

Transitions

LITERATURE REVIEW

for the EU Framework 5 study
'Gender, Parenthood and the
Changing European
Workplace'

Research Report #2

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Transitions

LITERATURE REVIEW Consolidated Report

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December 2003
Work Package 4
Deliverable 6



Published by: RIHSC: the Research Institute for Health and Social Change (formerly COP Research Group)

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RIHSC Research Reports and Occasional Papers

Published occasionally by the RIHSC: Research Institute for Health and Social Change

For information contact the publishers at the address below

ISSN 1359-9089

ISBN 1-900139- 41- 3

Printed by the Manchester Metropolitan University

RIHSC: Research Institute for Health and Social Change:

RIHSC is a centre of international excellence and innovation in critical research and consultancy on social change, social inclusion, community participation, well-being, work and leisure, health and social care practices and policies, and the clinical biomedical, behavioural and forensic sciences.

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Transitions is a research project funded within the Key Action Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base, of the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union.

Transitions is a qualitative cross-national research project which aims to examine how young European adults negotiate motherhood and fatherhood and work-family boundaries in the context of labour market and workplace change, different national welfare state regimes and family and employer supports. The project is examining individual and household strategies and their consequences for well being at the individual, family and organisational levels. This is studied in the context of parallel organisational contexts and macro levels of public support in the 8 participating countries: France, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, the UK, Bulgaria and Slovenia



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Chapter 1 Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

This report is a literature review on the transition to parenthood in the context of organisational change; i.e. the way new parents negotiate their work-family boundaries and the strategies they apply. The main objective was to review recent European literature (since 1998) on organisational, gender and well-being issues in relation to the transition to parenthood and the negotiations of work-family boundaries. Although the focus is on recent studies some exceptions are made in case of key studies. This review brings together key areas that have previously tended to be considered separately:

- Organizational change, job insecurity, work intensification or other employment related trends emerging in Europe;
- Gender and well-being issues identified in the literature for those negotiating the transition to parenthood and work/family boundaries.

The Transitions project includes eight European countries: the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Bulgaria. Each national team wrote a report based on a literature review of studies done in their own country. In this introductory chapter comparative European studies are considered. Each national report is structured around four themes:

- Young adults and parenthood
- Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries
- Workplaces and organisational change
- Well being

For each of the four themes theoretical perspectives, methodology used, main empirical findings and gaps in research are discussed. Although there are similarities between the countries, differences in institutional contexts give rise to different research topics being addressed. The countries included in the project represent a cross-section of policy regimes within Europe.

In cross-national comparisons typologies of welfare states are often used, either to select countries that are included in the analysis or as a theoretical framework for the interpretation of found differences and similarities between countries (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Sweden and Norway are both examples of the social-democratic welfare state regime known for its high public support for working parents. Slovenia and Bulgaria also have a tradition of public support but are characterized by a radical restructuring of employment patterns due to the

¹ We are grateful for the assistance of Claartje ter Hoeven.

transition to a democratic regime and a market economy. The UK is often characterised as a liberal welfare state regime in Europe, while the Netherlands, France and Portugal are usually seen as corporatist or sometimes conservative welfare states.

Next to the well-known typology of Esping-Andersen there are more perspectives useful for cross-national research. Künzler (2002), for instance, looks at the reduction of gender inequality over time across a large number of OECD countries (Sainsbury, 1996). He considers the process of a reduction of inequalities between men and women as a part of a general modernization process. By using various indicators, Künzler shows that countries differ in pace and extent of the trend towards more equal gender relations. He makes a distinction between 'stable modern countries that have achieved a high extent of equality a long time ago; recently modernized countries that needed high rates of change to achieve the same extent of equality; modernizing traditional countries that are not able to reach a high level of equality despite recent high rates of change; and stable traditional countries that combine a high extent of inequalities with low rates of change'. Indicators for gender equality are: changing gender inequality in (higher) education, employment rates, division of unpaid work and gender role orientation. Künzler (2002) shows that although a country can be ahead in some areas, in others it may lag behind. France, for instance, is classified as stable modern in the areas of paid work, education and gender roles, but as traditional in the division of unpaid work. Only Sweden shows a pattern of stable modernity in all areas (however, see chapter 4 on Sweden for evidence contradicting this statement). Other modern countries, like Denmark, Norway and East Germany, have to reduce traditionalism in one or more areas. Italy, on the other hand, is classified as traditional except for women's high participation in higher education. West Germany combines a stable traditional division of paid and unpaid work with modernization of higher education and gender role orientation.

