanings)" (Hearn 2001, 12). Changing these patterns is a very large challenge: it is necessary not only to deconstruct the taken-for-granted gender-neutrality of organizations but also to support women and women's initiatives in organisations and management" (Hearn 2001, 13).

Men's paid work is closely related to domestic and family life. In Hearn's words, "the practical arenas of gender equality are thus not just the 'big questions' of 'politics'; they recur in all social life, including personal and private life" (Hearn 2001, 15). Implementing gender equality involves changing men not only at work but also at home. Here we have to talk of the distribution of childcare and household tasks among men and women in the family.

The institutions of the Lithuanian welfare state provide both women and men with the opportunities to care for their young children. For instance, the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania provides for childcare leave which can be used, depending on a family decision, by the mother (or foster mother), the father (or foster father), the grandmother, grandfather or other relatives that take care of the child until he/she reaches the age of three. However, men very seldom use these opportunities. According to the data of the State Social Insurance Fund of the Republic of Lithuania (Sodra) from the first quarter of 2005, 98.64 % of women and 1.36 % of men received maternity/paternity benefits, or, in other words, took a parental leave. In the previous years, the percentage of fathers on parental leave was even lower.

The most common explanation for men not taking paternity leave is financial: men usually earn more than women; consequently, women have to stay at home. However, deeper cultural and ideological factors about gender roles and parenthood are at play here too. For most men, taking such a leave is not a part of their male and father's identity. "Child care" is usually assumed to be a gendered occupation, a 'woman's work.' According to Hearn, "so often men's avoidance of caring has been the defining feature of 'being men'. This is a *structural* question in terms of women doing more caring work,

both in private and in public" (Hearn 2001, 16).

The idea that a mother is a primary caretaker of children is quite strong in Lithuania. The two research projects "Woman in the Lithuanian Society" carried out in 1994 and 2000 show that Lithuanian women still carry out most child-care chores (Stankūnienė et al 2003, 117-18). According to the 2004 survey "Public Opinion about Gender Policies of the EU and Lithuania," 62% of Lithuanians thought that women had to take care of pre-school children. The similar percentage of men and women expressed this opinion (55% of men and 49% of women). On the other hand, even 32% of Lithuanians could not decide who, men or women, had to take care of children during the first years of their lives (Maslauskaitė 2004: 44-45).[4] In this regard, one should also consider a rather sceptical or even negative employers' and co-workers' attitude toward men taking paternity leave that serves as a general disincentive. Men who take this kind of leave are considered non-masculine (Tere□kinas 2006, 28-29).

Another issue related to gender equality is men's involvement in household tasks at home. Lithuanian men spend less time than women on household tasks. The research on time spending conducted by the Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania demonstrates that daily women spend two hours more than men doing housework and family chores (□emeta 2004). The results of the above mentioned survey demonstrate that the absolute majority of women living with their partners most frequently prepared food, did dishwashing, bought products and tidied up the rooms (Maslauskaitė 2004, 44). Most of their time per day women spent on food making and house keeping. Care for clothing and childcare differentiate partners most.

The cultural conceptions of men's and women's roles play an important part in this division of household tasks: the Lithuanian women's orientation to family remains stronger than their orientation to work. Men's roles stay directly related to the activities of the public and "outside" domestic sector.

The above discussion demonstrates that despite quite advanced gender equality policies in Lithuania, not much has been achieved, particularly in the sphere of men's attitude towards unpaid work. What should be done to create gender equality at work and at home?

According to gender researchers, to challenge men's dominance in the public sphere and their reluctance to be involved in the private space, it is necessary to change "men's relations to women, to children, and (reciprocally) to other men" (Hearn 2001, 10). Only by "attending to the men practices of power at home, in mainstream organisations" and challenging men's interpersonal, institutional or structural power and dominance (Hearn 2001, 11), it is possible to achieve factual gender equality. Furthermore, to end the dominance and power of men in the paid work and to increase men's family involvement, a gradual social and cultural redefinion of what it means to be a man is necessary.

NATIONAL RESEARCH ON RECONCILIATION AND FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

During the last decade of post-soviet social changes, several large-scale sociological surveys have been carried out in the national context to assess the value orientations of population towards the existing gendered order, its public and private dimensions, gendered segregation of labour market and reconciliation of roles. It is important to mention that the prevailing research on reconciliation of family and professional roles during the last decade have mostly targeted women. Men's reconciliation issues have not gained any higher scientific interest in Lithuania.

In 1995 the Institute of Social Research in Lithuania carried out the representative survey "Family and Fertility in Lithuania", which served as an integral part of a larger international initiative. The survey aimed to measure the public attitudes towards gender roles, the preferable family model, and the importance of family and work in the lives of women and men. The survey also provided data on the interrelation between the professional and family roles of both genders and other issues

of reconciliation. Kanopienė (1999, 102) in her article *Combining Family and Professional Roles: Gender Differences,* based on the survey results, reveals four types of attitudes on women's role in the family and professional life. The first is characterized by the orientation towards an uninterrupted professional career (the best way for women to combine professional and family roles is being employed full-time); it was supported by only 10% of male and 12% of female respondents. The second group of people favoured the preference for part-time employment for women (12% of males and 15% of females). More than 60% of the male and nearly 60% of the female respondents preferred an interrupted professional career (women should stay at home till the children are older) or a discontinued professional career (priority is given to the housewife's/mother's role) by women. According to Kanopienė (1999, 102), the middle-aged women (between 40-49 years of age) with a family expressed the strongest support towards full-time employment and an uninterrupted professional career. She argues that in spite of the big load of domestic and professional duties, the experience of "double employment" appeared to have a positive impact on women with regards to the importance of paid work (and personal autonomy) in their lives. The strongest patriarchal attitude was expressed among the married men between 25-29 years of age with children, who are on their career way leaving all family responsibilities for their spouses. This and other studies have revealed an interesting finding related to the educational level of respondents. Women's education positively correlates with their egalitarian attitudes towards sharing of public/private roles, while highly educated men in Lithuania hold patriarchal attitudes more often than others.

An important finding of this survey is that the respondents' family obligations are an important explanatory variable of their orientations towards waged work and the significance of professional career in their lives. Among persons with family obligations a professional career plays a more significant role in the life of men than women. The understanding of public recognition and respect was also disclosed as a deeply gendered issue. For men these are very much related to their role in the professional sphere while for women these are linked with being a good mother and fulfilling family obligations. A woman's primary identification with the role of a mother and housewife is the main reason of their subordinated position in the labour market. On the other hand, the stereotypes of "proper" male and female roles are enforced and strengthened by the gender segregation in the working place and the consequences of this phenomenon. The in-depth interviews with employers in 1996-1997[5], carried out by the Sociology department at Vilnius University, also showed that the demands of employers were grounded on their patriarchal understanding of gender roles in the family (Kanopienė 1999). The employers openly recognized that woman's primary responsibility for the childcare and housework does not allow them to be good and reliable employees. For men, on contrary, being a father and a breadwinner were considered as a necessary precondition for his successful professional career. The above-mentioned variables could be further tested and more elaborated in the following research of this project.

The nationally representative survey *Evaluation of Population-Related Policy*, carried out in 2003[6], revealed the attitudes of the population towards the state provided measures to enforce the reconciliation of family and professional roles. The data shows that the population basically views the growth of state provided financial support as a higher priority than other measures aimed at creating favourable conditions for family-work reconciliation. Among the most desirable measures are parental leave (until the child is one year old), childcare leave (child is 1-3 years old) and benefits paid during these leaves. The parental leave with 70% compensation of the employee's salary is desired to be longer or the benefits higher with the length of the leave remaining the same[7]. The allowances for childcare leave are very low in Lithuania and cannot guarantee the economic welfare of the family. Care services of pre-school children or opportunities to have flexible working hours are less desirable than the state provided economic measures, mentioned above, allowing to raise children, at least until the age of three, at home (Stankūnienė et al 2003; Jasilionienė

2005). The highly emphasized priority of enhancing financial support indicates the vitality of paternalistic orientations towards the state in the society.

One of the main obstacles for women to join labour market on better conditions is the lack of reliable and accessible system of childcare. The experience of other countries demonstrates that the availability, quality and variety of day care services are among the most effective measures of support for families with children.

The survey also reveals that, since 1995, the demand for care and services of school children before or after the lessons has grown significantly. The organization of this type of care has received little attention of family support policies so far.

Flexible working hours and part-time work were the least favourable measures of family support among the population, especially among men, in 2001. In general, the measures that are either not implemented in the country or of which the implementation is inadequate (like flexible working hours) were evaluated with reserve. As it was mentioned already, the untypical forms of work organization are poorly developed in Lithuania. The hardships of the national economy (high unemployment rate in the country and lack of security within the labour market) make the implementation of untypical employment forms quite unlikely. However, implementation of most of these and other measures practiced by many European countries (better pre-school child care facilities; out-of-class care for schoolchildren; flexible forms of employment; paternal leave provided on individualized basis, etc.) would permit combining family and work roles more easily and would provide alternative methods of childcare (Stankūnienė et al 2003; Reingardienė 2004).

The issue of reconciliation is not only a matter of the favourable structural and institutional conditions, but it is an issue of cultural attitudes, which are the prerequisites of the former. The values, norms and attitudes towards gender roles in the society are still very much differentiated along the dichotomy of the public and private spheres, in which men are primarily attributed to the former and women to the latter. For example, the gendered dimension of the employment patterns has preserved more or less the same attributes since 1995. Most men with children find it ideal for a man with children to work full time while most women have no other choice except of staying at home with small kids. An attitude about a more active participation of men in newborns' care is pointed out very rarely. An opinion prevails that it is women who have to reconcile family and professional roles. These attitudes do not encourage even prevent men from getting more involved in caring and limit the employment opportunities for women.

It can be concluded that Lithuanian population give a high evaluation to the role of government in dealing with social problems and providing financial support to families. As far as the attention of the government "to the problems of working women" and "to childcare conditions" are concerned, about half of the surveyed population (in 2001) think that in recent years the government has been paying less attention to these issues than before (Stankūnienė et al 2003).

The respondents agree that better working opportunities for women are the main prerequisite for gender equality in the society and that the state has to play a principal role in securing these opportunities. The bigger part of the population also supported the ideas that the distribution of roles in the family should be changed, that a father's involvement in childcare and an equal distribution of childcare between partners should be promoted. These attitudes provide a favourable context for more radical gender mainstream and expression of political will.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The further analysis is based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative research on the reconciliation of family and work roles. During the qualitative research the interviews with the couples and employers have been carried out. There were six heterosexual couples (12 informants) interviewed in Lithuania, representing different age groups, employment sectors and positions, as well as different role-share models at home. The interviews mainly focused on the informants' work

environment (work experience, job satisfaction, work organization, etc.) and family issues (role-share at home, satisfaction with partnership, etc.). The research aimed to find out the extent to which partners encounter the conflict between work and family roles and to reveal good practices of fathers' reconciliation strategies. The brief summary of the couples' socio-demographic situation and their labour participation is as follows:

- **Couple No. 1:** The man (Valdas) is a 30 y. o. businessman who works in two jobs. The woman (Lina) is an accountant in a private company. He has a high school education, and she, a university education. They are married and raise a 7 y. o. child.
- **Couple No. 2:** The man (Edgaras) is a 24 y. o. manager and his wife Aistė is a 23 y. o. administrator and student, currently on maternity leave. They raise 11 months old child. Both have a university education.
- **Couple No. 3:** The man (Andrius) is a 24 y. o. printer. His wife Aurelija is a 23 y. o. designer in a printing company. He has a higher education, and she, special non-university education. Their child is 1.5 y. o.
- **Couple No. 4:** He is a 35 y. o. manager (Arvydas) and goods transporter (works in two jobs). His wife Genutė is a 37 y. o. operator. Both have a higher education. They raise two children: one is 11.5 y. o., the other is 8.5 y. o.
- **Couple No. 5**: The husband Almantas is a 31 y. o. engineer. His wife Rasa is a 29 y. o. dentist. Their child is 11 months old.
- **Couple No. 6:** The man (Egidijus) is a 29 y. o. telecommunications consultant, and his wife Vilija is a 28 y. o. teacher. They raise a 1.5 y. o. child.

At the time of the interviews, all respondents were employed, living in a couple with a spouse who was also employed or on maternity leave (couple No. 2).

Another target group of the research was employers. 13 employers were interviewed in total. They represent different genders, sectors of economy (masculine vs. feminine), and different size of enterprise. The interviews with employers aimed to reveal their attitudes towards family friendly work organization, the concrete measures introduced at their organizations, obstacles at political/ideological, cultural, institutional or individual levels that impede to implement family-friendly principles at work, how welfare system and work organization can be constructed in order to promote gender equal reconciliation.

The analysis integrates the relevant data from a population survey[8] on work-family reconciliation conducted in 2006. The survey was implemented using phone-surveying techniques. The sample size is 1000 respondents. The following sampling criteria have been used: at the time of the interview the respondents (500-women and 500-men) and their partners were employed, they were married or lived in partnership and raised at least one child up to 10 years of age. The survey instrument was prepared by the researchers of the Social Research Centre at Vytautas Magnus University. The aim of the survey was to assess the tensions between family and professional roles, the gendered character of the conflict and related factors as well as the obstacles, which prevent men from creating a better balance of their public and private roles. The survey provided data on whether having children has had any repercussions for the respondents at work (reduce in working hours, change of work place, limited professional upward mobility, increase in physical and psychological stress, increase in workload to meet the family's financial needs, etc.), the respondents' opinion about employers' general response to employees' family obligations in Lithuania, the preferable family model in the society by the respondents and the most preferable measures for the national reconciliation policy. The data have been processed using SPSS software.

BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

Do the interviewed couples manage to balance their work and family responsibilities? The overwhelming majority of the respondents answered this question positively (6 women and 4 men). Only two men (couple No. 1 and couple No. 6) said that they were not able to balance work and family as much as they would like it.

Valdas stated that he was not always successful in doing it. Egidijus was not satisfied with his attempts to balance work and family since he worked a lot, sometimes even on Saturdays. In his words, because of his hectic work schedule his family and wife suffered. Aistė (couple No. 2) said that she was able to balance family and work only because of her mother's and husband's help. The rest saw their work and family life as well balanced. As Arvydas (couple. No. 4) stated:

> *In some way, I am always able (I don't know how I succeed in it) to balance [my work and family]. Finally, even at times when I have less time for my family, I still manage to do it. It never happened that my work would interfere into something ...*

However, if we look more closely at the interviews, we can notice the underlying evidence that despite the positive responses, the interviewed men and women experience a conflict between their work and family responsibilities. First of all, most of them emphasized the constant stress in combining work and family. The women complained of tiredness that impeded their family work. Men talked of the exhaustion and fatigue at work that did not allow them to enjoy family life. The respondents' answers demonstrate that it becomes difficult to fulfil the responsibilities of the family when one is tired and exhausted. Although Rasa (couple No. 5) balanced her family and work well, sometimes she felt tired. It can be argued that exhaustion and fatigue were the indicators that it was difficult to fulfil both work and family responsibilities.

One of the most important factors working against the work-family reconciliation was found to be time. The more hours a person worked per week the more difficulty they had combining work and family. This was particularly true with regard to the interviewed men who worked either full time or in two jobs or on non-traditional work schedules. Some women also mentioned the lack of time for the family (Aistė, couple No. 2). Although men attempted to give as much time for their families as possible, their work interfered with their attempts. Men more often than women felt that their work was an obstacle for spending time with the family (Almantas, couple No. 5 and others). Some men indicated that they arrived home exhausted and felt that they did not have enough time to be with their children.

One of the most common difficulties faced by the couples was organizing family schedules to fit with normal working hours. Normal working hours, particularly those of men, were not as flexible as the respondents would like them to be. Genutė (couple No. 4) saw inflexible working hours as the biggest obstacle for work-family reconciliation. In her view, employers did not consider women's working hours seriously in Lithuania: if you work from 9 a. m. to 5 p.m., and your children come from school around 1 p. m., they have to stay alone for a large part of the day.

All women and most men stated that family was their priority. However, it was evident from the men's responses that the breadwinner's role was most important for them. Arvydas (couple No. 4) said that "there [would] be no family without work." According to Egidijus (couple No. 6), it was good to sacrifice oneself for the family's sake, i. e. work long hours and earn good money. For men, work and career are the most important means of their self-realization and self-fulfilment.

It is quite obvious that the interviewed men usually attempted to adapt their family responsibilities to their work, prioritizing work; and women, on the contrary, changed their work requirements to fit their family needs. In the respondents Lina (couple No. 1) and Rasa's (couple No. 5) opinion, they would like to work more but were afraid that their families would suffer as the consequence of it. Thus, in most cases, women made deliberate compromises at work because of family reasons, for instance, temporarily giving up career opportunities because of the birth of a child or working only part time until a child was small. Men usually compromised their family lives because of work. It appears that for men family encroached on work much less than work did on family.

It should also be emphasized that women were more successful in balancing their work and family because of their trade-offs with regard to work: while all interviewed

men worked full time, 3 women held the part-time jobs or were on maternity leave. Lina (couple No. 1) would like to spend more time at work and advance her career since she got tired of home. Genutė (couple No. 4) chose a job that enabled her to be at home most of the week. Even some men acknowledged that women had to sacrifice more than men in their professional life. Almantas (couple No. 5) thought that it was more difficult for a woman to reconcile work and family because she gave birth and had to take a maternity leave. Consequently, she lagged in her profession because employers in Lithuania were not friendly to women with children. Although compromises such as part-time work or giving up education because of family were more common for women than for men, one interviewed man also said that because of his small child and family he postponed his plans to study.

The data from the population survey demonstrate that more women (69.8 %) than men (30.2 %) experience a work-family conflict. To the question whether the raising of a child and childcare had any impact on their work, women and men responded in the following way:

Figure 1. Did child-raising and childcare affect your job in any personal way?

Almost in all cases except one (men had to look for a supplementary job to fulfil the financial needs of a family), women experienced a more considerable conflict between their work and family responsibilities. Figure 2 illustrates how many of the consequences at work, inflicted by childcare (Fig. 1), have been experienced by women and men.

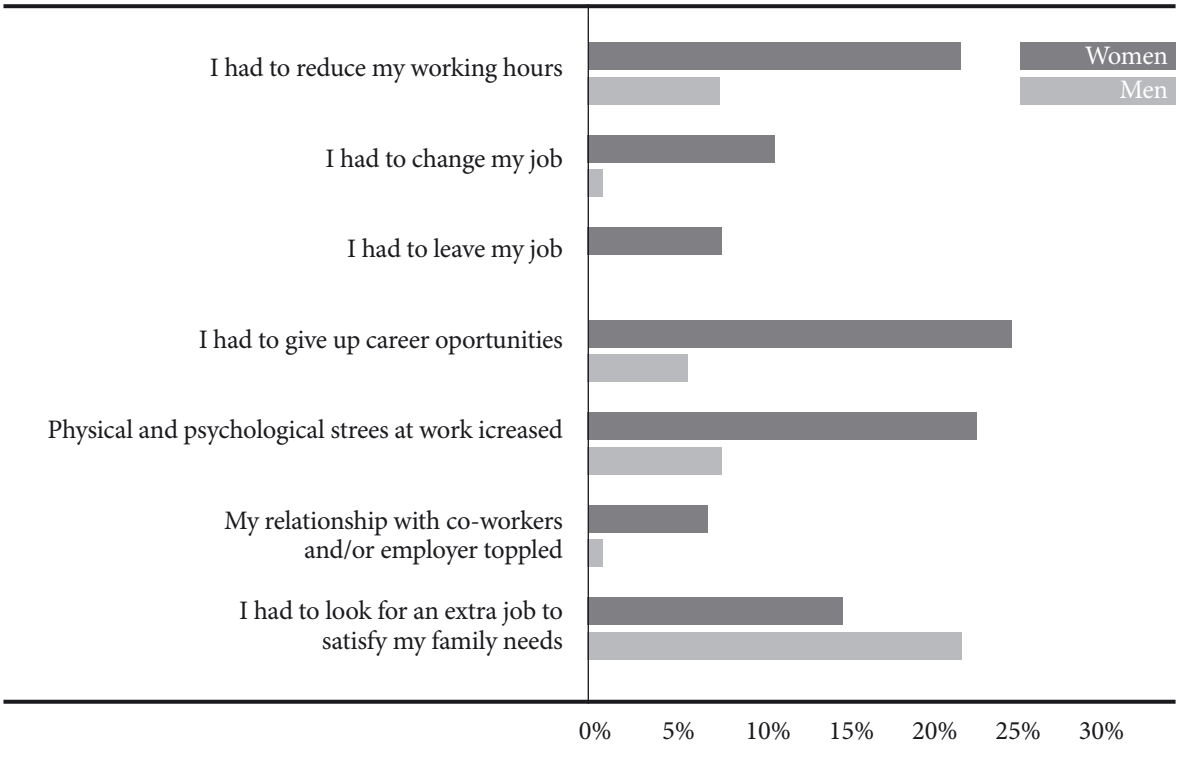


Figure 2. Number of instances of childcare impact upon women and men at work (%).

The figure 2 demonstrates that 70% of men and 50% of women did not think that child-raising and childcare affected their job in any personal way. However, women indicated that they are in a much bigger conflict of childcare and work than men. Table 1 summarizes the results of the correlation analysis for ordinal variables and indicates the differences of those who experience the work-family conflict (WFC) and those who do not. Those who endorsed at least one of the statements shown in Figure 1 were allocated to the category of people who experience the WFC. The bigger Somer d (by absolute value), the bigger is the difference in the corresponding variable between the men and women that confront the conflict and those that do not.

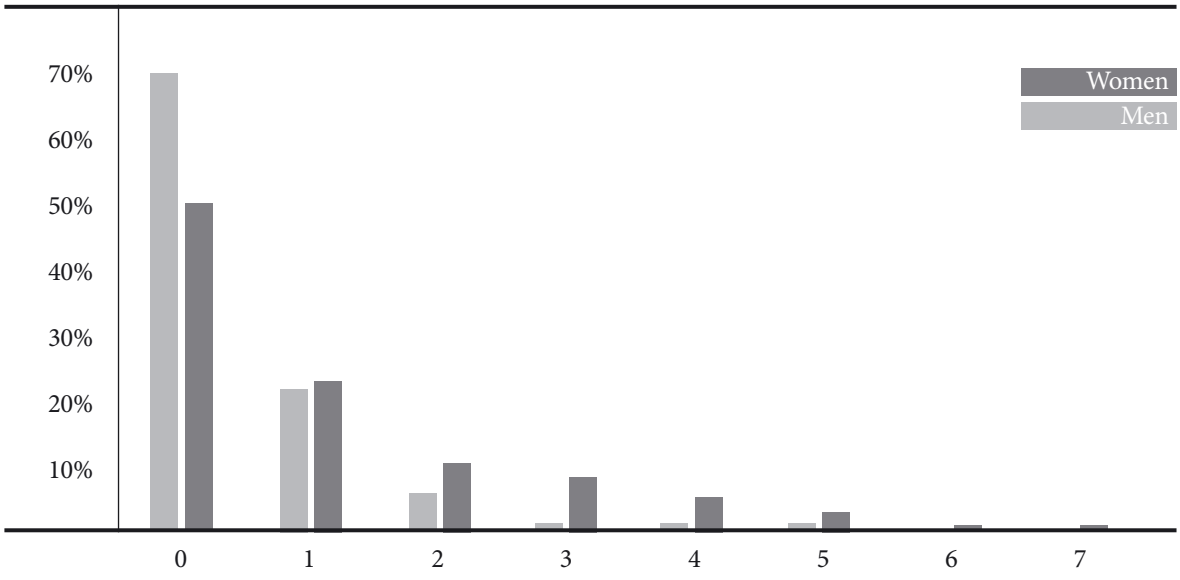


Table 1. The differences in the corresponding variable between the men and women that confront the WFC and those that do not (for ordinal variables).

	Men			Women		
Variable[9]	Somerio d	p	Difference	Somerio d	p	Difference
Used flexible working time arrangements for personal matters	-0,307	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often used flexible working time arrangements for personal matters	-0,250	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often used flexible working time arrangements for personal matters
Worked at home at work time	-0,249	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often worked at home at work time	0,210	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often worked at home at work time
Asked relatives or friends for help in taking care for the home or the children due to troubles at work	-0,229	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often asked relatives or friends for help in taking care for the home or the children	-0,328	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often asked relatives or friends for help in taking care for the home or the children
Paid somebody to tidy up the home and/or take care of the children	-0,197	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often paid somebody to tidy up the home and/or take care of the children	-0,214	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often paid somebody to tidy up the home and/or take care of the children
Used working hours to settle personal or family matters	-0,185	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often used working hours to settle personal or family matters	-0,260	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often used working hours to settle personal or family matters
Indicated that family and work responsibilities often clash with each other	-0,174	< 0,001	Family and work responsibilities of those in WFC clashed more often with each other	-0,261	< 0,001	Family and work responsibilities of those in WFC clashed more often with each other
Indicated that their partner perfectly understands and sympathizes with them, no matter what is the respondent's opinion	-0,164	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often indicated that their partner perfectly understood and sympathized with them		N.S.*	
Indicated being discontent that their partner spends too much time at work	-0,159	< 0,001	Those in WFC disliked more that their partner spent too much time at work	-0,255	< 0,001	Those in WFC disliked more that their partner spent too much time at work

	Men			Women		
Variable[9]	Somerio d	p	Difference	Somerio d	p	Difference
Partner does not like the respondent's type of work	-0,158	< 0,002	Those in WFC more often said that their partner did not like the respondent's type of work		N.S.	
The respondent likes the way they share child raising and care chores with his/her partner	0,130	< 0,002	Those in WFC liked less the way they shared child raising and care chores with his/her partner in comparison to those not in WFC		N.S.	
Buys foodstuff	-0,129	< 0,012	Men in WFC more often bought foodstuff	0,255	< 0,001	Women in WFC less often bought foodstuff
Work is more important to my partner than family	0,084	< 0,009	Those in WFC said this less often		N.S.	
Pays the bills		N.S.		0,245	< 0,001	Those in WFC paid the bills less often
The size of the settlement		N.S.		-0,201	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often lived in larger towns
Often discuss with their partner how to better combine family and work matters		N.S.		-0,196	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often discussed with their partner how to better combine family and work matters
Number of children under the age of 3 years		N.S.		0,192	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often had children under 3: 45,6% have one child and 5,4% two.
Number of children at the age of 8-10 years		N.S.		-0.128	< 0,005	Those not in WFC more often had children of 8-10 years: 36,4% have one child and 2,6% – two children

** Not statistically significant*

Table 1 shows the significant differences between those women and men who experience work and family conflict and those who do not. The male respondents who are in family-work conflict more often used flexible working time arrangements for personal matters than those who are not, more often worked at home or asked for help from other family members to take care of home and children (see Table 1). Women that face the conflict

more often ask their relatives or friends for help with taking care of the home or the children than those that do not face it; moreover, they are more likely to live in larger towns, more often discuss with their partner how to better combine family and work matters and raise children under 3 years of age.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the correlation analysis for nominal variables and indicates the differences of those who experience the work-family conflict (WFC) and those who do not.

Table 2. The differences in the corresponding variable between the men and women that confront the WFC and those that do not (for nominal variables).

	Men			Women		
Variable[10]	Cramer's V	p	Difference	Cramer's V	p	Difference
Does your employer take into account the family problems of the company's employees?	0,257	< 0,001	Those not in WFC less often said that their employer did not take into account. Those in WFC less often said that the employer always did take into account.	0,275	< 0,001	Those not in WFC less often said that their employer did not take into account.
Do the employers in general take into account the situation of men or women when they require special arrangements at work due to family problems?	0,243	< 0,001	Those not in WFC more often thought that the employers equally took into account the family problems of men and women. Those not in WFC less often thought that the employers took women's family problems more seriously into account.	0,260	< 0,001	Those not in WFC more often thought that the employers equally took into account the family problems of men and women. Those not in WFC less often thought that the employers took men's family problems more seriously into account.
My partner reproaches me when I have to stay longer at work or do some additional work at home	0,202	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often agreed that their partner reproached them	0,169	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often agreed that their partner reproached them

	Men			Women		
Variable[10]	Cramer's V	p	Difference	Cramer's V	p	Difference
Who takes care of the children at your home?	0,131	< 0,004	Those not in WFC more often said that "Always or most often another person living with us" took care of the children.		N.S.	
The office held by the respondent		N.S.		0,219	<0,008	Among those not in WFC there were more workers in physical labour.
Employment of the respondents		N.S.		0,215	< 0,001	Among those not in WFC there were more jobless women and those looking for work.
Education		N.S.		0,194	< 0,001	Those in WFC more often had higher education (57,6%), among women not in WFC higher education prevalence was 36,4%.
Whose income is higher in your family, yours or your partner's?		N.S.		0,153	<0,008	Those not in WFC did not answer this question more often. There were a bit more of those whose income was higher than their partner's in the group that faced the WFC.

In order to predict the dependent variables of the clash between the family and work roles of men and women the binary logistic regression analysis was carried out. In the case of analysis of men's answers, the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients are statistically significant ($p<0,0001$), $R^2 = 0.61$, percentage of correct classification is 81.6%. Variables significant at 0.05 level that predict the conflict between the family and work roles best are: the opportunity to use the working hours to settle personal or family matters, the employers' attitude toward the family problems of the company's employees, the understanding and sympathy of the partner, the opportunity to use flexible work schedule, the opportunity to work at home during work time, excessive working hours of the partner, the importance of work and family to the partner as well as the ability to pay somebody to tidy up the home and take care of the children.

In the case of regressive analysis of women's answers, the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients are statistically significant ($p<0.0001$), $R^2 = 0.49$, percentage of correct classification is 80%. Variables significant at 0.05 level that predict the WFC best are: conversation with the partner about how to better combine family and work matters, the number of children under 3 years of age

in the family, the employers' attitude toward the family problems of the company's employees, trust in partner (if I have to stay longer at work, my partner attempts to accommodate himself and takes full responsibility in the family), satisfaction with the distribution of household chores, excessive working hours of the partner, partner's reproaches when the woman has to stay longer at work or do some additional work at home.

EGALITARIAN FAMILIES: TRUE OR FALSE

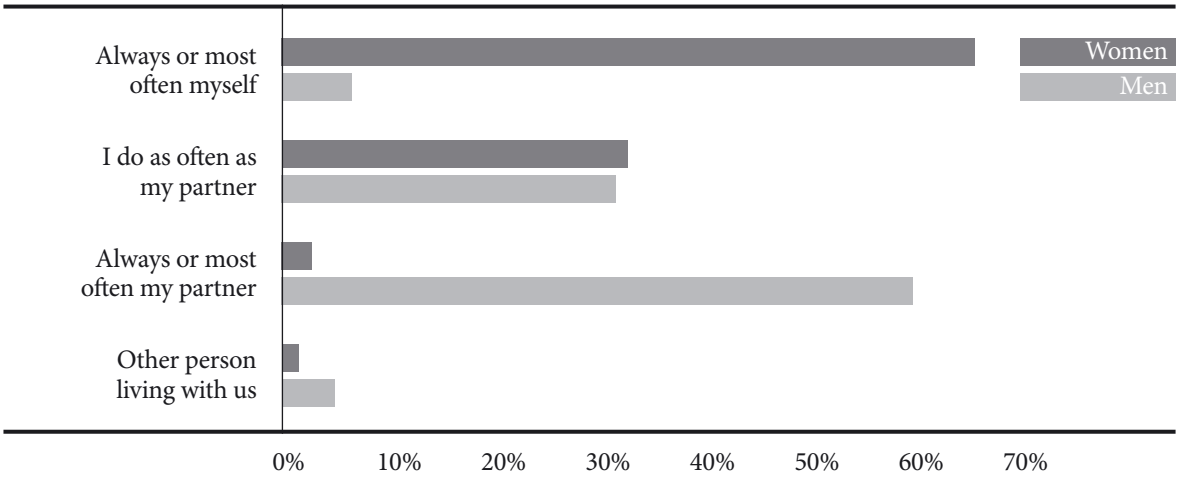
Half of the couples thought that their families were egalitarian. The rest three couples (couple No. 1, No. 2 and No. 6) assigned themselves to the intermediary family model between traditional and egalitarian families. In this kind of family, most childcare and household responsibilities fell on the women's shoulders. Lina (couple No. 1) argued that her husband helped her at home but not enough. Her husband indicated that his family enabled him to advance professionally because his wife took care of their child and household. His involvement in family affairs was minimal. Furthermore, he also expressed the view a woman could advance in her professional career only if it did not contradict her family responsibilities. Egidijus (couple No. 6) stated that he helped his wife in her household chores although she did most of them: she cooked, cleaned, did the laundry, etc. She even had to change diapers.

However, the data of the population survey demonstrate that Lithuanian women carry on the largest load of childcare:

Egalitarian families divided responsibilities in half. According to the interviewed men and women, both parents equally shared childcare responsibilities (looked after them or took children to day-care or school). For instance, Aurelija (couple No. 3.) shared family responsibilities with her husband equally. Her husband worked in shifts, thus he spent more time with their child than she did.

However, if we look at the division of household tasks between the interviewed couples, we see that women receive only supplementary help from their husbands in their domestic affairs. In Vilija's (couple No. 6) words, "before the birth of our child, we tried to do domestic work together but largely the household tasks are my responsibility. But my husband helps me." Rasa (couple No. 5) not only worked but also organized the household tasks. Only Aistė (couple No. 2) said that she

Figure 3. Who Looks after Children?



would do most of the household tasks before the birth of their child. Now her husband did most of this work (surprisingly she described her family as an intermediary between traditional and egalitarian). Andrius (couple No. 3) indicated that he did most household tasks since his work was more flexible and he spent more time at home than his wife.