1.2 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

1.2.1 The long road to parenthood

Within Europe young adults increasingly start a family later in life, if at all. In all European countries women are giving birth to fewer children and later in life. All over Europe, fertility rates are below replacement level (except for Iceland), and the average age of mothers at the birth of their first child has been rising steadily (e.g. Context mapping report; NGR, 2001; Beets, 2003; Drew et al., 1998). Both the lengthening of the period of education and the increased labour market participation of women are important factors in this respect. Young people organise and plan their entry into parenthood carefully: education and establishing a position on the labour market usually precede the formation of a family. In addition, research findings suggest that the delay of having children is further lengthened by the lack of work/family policies that facilitate the combination of paid work and caring responsibilities for young children (e.g. Künzler, 2002). In addition, it is argued that postponement of starting a family is linked to individualization and consumerism. It is assumed that young couples want to enjoy their freedom and maintain their consumption power as "double-income-no-kid" couples. Research shows that having children is costly; children usually mean less money, time and career options (NGR, 2001). Finally, labour market conditions are important

determinants: unemployment and precarious employment conditions is also a common reason for delaying the transition to parenthood. In Portugal, for instance, young people tend to stay longer in their parents' home and face many difficulties in getting their own independence (see Chapter 6). Laaksonen (2000) describes young adults' growing difficulties in becoming economic and social independent in five European countries: Italy, Spain, Germany, Finland and Sweden.

There are a large number of studies that focus on the decisions about having children and the timing of parenthood, both national and cross-nationally. However, as the various chapters show, countries differ in the focus of research attention given to this topic of research. In Bulgaria, for instance, the focus is more on young people's integration into work and less on the choices relating to having children (see chapter 5). Del Boca (2002) tries to explain the dramatic decline in fertility in Italy and at the same time the relatively low female labour market participation rates. She argues that the Italian institutional structure explains this apparently contradictory finding. In Italy, the limited availability of part-time work and affordable childcare facilities increase the costs of working for mothers. Her results also indicate that the availability of family support increases both the probability of labour market participation and having children.

There are also various cross-national research projects within Europe focussing on this topic. MOCHO (*The rationale of Motherhood Choices: Influence of employment Conditions and of public Policies*) is a three year European project (2001-2004) that aims to study how labour market conditions and social policies affect fertility decisions of young people. Countries included in this project are Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece and Italy. Analysis will also be extended to the 15 EU-member states. The focus is not so much on parents but on mother's choices only. The state of the art report is a comprehensive overview on motherhood in different welfare state regimes, in relation to social policies and labour market conditions. The report also offers an overview of other European projects that study family, work and fertility issues. Some relevant projects are:

- NIEPS, Network for Integrated European Population Studies, this network is composed of 11 European Population Institutes, both from Western and Eastern European countries. It focuses on the impact of employment, gender and family policies on the gender division of paid and unpaid work and on the fertility pattern
- FENIC, Female Employment and Family Formation in National Institutional Contexts. This project analyses the impact of flexibilisation of labour markets on family formation and female labour supply;
- Working and Mothering: social practices and social policies, the main objective of this project is to analyse the effect of social policies in the reconciliation of family (mothering) and working life (MOCHO, 2003).

Many cross-national studies are based on large-scale quantitative data sets. Qualitative in-depth studies on couples' decision-making are scarce. This is also true for most national studies done in the eight countries included in this review. An exception is an international study including Austria, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, UK, Belgium and the Netherlands, which investigates the decision-making of couples about having children by using 'partner interaction interviews' (NGR, 2001, 2002). This research project was part of the European

Family Impact Monitor and in total 210 couples across the 8 countries are interviewed. In this new methodology each partner had to fill in a short questionnaire, which served as preparation for the open interview that was done with both partners together. Thinking about what one's own wishes and thoughts are or were by answering the survey questions individually, does prevent the couple from immediately bringing up a couple perspective in the interview, which would then conceal their individual preferences and the interaction (e.g. discussions, conflicts) that actually did occur before coming to this common couple perspective. Confronting the couple during the interview with differences in answers on the survey questions, gives the opportunity to bring up these 'forgotten' past processes and witnessing their reactions to each other when they hear about their partner's attitude, or ideas about important life decisions.

A first methodological conclusion out of the Dutch pilot study is that the reported actual interactions do not correspond with the answers given in the surveys. In the survey most men and women for example attached importance to the division of household and paid work. But in the final actual consideration about having children, revealed in the interview, it was not taken into account. On the other hand, practical matters, like housing, did play an important role for the preferred time for having children, but were not mentioned in the surveys as important. Also, the surveys did not reveal the different roles men and women actually had in the interaction process. Findings from quantitative data survey could thus be very much expanded and enriched with information about the interaction process between couples. A more content-related conclusion of this research project is that decisions about themes as the timing of children and the division of paid work are typically family-decisions. Most external influences are mediated by the interaction between partners. The new methodology is a very promising approach for revealing the personal information that is covered in the interaction processes of couples. It also seems to be very valuable in order to discover more about the black box around the decision-making processes about having children or the division of paid and unpaid work.

Björnberg (1992) describes changes of values and practices of parenthood in the process of modernization in 14 Eastern and Western European countries. It (he/she?) focuses on changes in value systems related to parenthood and life-styles across Europe. This study is not a comparative research project but was set up as a cooperative study: to exchange research experiences, but no strict comparisons between countries based on comparable data was made. In the book, the process of individualization and the accompanying implications for the changing values of parenthood are discussed. Based on their research in the Federal Republic of Germany, Oechsle and Zoll (1992) describe the implications of individualization for men as a shift from work orientation toward leisure. For women the implications are described mainly in terms of independence and the question of how to combine motherhood and work. Self-fulfilment is stressed rather than the ethos of self-denial. Furthermore, they argue that parents today are surrounded by a growing body of professional knowledge on the needs of children, which has resulted in more demands in time and engagement on the part of parents to respond to children's needs. This may result in more stress women feel in their relation to their children. Björnberg (1992) argues that the social construction of parenthood is in a period of transition both on the institutional level as well as on the level of social values. The parents of the 1990s are "caught in the contradictions of

patriarchal ideology and dual-career families on the one hand and parents versus the professional parenting agencies on the other” (1992: 13). Studies with life story data from Finland and Italy illustrate how ideals are changing and how couples develop different coping strategies to deal with new ideals and practical constraints (Nurminen and Roos, 1992; Bimbi, 1992). In addition, changes in the construction of fatherhood and motherhood are discussed. Parenthood is also affected by changes in society, such as the transformation of the Eastern societies. (not sure what is meant by this last sentence)

1.2.2 Growing attention to fathers and fatherhood

Most research focus on women’s experiences, however, there is an increasing interest in fatherhood and the caring father. Smithson et al. (see Chapter 2) conclude that many fathers still see breadwinning as their primary commitment, but also time spent with their family is seen as important. In France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway there is also a growing research attention on fatherhood and caring fathers. In one of the few actual studies on fatherhood Plantin et al. argue “...men’s practices as fathers are shifting toward more involvement in childcare and household labor and that this process can be assisted by structural changes and social policy initiative” (2003:3; see also chapter 4 in this report).