The data from the population survey corroborate the findings of the interviews. For instance, the overwhelming majority of Lithuanian women prepare food at home:

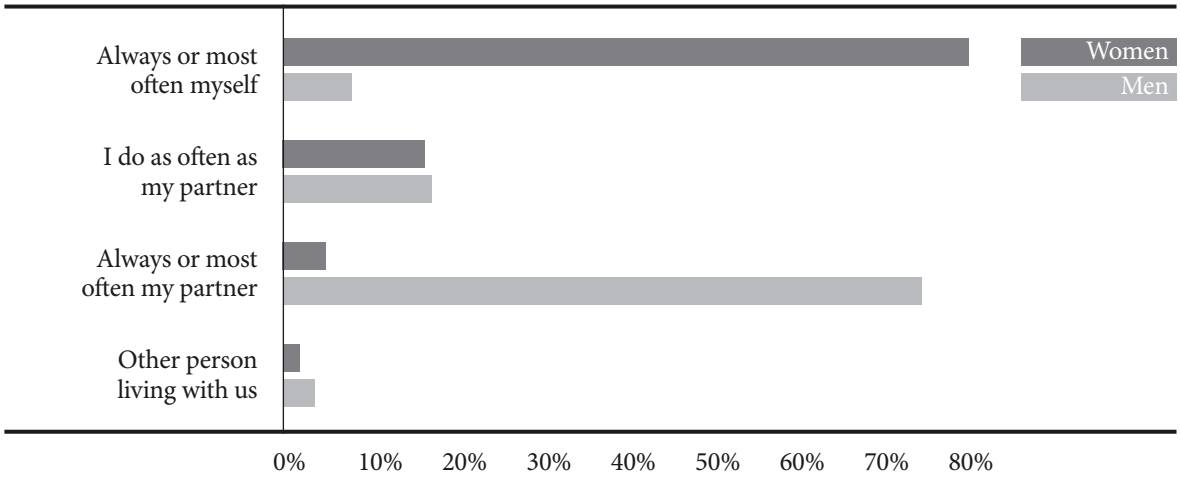
Similarly, more women clean home: 67.6% of women answered "always or most often me, myself", and 66.2% of men responded "always partner." Women most frequently shop for food (50.2% of them always did it, and 44.2% of men responded that their partners always or most frequently did it. However, 35% of the respondents, regardless of their sex, thought that both partners shared food shopping equally. The repair of home appliances was the only exclusive domain of men: 83.8% of men always repaired them; 79% of women stated that their partners did this kind of repair job at home. However, the statistical data from the same population survey demonstrate that 85% of Lithuanian women and 59.4% of men are unhappy about the above division of household tasks between partners.

Summarizing the division of childcare and household tasks between the women and men, we can argue that essentially only couples No. 3 and No. 4 have really egalitarian arrangements. For the rest of the families, the egalitarian family model was more a declared ideal than an accomplished reality. The presented statistical data corroborates this argument. However, in their responses about the different family models suitable for Lithuania, Lithuanian men and women "voted" for an egalitarian family model. 75.8% of women and 72.4% of men thought that the family model in which both parents had a well-paid job and equally shared household and childcare jobs was the most appropriate for the country.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE LITHUANIAN STATE

The respondents were asked about the potential and actual flexibility in their workplaces. Was it acceptable to arrive late or to leave early from work due to problems

Figure 4. Who Prepares Food in the Family?



regarding children? Did they consider their firms and companies family friendly? And if so, did they make use of the family supportive workplace policies: flexible schedules, parental leave, childcare supports, etc.? Did the respondents think that their employers and colleagues would find it acceptable if they left work early or arrived late due to childcare problems?

Most men (5) and women (5) indicated that their workplace was family friendly. Only Andrius (couple No. 3) was not aware whether his company was family friendly or not. Yet he could always leave his work in case of emergencies or could ask his co-workers to cover for him. Vilija (couple No. 6) was ambiguous towards her organization's family-friendliness. As a teacher, she had long holidays, and she usually finished her work early. On the other hand, she had to prepare for her lectures at home, and her pupils' parents occasionally would call with their questions and concerns. Thus, her free time at home would be diminished significantly. However, the same informant stated that the heads of her school were favourable to her raising children.

How did the respondents understand a family-friendly workplace? For most of them, the ability to work flexible hours and leave the job for personal reasons during their working time meant that their company was family friendly. Most respondents could take a leave if their children got sick or if they needed to run some family errands. They could negotiate and coordinate their working schedule with their employers. Egidijus (couple No. 6) described his company as family friendly because during holidays, his employer distributed gifts to employees' children. For him, it meant that the company cared for the family. However, it became clear from his further answers that his company was not particularly family friendly: he could not always leave in case of family emergencies: "… Sometimes it happens that they won't let me to leave at all or let me leave when I don't want to…" Once he had to take a leave to look after his child because his wife had some business to attend, and then he had to make up for his leave at work.

Most respondents emphasized the family-friendly attitudes of employers that helped them combine their work and family. But the interviewed also indicated that family-friendly policies were usually negotiated on interpersonal level and that much depended on the employers' goodwill and benevolence. No respondents spoke of organizational policies towards family established at their workplace. The conducted interviews indicate that the respondents have a rather limited understanding of what a family-friendly workplace consists of.

Family is a strong motivation for a longer break from work for women but not for men. Although most men said that their employers' attitude towards their taking a short sick leave was positive, they thought differently about a longer childcare leave. The men did not feel as secure about the employers' view of men taking an extended paternity leave. Arvydas (couple No. 4) did not think that he could take a paternity leave, and if he did he would be replaced by another employee. He also added that Lithuanian employers were not family-friendly particularly with regard to paternity or maternity leave. It was impossible for a man to take a paternity leave because of his fear to lose the job. We can conclude, from the collected evidence, that in the workplace the attitudes towards women taking a childcare leave were more favourable than those towards men taking a leave. Men taking a childcare leave were taken less seriously than those who did not. It was assumed that men would be penalized if they took time off work to care for children. But by using family-friendly policies, men did not want their earning reduced, i. e. to weaken their role as breadwinners. They also did not want to be perceived as uncommitted to their jobs or non-masculine.

As the respondents' experience demonstrated, small companies were more family-friendly than large ones. Lina (couple No. 1) thought that her firm was family-friendly because it was small. She argued that it would be different in a large organization. Citing her friends' examples, she was convinced that there were very few family-friendly companies in Lithuania (cites examples of her friends). Her experience at her previous job in a big firm confirmed this view: there she could not leave work when her child was sick or needed to be picked up from a kindergarten. According to Edgaras (couple No.

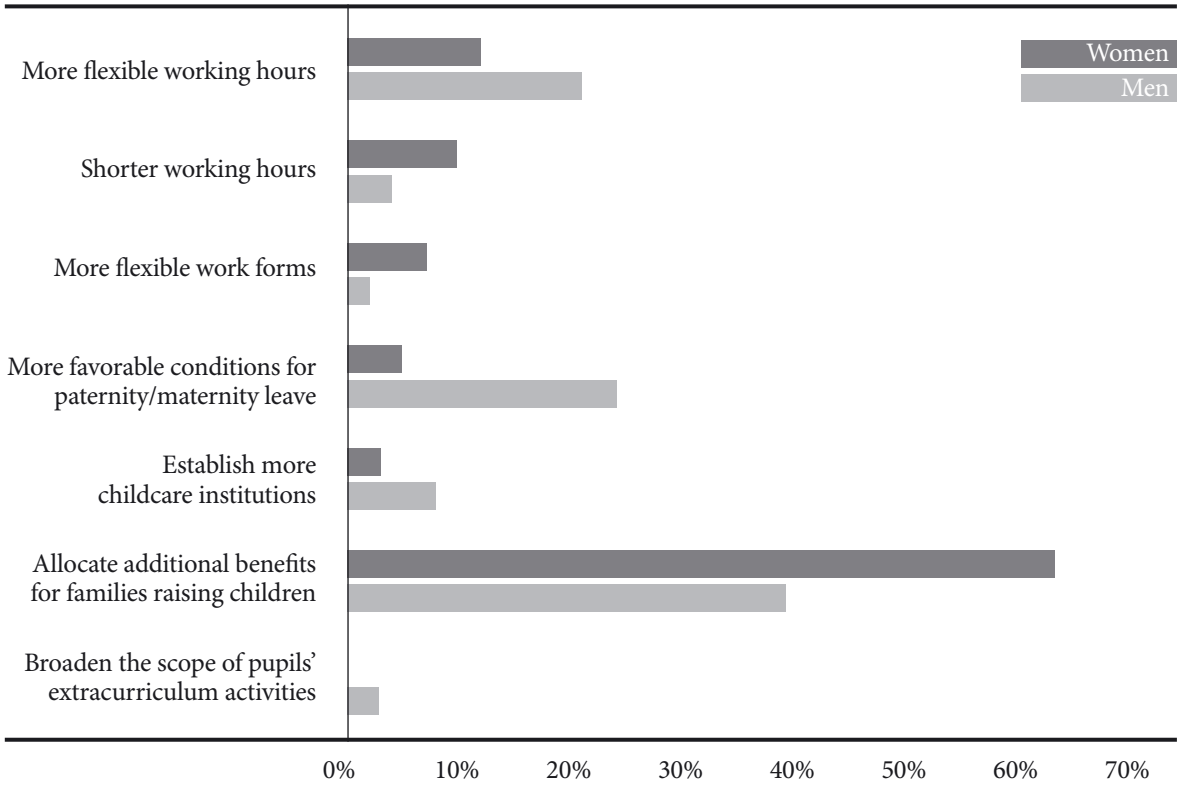
2), in a big company less attention is paid to an employee and his needs.

All respondents were rather negative towards the lack of good family policies in Lithuania. Most thought that the state should get more involved in the issue of family-work reconciliation. Lina (couple No. 1) wanted to have working hours shortened with a salary sufficient to survive. Aistė (couple No. 2) and Almantas (couple No. 5) thought that the Lithuanian state was not family-friendly: the state support for family was meagre, and child benefits were extremely small. In Almantas's view, "family is not a value" in our state. Because of the lack of efficient family policies, family–friendly workplace and state support currently experienced a demographic crisis in Lithuania.

The survey demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of the Lithuanian population (62.8% of women and 39.1% of men) favour additional family benefits over flexible work forms, more favourable conditions for paternity/maternity leave or shorter working hours. It is not surprising: overall benefits for families with children remain relatively small, and women are forced to rely not on the state but on their partners or the market (Paluckienė 2000: 98).

Family policy in Lithuania lacks a long term strategy; it

Figure 5. In your opinion, which of the following measures would help parents to balance family and work responsibilities?



is often incompatible with the current social, economic and demographic situation; the cooperation of policy makers, researchers and society in formulating this policy is insufficient (Stankūnienė, Eidukienė et al. 2001, 58; Stankūnienė 2001). The family support system does not sufficiently help both mothers and fathers to combine work with family responsibilities. In our view, the above cited Lithuanian population's responses mirror the lack of consistent and well-grounded family policy in the country and a weak public awareness of the issue of work-family reconciliation.

LACK OF GOOD PRACTICES IN BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

For most respondents, the question about their good practices at reconciling work and family was most difficult. In most cases, it remained unarticulated or in the state of aspiration. As Vilija (couple No. 6) put it, her individual strategy was based on the idea that her family was more important than her work: "You can change work but your family remains your family." Thus, a good strategy is the lack of it altogether.

Aurelija (couple No. 3) thought that her strategy of balancing work and family consisted of two things: 1) she almost never works overtime; and 2) her husband helps her considerably. Genutė (couple No. 4) kept her job separately from the family life: this way she would never bring her work problems home and her family problems to her job. The interviewed men typically pursued productive careers with marriage and children without conflict since their wives and partners took care of a large part of their family responsibilities.

As the interviews demonstrate, the Lithuanian women and men experiencing the conflicting demands of work and family roles and seeking to achieve a better balance between them are left alone in the country. No state or organizational policies helped them to do it. Both men and women wanting flexibility in their jobs and more assertive governmental policies supporting family face a limited number of choices in Lithuania. For most of them, the good practices consisted of the traditional gender arrangements: women trying to adjust their careers to their family needs, and men sacrificing their families for the sake of work (in one respondent's words, "more money, better the family").

MAIN OBSTACLES THAT IMPEDE GENDER-BALANCED RECONCILIATION OF FAMILY AND WORK ROLES

The European institutions have placed special emphasis on combating gender inequalities in public and private spheres. In the course of the 1990s, the EU moved beyond its previous emphasis on equal treatment on labour markets by embracing both positive actions and gender mainstreaming. This ambitious approach confronts various national welfare systems with respect to their diverging gendered welfare paths. The specific national cultural contexts, welfare and employment systems, discussions and measures undertaken during the last decade have already transformed gendered social and employment policies and have led to divergent national paths in pursuit of equality between the sexes. The reconciliation of family and work roles is one of the major topics on the European social agenda brought to the forefront by the increasing labour market participation of women, changing family forms and the demographic pressure from ageing population (Reconciliation 2005). Yet countries differ in their policy responses reflected in ideological and cultural, institutional, political or legal arrangements.

The way reconciliation policy has been implemented reflects partly the dominant role played by the combination of different ideological, cultural, institutional, political and legal factors. The dominant patterns of gendered division of labour, gender relations and gender contract are the major obstacles to the implementation of the gender balanced reconciliation policy in the country. The dominant androcentric ideology explains that despite women's more active role in the labour market and men's increasing roles in homemaking and childcare, there is still unequal value attached to feminine and masculine jobs and this remains the core of the labour market

segregation of women. Moreover, women account for an absolute majority of recipients of parental leave in Lithuania (98.8% in 2005). The predominant models of gender relations are in most cases the result of previous conceptions of the cornerstone of society (family or single persons) and the role played by the state (Behning, Pascual 2001). In Lithuania the family has long been the cornerstone of society; the society is organized around a gender concept based on natural differences and complementarity between men and women. The dominant gender model in the country has had an impact on integration of women into the labour market through its effect on the attitudes and orientations of male and female in the working life and family matters. As many research materials demonstrate, for men the understanding of public recognition and respect is very much related to their role in the labour market, while for women these are closely linked with being a good mother and fulfilling family obligations (Purvaneckienė 2001). The policy orientations in the national action plans of equal opportunities between women and men have been exclusively focused on women alone (their integration, aspirations and socialization into public life) and have uncritically adopted standard forms of male work and traditional male roles (e. g., orientations aimed at changing men's attitudes to work have been absent). Women have been measured by male standards. The most recent initiatives[11] have emphasized the importance of integrating men into the efforts to achieve gender equality as well as the need to change male attitudes.

Although the national gender equality policy has concentrated mainly on equal opportunities and women empowerment, gender inequality goes further. It is, in fact, the result of the patriarchal order reflected in the gender contract and policy measures. Ideological factors, such as the predominant concepts of valued work, skills, care, public vs. private, etc., need to be addressed at the same time (Behning, Pascual 2001). The standard male concept prevailing in the orientation of national gender policy has had important undesired effects.

One way to tackle ideological obstacles is to make gender inequality more visible. Very few efforts have been made on the political level in the country to make these inequalities visible. There are no specific policies to assess the gender impact of old and new policies, to develop good statistics and research on gender impact or to promote discussions on the issues that are taken for granted.

Gender contract model is not the result of ideological assumptions alone but also of the structure of welfare state and the institutionalized policies of social protection promoted by the state. As Behning and Pascual (2001) state, public intervention plays a central role in the regulation of social inequalities. The structure and the role of the welfare state (e. g, institutionalized care, paternity benefits' policy, single mothers' support system, etc.) are influenced by and at the same time reinforce gender assumptions. Three main governmental policies have been introduced on the EU level with a view of facilitating the reconciliation of family and work roles: the provision of public care infrastructures by the state, the provision of parental leave arrangements and the development of new patterns of working time.

Good infrastructure of public day care is the main factor for equality success in the Nordic countries. In Lithuania the number of public childcare facilities started to decrease after the collapse of the soviet system and rebirth of the retraditionalization of gender roles. It was reflected in some steps taken to reduce public childcare facilities, even family benefits. Decreasing fertility rate as well as increasing prices for childcare services also made an impact, but even more, reflected an outcome of the restructuring of public social services (Purvaneckienė 2003). Since 1990s women in Lithuania have been suffering lack of adequate and qualitative care facilities for children[12] and elderly, losing their social benefits, as well as the fertility rate has been decreasing drastically. The attendance of child care facilities is particularly low among children under 3 years old[13] and in rural areas. The cultural norms regarding motherhood and the proper way to care for young children also limit the use of public day care centres. The nationally representative survey of 2003 *Evaluation of Population-Related Policy* shows that the population basically view the growth of state provided financial

support and other economic forms of family support allowing women to raise children up to 3 years of age at home as a priority (Stankūnienė et al 2003).

Several problems can be observed regarding this equality strategy. It takes the traditional male role model as a norm. Gender mainstreaming demands not only equal participation and representation in socially valued activities, but also the readjustment of androcentric measurements of what constitutes social value (Fraser 1994). The problems related to the financing of social security systems with a sharp decrease in fertility rates as well as stress and work overload associated with this type of work profile are often overlooked. The economic and social benefits of men's more active involvement in childcare is even less visible.

An alternative way of organizing caring work is through provision of parental leave and caregiver allowances. In many countries these policies aim to change work practices and the organization of work in order to make it more family–friendly (e. g., through the introduction of flexible parental leave schemes). In the current legal basis of Lithuania the parental leave is framed as a family right (not individual or non-transferable entitlement). Consequently, women account for the absolute majority of recipients of parental leave in Lithuania[14]. The main problem with this regulation is that there are no incentives for men to opt for such leaves.

Among the factors determining the take-up of parental leave the Lithuanian varient is related to traditional gender roles' model. Even though the public opinion says that the level of payment affects which of the parents will take up parental leave[15], but at the same time women are still expected to care for small children, irrespective of their income. Moreover, this social role model often underlines organizational culture (Reconciliation 2005). The interviews of employers show that they have quite negative attitudes towards the men's right to take parental leave. The evidence of discrimination of young, unmarried, childless (with the prospect of having children) or pregnant women is also available in the country. Both genders suffer from unsupportive and even discriminatory organizational cultures when it comes to the take-up of parental leave in Lithuania. Lack of flexibility in the take-up of parental leave[16] is another factor which impedes women's career prospects and the development of a more family-friendly organizational culture. Flexibility may facilitate the parallel strategy in the sense that parents care for a child and participate in the labour market simultaneously (Reconciliation 2005). This in turn may affect a more balanced share of gender roles and more engaged fatherhood. Many countries in Europe (Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, etc.) offer parents the opportunity to take up leave in periods, usually as an individual and non-transferable entitlement, instead of taking up the leave by one person all at once. Finally, the length of leaves and take-up rates are also determined by job guarantees for employees taking up parental leave. According to the Lithuanian Labour Code, the employer has to secure the position for the employee who is on parental leave for the first year. The evidence exists that women often return to labour market before one year expiries in order to preserve their jobs or lose their positions when they are back in one year. This behaviour varies according to the level of qualification. Highly qualified women leave their jobs for shorter periods than women with lower qualifications. Those also encounter more problems when they want to re-enter the labour market afterwards. The difference in labour market sectors plays a significant role as well. The public sector seems to give women and men more security during the parental leave than private labour market sectors. The research materials show that the guarantees in the private sector are often predetermined by the informal agreements between employers and employees and depend on employers' will to preserve the employee or even employers' gender attitudes or his/her sensitivity to family issues. Usually the time and costs associated with finding replacements, especially in smaller enterprises, are considered to be a costly affair for the employer of a private sector.

In some countries, the national regulations of paternity leaves are extended or supplemented by companies, with regards to the length and flexibility of the provision or the level of payment, although on a rather limited scale. In Lithua-

nia the role of employers in providing leave is not known.

The provision of parental leave arrangements as a major reconciliation strategy in the country encounters several problems related to equal opportunities. The fact that leave regulations imply by definition distance from labour market and instead facilitate care time makes these regulations sensitive to the risk of reinforcing a traditional role share related to care and work. There is a vast difference, probably the biggest in Europe, in the take up of leave between women and men in Lithuania. Secondly, the duration of the leave taken up by men is in most cases shorter, thus less pronounced in the labour market impact. Women are under much higher risk to damage their career paths and lose earnings. Thirdly, women encounter many more problems at the re-employment stage. Even though the return rate of female leave takers in Lithuania is relatively high, part of them continue on a part time basis after return, others are left outside the labour market. The economic necessity is an important determining factor of high female leave-takers' return rate in Lithuania.

The involvement of men in childcare should be promoted by specific arrangements, e. g., paternity leave[17], or specific regulations with regard to fathers' take up of parental leave. Many countries rely on the fact that parental leave rights are individualized (non-transferable) and/or on the fact that parental leave is paid. The fathers' use of parental leave is particularly low if parental leave is organized along family lines and not well-paid (Reconciliation 2005).

Another institutional obstacle that impedes the moves towards better reconciliation of family and work roles is the underdevelopment of more flexible work and family-friendly working time in the country. The evidence exists that women are mostly subject to different forms of flexible working arrangement, thus are subject to economic dependence (inequality in terms of income, responsibility and power) which part time implies. On the grounds of the Western experiences it is crucial to go for such a scenario, which guarantees much better gender balance of public and private roles and stands for a dual-breadwinner/dual-caregiver model.

At the European level, the most flexible working time arrangements[18] are settled at the level of the enterprise. The involvement of employers in the development of this dimension is expanding in Europe. According to the data of the Department of Statistics in Lithuania, during the first quarter of 2006, 14% of women and 10% of men worked on part-time basis in the country. In Lithuania flexible working time arrangements are regulated at the level of national legislation that applies to all employees with special provisions for working parents[19]. Nevertheless, the incidence of flexible working time arrangements is low in the country (higher in the more qualified positions, namely intellectual and scientific occupations). There is a limited number of jobs (mainly in the service sector) that accept part-time work. Moreover, the flexible working time is mainly seen in the patterns of shift workers. The research data show that flexible arrangements are usually not contractually agreed on or regulated by formal policies in place. In many cases specific arrangements are subject to informal agreements between employer and employees. The employers are usually more responsive to women who are in need for arrangements at work due to family obligations. Such informal regulations in a way facilitate the reconciliation of family and work roles of concrete individuals at concrete workplaces. The political strategy aiming to promote equal opportunities at work and at home does not exist.

This short overview of the institutional obstacles shows that various positive measures have been elaborated on the national level to improve women's access to employment and their role conflict, but they tend to be based on gender stereotypes that are taken for granted and fail to tackle the ideological roots of the problem, dealing more with symptoms. Moreover, they focus exclusively on women rather than taking a broader approach to individual rights. Men are only passingly targeted by policies for reconciling work and caring. According to Fraser (1994), an adequate implementation of gender mainstreaming implies dismantling the gendered opposition between breadwinning and care-giving and integrating activities that are currently separated in the relationship

of opposition. One key condition is that those roles and their cultural coding be deconstructed. As Behning and Pascual (2001) put it, ideological and institutional obstacles are thus two faces of the same coin.

The way gender equality policy has been implemented reflects partly the role played by the political obstacles as well. Adequate implementation of gender balanced reconciliation policies requires gender perspective in all decision-making processes. The participation of women at all levels is crucial for transforming the gender contract. Moreover, those who are employed to work on equal opportunities' national action plans or monitoring of programs ought to have a certain amount of knowledge on gender issues. The implementation of equal opportunities policy in the country can be identified as a top-down strategy, when government institutions and actors are taking over responsibilities related to equality between the sexes without specifically including actors from the women's movement or taking into account culturally constructed gender identities. As Novikova (2004) states, the Baltic governments have made a clear political choice by selecting an expert-bureaucratic model for implementing gender mainstreaming. Assessing gender impact is regarded as a task to be performed by administrators. Although they may be thoroughly familiar with the policy-making process and the policy area in question, they are unlikely to possess a highly developed understanding of gender relations or a proper appreciation of the exact purpose of gender impact assessment (Beverige et al 2000,390 cited in Novikova 2004). Such an expert-bureaucratic model set up a legitimate premise for marginalizing women's advocates and gender researchers in the country. According to Behning and Pascual (2001), unless women were allowed to participate in the political processes developing those strategies (bottom-up approach), a great deal of knowledge and implementation opportunities could be lost.

Moreover, the fact that gender balanced reconciliation strategies should not focus on women only but also have to address men's and masculinity issues can involve the risk of the diffusion of responsibility and the negation of specific equal opportunities' structures (if equality becomes everybody's concern). This demonstrates the need to define gender equality aims in terms of a dual track strategy which complements existing equality strategies rather than replacing them (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000).

Another important aspect is the inter-connection of the above mentioned factors (ideological, institutional, political) with the prevailing regulatory framework. One of the first trends in the battle for equal opportunities has concentrated mainly on providing a regulatory framework. However, good legislation is not enough for implementing an adequate regulatory framework. The legalistic approach focusing only on establishing rights and procedures does not necessarily lead to equality of outcomes (Rees 1998). The weak results of the current legal framework in Lithuania, which basically respects the principles of non-discrimination, are the consequence of the lack of involvement of social partners, low prevalence of labour unions and their weak role, low representation of women in the decision making processes and the prevailing weight of preconceptions about gender. When considering the reconciliation policy, the country clearly lacks the adequate anti-discriminatory legislative framework for dealing with gender inequalities (e.g., vertical and horizontal gender segregation of the labour market, discrimination of pregnant or young and childless women at work, the impact of job insecurity and atypical forms of employment for women).

The discussion shows that the national reconciliation policy is quite fragmented and not based on the study of the complex circumstances, involving gender differences. Moreover, it is impeded by the lack of cooperation amongst the various departments and levels. An adequate strategy for the promotion of equal opportunities requires a multi-disciplinary approach geared to the simultaneous tackling of ideological, institutional, political and legal obstacles According to Sjorup (2001), one of the most important problems with the implementation of gender equality policies is that the main focus on fitting women into a status quo means that no proposals are made for changing values and priorities. Gender sensitive policy requires an emphasis on socially

constructed gender inequalities at work and in the home and how to ensure women's economic independence and more equal sharing of domestic roles. As Behning and Pascual (2001, 13) assert:

The recent efforts to integrate women into the labour market stem from the efforts to safeguard the social insurance systems at a time when all European societies are facing the problem of ageing. However, unless these policies are accompanied by increased efforts to reorganize and secure the flexibilisation of working life, build up qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient care services and policies (mainly in the fiscal field) which strengthen the equal sharing of work in the private sphere, the problem will become even greater.

Many authors have stressed the importance of understanding women's and men's social rights which focus on citizenship rather than on employment or marital status related issues as well as the need to include men as the subjects of identity change in the strategies relating to gender equality.

CONCLUSIONS

As our research demonstrates, substantial number of the interviewed men and women experience conflicts arising from the intersection of work and family roles. Yet only very few acknowledge these conflicts. However, the interviews reveal a series of indicators of work-family tensions. First of all, most male respondents complain that hectic work schedules create difficulties in fulfilling family duties and household tasks. Women lack time for themselves. Men and women's exhaustion and fatigue also point to the difficulty and their stress in combining work and family roles. Some respondents state that they don't have any personal life; it becomes absorbed by either work or family responsibilities. These factors negatively affect the quality of the respondents' family life and family responsibilities. The issue of time, particularly working hours, is a significant predicator of ease vs. difficulty in reconciling work and family life. The need for greater availability of flexible working arrangements is clearly felt in the interviews.

Men and women have different strategies for coping with the demands of their lives. Women attempt to conduct several tasks at once and adapt their professional requirements to family needs while men are rather "single-tasked", separating different life spheres, work, childcare and free time. The interviewed men emphasize their breadwinner's role. The priority of work is evident in their responses, although not always explicitly stated. Because of gender roles and gendered expectations men have much difficulty in imagining that they could reduce their work load. Men do more overtime work, and more women have part-time jobs. Thus, men feel a disadvantage in the family because of their work, and women experience a disadvantage in the labour market since they have to spend more time with their children. The data from the population survey demonstrate that more women (69.8%) than men (30.2%) experience a work-family conflict.

Although half of the couples describe their families as egalitarian, women usually have a larger share of family responsibilities. Mothers carried out significantly more of the domestic and childcare tasks at home than fathers. The current unequal gender distribution of family responsibilities is treated as a given in the conducted interviews. Lithuania does not differ much from other European countries. As Fine-Davis and Fagnani argue,

… gender roles and attitudes do not keep pace with the reality of people's lives. Paternal involvement in childcare and domestic work is still low, mothers taking its largest load. Women's ambivalence towards greater involvement of their husbands or partners in family affairs should also be emphasized. The similar gender asymmetry has been noticed in other European countries (2004, 86-87).

The 2006 statistical data corroborate the findings of the conducted interviews: the overwhelming majority of the Lithuanian women prepare food, clean and look after children. Although the majority of the Lithuanian citizens (75.8% of women and 72.4% of men) favour the egalitarian family model, it remains more a declared ideal than an accomplished reality.

Another significant factor in balancing the competing demands of work and family roles is the attitudes towards

family in the workplace. Most respondents indicate that their companies are family friendly. However, the family-friendliness of their companies is usually limited to their taking a short leave from work in case of family emergencies and occasionally working flexible hours. Employers' gifts to employees' children on holidays are also considered as a sign of family-friendly attitudes in the workplace. However, the interviewed men do not feel as secure about the employers' view of men taking an extended paternity leave. They think that an extended childcare leave can endanger their careers.

The interviewed men and women defined work and family not only as their personal problem but also as a wider problem of their employers, society and state. However, currently in order to find a satisfactory balance between the family and work, they are forced to negotiate their needs only with their employers on interpersonal level (there are no coherent organizational policies in this regard). According to most respondents, the Lithuanian state does not provide families with a sufficient support. Efficient family policies are lacking in the country, and employers are not interested in creating a family-friendly workplace.

It can be argued that most of the barriers to the achievement of work-family balance are related to cultural norms and ideologies prevalent both in work organizations and the larger society. The male respondents feel a constant pressure to put work needs ahead of their personal or family needs in order to achieve career advancement. On the contrary, women feel a pressure to put family responsibilities first sacrificing, at least temporarily, their career possibilities. Both work culture and traditional gender roles prevalent in society do not provide men and women "with sufficient flexibility and authority to manage the tensions that arise at the intersection of their work and family lives" (Parasuraman and Greenhaus 1997a: 233).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reconciling work and family responsibilities is a major concern in both industrialized and developing countries. The work-family balance is emerging as one of the most important social issues in Lithuania. Public, social and family policies in facilitating equal opportunities and quality life for women and men play a critically important role. Employees, employers and the larger community are affected by the work-family conflict. Thus, the responsibility for developing effective ways of managing this conflict is a shared one. It is paradox that despite the publicly proclaimed importance of family in Lithuania, direct government support or government-mandated private sector support for work-family issues is minimal.

The findings of the research do not lend themselves to simple policy solutions. Rather they raise some very crucial issues that need careful consideration at many levels in order to help workers to adjust to social change and to provide new opportunities for balanced and sustainable growth and social equality. The study highlights the potential contradictions between globalization and work intensification on the one hand and the need for time to care about children and others, in gender equitable ways, on the other hand. It also brings to the forefront the ideological, cultural, institutional, political and legal obstacles that impede the smooth implementation of family-friendly policies and gender mainstreaming.

What are the ways to resolve the conflicts and challenges faced by men and women in pursuing productive careers and satisfying family lives? On the most general level, the task of elaborating new social models and standards in organizations needs to take place with the full participation of all social partners. There is a need to extend the public discourse through a focused debate and collaboration between government, employers, trade unions, NGOs and others. Moreover, the social partners need to take a long-term approach to encourage socially sustainable work to support parents in their paid work and caring work and support sustainable societies in the future. Gender mainstreaming in policy-making is essential (Transitions 2006).

Nevertheless, the following are the tentative measures emerging from the conducted research about the ways in which social policy, employers, unions or NGOs can set the necessary conditions for multi level supports for family-friendly and gender sensitive policies at work :

- Employment policies need to take into account the changing experiences of work and intensification of workloads.
- National governments, together with the social partners should develop a national vision and strategy on the importance of good and equally shared parenthood, responsibilities of mothers and fathers, needs of children and on the importance of children for long-term national welfare.
- The Lithuanian governmental agencies must realize that balancing work and family is not a women's issue but rather an issue of both sexes.
- To urge that the government should implement a variety of family-friendly programs, for instance, flexible work arrangements, alternative career tracks, place-of-work flexibility (work at home, working in more than one place), and job sharing. To extend greater flexibility for all workers, men and women.
- To insist the government to issue a regulation that family-friendly measures should be recorded in the organizations' rules and regulations. Organizations should be obliged to implement theses measures and support the values of work-family reconciliation.
- Public campaigns should be organized to encourage men to get more involved in family matters. Men must overcome a sizable gender gap with regard to a division of labour within the home an must share household chores with women equally.
- Public awareness campaigns are essential in order to demonstrate that employers win in assisting their employers in balancing their work and family responsibilities. By implementing family-friendly policies productivity is increased and turnover costs are reduced. Implementing family-friendly policies can help to attract employees from a larger part of the labour force. Employer sponsored on-site day care should be established.
- More attention should be directed to regulations pertaining to the care-intensive earlier years of child development, i.e., on maternity protection, childcare leaves and institutional childcare options. The emphasis on the time immediately after birth seems necessary. However, this certainly does not mean that regulations that go beyond that (leave regulations for the care of sick children, care of school age children, etc.) are less important for a balanced reconciliation of work and family obligations.
- Better care facilities for children, especially under age of 3, in the country would promote the reconciliation of work and family life.
- More research should be sponsored on the conflicts and challenges faced by men and women in pursuing productive careers and satisfying family lives.
- Employers need to be aware of the contradictions between work intensification and the needs of parents and children. This is not just an issue of goodwill – it is crucial to the future of our society.
- Organizations must recognize that work-family issues involve work as much as family and that the resolution of work-family conflicts can improve the long-term effectiveness of the organization.
- Organizations must focus on accomplishments rather than on time in order to balance their employees' work and family commitments regardless of the location of their work.
- Employers, managers and trade unions should develop active strategies to support fathers as well as mothers in negotiating work and family boundaries.

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Modern Women and Men: Going Beyond the Housewife and Working Man Stereotype in Italy

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INTRODUCTION

The extraordinary social impact produced by the increasing participation in working life of Italian women has been the focus of much attention. In line with the trends recorded in all industrialised countries, women increasingly consider work as an integral part of their personal identity. This is testified by the fact that female participation in the labour market has been growing for over a decade especially in the central age groups, i.e. in the 29 to 45 age group, where family work load is heaviest; the same age group that in the past coincided with the more or less definite exit of Italian women from extra-domestic work. Nevertheless, the Italian labour market continues to present strong differences in the participation rate of men and women[1]. It should also be noted that labour participation average rates are affected by Italy's continuing "territorial dualism", and by the difficulties that women have in finding jobs in the south of the country[2]. In this context, however, labour participation propensity expressed by women in differing age groups should also be taken into account. Also as a consequence of improved female schooling[3], especially in the country's more developed areas, participation differentials are markedly lower among the younger generations of women and men of similar age groups.

On the other hand, as numerous sources have often highlighted (Villa, 2006, Piazza, 2003), most changes involved directly young women, their scale of values and attitude to education[4], work and family life. In-depth speculation on the social changes underway (Paci, 2005) shed light on the balanced approached of the younger generations to work, education and social relations, considered as spheres of life that no one is willing to sacrifice. These are the symptoms of a profound cultural change that crosses all spheres of public and private life and concern both men and women. Thus even within the Italian context, where profound gender inequalities persist, it does appear that "even as far as man is concerned things have been changing over the past ten years, for the macho man commonplace is waning. Most men also want to show feelings and weaknesses" (Beck, 1996). If we observe the changes of male attitudes regarding the sharing of domestic work with their partners, the situation, at least going by information currently available, is not too comforting. And the social dynamic leading to a substantial equality between men and women in Italian society appears to be, for the time being, "a social invention"

(Piazza, 2003) because, although female labour market participation are on the rise, family care work continues to be squarely on their shoulders.

The disproportion with respect to men is enormous: as much as 77.7% of the time dedicated by couples to family work and care and to household chores falls on women[5]. Compared to the Eighties, this percentage is actually an improvement, although not a very significant one. At that time, in fact, 85.5% of the time dedicated to family care was borne by women, barely a 7 percentage point improvement.

On the other hand, 83% of women's working time is dedicated to the family, while as much as 77.1% of men's overall working time is dedicated to paid work and just 23% to family work.

It is no coincidence in fact that in Italian specialised literature the term "reconciliation" is explicitly gender-related, because "reconciliation for women means striking a 'correct' balance between various roles (as a mother, wife and worker) and responsibilities (reproductive and productive) aimed at making salaried work viable" (Gherardi, Poggio, 2005). Insofar as addressed exclusively to the female gender, it is a notion that maintains the traditional division of labour, as if the issue of reconciliation were something to be tackled exclusively by women and not as a social problem. It is for this reason that the ambiguity of the term is increasingly coming under close scrutiny (Piazza, 2003). The ongoing debate at a European level shows that the issue of reconciliation must be referred to a work/life balance that "stresses the possibility of choice and the impediments that arise in the organisation of private and working life and the way they reciprocally affect each other over the years and the various phases of life, but also in the positive personal development within the family" (Trefiletti, 2006).[6]

It would be highly beneficial if the message coming from women were to be developed in a multi-presence and multi-activity perspective for everyone (Paci, 2005), i.e. in a balanced participation in all the various phases of life.

This option continues to be substantially unexplored in Italian society notwithstanding the implementation of a normative framework (Law n. 53/2000) that addresses not only women or maternity but also broader issues, such as the time taken up by family care, educational obligations and the city. Law 53 encourages life/work balance by widening the range of needs, and also by acknowledging the right to men to take care of their children or other family members that may require assistance. Yet, the expectations raised with the implementation of the law have substantially not been met: abstention from work on the part of men to dedicate their time for the care of their children continues to be rare. According to official figures, only 7% of fathers have taken parental leave during the child's first two years of life[7]. The percentage of those who are entitled to facultative abstention from work for parental leave is thus very modest and mostly involves affluent classes. Parental leave continues to be viewed as essentially "something that concerns women" (Prati S. et al. 2003).

The emphasis that often accompanies the evaluation of the opportunities offered by the law governing parental leave should, nevertheless, be monitored and verified. Although with differing percentages, the law's beneficiaries in all countries are predominantly women. This strongly gender-driven recourse to the law contributes to the maintaining of sexual inequalities and discrimination. Substantially speaking, "parental leave has so far not changed the traditional view that it is women who have the duty to take care of very young children" (Donati, 2005).

In reality, the theme of a balanced relationship between family life and work requires to be tackled against a broader backdrop, taking into account the factors that come into play and the way these relate to each other. On the one hand, there is the need to keep a close watch not only on the possibilities and conditions offered by national labour systems but also on family care support systems that families can rely on.

Faced with the persisting rigidity of gender division within family responsibilities – made even tougher by the changes in the population structure, which has led to a further increase of the work dedicated to the care of

a constantly ageing population, and by the shortcomings of personal assistance public services – the majority of Italian women appear to be alone, forced to find ways to reconcile contrasting demands and to rely on the crucial help of grandparents and on the informal work of immigrants.

However, what aggregate figures fail to reveal is whether couples succeed in stimulating a dialogue aimed at negotiating new strategies – strategies based on rational choices rather than on the perpetuation of stereotypical roles. In Beck's words, the question to be asked is the degree in which there prevails among Italian men the illusion "that the cake can be eaten twice" … and how much "they consider man-woman equality as perfectly reconcilable within the old division of labour (specifically in their case)" (Beck, 1996). Or maybe the question to be asked is whether the structural constraints that persist in the Italian labour market, in the welfare system, represent an obstacle to the diffusion of a labour division practice involving men and women as entailed by social behavioural patterns?

It is to provide an answer to these questions that a complex field investigation was conducted and whose results will be outlined in the following pages. The research investigated objective aspects linked to the conditions of and problems faced by men and women as they quest an often elusive work life balance, and to values and attitudes. Significant efforts were made to pinpoint novelties as well as critical areas in the modernisation process leading to the redefinition of male and female roles in Italy, and also to verify if men have made new demands and if there are new labour division models within families, and what policies Italians demand for the diffusion of these new models.

INVESTIGATION TOOLS: QUESTIONNAIRES AND IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The data and reflections illustrated in the following pages are the outcome of two parallel investigations that interacted with each other: a quantitative investigation relying on a standardised questionnaire with closed answers distributed to 1,000 men and women, and on a series of in-depth interviews with several couples, selected to represent specific couple models. In addition, several corporate cases were considered in view of the way the issues under review were treated.

Quantitative analysis

The quantitative survey was conducted on a sample comprising approximately 984 persons, almost evenly distributed among men and women (respectively 48.4% and 51.6% of the total) and in representation of a specific segment of the population. The sample involved persons with children who are under-15, live together as a couple and who both work. We have opted not to include in the survey those cases in which only one parent works, assuming that the division of family care tasks in such instances is markedly less contradictory, as most of it is naturally entrusted to the parent who does not work, i.e. to the woman in a predominantly large majority, barring very rare exceptions. The situation is totally different when there is imbalance among the two parents, i.e. when one of the parents – generally the mother – must take up the burden of working in the job market and in the care of the family.

The interviews were conducted throughout the national territory in a proportional way, covering as much as possible all age groups. Obviously, very young couples were excluded (those who still do not have children) or much older ones (generally with children who are above 15). Consequently, under-35 respondents were 17.3%, while the over-45s were 25.6%. Those belonging to the 35-to-44 age group represented just under 60% of the sample. Generally speaking, the women were on an average younger than the men.

In line with national population figures, and with the fact that couples were chosen on the basis that both parents worked, schooling levels were relatively high: 48% had a high-school diploma and 23% a university degree or a similar specialisation. On the contrary, schooling level was lower in the rest of the respondents, with just under a third (28.8%) finishing compulsory school.

The frequency of men who have university degrees is higher than that of women, especially in the north: the men with a university degree were 25.6% compared to 21% of female university degree holders (though this rate reached a peak of 27.7% in the north-west). Schooling levels were generally lower in the south, especially among men: in fact, schooling levels in nearly 39% of men in the south did not rise above junior high.

As much as 50% of the respondents had two children, one-third only one. Only 17.5% had more than two children. 42% had a child who was less than 6, therefore still in pre-schooling age. Out of these, approximately one-fifth were very young, mostly under the age of two and, therefore, in need of constant parental care and assistance.

32% of the respondents had children in the 6-to-10 age group – children who already attended a compulsory school. Only 26% had children who were over 10. Out of these, however, only a very small minority (just over 15%) had reached adolescence (between 13 and 15) and were, therefore, more self-sufficient and in need of a lesser degree of parental attention. Thus, most of the men and women interviewed had at least one child who still needed constant parental assistance.

Qualitative analysis

Besides the interviews relying on the standardised questionnaire, 16 in-depth interviews were held with eight couples of parents with the aim of gathering a freer and less constricted account.

The eight couples were chosen on a geographical basis and on the type of work and social and family background. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and the individuals forming the couple were interviewed separately, either at home or, when possible, at work or even elsewhere.

The following are the characteristics of the eight couples:

C**ouple 1:** both are head nurses at the city hospital of Teramo, a medium-sized city in central-southern Italy, heavily industrialised and with a strong Catholic culture. They are both about 50 and have two grown-up daughters. Their working schedule is highly favourable as both have regular six-hour morning shifts. They are in a position to reconcile family life and work very well, sharing all household obligations equally.

C**ouple 2:** The man currently works as a bearer at the Teramo hospital after having been made redundant in the factory where he was previously employed; the woman works at the Teramo office of the state pension provider. They are between 40 and 50 and have two small children, respectively 2 and 7 years. Their working hours are also very favourable as they both work six-hour morning shifts. They too are in a position to reconcile work and family life well because working conditions are quite good. He tries to share domestic chores as mush as possible, especially in taking care of their children.

C**ouple 3:** The man is a public school teacher but is currently working on a definite-term contract in a northern city as he has been unable to find a more stable job in his city. He has a second job as a free lancer to raise some extra money; the woman too is a teacher in a junior high school. They live in a town deep in the south, depressed economically and with a very high unemployment rate. She is 31 and he is 39; they have two small children. It is she who takes care of the children and all household chores with the help of her mother.

C**ouple 4:** The man found an occupation by way of the so-called socially useful jobs (contracts utilised by public administrations and financed by the state as a labour policy initiative); the woman is a social worker in a communal home. They are between 30 and 35 years and have a young child. Their working and financial conditions are very precarious. In this case as well, she does not receive any help from her husband. When working, she is helped by her sister.

C**ouple 5:** The man is the owner of three small shops, he earns very well, but working hours are terribly long; the woman works as a part-time secretary in a private firm. They are both forty, have a daughter of seven and live in Rome. Home and children are taken care by her;

he would like to participate more actively but is too busy with work.

C**ouple 6:** The man is an IT expert in a public sector entity and works very long hours; the woman does temporary consulting work at a medium-high level and manages a bed and breakfast. They are both forty, have a daughter of seven and a son of two and also live in Rome. In this case as well, it is she who takes care of the children and of the house: She has succeeded, however, to reconcile family and working commitments quite well, because she can rely on private domestic assistance other than on her parents.

C**ouple 7:** The man is a mechanic in a repair shop and works all day long; the woman works in the mornings as a cleaner. They are both forty and live in Genoa. They have two children, a girl of seven and a boy of 14. Work plus family commitments leave her with no time for herself; with the excuse that he works the whole day, the husband does not help at all. When she has some free time, she takes it for herself.

C**ouple 8:** The man is a social worker in a cooperative where he holds a position of responsibility; the woman is a public school teacher but is currently on maternity. They have a two-year-old child and another is on the way. They are between 30 and 40. Though they are an open couple and not all traditional in outlook, the commitment arising from a small child ultimately led her to reduce her workload. He helps her whenever he can, but is not in a position to reduce his working commitments because of the responsibilities he holds and because the family cannot do without his salary.

Interviews with employers

To gain a wider understanding of the strategies and policies that have been implemented to tackle reconciliation issues, a series of interviews were conducted with managers or department heads in five firms.

1) **A.M.A. Spa.**

A.M.A. is a big utility company that provides integrated environmental services with a staff of 6,054. It is a joint-stock company wholly-owned by the City of Rome. Reconciliation policies at the firm were started following the hiring of a predominantly female workforce.

2) **A.T.M. Spa.**

A.T.M. is a big utility transport firm that operates in Milan with a staff of 8,684. It distinguishes itself for the high rate of parental leave taken by its male employees: 9,769 working days in 2005. It has implemented a work/family life reconciliation scheme that takes into due account the requirements of male employees.

3) **Negri Bossi Spa.**

It is a Milan-based medium-sized company with a staff of 193. It specialises in the development, manufacturing, marketing and post-sale assistance of injection moulding machines for thermo-plastic material. Considering its small size, it is unable to fully implement reconciliation initiatives that are part of a wider strategy but does adopt good practices aimed at solving specific problems faced by its employees.

4) **Vodafone Omnitel NV.**

Vodafone Omnitel is a large-sized TLC company with a staff of 9,295 employees. While implementing reconciliation policies, parental leave taken by male employees continues to be lower than that taken by women (5 compared to 522).

5) ASL Roma E.

It is a very large local NHS provider in Rome with a staff of over 10,000 employees. It continues to be unable to implement reconciliation policies.

THE FAMILY: FEW CHILDREN, VERY LATE

Europe's lowest birth rate

Italy's fertility rate continues to be among the lowest in Europe. A fact that has led scholars, such as Giuseppe Micheli, to talk, since quite a while, about the "society of the absent child" (Micheli G., 1995). This does not

depend so much on cultural factors as on the lack of proactive family support policies, namely child care services and measures aimed at facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life[8].

The fall in the average number of children per woman reached an estimated 1.43 (for women born in 1965), while the average age for motherhood rose to above 27 (for men it is 33)[9]. This trend was confirmed by the results of a quantitative survey. In line with national population data, female respondents in fact gave birth to their first child before men did but still very late: 28 years for women and over 30 for men.

In the sample, the average age for parenthood was obviously linked to the study title, especially among women: for women with lower education the age went down to 25, while increasing to 30 for those with a university degree. There were also differences when the data was observed on a geographical basis: in the south, for example, the average age for motherhood (26.7) was lower by some 2 percentage points than in the north (28.5) and by one p.p. than in the centre (27.8). This difference was due in part to the education level, which was relatively lower among the southern women interviewed.

But what continues to cause great concern is the persistence of the phenomenon: it is in fact nearly 30 years that the number of children per woman does not rise above the so-called replacement level (2 children per woman)[10]. Lately, fertility rates have risen slightly in those regions where they were lowest, i.e. in the central north, while continuing to fall, albeit from higher rates, in the southern regions, thereby contributing to close the gap between the various parts of the country.

What is therefore emerging, especially in central-northern regions, is a one-child family model. And this pattern is all the more consolidated where the mother works. In fact, an occupation is not in itself an obstacle to maternity, and work and family life reconciliation becomes a problem for Italian women only when they want a second or third child. Fertility rates among working women nearly double that of non-working women (0.82 children per woman compared to 0.45)[11]. It is easy to understand that births are more frequent in those families where the income is higher, where the wives are likely to be working[12].

The key issue therefore concerns plummeting births as far as the second and third child is concerned. The birth of a second or third child is becoming a rare if not exceptional event. This means that the reconciliation of work and family life affects not so much in having children as to the difference between desiring to have children and the children one already has.

Maternity: more of an obstacle than a joy

The difficulties faced by working mothers manifest themselves not openly but in hidden practices, proving that we are currently dealing with a very difficult issue to tackle because it is a problem that exists "under the skin" in social relations. Birth pertains to the sphere of "social acceptance"; while it is an important event in the life of an individual, formally translating itself into a moment of joy and sharing; it can trigger – depending on working contexts – forms of refusal that for this very reason remain hidden, taking up the form, as emerging in a number of interviews, of hard-to-define "pressures".

It is surprising to discover that a mother may face hostility in her own working environment or professional milieu following the birth of a child. "I almost had a nervous breakdown requesting the first three months of maternity leave" a mother said in an interview. "It's not that they say no, it's that they make sure you know that they are not happy about it. But I'm already perfectly aware of this, because when I'm absent nobody does anything to finish the work I was doing. If I'm absent for one day, the work gets stacked up right there on my desk. I've often put pressure on myself to get back to work, without my bosses saying anything. I suffered like hell asking my boss for maternity leave" (couple 5: the wife).

It is easy to understand the impact of this situation on the worker. And because it is widespread, although formally suppressed, it contributes to give a form to the problem

related to childbirth. The values of a society are shaped also by the system of power that govern it, thus the problematic nature of childbirth, insofar as it cannot take the form of a straightforward refusal, is an attitude that is introjected in the psyche of individuals, justified by a strong sense of guilt and by a "sense of responsibility", according to other behavioural patterns already examined by Foucault (Foucault M., 1976): "I didn't have another child because it would have caused a lot of problems at work (…). I would have needed more time off from work and that's also why I didn't have another child. It's a question of feeling responsibility about work. *I know I would have created problems at work* with a second child" (couple 5: the wife).

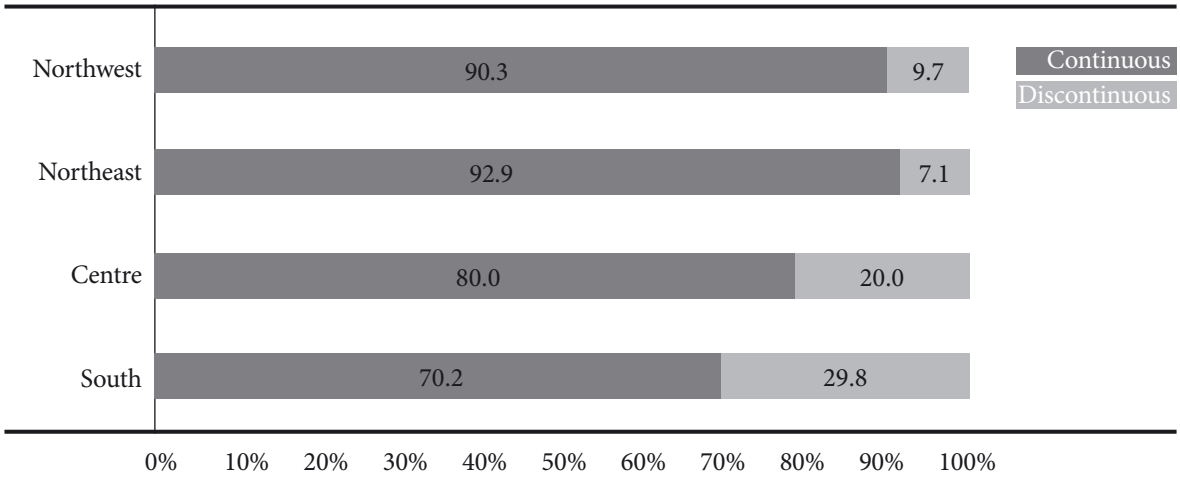
On the other hand, maternity, intended as a hindrance factor for professional growth but also as an element of "selection", is often the point of focus in the letters readers write to the editorial staff of women's magazines. Women whose desire for motherhood is contrasted by the demands of working life and its organisational models – a closed world that rejects women who desire motherhood, a world that says: "there's no work for you if you are at maternity risk"[13]. This is what a reader of the weekly Donna writes "This morning I got a call from a renowned professional firm in Rome's via Frattina after they had read my CV. They didn't enquire about my professional experience, my studies, they simply asked me: are you married? Do you have children? They don't want to have problems with mothers…"[14]. It is a widespread phenomenon as well as being a very problematic issue, for it places women in a position where they are "forced" to choose between work or family.

WORK: FOR WOMEN IT IS DISCONTINUOUS, UNCERTAIN AND OFTEN PART-TIME

The couples interviewed – both for the quantitative and qualitative analyses – were selected on the consideration that both worked. In the telephone interview sample, the men and women interviewed mostly worked in the private sector (66%) and approximately 34% (a slightly higher number among women) worked in the public sector.

In a predominantly large majority, the occupation car-

Figure 1. The nature of the work carried out by women by territorial contexts



ried out is defined by both men and women as being "continuous". This applies to practically all the men interviewed – with very rare exceptions – and to most of the women (nearly 91%). It is, however, interesting to note that the perception women had of their work changed depending on whether it was they themselves that described it or whether it was their husbands/companions that did so. Asked about the type of occupation held by their respective partners, men tended to define it as being discontinuous in as many as 23.3% cases. Note also that regarding the work carried out by men, there was no difference in the way men and women perceived it.

In any case, aggregating the answers relating to the female universe (that of women in connection with their work and that of men in connection with the work of their wives/companions), the quota of female discontinuous work reached 16%, while that given by those with continuous occupation decreased to 84%.

Discontinuous occupation involves above all the women of the south. Just under a third of southern women (29.8%), in fact, defined themselves or were defined by their husband/companion as discontinuous employees.

In connection with what has so far been outlined, women, more often than men, had fixed-term contracts: in fact 12.3% of women were temporary employees compared to just 3.2% of men. The latter, on the other hand, were often self-employed.

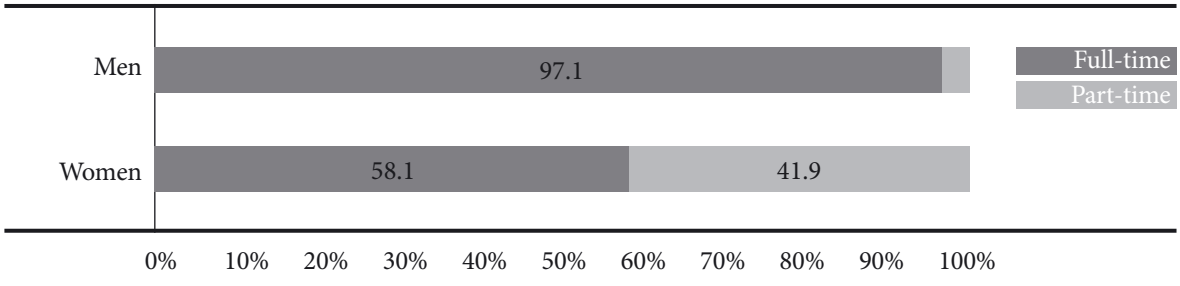
As predictable, temporary employees were mostly concentrated in the south. As many as 16% of female respondents in the south were working on a fixed-term contract.

Work was full-time for most men; while 42% of the women were working part-time[15]. For female employees, part-time work was mainly a conscious choice: the quota of non-voluntary part-time – i.e. imposed by employers – amounted to barely 6.6% of cases.

However, data on voluntary part-time shows that the number of those taking this option is much lower than that in our sample. In fact, Italy has a very low percentage of employees who opt for voluntary part-time jobs. According to a survey conducted by the Dublin Foundation, as many as 31.1% of Italian part-time employees who were interviewed declared that they did not choose to go on part-time voluntarily, compared to a European average of just 14.1% (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living Conditions, 2004). On the other hand, in sectors where part-time is widespread – for example, in the retailing business – it is almost exclusively imposed or concentrated in marginal jobs or in occupations that lacked perspectives in terms of professional careers. For specific tasks or sectors (hypermarkets, call centres, fast food eateries, etc.), part-time occupation has become structural, especially for women.

Part-time options were mostly taken up by women, also by those who had grown up children. But, as expected, it was mothers with pre-school age children who generally took up part-time. Out of these mothers, half of them work reduced hours.

Figure 2. Part-time (men and women)



Women who worked part-time chose to do so with a view to having more time for the family. As emerged from several interviews, when women worked part-time the family was viewed as an alternative for self-realisation with respect to work: "I'm not happy with my work, but I don't mind it because what really matters to me is to have a part-time job. I wouldn't even mind getting paid less as long as I can keep the part-time and have more time to take care of my daughter. […] Part-time work allows me to handle both work and my daughter" (couple 5: the woman).

If part-time was often chosen as a means to balance work and family life, there is no evidence, on the other hand, of the relationship between the commitment and desire to take care of children and the "choice" of a discontinuous job. This could mean that an occupation less burdensome in terms of continuity is not a choice but rather a necessity imposed by the difficulties faced by the job market, especially in the south.

It is a well known fact that career options too are different for men and women. The quantitative survey revealed that half of the men interviewed felt they had good chances of making a career; among women that perception fell to under 30%. This is partly, and not entirely, due to the working hours. Among part-time employees, in fact, the percentage of women who felt they had some chance of making a career fell to 26.6%.

As expected, impacting career opportunities for women is above all their commitment as mothers. Among women, the perception of having good career opportunities decreased when the child was either very small or when there was more than one child. It should be noted that the impact of these two variables on men was by far less relevant.

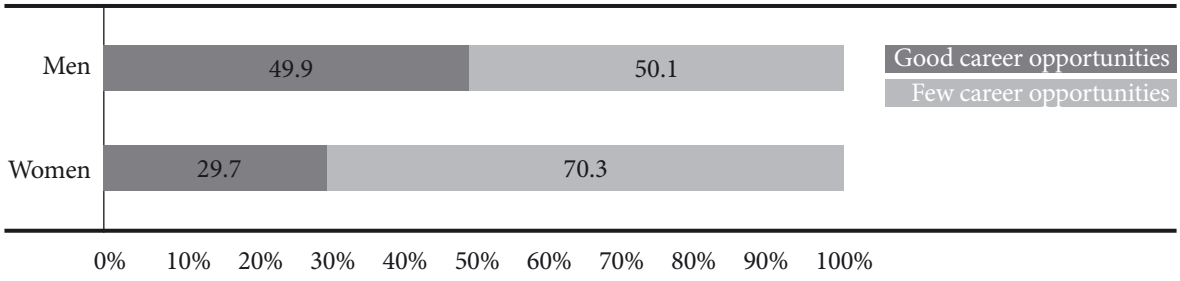
WORKING AND FAMILY LIFE

Having children: different consequences for men and women

Within families, time management and responsibilities are still to a great extent left to women. As emerging from numerous interviews, even when working away from home, it was the woman who adapted her time to meet the family's new requirements after the birth of a child. While a new form of paternity is developing – more actively involved in the caring of the child – a more equitable division of family duties continues to be elusive. Moreover, this situation is aggravated by the shortcomings of public sector services and by the new demands for a more balanced work/family relationship caused by the entry of women in the job market.

The fact that the reconciliation of work and family life continues to be a problem exclusively affecting women – even when women work regularly and full-time – was confirmed by the results emerging from the quantitative survey, especially from the answers relating to the consequences that the birth of a child had on work. Nearly all male respondents (93.4%) declared that there were no significant consequences for them at work immediately

Figure 3. The career



after the birth of their child: just 3.4% reduced their working hours and barely 2% took parental leave. Among women, the percentages were quite different: only 40% of female respondents said they continued working as usual after the birth of their last child. More than 20%, on the other hand, had to reduce their working hours, while 17.4% had to leave their jobs. Maternity leave was taken by 21% of the respondents, with a slightly higher percentage in the north.

Having children impacts men in a different way than it does women, and not only in the period immediately after their birth. The answers given by women to the question on how the birth of a child had impacted their work and, in general, their professional lives were definitely less straightforward. 16% of female respondents had to give up their career for their children (compared to the 2% of men who did likewise); 14% had to change jobs (3.8% men) and leave their previous occupation (2.7% men).

Several interviews revealed that many women had to give up "parallel" professional careers other than their main occupation. While cases of men having more than one job are not rare, a secondary activity – even when the main occupation is only part-time – is practically impossible for many women to handle and becomes the first thing that has to be cut when they decide to "settle down and raise a family". And this, too, when that secondary activity is the one that best responds to personal inclinations and aspirations, as the case of mother who had to give up her aspiration to become a journalist in order to dedicate time to her family: "Otherwise I would have chosen another type of work, one that offered career opportunities. (…) But if you decide to raise a family, you have to be willing to give your time to it, otherwise you'd be better off not having children, dedicating all your time to work, ambition and aspiration" (couple 3: the woman).

The fact that it is women who bear most of the burden of family care activities means that it is they who also have to do most of the giving up in terms of career prospects and professional growth and also bear work fatigue and stress. In fact, for most female respondents the birth of a child entailed in an overwhelming majority of cases increased physical fatigue and stress arising from the need to reconcile work and family life commitments. Fatigue and stress also affected men (56.2%) but to a significantly lesser degree (75%).

For men having children means, on the other hand, increased working commitments in order to meet the changing family requirements. This fact emerged above all in the face-to-face interviews as men revealed that they felt a strong "sense of responsibility" following the birth of the child and were particularly conscious of their role as the family's "economic provider". While this can also become a source of stress for men, they have taken account of it and are, therefore, willing to take up the responsibility: "With children, working commitments as well as responsibilities have multiplied. But this also acts as a spur, an encouragement to do better at work, because it is not only responsibilities that grow but also the desire to provide better for the growth of the family. There is no doubt, though, that the heaviest burden has fallen squarely on my wife as she has to do the bulk of family work" (couple 3: the man).

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that increased working commitments may actually act as an alibi – a more or less conscious alibi – to shirk off family care commitments. Generally speaking, it was easier for men to identify themselves in the stereotype of the working father than in the representation of a new male role or in more equitable division of family duties.

However, this does not mean that many men also felt – at least within the sphere of their subjective perception – the pressure exerted by reconciliation requirements. The percentages of those who said working responsibilities deterred them from dedicating time to the family or that work contrasted family duties did not vary significantly between men and women. In two-thirds of the cases analysed, men and women, in fact, answered this way.

The quantitative analysis, naturally, could not reveal a key issue: the repercussions on the life of the couple. The birth of the child, especially the first, brings about

profound changes in the life of a couple, as the habits on which the relationship had been built are literally swept aside. It is something that the couple must come to terms with in order to retune their relationship: "The life of the couple deteriorates and somehow becomes more ordinary. We simply have to try harder" (couple 6: the man). The couple must therefore learn to cut out time for themselves, which, naturally, entails a series of other problems, economic and logistical, such as the access to public and private services. (A respondent, for example, spoke of the "legendary" difficulties they had in finding a baby-sitter on Saturday night).

Family care: tradition and "discontinuous" modernity

As for the division of domestic work and childcare activities, the survey confirmed a trend that in our country is well documented that household duties and childcare continues to be, in a large measure, carried out by women.

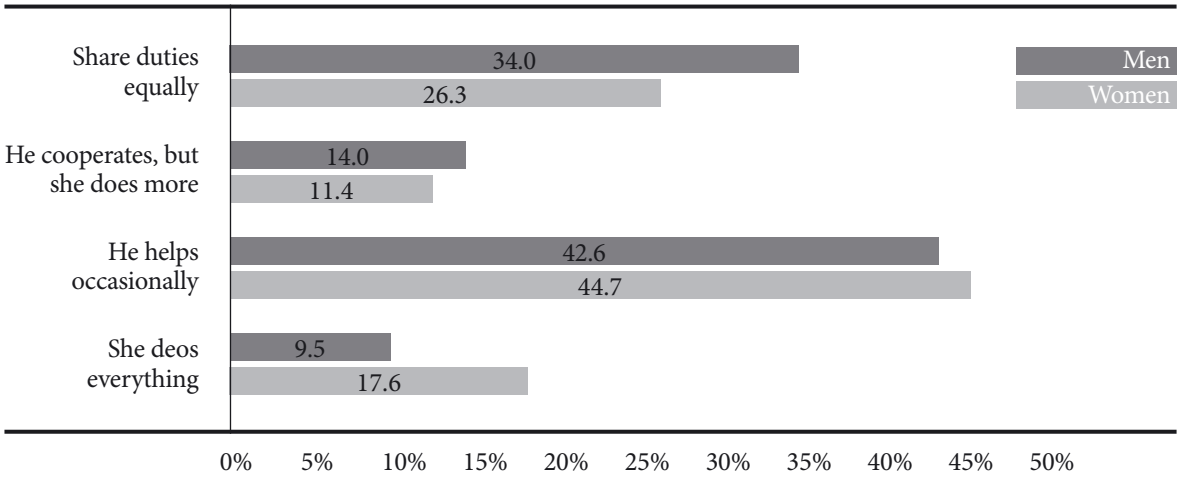
Official figures released by ISTAT, the national institute for statistics, showed that in the course of a day women dedicated on average five hours to family care activities (3h53' if they work, 7h24' if they are housewives); while men – only one hour and a half. But that is not all: some 23% of men did not even spend 10 minutes of their time to household chores. It should also be noted that the time men dedicate to the family is mostly on play, on straightforward interaction with their children, such as playing, talking or supervising homework. In fact, according to official data, men dedicate very little time to child caring activities (feeding, dressing, making them sleep, baby sitting) or on the running of the house (Sabbadini L.L., 2005).