Since the EU Directive on parental leave in 1996, all fathers are now entitled to 13 weeks (unpaid) parental leave. Take up of parental leave among fathers, however, remains low. Loss of income or low feelings of entitlement among fathers are generally mentioned as reasons for the low take up (Hobson, 2002). Rostgaard (2002) discusses fatherhood in relation to the leave legislation in Scandinavia (i.e. Denmark, Sweden and Norway). She argues that there are major differences in the social construction of the role of the father and the mother and in ideas about parenthood: “Fatherhood and the modern father are important in Sweden, whereas the emphasis is on parenthood in Denmark, and motherhood is a central feature of Norwegian leave policies” (2002:343). Compared to Norway and Sweden, the take up of leave by fathers is much lower in Denmark (Ibid).

Literature speaks of the crisis in fatherhood, which came about with the demise of the male breadwinner role (Hobson, 2002). According to Hobson (2002), “what is perceived as a crisis in fatherhood involves competing and conflicting social politics that revolve around the dimensions of cash and care, the obligations and rights of fatherhood” (2002:3). Hobson’s book consists of six case studies: England, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the US. The focus is on how fatherhood is bound up with institutions, embedded in law and shaped by policies in these different countries. Hobson and Morgan (2002) construct a father regime typology that is based on two dimensions: right to custody and care and obligation (i.e. economic responsibilities for child support and alimony). Developments in family law reflect greater recognition of father’s rights to shared custody after divorce. But fathers’ responsibilities are still largely defined towards cash, not care (Hobson, 2002).

1.3 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

1.3.1 Division of paid and unpaid work

Nowadays, the combination of work and family life is a main research theme in most countries. Relevant topics of research are the division of paid and unpaid work within couples, how parents combine their work and family life and utilize facilities such as parental leave or childcare facilities. In Sweden a lot of research focuses on the question of why there are still traditional patterns in family life despite ideology of gender equality and the broad range of policies. But also in other countries where policies aimed at supporting working parents were developed at a later stage, explaining the unequal division of work between men and women is an important research topic; i.e. Norway and the Netherlands.

Hence, there are a large number of studies that try to explain the persistent inequality in the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women. In a comparative perspective, the division of paid work is much more documented than the division of housework and time spent on childcare. However, all national reviews note that men spent less time on domestic work than women do.

Although focussing on women's employment, Van der Lippe and Van Dijk offer an overview of different approaches used to study women's time spent on paid work: the study of women's work at the macro level, which compares differences in institutional context (e.g. Rubery et al., 2001); micro level studies focussing on individual characteristics; and finally, the recent trend to combine micro and macro approaches. An example of the latter is the study of Van der Lippe (2001) explaining the number of hours women work for pay in Eastern and Western European countries.

Blossveld and Drobnič (2001) study employment careers of couples in different European countries and the US (transitions between full-time work, part-time work and unpaid work over the life course) using longitudinal data. The book is structured by country reports, grouped under various welfare state regimes: the conservative welfare state regime (the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium/Flanders), the Mediterranean regime (Italy, Spain), the liberal regime (UK and US), the social democratic regime (Sweden and Denmark) and the former socialist regime (Poland, Hungary and China). It offers an overview of theoretical perspectives explaining the division of paid and unpaid work within couples. On the basis of this study Blossveld and Drobnič (2001) conclude that the empirical results do not support economic bargaining theories which imply that women's greater involvement in paid work would automatically lead to a more equal division of unpaid work among partners. Women still have to choose between a career and a family while men are still able to keep paid work and family as separate spheres. In none of the countries included in this study did women's careers affect the employment behaviour of their partners. On the other hand, husbands influence their wife's career patterns to a large extent although the direction and intensity of this influence varies between the countries. In conservative and Mediterranean welfare state regimes (Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain), the pressure on the female partner to

withdraw from the labour market or to reduce working hours increases with the occupational position of the husband. In the UK, on the other hand, no impact of husband's resources on their wives' employment was found. In the social democratic welfare state regimes, husband's resources have a positive effect on their wives' employment. Blossveld and Drobnič (2001) also note that with the increase of dual-earner families social inequality between social classes increases.