The consequence is that available free time for women is significantly less than that for men: free time amounted to only 11.9% of the average day of a woman compared to man's 17.7%.

As predictable, the women who spent more time on domestic work were those who lived at home as a couple with children. In these cases, an additional 3h21' went into family care activities. This relationship, though, did not apply to men, for whom living as a couple with children meant extra domestic work amounting to only 25 minutes.

Confirming the trends outlined by ISTAT, in our sample more than half of female as well male (57.4%) declared that childcare activities were distributed unequally

Figure 4. Sharing childcare duties



among the two parents.

In most cases, fathers helped only now and then (43.7%) or not at all, leaving everything to the mother (13.7%). The percentage was much higher (72.4%) if household chores were also considered: in this case, mother received no help whatsoever in 30% of instances.

On the other hand, though, the interviews also revealed a change in the situation that official data cannot fully gauge[16]. Male and female respondents proved that many families were experimenting organisation models in which duties were equally shared among the parents: 30% in childcare; only 20% as far as household duties were concerned.

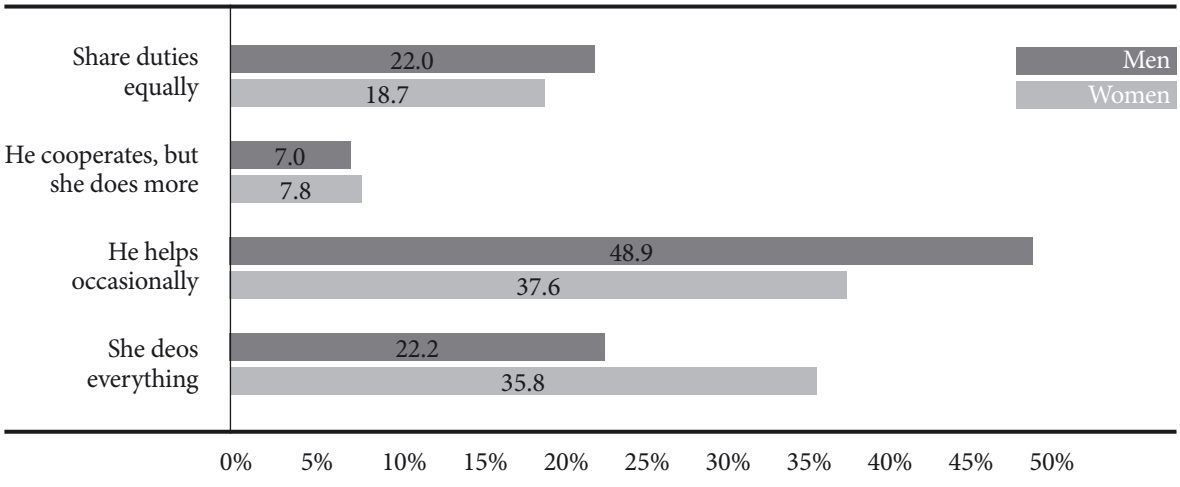
A more equitable division of family care activities continues to have difficulties in gaining ground at a cultural level, i.e. as a shared value, not only because *men are used to being served,* but also because their role as the family's economic provider ends up making deep inroads into their family life. Thus, looking at this issue from a different angle, it would seem that the stereotype of the working father is actually preventing men from dedicating more time to the family, especially those who would have liked to.

Male respondents, even those who had a more modern outlook, felt very strongly the responsibility of being the family's principal breadwinner, and as such their working hours were so extenuating as not to leave them with enough time to spend with the family. This is what a man said: "My wife does everything. And the fact that I work 12 hours a day is an excellent excuse! […] I would like to give more time to the family, but I can't because of work. I sacrifice a lot of my family life to work, but it's something I accept. Alas, there are no alternatives" (couple 5: the man).

It thus often happens that those men who would like to give more to the family – not the majority, it should, nevertheless, be borne in mind – are actually prevented from doing so because of working commitments, which is, of course, another stereotype, similar and contrary to that of the housewife mother: "Yesterday evening, for example, we were talking about our youngest son's school play: once again I was not there to seem him act in it. I really regret this. We were even thinking about buying a camera… My wife was telling me how excited the little one was and how he kept trying to catch her gaze. It's really sad that I can't be there on occasions like that" (couple 7: the man).

It is therefore men – traditionally more involved with work and in many cases excluded from family care

Figure 5. Sharing household duties



activities – who end up being those who are unhappy with the quantity and quality of time they spend with their families. 45% of male respondents were unhappy with the time spent in the family; just under 40% would like to have more time to spend at home. Compared to men, women – constantly kept under pressure by work and family care activities – complained about the lack of free time for themselves (16% against 7% of men). Expressing greater satisfaction about the time they spent at home were those women working on a part-time basis (a significant 61%). On the contrary, the quota of those wishing to pass more time with the family increased among male and female full-time employees (nearly 30% compared to 13% among part-time employees).

Thus, rather than full modernity we can at best speak about "pockets of modernity", about a discontinuous and intermittent form of modernity that manifests itself in the gaps of time not used up by work and not in day-to-day routine. Day-to-day routine that continues to be the almost exclusive domain of women. In other words, even when men show more willingness to do more for the family they end up doing it in their *spare time*: "For example, yesterday evening I finished having dinner late; I wanted to see a film but I washed the plates instead. And when it was quarter past eleven, I ironed a shirt. What we do is that practically every alternate night we take turns at washing the dishes, and now and then we play board games with the kids, monopoly or cards. I wouldn't have the physical strength to do more. I do what I can… considering I'm away most of the day. (…) When I'm around, I try my best to be present: I take the kids out when I can; I try to put in as much effort as I can. I have scruples about taking time off from work. The job I have keeps me busy the whole day, therefore I really can't do more that what I do: maybe I can't picture myself in a situation that is different than the present one" (couple 7: the man).

We have observed that in some cases the personal perception one has of family care commitments is totally different between the two partners. Often, the father believed that he was doing enough in contributing to an equitable division of family duties, firmly convinced that household work and childcare was being carried out by both parents: "We help each other. I'm away most of the time, so I can contribute little; but when I'm around, I give a hand" (couple 3: the man). The mother, on the other hand, had a totally different perception: "My husband gives me a hand, sometimes he hoovers, but I do all the work. (…) Generally speaking, I've noticed that when fathers want time for themselves they somehow manage to find it. Mothers, on the other hand, have to give up their free time also to be with the children. If I wanted some time for myself, I'd have to call the baby sitter, while if he had to get things done for himself, he'd find it perfectly natural to leave the children with me. Now, that's something I can't do" (couple 3: the woman).

The fact is that men feel they are helping at home and at taking care of the children without realising just how much work and organisation there is, and that all the day's workload – every single day – is borne by women, even those who work full-time. This was something that emerged very clearly in the words of another female respondent: "A woman's day doesn't ever finish; from Monday to Sunday, it's all the same for me. And, I'll tell you what: it probably gets worse on Saturdays and Sundays because you simply can't do what you had planned to do for yourself: you know, things like going out or maybe simply doing nothing. Maybe you can do it: but is a one-off thing, an exception. We went out for three days, recently: well, on Monday I had a whole week's work to catch up with, plus the bags of the things we had taken for the short trip. He says that he works the whole day, and that the most he can do for himself is during the lunch break from 12 to 2 p.m. The most I can get in the afternoons is 10 minutes; I'm so tired by that time that all I want is to lie down in bed. But sometimes, I don't even have those ten minutes. My day never finishes. Yesterday I was so tired I couldn't even fall asleep" (couple 7: the woman).

The type and quantity of man's contribution to family care depends on the age of the children. The quantitative data showed that when children are very small – in the majority of families (65%) – all, or most, of the work dedicated to family care is carried out by women. Among

them, the percentage of women who received no help whatsoever reached just under 16%.

When the children grow up and go to elementary school, the percentage of men who contribute just marginally increases more. It is when the children are older that you come across a more equitable division of family care duties. To this end, it is interesting to note that even in the couples that shared family duties more consistently there persisted a series of prejudices and stereotypes regarding the relationship between child and mother, with the latter considered as being "naturally more suitable" to take care of the child in his/her early years.

There is also a connection with the territory: if in the north the families that share family duties almost equally reach nearly 33%, in the south that percentage goes down to 24%.

But the connection was more significant when type of work was considered. As far as domestic and family duties were concerned, the percentage of women who received no help whatsoever increased when the work was discontinuous (41.7% compared to 28%).

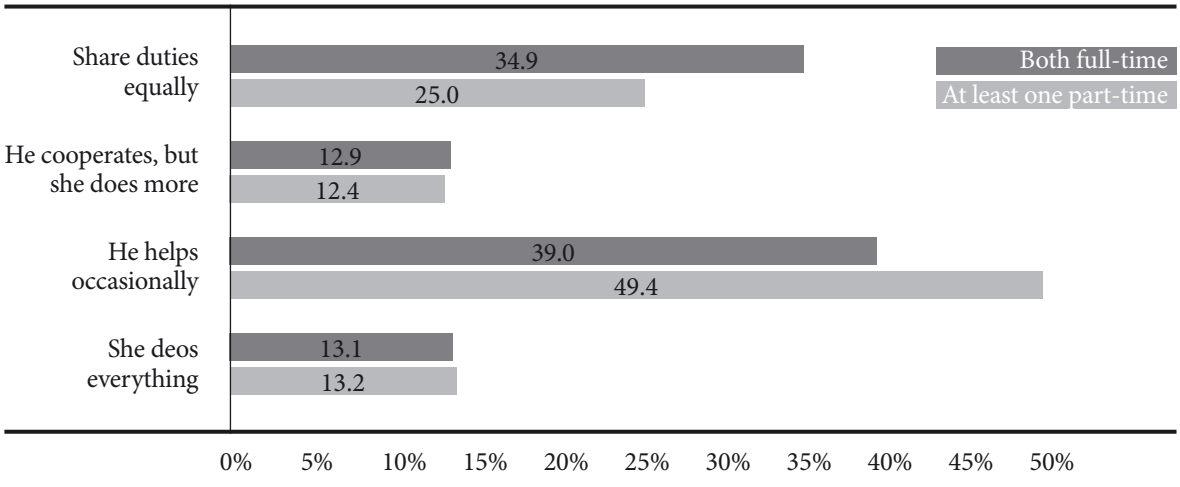
Similarly, when one of the parents worked part-time (in the overwhelming majority, the mother) it was more frequent to find more equitable domestic work sharing models: childcare was shared with the partner in 35% of the families where both parents worked full-time compared to 25% where one of the two parents worked part-time.

It is significant that a relatively high quota of women (approximately 40%), while working regularly and full-time, received from their husbands/companions very little, occasional, help.

When both parents work: grandparents are a key resource

But who takes care of the children when the mother works? Let us observe what the quantitative analysis revealed. Most respondents said they relied first and foremost on the help of grandparents (40% of answers) and on that offered by public services (35% of answers). A less significant number of the respondents relied on the market: 5.4% sought the help of baby sitters, while merely 3% relied on private assistance providers. Quite frequently, parents sought "integrated solutions": 41.5% of the respondents, in fact, relied on several sources for

Figure 6. Childcare according to diverse strategies



support, integrating the help offered by grandparents with that available from public services.

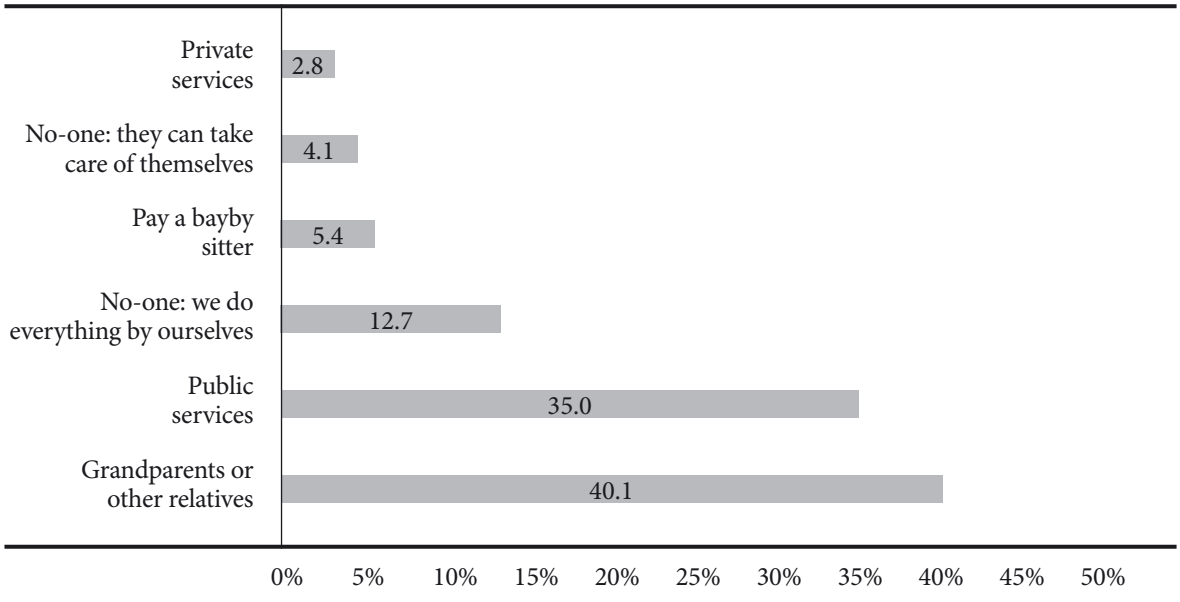
On the other hand, it is well known that in Italy the help offered by the enlarged family network, in particular by grandparents, is strategic. Unlike what happens in other European countries where it acts as a support to public services, the help coming from the family network is often a substitute for the welfare system, which is chronically insufficient. A welfare system that has been defined "familiar" (Andersen G.E., 2000), based as it is on the individual-family combination, also called "Mediterranean", this welfare regime is one in which the state plays an entirely residual role, attributing or delegating to the family and to informal networks the responsibility for the caring and assistance of its components (Sgritta G.B., 2005).

Thus if parents represent a precious help, in the long run they will turn out to be an aggravation as they themselves will need assistance[17]: "When my daughter was smaller, the grandparents were there to give me a hand, but today they are older and can no longer assist me" (couple 5: the woman). In this case as well the bulk of the work was borne by women.

The probability that a woman who can count on the help of her parents will work is, in any case, higher than that of a woman who has nobody to depend on. Now this situation persists even when public or private assistance is available. This is because the help offered by grandparents is flexible, while the timings of nurseries – especially the public ones – are rigid and cannot meet the requirements of working mothers. Family networks, on the other hand, become crucial when the absence of public assistance structures is accompanied by the family's low or uncertain income. In such cases, the alternative for those women who cannot rely on the help of grandparents is to give up her job in order to concentrate full-time on her children.

Our survey indicated that among those who had preschool age children, just one-third applied for public assistance services. Those who didn't said they preferred to take care of their children on their own (64.7%) or to seek the help of someone they fully trusted (21.8%).

Figure 7. Who takes care of the children when parents can't?



The respondents also said that they did not seek public assistance partly because they believed the services offered were not up to standards in terms of both quality and availability: 10% of the respondents said they did not utilise public services because there were no vacancies or because they were inconvenient distance and time wise.

On the other hand, official data concerning the diffusion of public services in Italy confirm a low utilisation rate for such services: only 6.5% of children who are under the age of three find a place in a public nursery (in Sweden it is 48%, in Germany nearly 30% and in France 10%)[18]. As admission is limited and strictly connected to family income, those who are affected most are those families where both parents work. Also, as admission criteria privilege less affluent families, the service is considered less attractive[19].

The situation was perfectly described by a mother we interviewed: "We enrolled our daughter in a private nursery, because we felt that when you pay you get a better service. In any case, though, admission criteria in public nurseries is based on income, it's not that they take anyone, so our daughter was left out. You have to sign up in the waiting list, and there is no guarantee that they'll take you. There are simply not enough places both in public and private nurseries. Many mothers have to give up working simply because they have nobody they can entrust their children to. The same problem cropped up again later when we had to enrol her in a primary school: it was if all schools were full!" (couple 3: the woman).

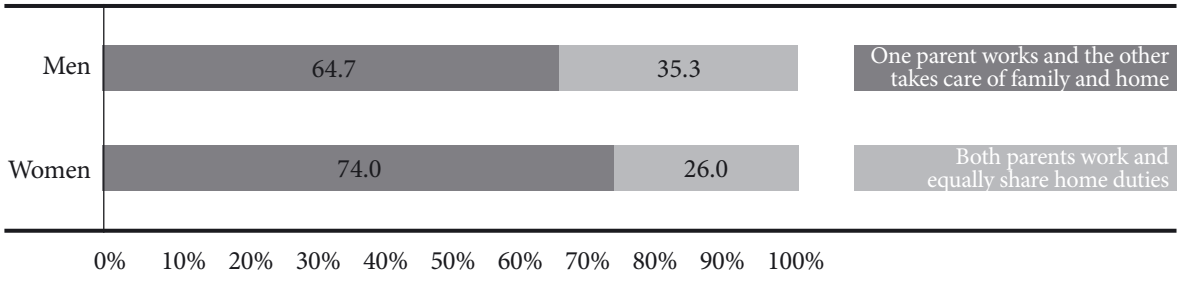
TRADITIONALISTS AND "MODERNISTS"

Family models: striking a balance in the couple

Our interviews revealed that the family model in which the man is the breadwinner and the woman is the housewife appeared to be waning. That model around which a large part of the Italian social model was constructed after the war thus seems to have been set aside[20]. Obviously this depends to a large degree on the fact that the men and women we interviewed were selected because they both worked. Therefore, we were dealing with families that, in daily practice, had already experimented – by choice rather than necessity – a family model where both parents worked.

Nevertheless, one-third of the respondents believed that the best society model was the one in which family care activities and labour market occupation were equitably distributed between the two parents in such a way that one had to take care of the family (the mother, barring very few exceptions) and the other of salaried work (the father, barring very few exceptions). This depended on the geographical context: among the respondents who lived in smaller towns, the percentage of those who believed that for our society it is preferable to have a

Figure 8. The work-family model that respondents (men and women) preferred



family model in which the father is the breadwinner and the mother the housewife rose to 36.3% (peaking to 40% in the small towns in the northeast and the south); going down to 24% among those who lived in larger cities. The case of a woman who lived in a small town deep in the south was emblematic: "Generally, a woman should be the mother. It's always been my opinion that women shouldn't work, because I believe being a mother and a wife is a truly big job: no salary can remunerate the work a woman does at home. It is the toughest of the jobs to be a mother and a housewife. Maybe it's because we've seen it being done by our mothers, grandmothers, aunties. And it is just as obvious that fathers shouldn't be staying at home. It's a good thing that women nowadays work, but if she decides to raise a family, then that comes first and work later" (couple 4: the woman).

But going back to the quantitative survey, it was mostly women who believed that the best family model was the one in which both parents worked and at the same time took care of their children and carried out household duties. This opinion was expressed by 74% of women and by 65% of men. The proportion was, however, inverted among the younger respondents (under-34): 72.5% of men preferred this family model compared to 67% of women.

Besides the model in which both parents work and together take care of the children and the radically opposite one in which the father works and the mother stays home, there exists at least another one that the respondents have broadly experimented. This is the family model in which the father works full-time and the mother part-time. In our sample, approximately half live in families of this type[21].

As for this variable, it was not affected by the territorial context (geographical location or size of the place of residence) nor by age. It was, however, affected by education level: 61% of those with a higher education were part of a couple in which both parents worked full-time, while among those with lower education the prevailing model was the one in which the father worked full-time and the mother part-time. But maybe this depended also on the type of occupation and on the opportunities available for people having a lower degree of education.

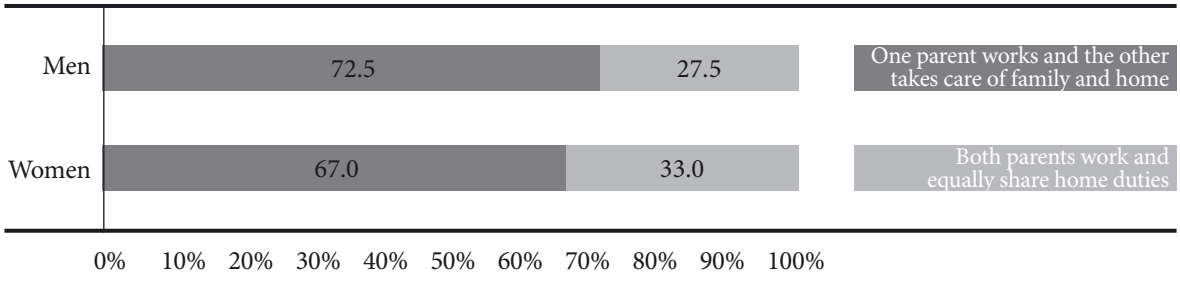
By cross-checking the information regarding the type of family that is desired with data relating to what families actually managed to put into practice on a day-to-day basis, three typologies emerged.

1. *TYPE A* (36.7%) is the one who prefers the model in which both parents work: a model that is applied because both, in fact, work full-time;

2. *TYPE B* (33%) is the one who prefers the model in which both parents work but who organises, by choice or necessity, the family in such a way that one parent works full-time (generally, the father) and the other part-time (generally, the mother);

3. *TYPE C* (30.3%) is the one who does not at all like the

Figure 9. The work-family model that younger male and female respondents (under 34) preferred



idea that both parents work: Type C in fact would prefer one parent (generally, the mother) fully concentrating on the children. Nevertheless, in daily practice Type C has to come to terms with the fact that the woman works either full-time (14.4%) or part-time (in the remaining 15.9%). Type C is predominantly male (56.6% compared to women who are 43.4%) and lives mainly in small towns (54.1%).

To conclude, out of every 1,000 couples with children who are under-15 and where both parents work, at least one-third preferred sparing the mother the effort of working away from home so that she could exclusively concentrate on the children. Another one-third succeeded in striking a balance between the work of the father and the mother where the latter opted for part-time. Only the remaining one-third was able to organise the family in such a way that both parents could continue working full-time. But it is not a coincidence that among the latter just under half actually worked in the public sector, where working hours are, on an average, shorter, and working conditions are relatively more family friendly.

Persisting stereotypes: what is a good father, what is a good mother

Generally speaking, parental stereotypes – in particular the breadwinner father and the housewife mother – are typical in traditional and conservative milieus, where the access to the job market is barred for women and where the roles are well defined and differentiated. This is because the gender representations that are widely present in the society are structured starting by the power relationship existing between the genders, consequently, a change in this relationship generates a mutation in

Figure 10. The work-family model respondents have experimented

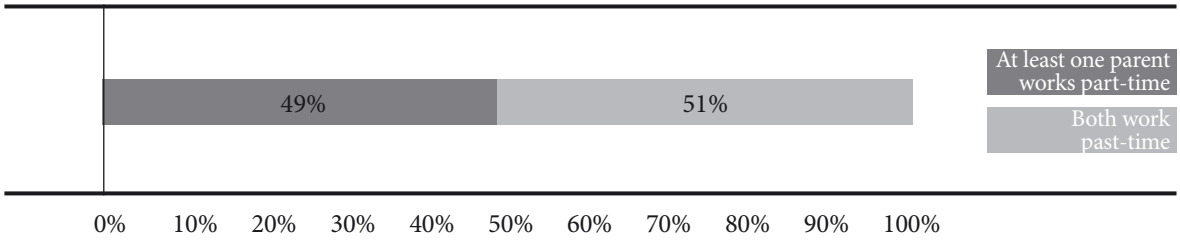
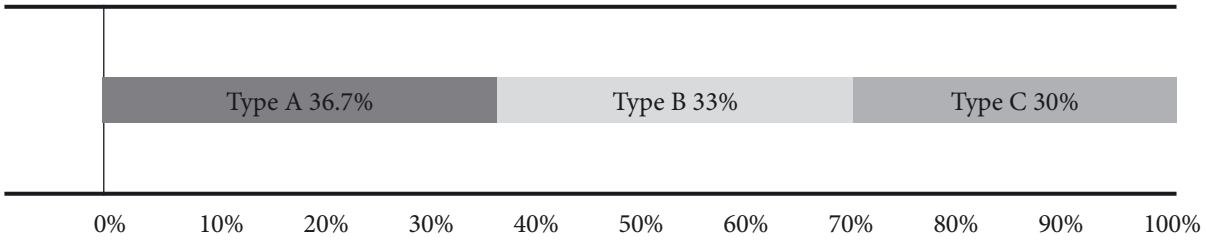


Figure 11. The work-family balance: what is desired and what is practiced



the way the roles held are perceived. While these stereotypes have been widely superseded in large segments of society, they somehow continue to define – consciously or unconsciously – the roles in the family.

The survey showed that the characteristics of what makes a good father changed significantly in the opinions expressed by men and women. For both, though, a good father must be first and foremost "a guide and a reference point" for the children. This opinion was expressed by 52% of the women and 46% of the men. More than women, men were convinced that a father should, above all, "ensure the financial well-being of the children" – the opinion expressed by 22% of the men and by just 15% of the women.

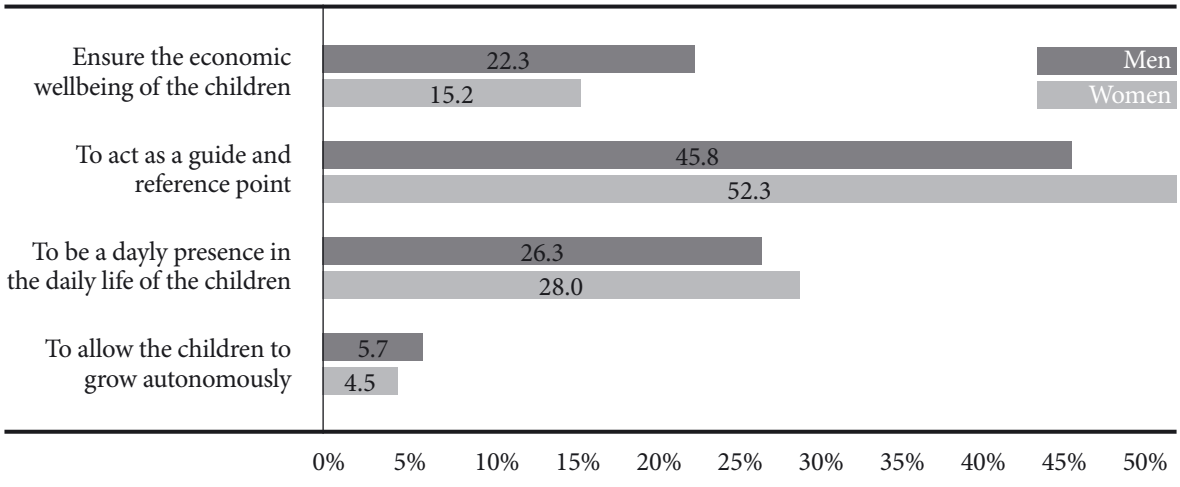
This opinion – the most traditionalist – was expressed above all by those with a lower education (25.5% compared to 16.7% with a university degree), living in a small town (23% compared to 13% living in large cities) and in specific areas of the country, namely the northeast (22.5%) and the south (24%).

We are assisting, in late modernity, to a "pluralisation of forms of life" dictated by the destructuring of traditional bonds that individuals at one time tied with their family and community during the course of their lives. As the era of "large collective epics" comes to an end, previously undisputed reference points begin to dissolve (such as ethnicity, class, religion, family) – reference points that in the past showed how to interpret social reality and what type of conduct was expected (Beck, 1999). As existential development becomes ever more fragmented and no longer follows a well-defined pattern, the biography of individuals is turning into an increasingly personal construction: identity is no longer determined at birth but is assembled along the way, changing and multifaceted, open to new possibilities. Bauman uses, to this end, the term a "modular man", a being whose relational modalities change in the course of existence (Bauman, 2000).

The destructuring of traditional forms of social life also impacts gender representations, and the family, intended as a social organisation, takes part in this double-pronged process: family life models multiply (to the extent that lawmakers have had to write new legislation governing civil unions as in Italy where the debate is raging) and the modalities through which individuals take up their parental and family roles evolve, also changing significantly during the course of one's life.

Our survey showed that men have somehow distanced

Figure 12. What is demanded from a "good father"



themselves from the traditional notions of what the parental role should be (i.e. the "good father" who is the breadwinner and the guide), giving importance to other elements as well, such as being a daily presence in the lives of the children, granting them autonomy in their growth. 32% of the respondents would, in fact, like to stimulate a dialectic relationship with the family, which is far from the paternal authority typical of more traditional systems, so as to develop a more evenly-balanced relationship with the children, respecting their requirements to a greater degree. But if we compare this with the effective distribution of family care duties, we notice that there is a gap between an intention and a real conduct, proving just how difficult it is to translate this cultural propensity into a concrete action. 38.1% of men declared they would like to spend more time with the family; but while claiming the possibility of creating a different kind of family, working commitments impose other lifestyles.

The objective of gender equality must, therefore, not only be that of spreading a more equitable representation of the relationship between the sexes, but also that of allowing for the transformation of a cultural propensity, already present and developing in one-third of the population, into a more equitable organisation of the family structure. Measures must thus be taken to remove obstacles such as excessive workload away from home, the absence of public assistance services, and the lack of attention on the part of employers for reconciliation issues when men are involved.

Male and female respondents were also asked to express a series of opinions, revealing a significant difference in their viewpoints. For example, asked why, in their opinion, family care was entrusted more to women than to men, more than half of male respondents (53.5%) – but less than 40% of women – said women were by nature more practical. More frequently than men, women said that it was simply a question of "bad habits dying hard" as men are *normally* used to being served.

These opinions were also reiterated in the face-to-face interviews: "Women can do a lot of things, men no! (…) Maybe it's because women have been taught to do things ever since they were little girls but not so for men. My husband, compared to other men, manages quite well. He tries to get housework done; he even hangs laundry out to dry. The thing is that he doesn't do it the way I want. Often I just do it because he simply doesn't know how to! Even with the children he's like that. It's true that he doesn't feel at ease when he's alone with the girls, especially the little one. But I too don't feel comfortable leaving her with him, because I don't think he is capable of handling her on his own" (couple 3: the woman).

Cross-checking the answers to the attitude questions that in the quantitative survey were aimed at, assessing the agreement degree in connection with a series of stereotypes concerning the housewife who shows little interest to work and professional career and who

Table 1. The housewife stereotype (degree of agreement)

	I agree a lot	I agree sufficiently	I agree little	I don't agree at all	total
Women show more inclination for domestic work	37.2	37.4	19.0	6.3	100
The mother-child bond is stronger	22.2	31.8	37.8	8.2	100
Making a career is more important for a man than for a woman	16.0	35.1	39.7	9.1	100
Today's women should take care of the family more	17.1	39.9	38.5	4.5	100

is entirely focused on and by nature more inclined to childcare and domestic activities, it was possible to define an attitude index serving to classify male and female respondents on the lesser or greater degree of *traditionalism/modernism*.

Thus, besides 14% who were undecided (i.e. those who provided apparently incoherent answers), the sample was split between those who agreed and those who didn't agree with the housewife stereotypes. We defined the first group *traditionalist*: they were 46%. This quota rose to 56% if the ultra-traditionalists (10%) were included. The ultra-traditionalists were those who openly and firmly agreed with the housewife stereotypes. The remaining 30%, on the other hand, were those we defined *modernists*.

Besides an over-representation of men among the ultra-traditionalists and, vice versa, of women among the modernist, we did not find a significant difference in the cultural attitudes of men as well as women. The same can be said as far as the age was concerned: the traditionalist or modern attitude is transversal to all age groups.

It is the level of education and geographical location that have a significant impact: more traditionalists were those with a lower education level living in smaller towns in the south and also in certain areas of the northeast and the centre; while those showing a more modern attitude were the respondents with a higher education living in large cities, mostly in the northwest.

Gender cultural attitudes as well as the persistence of gender stereotypes in the division of family care duties, obviously affect the way roles are organised within families. Thus, the prevailing attitude among hyper-traditionalists is that in which childcare duties should be carried out only by the woman (21%) who must also do all housework (37%). *Modernists*, on the other hand, more often experimented a more equitable sharing of duties (32% for childcare; less – 22% – for household chores). *Traditionalists* expressed the opinion that the best family model for our society is the one in which the man worked and the woman stayed home to take care of the children with greater frequency that the *modernists*.

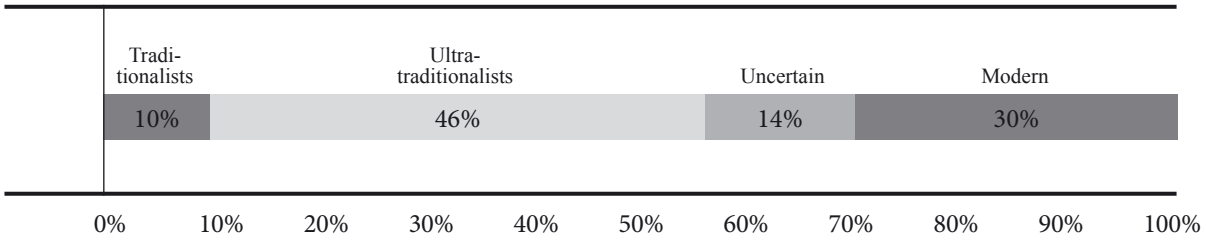
The habits of the family of origin were also very important. In fact, most traditionalists came from families where it was the mother who did everything at home (86% among *ultra-traditionalists* compared to 65% among *modernists*).

PATERNITY LEAVE AND LAW 35/2000: AN UNDERUTILISED TOOL

Little knowledge of the law

With respect to the topics discussed above, the impact of legislative and political action has been sketchy and scarcely organic. Reconciliation practices experimented

Figure 13. Attitudes regarding the housewife stereotype



in Italy over the past years have not succeeded in producing an integrated approach that could have tackled the issue from various angles at the same time, both structurally and culturally. The measures implemented so far have, in fact, focused on solving specific issues and have not been part of a broader project aimed at involving in an articulated manner interrelated aspects, ranging from the wider diffusion of family models based on the equitable sharing of domestic duties\ to the strengthening and improvement of public service networks, to the implementation of more family-friendly working hours and to a different notion of city time (Altieri, G., 2005).

The picture began changing only in the last few years thanks to the impulse given by the European Union and the subsequent introduction of Law 53/2000 in Italy, that, compared to the previous legislation, widened significantly the possibility parents have to take facultative (or parental) leave, granting to both the mother and the father a non-transferable right to take leave. Although its full effects have yet to be felt, the law recognises for the first time that the initiatives aimed at encouraging the reconciliation of work and family life must be implemented in an integrated way and combined with each other, involving all players, not only social partners but also the state and, above all, local administrations.

Although the law in many ways reflects and, in turn, stimulates the presence of fathers in family life, its effects continue to be well below expectations. Men who take leave from work in order to dedicate time to their families continue, in fact, to be very rare. According to ISTAT data, only 7% of fathers have taken parental leave in the first two years of the child's life.

This principally depends on the fact that although Italian law is quite generous as far as the duration of the leave is concerned, it is not so in terms of economic benefits, for the coverage granted during the period of parental leave is only 30%. Considering that men generally earn more than women, "losing 70% of the salary may not be a viable option" (Ponzellini A., Tempia A., 2003).

It should be said, however, that the law has not been applied in a uniform manner for women. As the women who take maternal leave in the first two years of the child's life mostly live in the north (81% compared to 61% in the south) and have a high socio-economic status with respect to the others, it results that this instrument ends up being principally used by women who can afford it.

Besides all considerations regarding the way the law was formulated, there is another key issue that needs to be addressed: Law 53 continues to be scarcely implemented. In fact, not many even know that it exists. The quantitative survey showed that the quota of those who did not know of its existence or who were not aware that it also applied to men was above 20%. Those who did not know about the law were above all male and female employees in the south (30%) and in the private sector (23%).

Lack of information about the law and ignorance of its contents forcefully emerged during the face-to-face interviews. At best, the respondents had heard about it. A respondent who could be classified as being, in many ways, modern, with a high level of education and a position of responsibility in the public sector, gave what could be considered a typical answer. Yes, he had "heard about the law from a friend" (couple 6: the man). Another respondent said: "Men don't take parental leave for psychological reasons, because it's always the mother who takes care of children. Personally, I would take parental leave, but there are persons who cannot because of the type of work they do. But then again, there are many who simply don't know anything about the law. To be honest, I too didn't know about it: I knew about the three or four days of sick leave one is entitled to, but that's about it. You bet, I would take parental leave: I love kids" (couple 2: the man). This lack of knowledge about the law proves just how much still needs to be done in terms of information.

The quantitative survey, on the other hand, showed that as much as 60% of the respondents did not utilise the options offered by the law. That quota rose to 75% among employees in the south. The quota of men who utilised the law was very low, just 7%, with a significant difference between those working in the public (nearly 9%) and private (just 5%) sectors.

Pay reduction becomes an insurmountable obstacle for men

Asked why the law was utilised by so few men, the most frequent answer – given by the men themselves (especially those living in the south and in small towns) – was that *it is better that children are taken care by mothers*. This answer was given by 44.4% of women and by 50.3% of men, and by as many as 54.4% of male and female employees in the south. On the other hand, though, 26% of the respondents believed it was just a question of people not knowing about the benefits offered by the law.

Just 16% felt that the main issue was the wage cut (down to 30%) and that it hit the family budget too hard if it was the man who took the parental leave rather than the woman. In fact, women in most cases earned less than their husbands or companions, as confirmed by official data. Central Bank figures, in fact, showed that in 2000 women's wages were on average 24% lower than those of men, a ratio that was confirmed by the latest available data (2002). The average annual salary for a public sector male worker is € 12,237 while for a woman it is just € 8,163 euro. The gap is widest in those occupations where average salaries are highest: male managers get a salary that is one-and-a-half times higher than a woman having the same qualification; among the self-employed, differences are highest among entrepreneurs and family business owners. Differences are less significant among employees (even at higher ranks) and teachers. Even at a territorial level, differences are more significant where average salaries are highest (in the centre-north, the male-female wage ratio is 1.40; in the islands and the south it is respectively 1.13 and 1.30). As for types of business, wage differentials are highest in the manufacturing and private services sectors.

There are also significant differences among pensioners. In Italy, the majority of pensioners are women (six out of ten retired persons who receive cheques from INPS, the state pension provider, are women). Yet although women represent 53.4% of the total number of pensioners, their impact on total pension spending is only 44%. A CNEL survey, in fact, showed that although women are the majority, the pension cheques they receive are, on average, lower than men's: an average of € 9,368 p.a. compared to € 13,446 p.a. received by men. In addition, over 2 million female pensioners receive an annuity of less than € 500 per month. On the other hand, only 9.9% of women manage to pay contributions for 35-40 years, with nearly 80% paying under 30; of these half have only 20 contribution years. The pension system confirms that there are wage differentials among men and women having the same job qualification but also that women begin working later than men and have slower and less straightforward careers.

Organisation of work and family friendly practices

A crucial issue in the reconciliation of work and family life for both men and women concerns the organisation of work.

Face-to-face interviews showed that a friendlier organisation of work or lower working hours – such as those applied in the public sector – could lead to a better management of work and life commitments, but also to more equitable sharing of home and family duties between men and women.

In this light, an interview with a couple was revealing. Husband and wife are both head nurses in a public hospital and work only during the morning shifts so that they could reconcile work and family life better. "We joined the course to become head nurses so that we could lead a more regular life. We did the course together because if you have a family and you are in the nursing business doing shifts means that there are no hours, no weekends and no holidays. Now that I passed the course, I work the morning shifts from 8-to-2 with my wife so that in the afternoons we are free. I even bought a place in the country and if I don't have the time to dedicate to it, what's the point" (couple 1: the man).

The quantitative survey showed that there is a wide demand for the implementation of a friendlier organisation

of work. One of the measures the respondents felt would facilitate reconciliation better would be the definition of more flexible working hours (45%) or shorter (17.6%). A more efficient public service was a demand made by 16.3% of the respondents, followed by more consistent benefits for the family (14%) and – further down in the wish list – by a more advantageous legislation governing parental leave (just under 7%).

It should be observed that over the past three decades reconciliation policies have been strictly connected to labour organisation and tackled principally by trade unions during bargaining. Reconciliation issues, in fact, have continued to be handled mostly at corporate level, with single companies implementing initiatives as part of the operational guidelines for human resources management, especially in companies where staff is predominantly female. Against this backdrop, reconciliation policies have been implemented as a pragmatic tool to obtain greater commitment from employees, to encourage the return to work after maternity leave or to stimulate the sense of belonging in employees. Moreover, these experiences have only involved employees with indefinite contracts, leaving out all other employees, i.e. those with precarious and non-continuous occupation or the self-employed. It should also be observed that in the Eighties and Nineties, reconciliation enhancement measures were mostly focused on the reduction of working hours, mainly at a sectoral level. It was only at a later stage – during the mid-Nineties – that measures were introduced to make working hours more flexible and, therefore, more family-friendly. These initiatives were more effective, but so far the implementation and diffusion of best practices continues to be greatly insufficient.

And to make things worse, reconciliation policies in Italy – those endorsed by trade unions and applied in the public sector – have been marginalised, considered as pertaining to the sphere of gender issues. In fact, reconciliation has often been intended as a measure aimed at protecting the weaker segment of the population and hardly ever as a broader issue involving all, i.e. as a measure addressing not only the specific reconciliation of work and family life requirements but more, in general, as a tool that can positively impact the quality of life of both men and women.

As far as organisation of work is concerned, workplace attitude and prejudices also play a significant role, without considering the perceived hostility for fathers who may be considering the option of utilising the benefits offered by the law. It is a fact that companies are not alien to the spread of a "paternity culture", but their labour organisation models are designed either to encourage or limit reconciliation policies for employees. We have seen that among the respondents, the perceived obstacles were ascribable more to the stereotypes that define behaviour and to the lack of information rather than to the economic motivations deriving from the wage cuts contemplated in Law 53/2000.

It is no coincidence that both quantitative and qualitative data showed that both men and women were convinced that employers tend to be more benevolent towards mothers: "Often it is the employers who show more benevolence with regard to women; if it's a man who takes time off from work to take chare of his children, they'll pull his leg, crack jokes, call him "mommy dearest" (couple 1: the man).

Our sample showed that half of the respondents believed employers tend to be more benevolent to women than to men. Only 20% believed employers treated fathers in the same way. A significant 24%, though, believed employers were not benevolent to men and women equally.

Reconciliation of work and family life: a complex issue involving both men and women

Generally speaking, then, work and family life reconciliation issues cannot be reduced to a mere economic consideration. While it is important to implement the law by ensuring, for example, a greater cover of men's wages when they take parental leave, the issue is by far more complex and does not even exclusively concern the organisation of work. It is something connected

to the fears and concerns of employees regarding their relationship with their employers. Other elements and anxiety factors thus come into play when the parental leave option is considered: career chances, relations with superiors and colleagues, difficulties on coming back in terms of backlog, opportunities in using other services and the possibility to rely on shifts. Face-to-face interviews showed, on the other hand, that parental leave was more frequent in companies that held human resources in high consideration; in those companies where – as a HR manager said – "employees are a key resource, a crucial part of the company; in this light, their well-being and the well-being of their families become vital for the company itself" (head of HR at ATM, Milan).

A key element in the policy of this kind is that of considering the employees in their existential entirety, in their role as citizens who work in a company. It is for this reason that the best reconciliation practices can be found in those companies that carry out an in-depth investigation on the requirements of their staff, setting for themselves the task of cooperating actively with personnel with the aim of working out suitable and viable solutions. The best results were achieved in large-sized firms, where management have been intensifying an effective dialogue with trade union representatives. All the successful cases we have reviewed start off with an in-dept study of human resources to find out – through an independent analysis commissioned by the management itself – what were the staff's needs in terms of shifts, information, family and personal problems, which all have repercussions at work. On the contrary, unsuccessful cases – where parental leave was scarcely utilised – as expected were found in those firms that did little or nothing to help their employees and that faced problems on a one-off basis, as they emerged, without working out an overall and systemic strategy aimed at resolving staff problems. A paradigmatic example is the leave day granted at the birth of the child to allow the husband to be alongside his wife. Now, this "good practice" – certainly positive – is not, however, enough to improve the quality of life of employees if it is not linked to other practices, such as flexible and focused work shifts for those who have very small children, that together can combine to create a system of "good practices" that employees can utilise.

In this light we could say that it is not so much "good practices" but "a good system of practices" that make a company "friendlier".

Protecting employees as citizens means offering them a support for their lives outside the company in such a way that the company itself may receive more in terms of productivity, loyalty and general climate. In what is an exemplary case, a public utility transport company (ATM of Milan) has set up a social services department for its employees whose tasks include even that of finding temporary council flats for its employees who, as they mostly come from the south, have serious housing problems, before helping them find a permanent lodging. The willingness to create an employees' support network – in terms of services (e.g. company nurseries and vacation centres), of consultancy and advice (e.g. a window specifically set up for this purpose as well as an information booklet on employees' rights), of organisation of work duties (e.g. telework options or personalised shifts) – brings about and encourages a "reconciliation culture" in view of the fact that the workplace is a powerful value creation milieu, constituting a "socio-cultural context of reference" and, at the same time a "real context of possibilities".

The situation changes in the public sphere where firms – unlike those in the private sector – cannot abstain or hinder, directly or indirectly, the application of laws or regulations that encourage or stimulate family models where domestic and family care duties are shared. The picture that emerges is therefore one which sees, on the one side, the public sector as an "oasis" where employees can utilise without too many problems the measures that law 53/2000 makes available and, on the other side, a private sector that presents cases of "intolerance" on the part of the firms who show unwillingness in accepting employees exercising their rights. The application of Law 53/2000 is experienced by the management of a large public sector we interviewed (the NHS local provider, ASL Roma E), as a normative obligation it is not possible to avoid. "In our capacity as a public sector company we cannot abstain from applying the regulations governing

maternity and parental leave. The organisation of work is affected by the absence of the employees who take leave. Had we a more adequate staff we would be in a better position to handle the situation, but as it is, when someone takes leave, the workload falls on those who stay behind. The exercise of these rights is a blow for us. Gone are the days when there were two employees for the same task!" (ASL Roma E head of human resources). To implement the utilisation of the law without causing repercussions on the organisation of work, the above manager suggested that parental leave be taken according to a different modality: "if leave periods were not fragmented (especially when men are involved) but longer, we could tackle the situation with substitutions. But if leave periods are short this is not allowed, thereby putting the rest of the staff under a lot of pressure".

CONCLUSIONS

This survey, conducted according to both the quantitative and qualitative methodology, has allowed us to "give a closer look" at the critical points of the work-life balance issue in the Italian context. If, on the one hand, the survey confirmed aspects that had already emerged in previous studies and researches, it showed, on the other hand, that new trends are emerging, regarding the social acceptability of changing male and female roles. Now, if these trends are accompanied by labour policies aimed at sustaining domestic and family care work, they could produce concrete effects in bringing increased equity in the sharing of family duties between men and women.

But let us see, to conclude, some of the results that emerged from the survey.

The family model in which the man is the breadwinner who works away from home and the woman is the housewife who stays at home has come under discussion with the massive entry of women in the job market. This has led to the need to redefine the relations within the family and the links between work and the family. Among the respondents, barely one-third believes that the best model of the society is the one in which the father works and the mother takes care of the children. But half of the families surveyed organised themselves in such a way that the mother works only part-time. Combining the information on the type of family that is desired and on the way the family is actually organised, we saw that out of 1,000 couples with under-15 children where both parent worked:

- One-third would prefer to spare the mother work away from home so that she could take care of the children on an exclusive basis;
- One-third organised themselves in such a way that the mother worked only part-time;
- One-third organised themselves in such a way that both parents could work full-time. It is, however, no coincidence that nearly half of these persons who succeed in managing this very difficult balance worked in the public sector, where working hours are on an average shorter and condition relatively more family friendly.

Traditional family models continues to survive above all in less dynamic areas of the south, in particular in small southern centres where the notion that a woman is by nature destined to be only a mother continues to be widespread.

Yet elsewhere – in the north as well as in the south, in big cities as well as small towns – the responsibility of family care is largely still in the hands of women, even when they work regularly and full-time. In most cases, as emerging from the quantitative survey, fathers more simply give a hand once in a while or at times even do absolutely nothing leaving everything to the mothers. And all the more so when domestic chores are concerned: in which case, mothers receive no help whatsoever in 30% of cases.

Now, if you add to this the shortcomings of Italian public services, it becomes clear why raising a family for Italian women entails making a lot of sacrifices. In fact, if women do not have to give up working, they do have, in many cases, to give up a career, change jobs or even take up part-time. Having children for women often entails so many difficulties that they are often left with no option

but to take the painful decision not to have a second child, contributing to worsening the demographic slump that is a feature of our country.

The fact is that the reconciliation of work and family life continues to be in Italy a problem, which affects women exclusively. The overwhelming majority of male respondents declared there were no repercussions at work in the period immediately after the birth of their child. Very few reduced their working hours and fewer took parental leave.

If the women who have children and who decide – by choice or necessity – to work are often called not only to give up career prospects but also to bear heavier workloads at home and stress at work; for men having children means enhanced commitments at work in order to face the family's changing needs. It is a "sense of responsibility" that is strictly connected to the traditional role of fathers, to their role as the family's breadwinner. It is a sense of responsibility that, however, ends up heavily affecting personal choices. For men these are inevitable choices: work more to earn more as expenses grow with a larger family. Work is totalising for men, obliging even those with a more modern outlook to give up childcare activities. Thus looking at the issue from a totally different angle, we could say that the working father stereotype ends up taking away from men the possibility to achieve self-realisation within the family even to those who would like to do so. Paradoxically, many men would like to be more with the family, but are unable to do so because of work, thus falling victim to another stereotype equal and contrary to that of a housewife.

A more equitable division of family care duties is an issue that finds obstacles in emerging at a cultural level, in its development as a shared value, not only because men are used to getting served but also because their role as the family's provider ends up interfering heavily on family life. Thus even in those cases where there are signs of a cultural change, we are still talking about partial changes. If we are starting to talk in Italy about modernity, we are actually dealing with "pockets of modernity", a patchy, intermittent, kind of modernity that finds expression in the gaps of free time allowed by work rather than in day-to-day routine, which continues to be exclusively left to women. To sum up, men's commitment to work is so totalising that even if they wanted they would be able to help only in their spare time.

In reality, the survey showed that at least one-third of the Italian population has matured a culture of gender equality, which, however, is not fully developing as a consequence of a series of obstacles, such as excessive workload away from home, the lack of interest shown by employers for male parental leave options as well as insufficient public family support services.

The Italian childcare public assistance service is totally inadequate and very few families can actually access it. The survey revealed that those families where both parents work relied – whenever they could – on an informal support network, starting with the help of grandparents. This ends up penalising women's access to work, for the discriminating factor is whether they can rely on the help of their parents or – alternatively – on paid private services.

So far, the impact of legislation and measures taken at a political level has been fragmented and not organic.

Even the enforcement of Law 53/2000, which grants fathers the right to take leave for childcare, has produced results that are below expectations. This principally depends on the fact that although Italian law is quite generous as far as the duration of the leave is concerned, it is not so in terms of economic benefits. Another reason is also that the law is very little known. The quantitative survey showed that those who did not know about the law and were unaware that it also applied to men amounted to 20%.

Even the interviews with employers showed that the law was considered more of a limitation than an opportunity, for it led managers to have to deal with staff shortages during periods of parental leave. A frequent complaint on the part of employers concerned the duration of the parental leave, often too short and fragmented to be able to call up replacements for the absent employees.

A key issue for men as well as women when dealing

with work-life reconciliation concerns the organisation of work. A friendlier or shorter working hours – such as those applied in the public sector – are more inductive not only to reconciliation of work and family life but also to a more equitable sharing of home duties between men and women.

Male and female respondents principally demand measures aimed at creating friendlier organisation of work with shorter and more flexible working hours.

A crucial element in facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life is that of considering employees in their existential entirety, in their roles as citizens who work in a company. It is for this reason that best reconciliation practices can be found in those companies that carry out an in-depth investigation on the requirements of its staff, setting for themselves the task of cooperating actively with personnel with the aim of working out suitable and viable solutions. In this light, implementing best practices may not be as efficient as implementing a good system of practices.

It should be observed that reconciliation issues have continued to be handled mostly at corporate level, with single companies implementing initiatives as part of the operational guidelines for human resources management, especially in companies where staff is predominantly female. Against this backdrop, reconciliation policies have been implemented as a pragmatic tool to obtain greater commitment from employees, to encourage the return to work after maternity leave or to stimulate sense of belonging among employees. Moreover, these experiences have only involved employees with indefinite contracts, leaving out all other employees, i.e. the increasing numbers of those with precarious and non-continuous occupation or the self-employed.

As far as organisation of work is concerned, workplace attitude and prejudices also play a significant role. Without considering the perceived hostility for fathers who may be considering the option of utilising the benefits offered by the law. It is a fact that companies are not alien to the spread of a "paternity culture", but their labour organisation models are designed either to encourage or limit reconciliation policies for employees. We have seen that among the respondents the perceived obstacles were ascribable more to the stereotypes that define behaviour and to lack of information rather than to the economic motivations deriving from the wage cuts contemplated in Law 53/2000.

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Does Welfare State Guarantee Gender Equality?

Charlotte Kirkegaard

INTRODUCTION

Labour market and welfare

The Danish labour market is characterized by a high employment rate of women as well as men, 69.3% and 75.6% in 2004, respectively. According to the research in 2004 (Deding, Wong, 2004), men still earn from 12% to 19% more than women, and it is not only caused by the women being more absent due to responsibilities within the families, such as maternity leave and children being sick. Some of the explanation is lower education, less work experience, more employment in the municipality sector, in part-time jobs and in low wage areas, such as the caring sector.

There are differences between remuneration received for the work in the private sector, the municipalities and the state. 10% of the wage gap in the private sector cannot be explained by the factors mentioned above, but it is probably caused by individual reasons such as motivation and visibility. In all sectors the women's longer absence is caused by maternity leave, child caring leave and the children's sickness.

According to Eurostat, the wage gap is not declining in Denmark – on the contrary. In 1998, women's wages in the public sector were 97% and in the private sector 92% of men's wages.

Most Danish children are in day-care centres, which are mostly financed out of public means. The parents pay about 30% of the costs. In 2004, 82% of the 1-2 year old children were in the public day-care and 94% of the 3-5 year old children spent their day in day-care centres. In 1989, the numbers were 61% and 75%, respectively. In some periods of time and in some areas there were long waiting lists because of lack of day-care centres available. Today 90% of the municipalities have a guarantee for supplying a place for the children when it is needed. Due to general cut down in public finances most day-care centres have decreased the opening time from 6-17 to 7-17 and 16 o'clock on Fridays. A few municipalities have day-care centres which are open 24 hours.

Another issue has been problems of taking care of sick children. The Danish Government started a pilot project in 2005, where the municipalities could apply for money to establish an arrangement with a corps of substitute-grandparents, who could be called out to take care of sick children in their own home. There is no information available on the results yet.

There is room for approximately 90 000 elderly in the public residential homes, which are all being used. Besides, 203 169 elderly were receiving public home help

in 2003. In 2004 there were 462 726 women and 341 851 men over 65 years old. This means that most of the caring work for elderly people is not the family's responsibility; they are taken care of within the public sector.

Parental leave

The legislation on parental leave in Denmark was last amended in 2002. The legislation grants the mother 4 weeks' parental leave prior and 14 weeks following the birth of the child. The father is granted 2 weeks' parental leave following the birth of the child. Both parents have the right to 32 weeks of parental leave, but only the reserved periods (4+14 for the mother and 2 for the father) and 1×32 weeks are paid**.** This makes a total of 52 weeks' paid parental leave.

However, pay during the leave is not only regulated by the legislation. Most employed people in Denmark work under the regulations of an agreement between the union and employers' organisation. Almost all agreements grant full pay during the periods that are reserved for one of the parents, and a growing number – for example, within the public sector – also grant full pay for further 10 weeks. A very small number of private companies even grant 100% pay during the whole period (up to 52 weeks). Analysing the statistics on the use of parental leave in Denmark, it becomes clear that something must hinder fathers from exercising their legal rights. The present legislation on parental leave does make it possible for fathers to go on leave for up to 34 weeks. This is considerably more than approximately three weeks that the average Danish father makes use of. Depending on how the parental leave period is calculated, Danish fathers currently make use of 2.7 and 3.5 weeks of parental leave. As Danish women take 40 weeks' parental leave on average, Danish men were only accountable for approximately 7% of all the parental leave taken in Denmark in 2004. In families with a child born in 2003, where at least one parent took parental leave, 71% of the fathers and 92% of the mothers availed themselves of parental leave.

There have been discussions on changing the law so that part of the parental leave will be available for fathers only. But the Danish Government does not want to push fathers to take parental leave. The opposition in Parliament has recently put forward a proposal on three months' parental leave for fathers only, but it is not likely to be adopted.

Time use in families

It is still women who are mainly responsible for domestic work, parental leave and taking care of the children. A Danish survey about women's and men's use of time (Sjørup, Lausten 2003), carried out in 2003, shows that women still spend much more time on domestic chores than men, especially after having children in the family. Women do most of the work which is not flexible, such as cooking, child caring, cleaning and laundering. Men use most of their time on flexible work, like repairing and gardening. This also shows that women become more stressed when they leave their job in contrast to men who become more relaxed when they leave work. Before the couples have children women do a little more than half of the domestic work – after the first child is born, they do 2/3 of the domestic work.

According to the National Institute of Social Research, fathers have more flexibility at work than mothers. Approximately 60% of fathers have flexibility at work and 9 out of 10 use the flexibility once in a while. Among mothers about 40% have flexibility at work and also 9 out of 10 use this possibility. But while mothers are "flexing down" in order to take care of the children, fathers often "flex up" in order to work more.

New fathers

The problems of focusing on men's/fathers' role can be understood in a broader context, where it is important to underline that men often appear as an "invisible gender". In many contexts it is not easy to discuss men as a social category and focus separately on their living conditions. This might be caused by the fact that men have never been socialised into perception of their problems as part of gender political agenda, which again relates to the fact that there has never been a tradition from institutional or professional side to discuss and problematize men's living conditions (Kenneth Reinicke 2002, 2004).

According to the Danish psychologist Svend Aage Madsen, throughout the history there has been much focus on exploring the relation between mother and child, but father's experiences and problems have not been researched with the same kind of intensity; the author also states that there is a need for a more systematic knowledge on men's lives in gender perspective (Madsen 2002).

The Danish sociologist Bente Marianne Olsen claims that men on leave often lack a language to describe their actions in the home. Men on leave often dissociate themselves from the domestic work, which is linked to femininity, even though they actually perform a lot of domestic work during their leave. But they do not want to be feminised by describing it in details (Olsen 2000).

Today we do not know exactly how early the relation between father and his baby affects the general fatherhood, but there is no doubt that it is positive for men to develop a close relationship to children (Sommer 1999). There is no doubt that cultural agenda for men and fathers has changed into different and closer relations between fathers and children. Men are, as the masculinity researcher Øysten Gullvåg Holter (2003) has expressed, to a larger extent beginning to *be* a family rather than to *have* a family. But a serious question, which still remains, is what really matters most: work or children?

Fathers who do not take paternity or parental leave could be seen as modern only in words and traditional in action, and that it is the cultural notion of fatherhood which has changed, and not the real and active fatherhood, according to the Danish sociologist Kenneth Reinicke; he also claims that there has been a larger qualitative change among fathers going beyond what is measurable in statistics, because most fathers express their will to be engaged and present in the homes (Reinicke 2006). According to him, there is a lack of using tools and instruments in order to help fathers; he mentions the Icelandic model, which includes earmarked paternity leave for men, as a very successful tool.

It still remains an open question within the research of fathers whether men who take paternity leave do this because of their personal development, for the sake of the child, to improve the mother's situation at the labour market or for some other reasons. The ideal of gender equality does not necessarily have to be the reason for the father to involve with his child. The Swedish researcher Lisbeth Bekkengen (2002) uses the expression "child oriented masculinity" to describe that a close relation to the child does not necessarily include acceptance of the gender equality thought. The child-oriented masculinity does not necessarily change the motherhood in the family and by that abolishes the traditional relation between the sexes.

The Danish sociologist Bente Marianne Olsen has claimed that the discussions in the families with small children rarely focus on who is the best caretaker, who earns most or who has the most flexible workplace. She points out that gender is not an issue we think about or talk about – gender is something we do (2002).

Women's career opportunities

In general, women are more responsible for child-caring and domestic work, which also reflects on their career opportunities. According to Jette Bjerrum (2004), who investigated Danish male and female leaders, it was obvious that it was considered to be a good asset for a man to be married and have a family, while it was seen as an obstacle for a woman to be married and have a family.

The Danish research about gender differences in job interviews, performed by Jann Scheuer, Copenhagen University, in 1998, clearly shows a huge difference in how women and men are being interviewed. Men are allowed to speak freely about their ambitions and competences, while women are being interrupted with questions related to their family and children. One of the conclusions of the report was that it was an asset for men to have children while it was obviously a minus for women.

In the private sector there are only 4% of female top leaders. Under 1/3 of the local politicians are women; only 1/5 of the researchers are women and 10% of the professors are female. The Government has no intention

of making quotas to create a gender balance, and it is not an issue in the public debate.

A research published in 2005, carried out by Nina Smith, showed that more women in the boards of directors and executive boards of firms have a positive effect on shareholder value and firm performance. It is not possible to evaluate the effect of the conclusions yet.

Stress in families

New working cultures have been developing these years, focusing on individual performance, changeability and value-based management and adding new demands on how to be a good employee. The Danish Board of Technology, which is an independent body established by the Danish Parliament in 1995, published a report in August 2005, concluding that this new working culture is a threat to people's lives. Every fourth Dane feels stress in their daily life and every fifth Dane is so stressed that it is a threat to their quality of life and a direct threat to their health conditions. Research has shown a direct link between working conditions and stress-related symptoms and sicknesses. For example, is absence caused by sickness rising when work demands have a negative impact on family life? The formal work time per day has never been as low as today, but still work seems to take up much more space. The report concludes that the family taken together has a longer working time and that Denmark has a population, which in proportion to its size, puts in most (paid) working hours in comparison to other countries in the Western world. One third of all families with two adults work more than 80 hours per week – including both the adults – and only 10% work less than 70 hours per week. Now taken together Danish men and women work on average half an hour more on a daily basis compared to 1987. At the same time they spend half an hour more on domestic work and half an hour more on the primarily needs such as sleeping and eating. All together it means that today Danes have less time for family, friends and leisure. The report also points out that new initiatives such as massage, exercise, take-away dinner, laundering of clothes and child caring, provided by the employer, are mainly established to make the employees work harder. The report concludes that there is a lack of policies that creates a sustainable strategy on how to balance work and "other life".

The report from The Danish Board of Technology also stresses that flexibility is problematic, because it covers many different aspects and is easily used by employers to make employees work harder. Flexibility should not only be an advantage for the firm but also creates an opportunity for people to develop a balance in their lives.

A research from the National Institute of Social Research (2004) shows that at least 25% of mothers and almost 20% of fathers have experienced the feeling of not being able to handle daily life or have had problems with depression or anxiety within their child's first 3 years.

In general, Danes have an increased consumption of medication to feel better. The use of the so called "Happy pills" (SSRI anti depressive medicine) has increased from 145 966 persons in treatment in 1997 to 244 045 persons in treatment in 2004. Both men and women have increased their consumption, but 2/3 of the treated persons are women.

There have been discussions on measuring work time throughout the whole life. Meaning that it should be possible to work less when the children are small and work more before and after having children living at home. There are also discussions on how to make a flexible retirement for the elderly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Further analysis is based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative research on the reconciliation of family and work life. The research includes a quantitative part consisting of the findings using a questionnaire administered to 979 respondents and a qualitative part consisting of in-depth interviews with 7 couples and 6 employers.

Quantitative research

The questionnaire contains five international questions, which were agreed upon by the partners in the project,

and seventeen national questions. Some are screening questions and two of them focus on father's parental leave and are copied from a survey performed in 1990 for comparison. The questionnaire respondents had to meet the following criteria: to live as a couple, to have at least one child aged 1-10 and both of the partners had to be employed.

The questionnaire was distributed on the Internet through a large number of Danish organizations, labour unions and private companies, who were very helpful during the process, and we received 979 completed questionnaires.

We had to do it this way because the costs of getting an external company specialized in survey analysis to do it were far too high compared to the money set aside in the budget. One of the problems we encountered was a delay in collecting the expected data. Another problem was that the gender balance within the survey was imbalanced, but this also gave an indication on who was most interested in this subject. It was probably not a coincidence that most of the respondents were women.

The benefit of doing it this way was that we were able to send out 22 questions, which is much more than the five international questions that we agreed upon within the project, and that provided us with an opportunity to perform a much broader analysis and obtain more knowledge within this field.

Description of respondents

The majority of surveyed respondents (75%) are women and only 25% are men. This indicates that the problems related to reconciling family and work life are still very much regarded as a women's issue. 65% of the respondents have a higher education (36% with a middle range higher education; and 29% with a longer higher education), 21% have a short higher education, 11% are skilled workers and only 2% left the educational system after primary school. Men both have a shorter and longer educational background, compared to the women who tend to be in the middle with a shorter or a middle range higher education.

28% of respondents have children of 7-10 years of age, 26% have children above 10 years of age, and 23% have children at the age of 4-6 years, 18% have children at the age of 1-3 years and just 5% have children under the age of 1 year. So the ages of the children are widely spread within the wanted target group.

Within the surveyed sample only 1 person is under 20 years of age. The largest group comprises research participants who are 30-39 years of age (51%) and the second largest group is 40-49 year-old respondents (37%). Only 6% are 20-29 years old and 6% older than fifty years. In general, the surveyed men are older than the women. 44% of the men are younger than 40 while 63% of the women are younger than 40.

The survey participants were also asked for the real number of hours spent on paid work per week. Most of the respondents (47%) work 35-39 hours per week. 23% work 40-44 hours per week and 9% work more than 44 hours. Only 3% work less than 20 hours, 5% work 20-29 hours and 13% work 30-34 hours per week. This means that 32% work more than 40 hours per week even though the normal working week in Denmark is supposed to consist of 37 hours per week. The women have less paid working hours per week. 26% work less than 35 hours, 54% work 35-39 hours and 21% work more than 40 hours. Only 5% of the men work less than 35 hours, 32% work 35-39 hours and 63% work more than 40 hours per week. Thus, 2/3 of the fathers and 1/5 of the mothers work more than 40 hours per week.

The majority (96%) of the respondents are of Danish origin, 3% are from another Western country and only 1% is from a Non-western country.

Qualitative research

During the qualitative research the interviews with the couples and employers have been carried out.

The couples were interviewed face-to-face separately and the employers were interviewed on the phone.

During the search for research participants it was very

clear that the couples who really had a stressful life – especially academics – could not find any time to participate in the research. Specific appointments were made several times; however, they had to be cancelled several times before realising that they just were unable to find any spare time for participating.

Description of research participants

There were seven heterosexual couples (14 research participants) interviewed in Denmark, representing different employment sectors, educational background and different role share models at home. At the time when the interviews were carried out all of them had a spouse, were living together, had at least one child in the age group of 1-10 years and they were both employed. The interviews mainly focused on the work environment and family issues.

The couples' socio-demographic situation and their labour participation are as follows:

- Couple 1: She (1A) is 38 years and works as a typist 30 hours per week in a small private company. He (1B) is 43 years and works as a general labourer in a big private construction company and works 37-55 hours per week. They are married and have two children of 6 and 12 years old.
- Couple 2: She (2A) is 40 years and works as an accountant in a middle-size private company 37-45 hours per week. By the time of the interview she had just quit her job because of too much stress and workload, and was going to work part-time (27½ hours per week) in another private company. He (2B) is 40 years old and works as a carpenter 37 hours per week in a private company. They are married and have 3 children of 5, 11 and 13 years old.
- Couple 3: She (3A) is 40 years and works 37 hours per week as a sales assistant in a big private telecommunication company. He (3B) is 42 years and works 37 hours per week as a team leader in a private company in the construction sector. They are married and have 2 children of 8 and 12 years old.
- Couple 4: She (4A) is 42 years and works 37-40 hours per week as a social worker in a municipality. He (4B) is 42 years and works 37-45 hours per week as a team-leader/engineer in a private construction company. They live together and have 3 children of 3, 12 and 15 years old. The two eldest children are hers, only from the previous marriage.
- Couple 5: She (5A) is 32 years and works 40 hours per week as an academic development consultant in the public sector. He (5B) works four nights a week from 2 o'clock in the night to 10 o'clock in the morning. Unfortunately his personal data is missing. They are married and have one child of 2 years and she is pregnant.
- Couple 6: She (6A) is 36 years and works 37-40 hours per week as a consultant in a municipality. He (6B) is 40 years and works 37 hours per week as an academic in a municipality. They live together and have 2 children of 6 and 9 years old.
- Couple 7: She (7A) is 40 years and works 37 hours per week as a teacher in a public kindergarten. He (7B) is 46 years and works 37 hours per week as a head clerk in a public research institution. They have 2 children of 9 and 11 years of age.

6 interviews were carried out with employers in total, and they were selected to represent different sectors and sizes of companies. There were 1 non-governmental organization (NGO), 1 municipality, 1 ministry and 3 private enterprises of different sizes and sectors. The interviews focused on family friendliness, flexibility, working long hours and attitudes towards stress.

SITUATION AT WORK RELATED TO HAVING CHILDREN

Changes when having the children

The respondents were asked which consequences they experienced in their work life when they had children (see table 1).

Obviously the most common impact was the experience of increasing physical and mental stress, which was observed by 66% of the respondents. From a gender perspective there were differences, since only 58% of the men and even 70% of the women experienced increased stress. Thus, more than half of the respondents found it stressful to have children.

40% had to reduce their working hours while 12% had to increase their working hours. Analysing the data about women, the numbers are 44% and 11%, respectively, and for the men they are 28% and 16%, respectively. Almost half of the women had to reduce their working hours, which shows that it is still the mother doing most of the unpaid work at home (Sjørup, Lausten 2003); however, one out of ten had to increase their working hours.

Gender differences are also observed with regard to career. Only 4% of the men had to give up their career and 19% had to postpone it. The numbers for the women were significantly higher. 12% had to give up their career and 36% had to postpone it. So having children had a negative impact on the working life for 23% of the male respondents and for 48% of the female respondents, i.e. almost half the women.

So there is no doubt that having children still has a major impact on women's career and work life, which is much more radical than that on their male partners.

The interviews

2 of the interviewed women had to leave their full time job and are now working 25-30 hours per week. One of them (1A) explained that it was too stressful to work full-time with two small children.

> *"I thought it was too tough. I cannot count on my husband and if I was a bit late and traffic was bad, well sometimes my daughter was the last to be picked up and sometimes it was after the institution should have been closed."* (1A)

Her husband often had long working hours and she never knew when to expect him home.

Another had just left a full time job (2A) where she worked 37-45 hours per week, and started at a new office where the working hours were 27½ hours per week. She felt that she had lost the sense of her 3 children and did not really know how they were doing with school and friends. And she had no time to herself at all.

> "*I was alone in the office so I just forgot about time and place and worked hard. The job was interesting but not family-friendly at all*" (2A).

2 women had to change from a full-time job with too much work to another full-time job with less stress and expectations.

Table 1. Did child-raising and childcare affect your job in any personal way?

Consequence	Yes	No
I had to reduce my working hours	40%	60%
I had to change my job	20%	80%
I had to give up career opportunities	11%	89%
I had to postpone my career dream	33%	67%
Physical and psychological stress at work increased	66%	34%
I had to increase my working hours in order to meet the increased economical needs of the family	12%	88%

It is interesting to note that 4 of the interviewed men also changed their job or trade in order to have time with their families, but in opposition to their partners they kept working full-time. One (2B) was working at the airport as a guard and had shifting working hours. He preferred to get an education as a carpenter with steady working hours. They had three children and he left his job everyday at 3 o'clock and picked up the children.

> "*If you give priority to your career you forget your children. And to me my family is everything. The job will always be second to my family*" (2B)

Another father with two children (3B) worked as a long-distance truck driver when the first child was born. He was away for one or two weeks every time he left, and he realized that it was too much, so he changed his job when the first child was about 8 months old.

> "*I could not stand to sit at a picnic area in the south of Europe and my partner calls on the phone to tell me that our baby now has her first tooth. And I am not even present. That was not okay. Fortunately I experienced this with our youngest child. And it is really something different.*" (3B)

One father chose to work night shifts, so he could pick up the children in the afternoon while the mother was working late. He thought it was very hard and he was always tired, but if he worked ordinary hours in the daytime the family could not function at all (5B). It is interesting to note that his female partner thought that they had a good balance between work- and family life while he did not.

The fourth father changed from working 50 hours a week in the private sector to get employed in the public sector where the working hours were more family-friendly, and he was not supposed to work 50 hours per week (6B).

Employer's attitude related to gender

The most of the respondents (71%) in the survey experienced that their employers were equally responsive towards female and male employees who needed to make special arrangements to take care of their family's needs. 16% experienced that the employer was more responsive to women and only 2% thought that they were most responsive to men. 10% experienced that the employer was not responsive at all. There are no significant differences between the answers from a gender perspective. They very much agree on this subject, which indicates that Danish employers are seen upon as equal family friendly towards both men and women.

The interviews tell a slightly different story. 3 women (1A, 3A, 4A) and 3 men (2B, 6B, 7B) experienced their workplace as family friendly and two of both sexes did not (2A, 7A, 1B, 3B), meaning that in four of the couples one partner was working in a family-friendly place and the other was not – and this was not related to gender. 1 woman and 2 men experienced their workplaces to be in between. 2 women and 2 men experienced a big difference in how the family-friendly possibilities were used. It was primarily women who stayed at home with sick children and took the whole parental leave.

During the interviews it was very interesting to note that while the men thought they worked at a family-friendly workplace, they did not use the opportunities very often. The standard explanation was something like this: "Oh, there is no problem for me to go home when the children are sick, if my wife does not have a possibility." It was very obvious in several of the interviews that the men have an understanding that it is easier for their wife to go home or to stay home for different reasons. Their explanation is that she works closer to the institution, that her employer is much more family friendly or that it is often hard for him to leave the job because there is no substitute or he has important tasks that are not possible to postpone.

Organizational culture at the working place

The interviews were structured along certain themes in all the interviews regarding family-friendliness in the organizational culture of the workplace:

1. Flexibility.
2. Talking about the children at work.

3. Having colleagues to share the work with.
4. Understanding superior – especially if they have children.
5. Burden of work.

The interviews were divided in two different groups:

a) Family-friendly culture

There were 3 women and 3 men in this group. They all valued flexibility because it was real, in the sense that if they had too much work they had a possibility of getting help. And it was not a problem to say that they might be behind schedule with the work. If they had to be at home with sick children, some colleagues would take over the workload. They also valued that talking about children was a part of the culture, and to experience that the others – including the superior – cared about their children and family life. The third issue they mentioned was that the superiors were very understanding and had children of their own. One of the men (6B) told that his superior was a single mother, so she really understood the problems of being a parent.

> *"So she listens when you say that you have too much work to do and makes changes. She does not only see you as a work-machine."* (6B)

Another superior wrote in the shared calendar when he had to pick up his children, so everybody knew that they could book him at that time. (6B)

One of the women experienced that it was only the women at her workplace that were using their flexibility to take care of the children. There was no encouragement from the superiors in order to make the men use their opportunities. (4A)

b) Non- family-friendly culture

There were 4 women and 3 men in this group, and it was interesting to note that their reasons for perceiving the culture as non-family-friendly varied in different sex groups. The women experienced that officially they had flexibility at work, but the reality was that they had too much work and there was no one to take over if they were sick, their child was sick or they had to leave early for some reasons. Two of them had refused to establish a workplace at home, because they did not want to feel pressured to work more than they were already doing and felt obliged to read their emails during the evenings at home.

> *"They (the employers) want to think of themselves as very flexible, but I do not know how flexible it really is, because if I have to leave early one day, then I have to work long hours the next 3 days. And when I need 1 week of vacation, I will have to work very hard before, so I can leave with all the work done … I did that during the winter holiday." (2A)*

The men experienced that the culture was very traditional male-dominated and that they were seen as "chicken" if they stayed home with sick children.

> *"This is a male trade, so you are supposed to take care of your job. If the children get sick, the mother is supposed to take care of them. I have one colleague who sometimes stays at home with his sick children, and everybody laughs at him." (1B)*

> *"No one stays at home because of a sick child or takes time off because they are going with the children to school plays or whatever. Never. You would push your colleagues too much if you did. And here you could never come and ask for 6 months paternity leave." (3B)*

There is a clear tendency that men have a greater sense of loyalty towards their workplace, and they do not feel as stressful as women, when they cannot take care of their families in the way they might want to. The women seem to get more distressed when they do not have the opportunity of being as responsible mothers as they want to. One woman (3A) had a job which she thought was really interesting, but the fact that she rarely saw her 3 children made her find a part-time job near the home, because she felt awful about not having the contact with the children, she really needed it. Economical considerations play a crucial part in this, since all the men in these interviews are the main breadwinners; and equal pay is not a reality in Denmark. The men obviously talk about money as a vital issue when it comes to their

main reasons for working hard and not taking longer paternity leave. It was not mentioned many times during the interviews and it was not stated very directly, but it came in short sentences.

One man (1A) worked 45-55 hours per week and the mother always took care of the children and the domestic work.

> *"When you earn money, the family feels good" (1A)*

At the end of the interview he told that he was frustrated by the fact that he did not have the time he really wanted to spend with his children, and that he felt sad when they got mad at him, because he almost never had time for them. But still he did not think of changing the situation. He earned the money so his wife could work only part-time and be with the children.

WORKING LIFE VERSUS FAMILY LIFE

Pressure and time

Only 10% of the respondents in the questionnaire survey never experienced that family obligations and work life could clash. 27% experienced this often and 63% experienced it sometimes. Obviously this is a general problem within the Danish households, when 90% think that their different obligations clash sometimes or often.

The percentage of people who never experienced the clash for both the female and the male respondents was 10%. For those who experienced this clash often the number was 29% for the women and 21% for the men. Therefore, more women than men often experienced a clash between family obligations and working life. The opposite tendency was seen for those who sometimes experienced a clash (61% women and 69% men).

32% of the respondents found it hard or very hard to adjust the beginning or the end of their working day to the family needs. From the gender perspective it was 25% of the men and 34% of the women who found it hard. 1% of the men and 5% of the women found it very hard.

In the interviews it was obvious that a number of the respondents – both male and female – had to change job or working-hours in order to get their daily life to function. And still their days had to be very strictly planned. One woman (7A) had to depend on the father to pick up the children every day.

> *"I always have to do overtime, so I can never pick up my children. I have to rely on my partner having a job being quite flexible." (7A)*

Another woman (1A) who had to reduce her working hours still thought that the pressure was hard.

> *"I never have time to do anything spontaneously. Sometimes it is very annoying to be so strictly tied up. I am so much looking forward to the children growing up…"*

Many of the parents complained that they often were tired and that it caused conflicts in the family, that neither the children nor the parents had the time they needed together or the time to relax after being at work the whole day.

Career and family

38% of the respondents of the questionnaire survey had never experienced being forced to choose between their family and their career. The numbers for women and men were 34% and 48%, respectively. 11% of all had often experienced feeling forced to make that choice – for the women it was 13% and for the men it was 7%. The largest group was the one who had experienced being forced to make the choice sometimes, which was 51% of all the respondents; for women it was 53% and for men it was 46%. Thus 66% of the women and 52% of the men had felt forced to make the choice often or sometimes. These numbers clearly show that women are much more caught between work life and family life. Almost half of the male respondents had never experienced this being a problem.

The respondents were asked to make preferences between family and career by indicating if the family or career was most important. 66% thought that the

family was most important, 20% considered family to be a bit more important and 13% thought that they were equally important. Only two respondents answered that career was most important, and they were both women. Nobody thought that career was a bit more important. 70% of the women answered that the family was most important, while 57% of the men thought that the family was most important. 26% of the men thought that the family was a bit more important and 18% of the women thought that the family was a bit more important. 12% of the women and 17% of the men considered these two aspects to be equally important. The general view is that women prioritise their family a bit higher than the men, but still most people seem to think that family is much more important than career.

In the interviews it was quite obvious that if one of the parents worked in a non-family-friendly workplace, the other one was forced to work in a family-friendly place or to work part time. From this quite limited scope of material it is not possible to see a clear difference from a gender perspective, since they are almost equally shared – except from the part-time work which is obviously chosen by women only. The men still have to work full time due to economical reasons, but they have to change trade, job or working hours in order to compensate for their female partners' lack of flexibility on their jobs.

Personal strategies

In the interviews everybody was asked about their personal strategy to combine family and work life. Almost everybody answered: planning, planning and structure. They had almost no time for spontaneity except for the weekends, where most of the women had to do the laundry and to clean the house. One respondent (7B) said that he was prioritising time with his family instead of material goods and career.

It is also interesting to note that while one woman (4A) said that she always took her work with her home and her children with her to work – in a figurative sense – in order to feel as a whole person both places, one man has the opposite strategy. He (6B) always tried to separate and not to take work problems with him home and the opposite way around. That was his way to combine the two different worlds. These are two extremely different strategies.

FAMILY SITUATION

Expectations

In the survey the partners were asked what they thought was most important: to spend time with their family or to earn money to the family. 51% of the research participants (62% of the men and 47% of the women) thought that they were equally important. 48% of the respondents thought that spending time with the family was most important – and this came from 53% of the women and 35% of the men. Only 1% of the respondents thought that earning money for the family was most important – no women in this category but 3% of the men.

We also asked about their expectations about their partners on the same issue. 3% of the women thought that their partner should give priority to the variable to earn money for the family, whereas no men thought that their partners should prioritise earning money. 64% of the women expected their partner to prioritise equally between time with their family and earning money and 50% of the men thought so about their partners. 50% of the men thought that their partner should prioritise time with their family and 34% of the women were of the same opinion about their partners.

There is no doubt that a Danish couple seems to have a high priority regarding time with their family, but there is still a tendency that the men expect their partners to stay with the family and the women expect their partners to earn money. And we see that the women to a higher degree prioritise time with their family than men do.

Work sharing within the household

The interviewed couples had different strategies, which were very much related to the way their paid work was organized

Couple 1: She does all the domestic work and takes care of the children. He sometimes cooks during the weekend, if she asks him to. They have never discussed this; they both agree that it feels natural.

Couple 2: He takes care of the children, does the shopping and the cooking. She cleans the house and does the laundry during the weekend.

Couple 3: She does the laundry, delivers the children and makes breakfast. Sometimes he picks the children up, but it is mostly her job. She cleans the house and he takes care of the garden. They both cook dinner and they shop together. They have never discussed their work sharing, but they both do what they like most.

Couple 4: She cleans the house, does the garden and the laundry. She takes most care of the children. They have never discussed sharing of their work, it has just naturally become like this.

Couple 5: She delivers the children in the morning. He picks up the children, does the shopping and cooking. They equally share the rest of the work.

Couple 6: She does most of the cooking and the laundry, and he often picks up the children. They equally share the rest.

Couple 7: He delivers and picks up the children. He does most of the cooking, and the rest is equally shared.

Three of the couples (1, 3 and 4) live performing traditional gender roles, where he works a lot outside the house and she takes care of the home and the children. In two of the couples they both work full time, and she stills works much more at home. It is interesting to note that the couples have never discussed the subject – they all claim that it has "naturally" developed this way. In three of the couples (2, 5 and 7) he does most of the domestic work and she has long working hours. In couple 6 she does the cooking and the laundry and they share the rest.

Among the couples, leading a traditional way of life, two of them had none or little education, and the third couple both had a middle range higher education and both of them focused on their career. She had two children from an earlier relationship and they had one child together. She thought that this was the main reason why their domestic work was so unequally shared, and she actually regretted that she had her third child. The three couples lived in a small town in rural areas.

In the couples where he did most of the work, one couple were skilled workers; in one couple he had a longer higher education and she had a middle range higher education. In the third couple she had a longer education

Table 2. The reasons why fathers did not take parental leave.

Reason	1990	2006
The mother was still breastfeeding the child	21%	10%
It would be more expensive for the family	19%	19%
The father's work did not give a possibility for taking parental leave	21%	29%
The family never considered the possibility	21%	10%
The father did not believe that he was capable of taking care of the baby	1%	1%
The mother was the best to take care of the baby	8%	3%
The father was not interested	5%	15%
Other reasons	4%	13%
Total	100%	100%
Number of respondents	741	523

and he had a short higher education. Two of the couples lived in a big town or in the suburbs, and the third couple lived in a small town.

Parental leave

In the questionnaire we asked for how long the mother and the father took parental leave at the birth of their youngest child. For those fathers who only took two weeks or less than that we also asked the reason why. The reasons suggested in the questionnaire were copied from a survey performed in 1990 by the National Institute of Social Research to find out if there were any changes. In the survey in 1990, 741 parents who had a child in 1984-89 and the father did not take any parental leave at all.

In 2006, 35% of the mothers had 12-26 weeks of parental leave and 60% more than 26 weeks of parental leave. Almost 5% of research participants had less than 12 weeks of parental leave. Investigating the per cent of fathers who had parental leave it was found out that 12% had no parental leave at all, 41% had it from 1 day to 2 weeks, 27% had 2-4 weeks and 11% had 5-12 weeks of parental leave. Only 8% of the fathers had 12-26 weeks and 2% more than 26 weeks. 53% of the fathers took 2 weeks, less or none parental leave.

It is possible to state that nowadays more families are considering the issue of the father's parental leave. In 1990, 21% of the families never considered the possibility. In 2006, the number has decreased to 10% (see table 2).

It was very interesting to notice that the per cent of fathers who were not interested in taking parental leave has increased from 5% to 15%. At the same time it became more difficult for the fathers to take parental leave because of their work situation. In 1990, 21% of the respondents mentioned the reason that the father's work did not give a possibility for taking parental leave it and in 2006 the number of the respondents who marked this reason increased to 29%. The economic consideration or the reason that it would be more expensive for the family was the same, namely 19%. Also the explanation that the mother was the best to take care of the baby declined from 8% to 3%, and so was the reason that the mother was still breastfeeding the child.

When we look at the gender perspective in the answers, some interesting points turn up. In the survey in 1990 it was both 5% of the fathers and the mothers who said that the father was not interested in taking parental leave. In 2006 it was only 6% of the fathers and 17% of the mothers who said that the father was not interested in parental leave. Instead, 23% of the fathers said that it was because of the family's economic situation that they had not taken parental leave, whereas only 18% of the mothers chose this explanation. Instead, 11% of the mothers used the explanation that they were still breastfeeding, while only 6% of the fathers chose this explanation. It is interesting that the explanations from a gender perspective were so different. Especially that more women seemed to believe that the father was not interested and he thought of his job and the finances within the family.

Among the interview participants none of the fathers took more than two weeks of parental leave. In one of the couples, she claimed that he was not interested, while he could not remember that they had ever discussed the issue. But he still thought that it would be hard to get leave from his current job. (Couple 4)

In another couple she had a year or a year and a half with all three children (Couple 2). He would very much have liked to have 3 months leave with all the children.

> *"Of course I wanted to have some leave with my children, but then I would have taken something from my wife. And I did not want to do that." (2B)*

This couple had never discussed if they should share some of the leave. And that is very common in these interviews. They never really discuss if the father should have a longer paternity leave.

Couple 3 had not talked about it either, but he said that he would have liked to take 3 months with both the children, but the family could not have afforded it. According to his partner, he had never mentioned anything about wanting any leave.

It was obviously not an issue that the couples discussed openly. But the discussions in the media and in the trade unions now often focus on the subject, so it will probably change slowly. A new survey, carried out by an insurance company, showed that mothers in the big cities take less maternity leave than mothers in the rural areas, which indicates that fathers in the cities take more paternity leave. Some of the big trade unions are planning to advocate for earmarked paternity leave for the fathers with full wage in 10 weeks during the winter/spring 2006-2007.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

How to secure equal share of household work

We asked the respondents in the survey to write a short text on how they thought it would be possible to achieve more gender equality in the household doing the daily work that came with the children, and 190 men and 623 women wrote their proposals. Many of them had more than one proposal and we have tried to put all of them into the categories. It is not possible to measure in per cent, but the answers can be put in different categories and it is obvious that the proposals vary a lot from a gender perspective.

Top 10 for women:

1. Men have to change their basic attitude and take more responsibility at home (107).
2. Women have to lower their expectations and let go of responsibility (82).
3. Women should demand more from the men (76).
4. Better dialogue and respect between the partners (76).
5. Forced paternal leave for the fathers (72).
6. Equal pay (70).
7. Decreased working hours with wage compensation (48).
8. Should be dealt with within the family- not equal share of all work (48).
9. Better education of children – especially the boys (46).
10. Change in attitude for both men and women (46).

Top 10 for men:

1. Better dialogue and respect between the partners (39).
2. Equal pay (20).
3. Change in attitude for both men and women (19).
4. Should be dealt with within the family- not equal share of all work (18).
5. Men have to change their basic attitude and take more responsibility at home (18).
6. Flexible working hours (17).
7. It is not a problem – traditional gender roles are good (14).
8. Forced paternal leave for the fathers (12).
9. Women have to lower their expectations and let go of responsibility (11).
10. Better education of children – especially the boys (9).

The women tend to focus primarily on responsibilities of the individuals in their first three suggestions. They put the responsibility on men to change radically and take more responsibility. Many of the women who gave this answer also claimed that women had to lower their expectations and demand more from men. So the Top 3 for women are very much connected with each other, and most women take a responsibility for the current situation, while admitting that they have a responsibility too. The men, on the contrary, tend to focus on the issue as a common responsibility or as a political issue regarding equal pay. Their priorities are a better dialogue and respect between the partners and a change in attitude for both men and women.

It is probably not a coincidence that the men tend to focus more on equal pay as a very important tool, since they are often still the main breadwinners within the families and feel very responsible for the economical well being of the families. The women in general are being more specific on their demands in the private sphere, and they specifically want the men to take more responsibility as a clear number one. As number four they mentioned

a better dialogue and respect between the partners. But the men also admit – as number five – that they need to take more responsibility, but they do not mention that the women should demand more from the men, which is the women's number three. It is interesting to note that women prioritise forced paternity leave for men much higher than the men do and even higher than equal pay. But both women and men agree that both equal pay and forced paternity leave are effective tools to achieve more gender equality in the private sphere.

The conflict between traditional gender roles and gender equality is also obvious, and more men than women seem to think that the tradition is worth keeping. There are two groups of answers in this category where one is more distinct than the other. The first one is that nobody should interfere in the family's life and that both partners do what they want to and it is not necessarily a goal to have equal share of the domestic work; this is number 4 among the men and number 8 among the women. The men have an even more extreme variant saying that gender equality at home is not a problem and that traditional gender roles are good, which is their priority number 7. No women seem to agree with this. It is also interesting to note that while the women prioritise decreased working hours with wage compensation, the men prefer more flexible working hours.

Which policy is most efficient?

The respondents in the questionnaire survey were asked which policy would be most efficient in order give them an opportunity for a better balance between family- and work life. Number one was definitively more flexible working hours, which was chosen by 42% of all respondents. 38% of the men and 43% of the women wanted more flexible working hours, so there is a tendency that women prioritise this more than men do. Number two was shorter working hours without wage compensation, which was chosen by 18%. There was a disagreement in opinion between men and women: 20% of the women wanted shorter working hours while only 12% of the men chose this option. Men's second priority was better access to services, such as day care centres and possibilities for getting sick children taken care of, which was chosen by 20% of the men. In terms of women, 15% of the women expressed their preference to this option. Better additional income for families was chosen by only 7% of the respondents. Again men seem to think a little more of the family's financial situation than women, since this option was chosen by 10% of the men and only 6% of the women.

Flexibility is a keyword when it comes to reconciliation of the family- and work life for both men and women; however, bearing in mind the statements from the interviews, it is crucial that the flexibility were a real option and that it did not include working much harder in order to achieve the flexibility. It might become more stressful if the workload became an individual responsibility.

Which family model is the best?

The respondents of the questionnaire survey were asked which family model they thought was the best: if both parents should equally work outside home and share responsibilities and obligations in relation to the family or if one parent should work and the other should stay at home taking care of the family. The majority (84%) of both men and women answered that they preferred the model where both the parents worked equally and shared responsibilities related to their family equally. This corresponds to the fact that both women and men have a high participation in the labour market in Denmark, but it does not totally correspond to the fact that fathers work more outside the home and mothers do most of the domestic work related to the family. 16% of the research respondents expressed the preference that one of the parents should stay home taking care of the family, and 72% thought that it was of no importance whether it was the father or the mother who would stay home with the family. 27% thought that the mother should stay at home, and nobody admitted that the father should be home taking care of his family.

There were no gender differences observed in the answers – both genders totally agreed on this, which is

quite interesting, since we have the society based on both parents working more or less full time. It is also interesting to note that ¾ of both men and women admitted seeing no difference in who of the parents – the father or the mother – should stay at home. But we still have to face the fact that ¼ believe it should be the mother, and that nobody apparently seem to think that the father would be the best.

EMPLOYERS

Family friendly, flexibility and working long hours

The employers were asked if they considered the workplace to be family friendly, and the answers can be divided into two groups of equal size. Three thought that the workplace was family friendly: the ministry, the municipality and the biggest private company; and they all related this to the fact that the employees to a certain degree had good possibilities for flexible working hours. In a big private company a large group of employees have a possibility to work at home.

> *"We, who have a possibility to work at home, can plan our work. I can choose to leave now, if I want to pick up my children, and instead work late at night or at the weekend." (a representative from a big private company)*

But in opposition to those who do not have a possibility of working at home, they do not get paid for working long hours.

At the municipality they also have much flexibility and a tradition of acceptance of a family friendly attitude. It is common that men also take paternal leave with their children. But often it is necessary to do overtime:

> *"There is al lot overtime. And it happens too often that the employees get paid instead of taking time off for compensation. And that is, of course, a problem. Our attitude is that overtime should be compensated by taking time off. But the reality is that we often get caught up in situations where it is not possible." (a representative from the municipality)*

In the ministry the workload and the ambitions are high, but the head of a department regards the place to be family friendly.

> *"Flexibility is the keyword. It is the mutual flexibility that makes everything function. We do care about employee's obligations towards their families, but it must never become a burden to their colleagues. If someone has to leave early to pick up children, it does not mean that the work will be handed over to somebody else. They have to find some other time to catch up with their work." (a representative from the ministry)*

Three of the employers did not see their workplaces as family friendly for different reasons. At the NGO the employees are supposed to be very committed to their work and they often have to do overtime.

> *"We have a large amount of commitment in our organisation. Our employees will often prioritise their work at the expense of their family life. So I believe that if you asked most of the employees, they would tell you that it is hard to work here and that it puts heavy limitations to their family life. (a representative from NGO)*

At the middle size private company the manager says:

> *"In our company the reconciliation of work life and family life is exactly as it apparently is supposed to be: There is too little time for both. We have so much work to do, so we are working long hours and that is not good for our families." (a representative from a middle size private company)*

The attitude towards working long hours is that it is not only a demand – it is a necessity. There is a minimal possibility for flexibility. The company has 220 employees and 95% of them are male. And the burden of overtime is obviously seen as success criteria for the company. It is possible to stay home with sick children, but the manager never mentions this by himself during the interview. He keeps on talking about flexibility in order to go to the hairdresser or the dentist.

In the small private company, the manager does not see the workplace as especially family friendly. They have 22 employees and only one of them is a woman. They almost never do overtime, they are planning their work, so they do have enough time to complete the assignments they get. There is no problem when any of the employees have to stay home with sick children. There are two managers – both male – and both of them have small children, so they know what it is like, and they also stay home with sick children from time to time.

It is interesting to see how different the notion of family friendliness is interpreted among the employers. Flexibility is often mentioned, but it is a flexibility that includes the employees' personal responsibility for getting their work done, and it is primarily academics who have the possibilities. In the ministry the manager tells directly that it must not at anytime affect the colleagues, and she still considers the workplace as family friendly. Regarding doing overtime, she says:

> *"If people want to do overtime, we will let them. We have a lot of academics here who are dying to use their competences." (a representative from the ministry)*

At the small private company, the manager does not think about the workplace as being family friendly, even though they never have to do overtime and it is not a problem to stay home with sick children. On the basis of the interviews with couple 2 (2B), the father, who works in exactly at this small company, expressed quite a different point of view, characterising the particular small private company as family friendly. He is very much satisfied and experiences the workplace to be very family friendly. Every day he leaves the job at three o'clock to pick up the children and it is always him who stays at home with sick children – never his spouse. And it is never considered a problem.

It seems that the notion of family friendliness is not very well defined among the employers, and their views upon flexibility vary from the flexibility wanted by the female research participants from the interviews. They did not see the flexibility as a reality, when they had to catch up with their work on their own.

Attitudes toward stress

All the employers agree upon the idea that it is the individual employee's own responsibility not to get burnt out and stressed, but they do have different strategies to avoid too much stress. At the NGO they only do what it has to be done according to the law, which is an evaluation of the concrete working place, but nothing directly related to avoid stress. In the big company they have information on their intranet on how to discover and handle stress. They also do research on various factors in the work life that can influence stress in a positive or negative direction. But it is the employees' own responsibility to tell if they feel too stressed. A manager of the middle size company says:

> *"I am sure that we have some employees here who feel both burnt out and stressed. But then we try to take care of them by telling them that they should take more care of themselves and become more holistic persons."*

If it is considered very serious, the department of Personnel will get involved and prioritise the resources differently.

In the small company they have information meeting every third month where issues such as stress are being brought up, but it is not considered a big problem.

At the municipality they try to define limitations of the workload of individuals, and they have some working groups trying to deal with the problem. For the time being they do nothing of the kind.

At the ministry, the manager does not see any signs of stress. She thinks that the high rate of flexibility prevents employees from feeling too stressed and ensures opportunities for them to control their workload and avoid getting burnt out. There are no particular initiatives in order to avoid stress.

CONCLUSION

Danish families with children and both parents working

experience that the reconciliation of family- and work life is stressful. According to the survey performed in this research, nine out of ten parents experience that their work life and family life sometimes or often clash. Almost two thirds of the parents often or sometimes feel forced to choose between their family and their career. One third of the parents have problems in meeting family obligations before and after their working hours. And two out of three parents give more priority to their family than to their career, even though both of them are working.

On the basis of the data collected in the interviews we have experienced that most of the families do not have time for leisure or having hobbies. Their lives are focused on their jobs and their children. 84% of the respondents prefer a family model where both parents are working and sharing responsibilities for the family equally. Thus it is interesting to note that we have a society which is based upon the dual-breadwinner model, and only 16% of the respondents would like one of the parents to be home with the children.

The families are having hard times, and there still are gender differences. Despite of the fact that the Danish welfare system grants caring facilities for all children and elderly people, there is gender equality neither at the labour market nor in the private homes. The Danish society is based on the dual breadwinner model, and has been such for more than 20 years; yet traditional gender roles exists, which have been obvious during this research, even though things are changing slowly. It is evident that an effective and strong welfare system does not in itself guarantee gender equality.

The research shows that women's position in the labour market still is much more affected when having children. They take most of parental leave, reduce their working hours, give up or postpone their careers, do most of the unpaid domestic work and experience more stress than their male partners.

They also use the possibilities of family friendly workplaces more than men, even though things are changing. Some men do use the possibilities of leaving their job in order to pick up or take care of sick children, but it is still the women who are often seen as the main caretakers of the households and the children – with some exceptions.

The concept of family friendliness is not very clear and varies from the different sexes and from employee to employers. This concept needs to be more clearly redefined and more developed, identifying what really is needed for the families, different sexes and for the employers in order to reconciliate family- and work life in a satisfactory manner for all.

Some of the women claim that even though they experience a high degree of flexibility at the workplace it is not real when the workload does not differ. To them it is very stressful that they have to catch up with the work at other time periods. And some have refused the idea to organize a workplace at home, because they thought it would be too stressful to feel obliged to work at home as well. It is also clear that the women experience it more stressful than men when they do not feel being able to take proper care of their children.

The men still think of themselves as the main breadwinners, which they also often are, because of the lack of equal pay. Some of them had to change job when having children because they wanted to be more present as fathers, but due to financial reasons they had to find another full time job. There is no doubt that men also want to be good fathers and want to have close contact with their children. According to the interview data, this does not necessarily include any ideas of gender equality and work sharing in the home, but sometimes it does.

There is a clear tendency that men do not use the possibilities which are included in a family friendly workplace. They tend to argue that if their wives are not capable of leaving their job for some reasons, they do have a possibility to do this. They seem to believe that it is often easier for their female partner to leave her job, either because she works closer to home, she has a more understanding manager, or his job is very hard to leave because of solidarity with his colleagues, his tasks are very important, and etc.

Some of the men, who work in very male-dominated work places, explain that they would be laughed at and made fun of if they left work in order to take care of the children. So still there is a very traditional male culture in some places, even though the research participants would like to be home with their children more often, they would not dare to speak out in this environment.

The men seem to be stressed more when they cannot fulfil the needs of their workplace rather than being stressed by not being able to take proper care of their family.

There are, of course, exceptions from this scenario. Some of the men work in family friendly places where it is a part of the culture to be a responsible father, and they use this possibility. Maybe it is significant that they both live with female partners who are so tight up at their work places that they really do not have a choice.

It is interesting to note that if one of the parents has a very non-flexible job, the other partner has to stay in a flexible work place. This is also a matter of having to do overtime in a non-flexible way. But it is not related to having a high and successful career.

Investigating the concept of family friendliness it is clear that the employees relate this to:

- Flexibility
- Talking and caring about children at the workplace
- Colleagues to share work with
- Understanding superior
- Realistic workload

Especially women focus on the flexibility and underline that it should be real, and they want the possibility to get help from colleagues when the workload becomes too excessive. The men seem to focus on their superiors and the culture of the workplace. It really helps them to have an understanding superior who also is a role model in order to legalize taking leave with children or leaving early to pick up children. The results of the questionnaire survey revealed that both women and men thought that more flexible working hours was the most efficient policy in order to reconcile family- and work life.

The employers focus on mutual flexibility and the possibilities to establish a workplace at home. They do not think of doing overtime as especially family friendly, but still it is obviously a necessity in some places. The interview results show that the employers do not in general have a very clear idea of the concept of family friendliness and their knowledge and interest in the subject differs quite a lot. It could be recommended for the employers in general to receive more knowledge in this field.

When analysing the proposed strategies to achieve gender equality in the homes, regarding the extra work that comes with having children, it was very interesting to notice that the men want a better dialogue and respect between the partners as number one (whereas women noted it as priority four only) and equal pay as number two (for women equal pay was chosen as number six out of ten). The lack of equal pay is crucial regarding gender equality, and the fact that men have to work harder because they earn more means that they cannot be present with children as much time as women do and they cannot be caring fathers they might want to.

Both men and women mention almost the same strategies in order to get more equality in their homes, but their priorities differ. The women focus on the responsibilities of the individuals in their first three suggestions: the men have to change and take more responsibility at home; the women have to lower their expectations and let go of responsibility and women should demand more from the men.

Both men and women mention forced paternity leave for fathers as an effective tool. It is still the mothers taking most of the parental leave after childbirth. The main reason according to the survey is that the father's job did not give the opportunity to take leave and, what is equally important, the family could not afford this. Financial obligations seem to play a crucial role when fathers do not take leave with their children.

From the interviews it was clear that the partners really had not considered the subject in details. Many of them had never discussed the issue of the father taking leave.

It emerged from the interviews that female partners just assumed that their male partner wanted or did not want to take leave. None of the men had taken more than 2 weeks leave, it appeared that some of them would have liked to have more, but their female partners were even not aware of this. This is probably changing since there is a lot of public awareness of fathers taking parental leave and that some of the unions are starting to make this a political demand.

The facts that the partners do not discuss the issue of the father's parental leave and that in the families who chose a traditional way of living they have never discussed the work sharing at home indicate that gender issues to a certain extent are still something we do in a very unconscious way – and not something we are aware and conscious of doing.

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Policies of Reconciliation of Work and Family Life: Trends and Possibilities in the EU and Lithuania

Algis Davidavičius

INTRODUCTION

This analysis is concerned with the problem of discontinuity between the present EU-level RWF policy discourse and that of equal opportunities/gender equality, pointed out by a number of academic analysts. More precisely, the particular focus of the present analysis is on the development of work-family/life reconciliation/balance policies in their shifting relation to equal opportunities policies in both the EU-level and national (Lithuanian) contexts of public policy formation.

We will concentrate on the EU-wide policy developments in regard to this central problem and later compare them to the Lithuanian ones, analysing the scope of public policy transfer from the "central" to national level and a possibility for alternatives on both of them. We argue that the EU-level RWF policies are shifting away from their former "traditional" association with equal opportunities and, hence, gender equality policies move to a much narrower, rather instrumental, link to employment and/or workfare policies (Lewis and Guillari, 2005).

This analysis corresponds to and deepens the contextual description of RWF policies on the levels of the whole expanded EU and Lithuania's contexts presented in Jancaitytė's paper that is also present in this report. Since we already have a sufficient cross-national comparison of RWF related actual policies and provisions in Jancaitytė's paper, here we will concentrate on wider conceptual frameworks, shaping the policy building strategies that are represented in various policy documents and the EU and Lithuanian policy.

In our analysis we will primarily deal with publicly accessible expert evaluation of the developments in the EU and Lithuanian public policy systems and their elements, such as policy documents, networks of various policy-making actors and modes of their interaction. In other words, it is a meta-analysis of the already collected expert knowledge on the present trends in the EU-wide and Lithuanian public policy building trends.

The policy documents themselves as well as economic and social statistics data and their scientific interpretation used to justify public policy designs and policy strategies will not be analysed in detail. These contextual data and opinions will only be mentioned where appropriate to illustrate the expert debate. The questions regarding governance processes used to adopt and implement the policies of RWF on the EU or member-state levels will also be addressed only in respect to the generalizations made by the reviewed expert papers.

There are several reasons for this choice of topic. First of all, the connection of RWF policies to gender justice-re-

lated ones is rarely analysed, what we usually have instead is an extensive body of cross-national comparisons of RWF policies in regard to various analytical frameworks that conceptualize the so called welfare state models or regimes. Secondly, rarely we find exhaustive explanations on what patterns in RWF policymaking prevail throughout the EU that may be of influence and importance to any national member-state context. The third reason is that since arguably the very concept of RWF has a wide array of interpretations throughout national contexts in various analytical frameworks, we must have a more generalized picture of what RWF-policymaking is and what strategies in its development can be adopted or pursued both on the EU and Lithuanian level.

First, we will describe the scope and method of analysis and its conceptual framework, then we will describe public policy paradigms shaping the present EU-level RWF policies and analyse the direction of the paradigm shift in and discontinuities of those policies within the gender equality policy discourse. Later we will map the EU RWF policy actors and explore how the EU trends correspond to RWF policy discourse in Lithuania. Finally, we will draw conclusions and recommendations.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our choice of the topic allows us to address the conceptual confusion in regard to RWF. That difficulty stems first from the observable nature of political RWF discourse and second – from the competition among various welfare regimes of national states within the so called "European social model" that usually serves analysts or politicians as a distinction between common traits of social policy strategies at work in EU from those in US.

Since RWF political discourse combines two historically separate areas of political interventions – "public" professional life and "private" familial or individual life of citizens – it is inevitably a cross-sectoral, mixed policy field that must combine complex solutions of economic policies (mechanisms for regulating employment conditions, labour market interactions, etc.) with social policies (various kinds of equal opportunities bolstering measures, gender mainstreaming, family relationship regulating policies), and even educational and healthcare policy systems (regulations and mechanisms *vis-à-vis* fertility of adult citizens, development of skilled workforce and so on). In other words, there are many aspects of both "work" and "family" spheres of human interactions that can be reconciled in many different ways and with wide array of policy instruments (McInnes, 2006) – hence a wide variety of explanations of RWF policy goals and measures.

But is there a coherent "EU social model" that would let us have a more coherent and "universal" explanation of the broad variety in RWF policy building practices across the EU? Indeed the attention in the EU public policy research is already shifting away from describing and comparing national welfare policy systems and more to finding the EU-wide, cross-national, general conceptual frameworks to explain historical and model future RWF policy developments, to have a "broader picture". There are attempts among some EU- and member-state level policy makers to construct a transnational European welfare state in contrast to long-term trends in welfare policies represented by the US (Andersson, 2005). Hence the more "normativist" attempts among the public policy analysts to find and make visible those public policy developments that would be valid transnationally throughout the EU and maybe even on a "global scale". Such developments, if found, could serve as valid examples to a possibly more federal, centralised EU-wide social policy in its classical form described by Karl Polanyi (1994) as a protective and/or pre-emptive reaction against threats posed by expansion and growing intensity of market relations.

The "EU social model", however, is more like **mutually constraining complex interaction** between the weak EU "centre" and wide diversity of national public social/economical policy commitments made by national states and their ruling parties. In that interaction, starting from mid-90's of the previous century, a clear trend prevails by which national governments gradually lose their

flexibility and experience, narrowing the options for reforming their welfare systems (Wallace and Wallce, 1996; Andersson, 2005). Member states still can choose various social policy blueprints, but from the menu that is increasingly restricted by central institutions. This means that the construction of national and EU-wide markets is increasingly shaped by the EU social policy (including RWF issues) intervention that validates and explains the main focus of analysis in this paper.

In that respect **Lithuanian context** of national RWF policy-building is critically significant for analysis at hand because of bearing relative contrast to wider EU developments in the first place and hence showing the sources of discontinuity and conflict between policy building and implementation in simpler terms. One of the most important features of this discontinuity is the apparent declarative nature of national social policy developments related to the EU-enlargement. Several influential national authors (Vilpišauskas, 2004; Maniokas, 2005) stated that Lithuanian social policy was virtually "rewritten" by the state's efforts to become a member of the EU in late 90's of the last century and the first years of the present one. And "rewritten" is certainly more appropriate than "reshaped" or "transformed", because the impact is more on official discursive level and is not to be seen as clear large-scale change in policy implementation mechanisms. Despite the adoption by Lithuania of all EU directives and other legal provisions in respect to all welfare systems (including equal opportunities and RWF), the level of implementation severely lags behind (Maniokas, 2005).

Our **main method of analysis** is critical review of the already available investigations in trends and developments of RWF-related public policy on the EU, cross-national, and, in regard to Lithuania, national contexts of policy-making. For conceptualisation and assessment (e.g. analysis) of expert interpretations reviewed we used mixed approach, combining roughly two conceptual frameworks for understanding policy developments in question. The first corresponds to the notion of "gender division of labour" and the second can be called "public policy paradigm shift".

The usual way of conceptualizing the policy formation and change in respect to RWF-related problems of inequality, unemployment, demographic change and alike is usually done by analysing social, economic and other policy-related parameters of various "welfare regimes" in particular national contexts, what refers to seminal work by Esping-Andersen (1999). Since welfare systems are a combination of all those policy factors and processes from different areas of human economic, social and political agency, this approach seems reliable and valid.

Nevertheless, there is a growing feminist attack on this analytical framework as being too gender neutral and insufficient for explaining the impact of various RWF policies to clearly observable and universally remaining gender inequality throughout the EU. In contrast to Esping-Andersen (1999) who views the family as a unit, feminist research distinguishes between the two different relationships that may make up a family, namely, partnership and parenthood. Then, welfare-state classifications in the context of feminist research deviate from Esping-Andersen's classifications, if cross-national comparisons include the ways in which family policies regulate partnership and parenthood, on the availability of social care services, and on the gendering aspects of welfare-state policies.

Scholars such as Fraser (1994), Lewis (2001, 2002) and Langan/Ostner (1991) are more inclined to deal with questions of formulating and implementing RWF public policies in various particular contexts, not as with questions regarding the changes in quite gender-neutral "welfare regime", but as with the ones that explain/control the change in family-work balancing patterns. For these experts, the main focus of analysis is the shift from policies sustaining the family-work balance model of "male breadwinner/female carer" to, ideally, egalitarian dual-carer/dual earner ("universal breadwinner") model.

The approach that adopted in this research can be called **"gender division of labour", it** allows us to reliably connect RWF policy issues with social justice issues like gender equality and not to drown the analysis in the sea of narrow-scope economic and social data supporting

observable policy-designs. At the same time various feminist analysts have convincingly argued that the way in which policies are represented is underpinned by normative assumptions regarding the gender order and gender differences (e.g. Lewis, 2001; Mazey, 2000; Bacchi, 2004), so what should we use in order to define those main directions and shifts in normative thinking?

For this aspect of our analysis we can use the notion of a "**public policy paradigm shift"** (Hall, 1993, pp. 278-9). A "policy paradigm" is a generalization of core beliefs shared by policy-makers in any given context. In other words, such a "paradigm" is a more or less connected set of ideas about the goals of a policy, the problematic issues addressed by a policy, then explanations of why those problems arise and what solutions should be provided, in what way and with what outcomes. Finally, there should be also general descriptions of the appropriate roles of various policy actors (governmental institutions, civil society bodies and business, for example).

Hence a shift of such a paradigm is a clear change through some time at least of several of its elements – goals, problems addressed, measures to be applied and political roles to be enacted. Since the public policy paradigms are not nationally specific, the paradigm shift can happen regardless of local context in which a paradigm is manifested through particular policy-building practices. This allows us to discern the EU-wide policy paradigms and their shifts.

A valid example of application of this conceptual framework is presented by the EC funded WRAMSOC (2005) project. In it the EU-wide social policy shift, e.g. in regard to RWF-policies, is described as a clear move from the policies oriented to "old social risks" to those corresponding to "new risks" (based on Bonoli (2004), Esping-Andersen (1999). The "old social risks" driven paradigm for public policy building was developed during the "golden" years of sustainable economic growth and manufacturing-based economy with relatively huge, stable labour markets mainly in Western European countries, meaning the "old" EU member states during 1950-1970. In regard to RWF, the issues represented traditional gender divisions of labour/care and were understood as needs which were not adequately met through the market, namely:

- interruption of income (retirement, unemployment, sickness or disability)
- mismatch between income and need during the life-cycle (for example, child endowment)
- Or there were needs where state provision was widely recognised as desirable (for example highly-valued services in the areas where the costs of privately checking professional expertise are high such as health care or education).

However, social care (for children, elderly or those with disabilities) was to be provided by the nuclear family system with women playing the absolute lead role. What kind of change occurred and what new risks the present EU-level political discourse sees? Through a number of EU documents explaining the EU Employment strategy we find the same view that:

- First, **technological developments virtually rule out stable long-term employment** in the manufacturing sector on a mass scale and this heavily endangers job-security of semi- and un-skilled workers and for the political interactions associated with it.
- Secondly, stricter competition promoted by economic globalisation has **advanced labour market flexibility and mobility**. Flexible working hours as well as worker migration both create much bigger tensions in workers' social relationships, especially with dependant family/partnership members such as children.
- Third, the fact that women have succeeded in gaining greater advancement in education and in employment and are continuing to press for more equal opportunities means that **traditional unwaged social care based on a gender division of labour imposes strains on the family**.

Unlike the welfare-state regimes analysis the combination of the abovementioned conceptual approaches allows us to discern and explain the change in the

main RWF policy-building patterns on the EU-scale in relation to the gender equality issues without getting lost in national peculiarities. It also allows avoiding sometimes over-optimistic impression of "successful" policy-making in terms of document-production and governance activities both on the EU and national levels (Zeitlin, 2005) gained through comparative descriptions of welfare regimes.

Furthermore, if we take into account the developments ("shifts") of wider conceptual frameworks ("paradigms") underlying the present political status quo in the EU and member-states, we will have a more sobering picture of discontinuity, conceptual contradictions and other challenges that are presently inherent in RWF policy building processes on both the Union and national levels, everywhere (Lewis and Gullari, 2005)

However, we also must keep in mind that there is a universal tendency in the accessible literature on any particular policy field to depict developments as coherent and linear, for example, towards "ever greater" subordination to employment policies in the case of work/family reconciliation policies (Stratigaki, 2004), or the "expansion of the meaning" of equal opportunities to include work/family issues (Hantrais, 2000).

PUBLIC POLICY PARADIGMS SHAPING PRESENT RWF POLICIES AT THE EU LEVEL

In the context of generally vague "European social model" that we mentioned before, throughout the EU the spreading understanding of new social risks and erosion of male breadwinner system they bring is evoking three different public policy building strategies or paradigms for answering the challenges that arise. These can be called "neo-familialism", "social investment" (or "third way") and "gender justice".

The common ground for all these strategies is the main tendency in the EU-level policy discourses towards what Andersson (2005) calls "enlightened capitalism model" – a strategic coupling of various EU and member-state level economic and social policies that aim at controlling potentially socially destructive effects of the needed expansion of markets. Exactly this general direction of policy-making allows us to pose the "European social model" as distinct from, for example, the "American model" in which the market and the family are the main providers of people's welfare, with little role for national social policies.

In regard to RWF policy-making and its relation to the issues of gender equality this means that the widespread objective is undoubtedly to increase women's labour market participation, widely seen as a key to the long term EU-wide economic growth in the face of shrinking European workforces due to population ageing and falling fertility rates across the whole enlarged Europe. And exactly in that regard we can point to three internationally competing paradigms that interpret this common objective differently[1].

The first paradigm that we call **"neo-familialism"** draws on, while seeking to modernise, traditional views of gender difference. It is more likely to be found among the conservative welfare regimes of continental, esp. southern Europe, but there are also signs of this approach in "social democratic" Finland or new member states such as Lithuania or Estonia. This paradigm shares with the US neo-liberalism an emphasis on the "choice," but here the choice is understood not in terms of markets for care but as women's right to choose between a temporary housewife-mother role and labour force participation, with the balance tipped in favour of the former.

In the neo-familialist view, women should be encouraged to return to work when the child enters public preschool, but in fact rarely to their former job and most usually on a part-time basis. Thus, in effect this paradigm allows policy makers to provide incentives for working but not necessarily professional women to withdraw from the labour market. The needs and rights of children are associated in this view mostly with maternal care, and the involvement of men into work-life balance of a partnership/family is largely ignored. In regard to gender division of labour this strategy clearly promotes a dual breadwinner/female carer model and puts double

workload on women.

Meanwhile the other paradigm that we call **"Social investment"**[2] is more complex and is driven by primary concerns about work-force mobilisation and economic competitiveness. It interprets RWF issues in terms of the extent to which women can be attracted into paid work by enabling them to balance employment and domestic responsibilities (mostly regardless of behaviour of men) by relative "marketisation" of care services. In other words, this paradigm advocates a "gender sameness" view, according to which equality of the sexes is defined as encouraging women to remain in the labour market.

Largely ignoring the unequal division of care work within the home, the "third way" of policymaking focuses on short duration, but funded, parental leave and public support for childcare, to "preserve human capital" of usually gender-neutrally described workforce. The state is not to play the role of provider and works in "partnership" with the private (commercial and non-profit) sector, usually on the local level. Although the third way advocates do not endorse long care leave schemes as destructive of human capital (women's in the first place), they see part-time work as a good "bridge" back into the labour market. In this sense, they share with their neofamilial counterparts an acceptance of one and a half earner model.

The children are seen here as a "future investment", hence the accessibility and quality of childcare services is promoted. The need to involve men into equal participation of work/care sale is of secondary importance, though can be mentioned. In practice this means though, again, support for dual earner/female carer family and work responsibilities sharing system between men and women and, in effect, double workload for women.

The third alternative paradigm for RWF policy building – that we can call "Gender justice" – is mostly met in Nordic countries, though starting to appear in national debates elsewhere. It is based on the agenda of equal rights and opportunities and addresses the extent to which RWF policies actually succeed in giving women equality with men in paid work by using these policy-implementation strategies:

- Parental leave structured to foster an equitable sharing of domestic childcare between mothers and fathers;
- Provision of universally accessible, affordable, quality childcare non-parental care services;
- Children have the right to early childhood education and care, whether or not their parents are working or involved in some form of training;
- Care is provided by skilled providers and the value of their skills is recognised through equitable wages, good working conditions and in-service opportunities to improve their skills;
- Provision is made for democratic control, including a strong element of parental and community voice.

The children are seen here not only as "future investment" but almost as "active citizens" with respectable needs here and now. Men are viewed as necessary and equal partners in actual implementation of reconciliation provisions and so a gender just division of family and work responsibilities is encouraged between women and men in families or partnerships, what effectively embodies egalitarian double breadwinner/double carer model.

So this brief overview allows us to discern between the paradigms of RWF policy building that seek to conservatively/moderately sustain a work-life balance (to combine paid work with domestic responsibilities) principally for women ("neo-familialism" and, in its effects, "social investment/third way"), and the paradigm that urges policy makers to go further in promoting full gender equality and social inclusion, i.e. address positive involvement of men in combating gender-segregation of labour and care, correcting gender pay-gap, meeting basic needs of children, and etc. – the "gender justice".

Needless to argue that the "gender justice" paradigm seems ideal for the advancement of RWF policies and their effectiveness in the EU and it is supported by a wide array of positive policy design and implementation

examples from Nordic countries (also those that are not actual EU members). Now the question remains about the dynamics and interactions of these paradigms at the EU level and how this corresponds to our "control" national context of Lithuania? First of all, we will analyse the factors contributing to and directions of change in EU-wide RWF policy building.

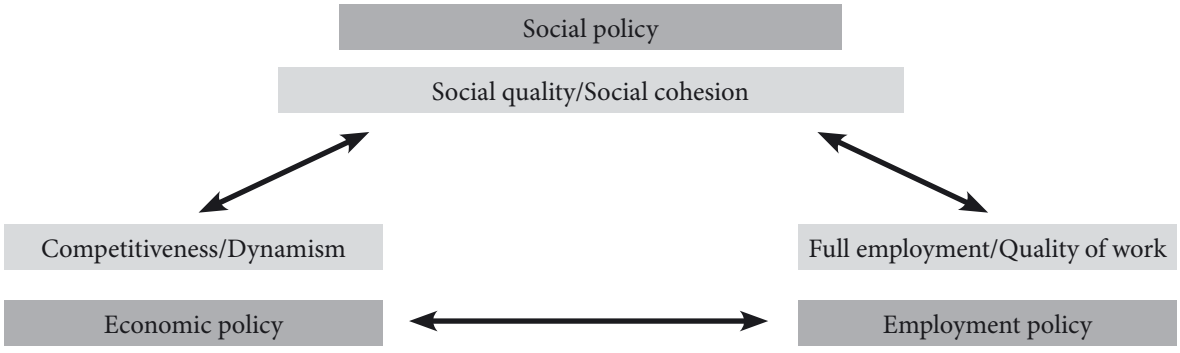
PARADIGM SHIFT IN RWF POLICIES AT THE EU LEVEL

The three paradigms of RWF-related policy-building that we described before are, to repeat themselves, representing a paradigm shift: they address "new social risks" and correspond to widely acknowledged challenge of decline of male breadwinner system of sharing work and family responsibilities. Is there any discernable shift in these paradigms and what is the relationship between the three in EU-level policy building?

Generally, after the analysis performed by Lewis and Giullari (2005), we can state that the erosion of male breadwinner /female carer labour division system and policy responses that try to strengthen the positive economic effects of this societal change (like growing female employment and productivity) are also met by obvious inertia and even conservative backlash from adherents of older welfare systems, and this creates the EU-wide predominance of neo-familialist or third way approaches. There are only regional Nordic exceptions from that trend and also we have systemic, long-term discourse on gender equality in central EU institutions and public policy processes which still has limited influence on the rest of the EU member states. Hence one can argue that the main trend in the change of the EU/national RWF policies is being into direction of instrumentally bolstering „defamilization"[3] of women through employment and less toward gender desegregation of work and life balance.

This general trend is also influenced by, if not depending on, the loose structure and market-dependence of the EU-level policy building practices. The EU institutional support for the successful operation of the EU-wide and national open markets takes priority over global and local advance of equal (primarily in gender terms,

Figure 1. Interdependence of policy goals throughout social, economic, and employment priorities.



The policy mixes to be established to create a virtuous circle of economic and social progress should reflect interdependence oh these policies and aim to maximise their mutual positive reinforcement.

European Commission 2000, p. 6

but not only) social citizenship. Hence the appearance of a separate area of the EU-level policy-making called "employment policies".

Actually, employment is also strongly economy-oriented policy field, so this scheme is only proving subservience of social policy issues to the ones aimed at markets-development and control. That model is direct consequence in the EU-level policy-making since 1999 EU Treaty of Amsterdam that created a "separate" policy category of "employment" as combining monetary, economic and social policy measures. Here we can see this separation in the schematisation (created by the EC) of policy goals' interdependence throughout social, economic, and employment priorities, where a mutual interdependence "to maximise mutual positive reinforcement" is stressed (see figure 1).

Exactly this elevation of employment priorities into a separate area of policy, as Lewis (2002) argues, opened a new EU-level commitment to RWF policies as being subsumed into employment policies with the elaboration of the European Employment Strategy. Hence the RWF measures, on the EU level policy-making, became integral part of employment policies.

The administrative mechanism by which those policies are transferred to member states has also significantly changed into the direction of weaker interaction. After Amsterdam Treaty the "Open Method of Coordination"[4] replaced more demanding (to member states) EU Directives with "softer" pressures on member states to reform their welfare systems and related economic policies by adapting to the EU-wide "common objectives", while monitoring the progress of adaptation by the means of expert peer-review.

On the one hand, the "soft" nature of OMC from and a clear shift of employment policy towards the economically understood policy goals and needs on the other creates a public policy making trend that is further complicated by three main qualities of loose general EU policy-making system as it is now (WRAMSOC, 2005). These qualities concern both the EU-member state political discourse and interaction patterns:

1. Different national welfare regimes, especially in "old" EU-15 seem remarkably resilient to new pressures for regional or EU-wide public policy convergence (or cross national "transfer") in regard to their welfare systems and remain locked more or less in the "regional competition" situation. Only Nordic countries seem to be adapting best to these pressures.
2. In the assessment of the importance of different factors in generating pressure for social and economic policy change, internal factors (demographic, labour market and family change) seem more important than external ones (globalized economy, trans-national governance problems).
3. The general scope of the development of national welfare states in both old and new member states is narrowing: although agendas for reforming national welfare systems vary quite substantially across regime types prevalent in various EU regions, all of them make the containment of the cost of RWF and related policies asb their first priority. In other words, the general development is towards fiscal "austerity", emphasising tighter public control over state expenditure, and this creates a harsh climate for efforts to improve the measurable effectiveness of social provision systems and so address the newly recognized risks.
4. The main bearers of "new social risks" and those in most need in developing RWF policies are at the same time of weaker political influence. As it follows from our previous analysis of expert opinions, the most interested in RWF policies are women (as finding themselves in misbalanced earner-carer position) and middle or small size businesses (who lack resources to tackle labour and global market volatilities in social just and hence sustainable way). This makes the national RWF policymaking in the EU member states, where this policy field is underdeveloped (and with some Nordic exceptions that count for all of them), quite problematic and makes it again dependant on EU-level developments.

And exactly these observable trends of the EU-wide so-

cial policy building, certainly influenced by the introduction of OMC, especially in regard to policy transfer from "central" level into national welfare systems, have "/…/ arguably made it more difficult to address the broader issues of systemic gender inequality arising from the unequal division of work, paid and unpaid, and the fact that a majority of women workers enter the labour force on terms that are different from those of men." (Lewis and Giullari, 2005: 78). This raises a question whether present OMC system really can provide effective means for the "gender justice" paradigm to take wider roots than its present "confinement" to Nordic countries?

Although previously the EU has relatively succeeded in widening its approach towards equal opportunities and gender de-segregation in regard to RWF policies, this success is of pre-Amsterdam era: for example, in the shape of the Directive on parental leave. Newer, OMC-related EU policy documents have only, though consistently, declared the importance of the 'balanced participation' of men and women in the member states, possibly because of the visible role played by specific women's lobby groups (the European Women's Lobby and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men).

Indeed, following a review of the European Employment Strategy in 2002 and strengthening the gender mainstreaming principle, the employment guidelines for 2003 postulated that (emphasis by me – A.D.):

> *"Member States will, through an integrated approach combining gender mainstreaming and specific policy actions,* ***encourage female labour market participation and achieve a substantial reduction in gender gaps in employment rates, unemployment rates, and pay by 2010. The role of the social partners is crucial in this respect***[5]*. In particular, with a view to its elimination, policies will aim to achieve by 2010 a substantial reduction in the gender pay gap in each Member State, through a multi-faceted approach addressing the underlying factors of the gender pay gap, including sectoral and occupational segregation, education and training, job classifications and pay systems, awareness-raising and transparency.* ***Particular attention will be given to reconciling work and private life, notably through the provision of care services for children and other dependants, encouraging the sharing of family and professional responsibilities and facilitating return to work after a period of absence.*** *Member States should remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of childcare provision, to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90 % of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33 % of children under three years of age".*

However, as our previous analysis has shown, the abovementioned EU-level policymaking factors that hinder successful transfer of such priorities to policy-implementation level in particular member-states, such as "weakness" of OMC, narrowing of RWF policies to employment issues, and political weakness of "new social risk bearers", persist and are not addressed by policy documents like this. Further we will overview the document-level development of the EU RWF policy discourse up to date and show this discontinuity in a greater detail.

THE DISCONTINUITIES OF EU RWF POLICY-MAKING

The EU policy-making has followed an uncertain trajectory in regard both to RWF and gender equality, with bursts of interventionist activity in the mid-1970s, late 1980s, and following the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties and later "slow-down" after the introduction of OMC, as we showed above. Quite often gender equality policy is seen as an area in which EU-level policy-making activities, in response to pressures from organised lobbies as well as from labour market and social change, have been relatively effective.

However, although article 119 of the Treaty of Rome stipulated equal pay for equal work, no action followed until the mid-1970s, when equal pay and equal treatment

in working conditions and in social security directives were issued. Gender issues next emerged prominently as an aspect of Delors 'social dimension' in the mid-1980s, and figured in the Social Chapter and the 1993 Green Paper on Social Protection in relation to work/life balance and labour market desegregation.

A series of ECJ judgements from 1986 onwards expanded the competence of the directives into occupational benefits and work-related areas. The principal concern of the third and fourth Equal Opportunities programmes of the 1990s has been 'mainstreaming' gender issues, so that concern expands beyond specific policy areas. In this some success has been achieved (Geyer, 2000, pp. 125-7). Gender issues are prominent in EC reports and policy documents and information on inequalities is increasingly available. For example, the discussion of all four of the 1999 EC social protection objectives ("making work pay", sustainable pensions, social inclusion, high quality, sustainable health care) in the 1999 report includes gender, although the emphasis is universally on policies to help women participate fully in paid work (EC 2000, p.5).

Article 137 of the Amsterdam Treaty included equal treatment in 'labour market opportunities and treatment at work' as an area falling under qualified majority voting, and gave the Council powers 'to take appropriate action against discrimination on grounds of sex' (Article 13). Directives on parental leave, the treatment of part-time workers and the burden of proof (falling on employers in discrimination cases) were issued in the mid-1990s. Thus emphasis in this area has shifted from equal pay to a broader conception of gender equality and from directives and ECJ rulings on specific topics to policy mainstreaming in which the EC has powers to initiate actions and in which information on a wide range of issues is distributed. However, issues of women's position and treatment in the labour market remain central, proving our analysis of prevailing paradigms and directions of their shifts as happening in this narrowing direction.

So the orientation of the EU gender equality policy discourse towards integration with RWF and other gender-related employment issues is obvious. Less clear is the opposite -- connections of the emerging RWF discourse with gender equality issues. It must be stressed, first of all, that RWF is a "more recent" theme in the EU policy-making that began to expand and gain attention only with OMC-induced documents and a couple of directives. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC), 2006) analytic paper review makes the following listing (apart from Employment Strategy document quoted earlier) of RWF-related EU policy initiatives and documentation:

1. The issue of reconciling work and family life was one of the main points tackled under the **Portuguese Presidency**. Thus, the Member States adopted a resolution on 6 June 2000 on the balanced participation of men and women in family and working life. As part of the Beijing+5 follow up process (referring to the June 2000 review of the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing), the **French Presidency** developed a set of indicators on reconciliation. Among the issues covered by the indicators were flexible working schemes, parental and other forms of leave, and care-service opening hours.

2. **European Council Guidelines for Member States**: In January 2001, the European Council, in the Guidelines for Member States about employment policies for 2001, emphasised that (EC, 2003):

"Policies on career breaks, parental leave and part-time work, as well as flexible working arrangements that serve the interests of both employers and employees, are of particular importance to women and men. Implementation of the various directives and social partner agreements in this area should be accelerated and monitored regularly. /…/ there must be an adequate provision of good quality care for children and other dependants in order to support the entry of women and men into, and their continuing participation in, the labour market. After an absence from the labour market, they may also have outmoded skills, and experience difficulty in gaining access to training. Reintegration of women and men into the labour market after an absence must be facilitated. In order to strengthen equal opportunities, Member States and the social partners will:

- design, implement and promote family-friendly policies, including affordable, accessible and high-quality care services for children and other dependants, as well as parental and other leave schemes;
- consider setting a national target, in accordance with their national situation, for increasing the availability of care services for children and other dependants;
- give specific attention to women and men considering a return to the paid workforce after an absence and, to that end, they will examine the means of gradually eliminating the obstacles to such return."

This was also later repeated in Lisbon strategy revised.

3. Temporary agency work: In October 2001, a joint declaration was concluded between the EU-level sectoral social partners in the temporary agency work sector. The signatory parties hoped that the 13-point declaration would serve as a basis for an EC directive regulating this area, following the breakdown of EU-level intersectoral negotiations on the issue. The Commission proposal in 2002 for a directive on temporary agency work has been blocked several times due to continuing divergent views among national delegations.

4. Working time directive: In November 2003, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a consolidated version of the directives on certain aspects of working time, combining Directives 93/104/EC and 2000/34/EC. In September 2004, the Commission adopted a draft directive amending the working time directive. No decision has been reached on this at the time of writing.

It must be added that in 2004 the European Commission proposed to combine in a single text seven directives in the gender equality area. That should certainly not only add to clarity and certainty, and reflect developments in the EU case law over the past 20 years, but also would allow to connect RWF policies more closely with gender equality ones, thus balancing out the macro-economic agenda of "female employment" and creating more space for the "gender justice" paradigm in other than Nordic EU member states.

Still this is not the case. We can also notice yet another direction of tying RWF policies to economic goals and not with gender equality: demographic risk of falling fertility. High Level Group on the Future of Social Policy in an enlarged European Union also promotes reconciliation, but mainly as a means of allowing couples 'to have the number of children they desire' (Commission, 2004). This is also repeatedly stressed in the Commission's Green Paper on the need to address demographic change (Commission, 2005).

This overview gives us a more detailed picture on how the emphasis on RWF policy, as a tool for female employment goal in these documents and initiatives, evokes a common effect of the partial substitution of formal services for women's domestic work and not a measurable shift in gender roles. Next obvious conclusion is the fragmentarity of these initiatives and documents that is reinforced by already mentioned weaker administrative power of OMC that creates more but weaker pressures on member states, so the societal and economic changes that the EU-level RWF policies are opting for become more of recommendations and "general priorities", not biding directives.

Thus. all cross-national researchers state that gender inequality in access to employment, in incomes, in services and in the capacity to form an independent household at an equivalent standard of living remains clearly prevalent throughout most of Europe and even to some extent in Nordic countries. Hence the remaining and even strengthening feminist criticism or the EU-level RWF policy discourse as being too gender-neutral or narrowly conceptualizing gender equality in "employment" and other economic terms regardless of persisting gender inequality in work/care and pay-level divisions. Defining women as "untapped labour reserve" and at the same time "citizen workers" on a par with men in "adult worker model family" (Lewis, 2002) only contributes to the "one and a half" earner model sustained in the "neo-familialist" and "social investment" paradigms presently prevalent throughout the EU. It is not clear that orienting RWF policies to the challenge of falling fertility will do any more for the pursuit of gender equality than the strong link to employment has done.

The present discourse on RWF and on equal opportunities / gender equality policies, as the feminist argument goes, was already for a long time and in large measure separate and remain unintegrated (Lewis and Giullari 2005), while the relationship between these "separate" areas of policy development is crucial for any effective application of the "gender justice" paradigm: "/…/ gendered divisions in paid and unpaid work have long been recognised [in social sciences] as being central to the issues of gender inequality" (Lewis and Giullari, ibid.).

In fact, this situation resembles another "cross-sector" policy approach that appeared in the recent EU equal opportunities policy developments – "gender mainstreaming" – that most notably appeared in the EU political discourse after Beijing Women's Conference in 1995. Recent internal feminist criticism of this concept (Woodward, 2003) points out vagueness of what "mainstreaming" should mean and too technical, "checklist" approach again induced by OMC that arguably narrows implementation of gender mainstreaming policies to "gender impact studies", "gender-proofing" of documents and "gender monitoring" of organizations/institutions (Shaw, 2002). Content-wise this concept and equality policy approach based on it have a very important function that should be integrated into the present EU-level RWF policies: development and implementation of measures that promote change in behaviour and position not only of women but of the very "mainstream". In other words, there could appear a gender-mainstreaming strategy for every set of RWF measures designed and this is yet clearly lacking in any of the EU policy documents accessible to this analysis.

In this section of our analysis we established that the common EU public policy focus on female employment after Amsterdam Treaty gains weight and creates the EU-wide side-effect of sustaining gender inequality. This means that narrow and fragmented formulations of RWF policies, as a tool for increasing female employment or fertility, when disconnected from gender equality goals, only contribute to containment of gender imbalance. This also explains why, as we stated earlier, the "third way" or even "neo-familialist" paradigms prevail in shaping RWF policies throughout the EU.

Further we will analyse how these developments are influenced by the existing patterns of EU-level and Member state policy actors.

EU RWF POLICY ACTORS

Although some influential EU policy analysts, such as Wallace and Wallace (2000), argue that in regard to social (and employment) policy both autonomy and

Table 1. RWF policy processes and key actors.

Processes	Key actors	Illustrative examples
„Positive" social policy initiatives to construct areas of competence for uniform social standards at EC level	Commission, expert committees, EJC (background actors: European Parliament, ETUC, UNICE, ESC)	Gender equality (Art. 119, EEC); health and safety (Art. 118a, EEC); 1989 Social Charter; 1992 Social Protocol („Maastricht")
„Negative" social policy reform via imposition of market compatibility requirements	European Court of Justice, Commission; Council (national governments)	Labour mobility: „coordination"; regulation (Reg. 1408/71, 574/72); freedom of services (Arts. 7a, 59-66, EEC); regional as well as sectoral subsidies
Indirect (*de facto*) pressures of integration that force adaptation of national welfare states	Market actors (employers, unions); Council (national governments)	„Social dumping"; harmonization of tax systems; stages of EMU

sovereignty of national welfare states are eroded in emerging a multi-tiered system of EU policy-making, there are also no signs of common welfare regime emerging either before or after the last EU enlargement in 2004. To repeat, what we still have in the EU-member state interaction regarding social and employment policies is a fragmented and administratively weak pressure on member states through OMC and in the common direction of raising female employment and bolstering fertility. It is true though that minimal gender equality standards and RWF provisions like statutory parental leave are enforced throughout all of the member states.

To illustrate how this weak pressure to the member states is asserted, we can use a table representing how national welfare systems can be transformed through the EU level policy building and interaction (Wallace and Wallace, 1996: 187).

Here "positive" pressures are the central initiatives taken by the European Commission and then usually accompanied by extensive explanations by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and exerted in forms of directives from the beginning of the EU (see table 1). Then "negative" pressures are ECJ's imposition on the member states of market compatibility requirements that restrict and redefine social policies of member states. Then what is called here "indirect pressures" is exactly what corresponds to "softer" effect that OMC system is able to produce through "recommendations", "guidelines" and documents alike.

Since the present EU-level RWF policy development is going into the direction of obviously exerting indirect pressure, we can state that the policy players that really shape the extent and ways how RWF policies are adapted and implemented in the member states then become not central level institutions and expert groups, but the EU and national "market actors" – employers and unions that can achieve particular, enforceable agreements on RWF provisions other than minimal parental leave. On the EU level, such main players are the European trade union confederation (ETUC) and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) that indeed shape the extent and content of flexible work and telework policies of multinational corporations active in the EU (EFILWC 2006):

1. The EU-wide cross-industry (or intersectoral) social dialogue that began in 1985 with the initiative of the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, was further developed in the social partners' decision (Laeken European Council in 2001) to develop a more autonomous social dialogue through a multi-annual work programme. This work programme covered issues that have a bearing on the reconciliation of family and work life debate – gender equality, forms of employment (e.g. telework), lifelong learning, etc. The sectoral social dialogue has also encompassed flexible forms of working, equal opportunities and the lifelong learning/training debate.

2. A number of agreements have begun to emerge globally that transcend the national and the European level – the so called global agreements signed between multinational companies and unions. Rhodia is a case in point. In late January 2005, a global social responsibility agreement was concluded at the French chemicals multinational Rhodia. The agreement encompasses labour rights texts relating to equality of opportunity and treatment, the prevention of discrimination in employment and occupation, equality of opportunity for male and female employees with family responsibilities, and for pregnant and nursing women.

However, since we established the discontinuity of RWF discourse with that of gender equality, it is more difficult to say what public policy players are crucial in bringing more gender balance to such agreements. OMC system obliges the Commission and member states to consult not only with companies and unions, but also with NGO's while defining common goals and their benchmarks[6]. It seems though that the European Women's Lobby and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and other similar pressure groups can only achieve some minor discursive change at the EU-level RWF policy-making like mentioning the need for balanced participation in the labour market of women

and men in the member states. Does this mean that trade unions again are the best policy actor to ensure gender mainstreaming of national/local RWF provisions and thus the promotion of "gender justice" paradigm? We will further try to answer this question by using outcomes of recent academic researches on relevant policy actors in various member states.

In 2000-2005 two EC-funded wide-scale trans-national academic research projects dealt with the question on identification of political actors involved in RWF policies and their power-resources (abilities and tools to exert influence over policy-building/implementation processes), namely IRPROSEC and WRAMSOC. The earlier project IRPROSEC (Improving Policy Responses and Outcomes to Socio-Economic Challenges: Changing Family Structures, Policy and Practice) was started in 2000 and led by Louise Appleton and Linda Hantrais from the European Research Centre, Loughborough University (UK). One of the aims of the IPROSEC project was to analyse the family policy process in eight EU member states (France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK) and three (then) candidate countries (Estonia, Hungary and Poland), by investigating the role of different policy actors and their contribution to the policy process.

The project established (IPROSEC, 2002) that all Western and Central/Eastern European countries investigated had shared one of the two possible modes for political interaction between different level policy actors: there are roughly only two extreme kinds of "family policy networks" and there is a scale of national variations "in between". One extreme is "integrated" and the other is "segregated family policy network". In the first case, the different public policy agency sectors (namely political, economic and civil society sectors) contribute collectively and co-operatively to family policy, while in the second, different sectors operate independently from one another, with no co-operation. Tellingly, South-European and Central/Eastern European countries showed clear signs of "segregated" networking, while Western countries, especially France, had a more or less integrated way of public policy building in regard of diversity of policy actors involved.

The project reports also stated that nowhere in the countries reviewed was the public prepared to accept any heavy-handed intervention in family life. Prohibitive and proactive policies were universally and overwhelmingly rejected in favour of a more conciliatory approach that should go with the grain of socio-economic change, while political parties were noted as crucial in defining national RWF-related policies (with the help of social partner organisations in "integrated" networking contexts, i.e. Western Europe). This explains very well the adoption and prevalence of OMC as a tool for public policy transfer from the EU level to the member states.

Meanwhile, a more recent WRAMSOC (Welfare Reform and Management of Societal Change) project is being led by Kent University (UK) team and also encompasses researchers from Finland, Sweden, France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland. The project is aimed at researching the factors influencing policy direction in Europe, reforms under way in the European Welfare States, the best way to advance the European Project in Welfare and alike. The team's report has more arguable points to make than IRPROSEC. The aggregated project conclusions from the countries investigated are briefly as follows (WRAMSOC 2005):

1. Internal (i.e. national or EU-level) rather than external pressures continue to be of the greatest importance in influencing welfare state reform processes across Europe. Needs associated with the new social risks of the transition towards a post- industrial society are emerging alongside traditional social needs. Policy responses are shaped primarily by national regime differences, but some convergence is taking place in isolated areas (delineated by the EU Directives on employment and related issues).

2. Attention to new social risks is a key element in the shift away from welfare state policies based on neo-familialism and towards the modernising paradigms in social policy (social investment and/or gender justice). This approach stresses the pursuit of welfare goals via the mechanisms which promote labour market flexibility,

enhance human capital and expand individual opportunities. It is understood to link economic and social goals in a 'virtuous circle' and to match the direction of current economic and social change.

3. The politics of welfare state reform to meet new social risks differs from that in more traditional areas. Old social risks directly affect the interests of substantial groups in the electorate, but new social risks tend to exert immediate impact on minorities. Social partners and, particularly, employers, are especially important in new social risk policy-making, and 'modernising coalitions' between political parties and groups drawn from the social partners are often important. Since actors other than the immediate new risk bearers are heavily involved in reforms, outcomes tend to reflect the interests of such actors to a greater extent than is typically the case with old social risks.

4. The EU has strong opportunities to involve itself in the new policies, particularly in relation to changes in labour markets and to women's access to and position in paid work, because activity at national level in these areas is less well developed, and national policy actors have not developed entrenched positions.

5. Progress in these areas is difficult to achieve since the balance of interests involved is typically complex. While it is difficult to establish whether the EU OMC system in social policy has a strong impact, it still contributes legitimisation resources to particular actors and advances issues on the political agenda. It should therefore be pursued and expanded.

Obviously, the stress in these conclusions is on political weakness of the "new social risk bearers" that are in the first place women, who, as a rule, are placed into double earner/carer position, without actively addressing the involvement of men, by predominant "third way" and neo-familialist trends of RWF policy-making in non-Nordic part of the EU. Since, as IPROSEC conclusions point out, political parties are very significant in defining the national extent and implementation mechanisms of RWF policies, then indeed OMC procedures is the only way for NGO's advocating for gender equality and mainstreaming to address this issue. In that respect we can only agree with other IRPROSEC conclusions that the influence of the national or EU-level women organisations (NGO's) is dependent on the pattern of public policy networking ("segregated"/"integrated") and that "integration" or "networking" of gender justice oriented NGO's with social partner organisation can create more balance in predominant RWF policy-making paradigms.

Finally, we must ask how all these identified general trends and developments correspond to the Lithuanian situation.

RWF POLICY DISCOURSE IN LITHUANIA

In addition to what is already delineated in Jancaityte's paper regarding the trends of RWF policy development in Lithuania it must be stressed that Lithuania clearly represents a situation, where the "third way" policy paradigm with some neo-familialist elements is rhetorically challenged by the "gender justice" one, but the perspective of implementing more gender balanced RWF provisions is hampered by a "segregated" mode of policy-networking when political parties and governmental institutions have the most say in the design and implementation of any policy with rather formal involvement of social partners and NGO's in respect to OMC requirements.

The long term trend of desegregated networking between various and sustained multipolar gender inequality policy actors is in fact unchallenged by the admittance of Lithuania into EU in May of 2004. Although the analysts of eurointegration processes in Lithuania such as Maniokas (2005) and Vilpi□auskas (2005) are formally claiming that Lithuanian social policy was virtually "rewritten" by this state's efforts to become a member of EU and was fully integrated into present OMC system, it does not mean that Lithuania achieved any significant measurable results in actual implementation of already mentioned EU-level policies. As extensively demonstrated elsewhere in this project's

report, Lithuania remains a clearly gender-segregated and conservative society in regard to work/care division of human activities.

In the framework of the present analysis this is most easy to demonstrate by referring to the main social and employment policy documents used by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Lithuania. Namely we refer to the "Governmental programme of equal opportunities for women and men 2005-2009", "Lithuania's employment action plan for 2004", "Single programming document" for the EU structural support to Lithuania during 2004-2006, "EQUAL community initiative programme for Lithuania 2004 – 2006" and project-document of "2007-2013 Human resources development action programme". Most of these documents have clear references to the European Employment Strategy and other OMC related documents. However, only in some of them are there direct statements on reconciliation of work and family or its importance. The usual "universally valid" priorities are female employment that is understood as encouragement of re-employment of women that are outside of labour market because of their care activities as well as education of workforce in different ways of using flexi-work and part-time work provisions that are largely unpopular due to much lower income provided by them.

The first mention of clear RWF policy goals is in "EQUAL community initiative programme for Lithuania 2004–2006" that was produced by the EC funded foreign experts. There we find a direct mentioning of RWF concept and priority setting in developing both social science knowledge and innovative measures bolstering RWF public policy building in Lithuania. This is also repeated in the project-document of "2007-2013 Human resources development action programme" because of incorporation of EQUAL objectives in the new European Social Fund programme in Lithuania.

The RWF goal setting is more developed in the "Governmental programme of equal opportunities for women and men 2005-2009" and also it is clearly connected to gender equality issues and involvement of men into (or at least education on) RWF provisions, especially concerning parental leave. This is a clear landmark for official RWF policy discourse in Lithuania, signifying the first clear "gender justice" paradigm elements in it. In this programme, the importance of educating social dialogue partners on gender balanced RWF provisions is also stressed. The programme focuses on educational and awareness raising activities mostly and traditionally calls for greater involvement of NGO's. However, this programme will not be of a measurable direct impact due to limited financing that is more nearly thirty times lesser than expected investment in less gender balanced, more "third way" style European Social Fund structural support for human resources development in Lithuania during 2007-2013 (1,4 million Litas compared to almost 3,7 billion)[7].

Both in existing Labour Code and in measures envisioned in "Governmental programme of equal opportunities for women and men 2005-2009" and ESF supported human resources development measures in 2007-2013 there is sufficient room for strengthening and exerting influence upon social dialogue partners, although presently nothing measurable is happening in that respect, mainly because of the remaining weakness of trade unions and related social partner organisations that are still struggling with the soviet legacy of autocratic male administrative culture.

In regard of the programmes of two most important, "systemic" political parties – Lithuanian Conservatives and Lithuanian Social-Democratic Party – it must be stressed that there is a very clear division between strongly neo-familialist and even "traditionalist" rhetoric in the Conservative party's programme[8] and mixed, quite general "gender justice" priorities with some "social investment" elements in the LSDP's programme[9]. However, none of the programmes mentions RWF priorities clearly, although the social-democratic programme has much greater clarity on gender equality goals. It is hard to tell now whether social democrats will develop a more specific approach to RWF issues with the majority of trade unions – one of their main bases of electorate – being quite passive and ignorant in that respect. We can also state that the recent initiative by social democrats

to grant working fathers of newborns a full paid month of statutory paternal leave that is non-transferable to mothers was met by successful conservative initiative to limit that provision only to fathers that are in official wedlock with mothers of their children. Next to this, there was a recent initiative of Lithuania's business employers association to legalize overtime in private sector, what goes directly against the notion of RWF. Whether this neo-familialist trend will be met by more focused "gender justice" initiatives by social democrats, not to mention active NGO's and trade unions – is to be seen. Obviously the government and systemic parties remain the main active force in shaping RWF discourse in Lithuania.

It is clear that the "virtual remaking" of Lithuanian social policy system after the end of Eurointegration process shows how superficial OMC-induced pressures upon local welfare regimes still are. The lack of legitimate (in a broader sense of civic participation) mechanisms for the implementation of socially innovative policies means shallow formality of EU-level policy goals transferred to the post-soviet, socially conservative context of Lithuania and calls for greater investigation into and effort for ways of making OMC system measurably work on local level, especially in new member states.

All these considerations point to the need to deepen social and political scientific research on factors shaping policy paradigm shift in Lithuania and other new member states with a possible effect of efficient recommendations for correcting OMC system in respect to RWF policies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After discussing the prevailing paradigms of RWF public policy-making at the EU-level and in Lithuania, related policy actors and modes of their interaction, we can state, that:

1. The present trends at the EU-level RWF policy-making show unnecessary narrowing of its goals to meet economic or demographic challenges, while ignoring an important gender balance priority for achieving sustainable effects of dual earner/dual carer family/labour sharing between men and women. This means that a socially conservative neo-familialist strategy is not essentially replaced but complemented with more innovative "third way" and "gender justice" paradigms.

2. The OMC system for social and related public policy transfer from the EU central to national levels does not exert sufficient pressures upon national policy systems for RWF policies to be actually implemented, especially in new member states like Lithuania.

3. At the same time, OMC is the only tool accessible to most interested and least politically empowered political actors – working parents, especially women – by means of party, NGO and trade union representation in national debates with political decision makers and employers.

4. The "integration" model for interaction of diverse non-governmental political actors, especially the social dialogue partners, within the constraints and opportunities of different systems plays a crucial role in ensuring the possible future effectiveness of OMC in regard to RWF or any other social policy both at the EU and national levels.

Based on these conclusions we can recommend any public policy actor on the EU or national level the following:

1. Any RWF policy project whether on the EU or national level should be clearly gender-mainstreamed: a narrow economic and/or demographic goal setting should be balanced out with a clear strategy for positively involving men in bolstering dual earner/dual carer culture of family/labour responsibilities sharing between men and women.

2. OMC-procedures should be reshaped so that consultations of governmental bodies and businesses with social partners would be obligatory for any RWF measure policy project at national or local level. The effective policy transfer in regard to RWF thus must happen primarily between experienced social partners from the "old" EU member states and the emerging ones in the

new member states.

3. In order to create effective implementation mechanisms of RWF policy goals shared throughout the EU, but especially in the newer member states like Lithuania, by means of OMC, primarily social partners and political parties should be empowered to understand new social risks and needs of bearers of those risks. At the same time, the "Integration model" of political interaction between the governmental and non-governmental policy actors should be promoted both on national and local levels in these member states.

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Footnotes

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES AND WELFARE STATE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

[1] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm

[2] http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11318.htm

[3] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/guidelines_en.htm

[4] The degree to which welfare state weakens the cash nexus by granting entitlements independent of market participation (Esping-Andersen 1999: 43)

[5] Policies that lessen individuals' reliance on the family maximize individuals' command of economic recourses independently of familial or conjugal reciprocities (Esping-Andersen 1999: 45).

[6] Paternity leave has been introduced in Lithuania since 1st of July, 2006.

RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE IN LITHUANIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

[1] In the Joint Employment Report of the EU of 1999-2000 on the implementation and effectiveness of labour market measures within the context of the National Action Plans, the European Commission emphasized that equal opportunities for women and men at work is an economic necessity and that an average gross national product of the EU countries have increased by 2.3 % due to the increased women's participation in labour market (Burneikienė et al 2002).

[2] There is a growing amount of literature on the 'work-life balance', which refers to much broader aspects of interrelation between work and individual life (education, training, leisure time) than merely family life. Following the conceptual framework of the project, which aims to analyze the relationship between work and domestic responsibilities of individuals living in a partnership, the concepts 'work-family balance' and 'reconciliation of work and family life' will be used in the study.

[3] For the 2003-2004 State Program of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, see http://www3.lrs.lt/cgi-bin/preps2?Condition1=212270&Condition2=

[4] In her article, Aušra Maslauskaitė quotes the data from the research "Public Opinion about Gender Policies of the EU and Lithuania" conducted in July, 2004. The TNS Gallup conducted the field research: 500 respondents of 15-74 years of age were questioned. For the results of this research, see http://www.gap.lt/vnaes

[5] The aim of the research was to measure the attitudes and behaviour of executives during hiring procedures.

[6] This survey is a part of the international comparative research project, which is called „Acceptance of Population – Related Policies" (PPA2) and involves 14 states.

[7] For more research data on parental leave in Lithuania, please, see the national research report on the webpage: www.dadcomehome.org

[8] The survey was carried out within the framework of the project "Modern Men in Enlarged Europe II: Family-Friendly Policies." The representative survey of Lithuanian population was carried out in May 2006 by UAB "RAIT".

[9] See the questionnaire in Appendix A.

[10] See the questionnaire in Appendix A.

[11] The most prominent initiatives should be attributed to the Ombudsperson's Office of the Equal Opportunities in Lithuania and the Center for Equality Advancement.

[12] In 1989-1990 there were 1808 pre-school public childcare facilities in Lithuania (1003 in urban areas, 805 in rural areas). In 2003 m. the number of childcare institutions was 672. In urban areas the number decreased almost three times, in rural areas – more than four times. The number of children who attend these institutions had been decreasing till 1993. Since then, the demand for childcare institutions has been increasing; however, it cannot satisfy the current supply (Purvaneckienė 2003).

[13] In Lithuania, the enrolment rate in pre-school establishments for children up to 3 years old is 18%, which stands far below the Barcelona target of 33% childcare for children under three. For children aged 3-6 the enrolment rate is over 60% (the Barcelona target states that the actual coverage should be at least 90%) (Reconciliation 2005).

[14] From the 1st of July 2006 a new paternity leave regulation has been introduced, which grants married fathers a non-transferable right to childcare from the child's birth until the child is one month old. Even though the law provides specific arrangements for men, it nevertheless discriminates unmarried parents, excludes the unmarried men from paternity benefits and violates the rights of children whose parents are not married.

[15] Level of payment partly explains the considerable differences in take-up rates between women and men in Lithuania. Because of the wage gap women contribute less to the family budget and are more likely to take maternity leave and exit the labour market.

[16] In Lithuania parents are permitted to take up parental leave with the 70% compensation of their salary on a full time basis only until a child is 1 year old. If a caregiver returns to labour market, she/he simultaneously loses the childcare benefits. This period can be shared among the immediate caregivers, but it rarely happens.

[17] In the laws of the Republic of Lithuania that regulate paternity/maternity leave, the notion "paternity leave" does not exist (maternity/paternity benefit and child care leave are used instead).

[18] A comparative review of Reconciliation of Work and Private Life (2005) of thirty European countries states that most European employers provide at least one of the following working-time arrangements: part-time work, telework, flexitime, jobsharing, saving hours/ personal accounts and term-time working. Of these arrangements part -time work is most common.

[19] Article 146 of the Lithuanian Labour Code.

MODERN WOMEN AND MEN: GOING BEYOND THE HOUSEWIFE AND WORKING MAN STEREOTYPE IN ITALY

[1] The activity rate of women between 15 and 64 years is 49.6%, still some 25 percentage points lower than men's (74%). Similarly, female employment rate is 44.8% against 69.9% of men's. Average figures in Italy are therefore quite distant from those recorded in Europe and from the targets set at Lisbon.

[2] The prevailing model in the south of Italy continues that in which the majority of women do not work: only 44.8% of women between 35 and 54 are present in the job market, compared to the figure of over 70% in the north.

[3] Education levels are decisive in determining job participation rates. In the three geographic macroareas, female activity rates are very low among those holding elementary and junior high diplomas, increasing considerably among those who have graduated from high school and universities even in the south.

The participation model of men and women with higher education is substantially similar: among the younger, female activity rate is even higher than that of the same-age males, also because women finish school earlier. In all three macroareas, differences between men and women are once again very strong after the age of 55. It should also be observed that adult women with only compulsory education not only participate less but their participation is discontinuous and difficult as they run greater risk of losing jobs.

[4] In the 30-to-39 generation, 55.5% of women finished compulsory schooling, while only 49.9% of men did. 13.7% of

women have a university degree, compared to 11.2% of men.

5 ISTAT, multi-target survey on the use of time

[6] ISTAT, 2003e.

[7] The law has not been applied in a uniform manner not even among women. Women who utilise maternity leave in the child's first two years of life mostly live in the north (l'81% compared to 61% in the south) and belong to higher status groups. This means that the instrument ends up being utilised only by those women who can afford it.

[8] The changement of female condition togheter with the lack of institutional help to families and the unequal division of roles within families are the most important reasons of the low Italian birth-rate. Mc Donald, 2006.

[9] A key variable to explain average age increase is rising education levels among women. The duration of studies is one of the principal reasons for the postponement of birth. It should be observed that the average age of women when the first child is born has increased by at least 3-4 years in all European countries.

[10] The decrease in the number of children per woman started in the seventies. Until then, Italy's fertility rate was among the highest in Europe (2.43 per woman). Cfr. ISTAT, 2003a.

[11] Ibidem.

[12] This trend was also recorded in Spain and Greece. In Scandinavian countries, employment rates are high even among mothers. While in France, Germany and the United Kingdom the ratio is inverted and the difference between women with and without children is 20-25 percentage points. In the United Kingdom, for example, the employment rate of women with children in 1999 was 55.8 while that of women without children 74.3.

[13] Donna Moderna, n. 17, p. 29

[14] Donna Moderna, n. 12, p. 33

[15] In the first quarter of 2005, the continuing monitoring of the labour force recorded 2,927 thousand employees (2,274 thousand women and 653 men). Female employees, therefore, amounted to 25% of total workforce (ISTAT, 2005). In Italy, part-time work substantially involves women. In the public sector, for example, three-quarters of all part-time contracts have been given to women, most of whom have decided to work less in order to reconcile work with family life. As for men, their principal motivation for part-time is to be able to dedicate more time for a secondary activity.

[16] It should nevertheless be observed that even ISTAT data show that changes albeit marginal are emerging. Notwithstanding the differences between men and women in the division of family duties continue to be significant, a comparison with past figures showed that there is a slight change in the trend, especially among younger and more educated fathers. The comparison with the previous data on time use, which dates back to the 1998-89 two-year period, showed that the time fathers dedicate to family care work increased by approximately 21 minutes. Significantly, what increased most was above all the time dedicated to family care, up to 45 minutes from 27 minutes. As also confirmed by our survey, the time dedicated to domestic work grew less significantly.

[17] Currently, the over-60 population in Italy amounts to 24% of the total resident population; the over-80 amounts to 4%.

[18]The availability of public nurseries changes significantly depending on the region. 20% of demand is covered in Emilia Romagna (one of the country's most dynamic regions), compared to only 2% in Calabria (one of the less industrialised in Italy). Low coverage corresponds to low demand because the latter is connected to female employment rate, which in southern regions is significantly lower than in the rest of the country. This means that demand is not met above all in the north: 35% compared to 11% in southern regions.

[19] Del Boca, Saraceno, 2005.

[20] In this light, Esping Andersen (2000) assigns a strong family component to Italian welfare. According to the Swedish scholar, pay-as-you-go systems, such as the Italian one where social protection is guaranteed on the basis of professional categories, the close relationship between transfers and working conditions have produced not irrelevant repercussions on the occupational choices of families. The choice of the Italian governments to privilege wage transfers to male heads of families and to spare women the burden of working away from home, entrusting them, through unpaid domestic work, with a relevant part of the tasks that the welfare system should have provided, has produced, since the second half of the 20th century, a rigid separation between those who were in the job market and those who were excluded from it. These societies where social rights were founded on stable and continuous professions were developed on the a specific stereotype, that in which women were housewives and men the breadwinners, i.e. the man, who alone provides for the whole family, ensuring social rights for all the components of the family. As they depended on their husbands, women

were left out from the welfare system. According to the author, the very objective of creating full employment on which the western European economies have been based after the World War II would not have been achieved if women – who were excluded from agricultural work – had chosen to work rather than to stay at home taking advantage of their husbands' ability to get a stable job and ensure economic independence not only for themselves but for their families. Employment growth in the industrial sector actually covered but a very modest job offer due to the demographic structure (not very numerous generations) as well as to family choice, which, relying on the male breadwinner model, has led to the drastic reduction of female activity rates.

According to Esping Andersen, this explains why increasing job rates in the services sector is not capable of compensating the jobs that have gradually been lost following the de-industrialisation process that started at the end of the Seventies. In the Eighties and Nineties, the job market had to absorb the baby-boom generation and also face the changes in the workforce structure. Female employment, in fact, had been growing throughout the Sixties before literally exploding in the following decades when jobs available for men in the industrial sectors started to decrease.

[21] This case concerned almost exclusively the couples where it is the woman who works fewer hours. The opposite case, where the man works part-time and the woman full-time, is very rare (only 16%, i.e. 1.6% of the sample). There were also 17 cases (1.7%) where both parents worked part-time.

POLICIES OF RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE: TRENDS AND POSSIBILITIES IN THE EU AND LITHUANIA

[1] Here we are combining WRAMSOC (2005) project outcomes and conceptual analysis of those policies performed by Lewis and Guillari (2005)

[2] This paradigm is called also the "Third way" in the UK after some influential work of Anthony Giddens. As Giddens notes, the "Third Way ideas about reform of the state were strongly influenced by the New Public Management (NPM)…. According to the NPM, state-based organisations should learn from best practices in business. They should move towards flattened hierarchies, the setting up of quasi-markets, local responsibility for budgets, and assessment by outcomes rather than process" (2001:14). As Andersson (2005: 14) puts it, "By shifting the locus of social services from households and public sectors to markets, thus making them commodities in market transactions, their unproductive character is magically transformed into productive activity".

[3] Esping-Andersen defines the notion of defamilialisation as: 'policies that lessen individuals' reliance on the family; that maximise individuals' command of economic resources independently of familial or conjugal reciprocities' (1999, p.45).

[4] The Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of March 2000 first describe the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) as a tool for implementing the Lisbon Strategy, which aims to turn the EU into "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion". This composite tool should serve for spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals and relies on "softer" practices of goal setting and monitoring already used in different areas of policy-making.

[5] Here and forth in this quote the emphasis added by me – A.D.

[6] As stated in "Presidency Conclusions of the European Council in Lisbon", 23 an 24 March 2000.

[7] Based on the latest Lithuanian Government estimates of the EU structural support prioritizing found at http://www.lrv.lt/main.php?id=aktualijos_su_video/p.php&n=3918 *(in Lithuanian).*

[8] Found at http://www.tsajunga.lt/index.php?1316216956#5 *(in Lithuanian).*

[9] Found at http://www.lsdp.lt/index.php?-1016242929 *(in Lithuanian).*