1.3.2 Strategies to combine work and family life

Besides the division of paid and unpaid work between partners, research also focuses on the childcare arrangements of parents, the use of parental leave and part-time work. Knijn, Jonsson & Klammer (2003) have investigated the 'care packages' of working mothers of pre-school children in three European countries: the Netherlands, Sweden and East and West Germany. Interviews were used to determine the sources mothers with young children use to organise the care of their children. Mothers in all three countries combine public daycare facilities and family help. In Germany and the Netherlands mothers often do not use any of the sources when the children are very young, instead they stay home to care for their children themselves. Parental leave is used as a way to care for children at home. Leira, Tobio & Trifiletti (2003) have done a similar research in Norway, Spain and Italy. Knijn (2003) argues that two conclusions can be drawn from this comparative research: first, that if mothers with young children want to participate on the labour market they do not wait until public childcare is available. In all countries the labour market participation of women preceded the development of public day care. Secondly, in case of a lack of public childcare facilities, mother's labour market participation depends on complicated care packages of family help.

SOCCARE, is a European research project that looked at informal and formal social care arrangements for young children and older people. In 5 countries (Finland, France, Italy, Portugal and the UK) qualitative data were collected regarding different types of families (single-parent families, multi-career families, immigrant families, and multi-generation families) to discover which arrangements they use to provide care for children and elderly (for the full reports see the SOCCARE-website: <http://www.uta.fi/laitokset/sospol/soccare/>).

1.3.3 Parenthood and social policies

A large number of comparative studies analyse the development of family and social policies across Europe (e.g. Hantrais, 2000; Kaufmann, et al., 2002; Pfenning & Bahle, 2000). Furthermore, the relationship between parenthood and social policies is a topic of research. Studies on social policies provide an overview of how and in what way national governments support working parents, focussing on leave arrangements, such as maternity leave, parental leave-or-leave for family reasons, working-time policies, and childcare provisions. East European countries are increasingly included in these cross-national comparisons. Björnberg and Sass (1997), for instance, focus on the way in which family policy measures relating to reconciliation of work and family were viewed and used by employed parents with young children. For this study data were collected in 1991-1992 by using questionnaires in the following countries: West and East Germany, Poland, Russia (European part only), Hungary,

and Sweden. Gornick and Meyers (2003), on the other hand, compare US, Canada and 10 Western European countries regarding social policies for working parents. Moss and Deven (2002) offer an overview on statutory leave arrangements in a large number of countries: member states of the European Union, Central European countries, and Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. This overview shows that paid maternity leave and paid or unpaid parental leave are now available in all European countries. The number of countries in Europe offering paternity leave is increasing and also within parental leave schemes more attention is given to fathers. Sweden still has the most comprehensive parental leave system in Europe. Kocourková (2002) takes a longitudinal approach and discusses leave arrangements and childcare services in four central European countries: Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia before and after the transition. Before the transition there was a relatively well-developed network of childcare facilities, after 1990 state expenditure on childcare decreased and more attention was given to extended parental leave.

Rønsen and Sundström (2002), compare employment patterns of women after first and second birth in Finland, Norway and Sweden during 1972-1992, focusing on the impact of parental leave and childcare programs on the transition to full-time and part-time work. The results show that public policy measures do shape women's after-birth employment behaviour.

OECD (2001) documents changes in parental employment patterns, the gender wage gap, the division of unpaid work and childcare as well as work-family policies in OECD countries. Main findings are: employment rates of mothers with a child under 6 are rising rapidly. However, employment rates of well-educated mothers are much higher than less-well educated mothers in all countries. In the EU, around half of mothers with a child under 6 in employment work part-time. Regarding preferences of parents with young children with respect to employment patterns there are considerable differences between countries: Dutch parents prefer the one-and-a-half earner model (man fulltime, women part-time). In Sweden and Southern European countries preferences for part-time working are relatively low. Chapter 8 and Chapter 5 show that also in Slovenia and Bulgaria working mothers mainly work fulltime.

National as well as cross-national studies tend to focus on the relationship between social policies and family life. There is less attention to the relation between the market and family life. Although recent research tries to fill this gap. For instance, Swedish research looks at spill-over effects between family and working life (see Chapter 4). In Norway more attention is paid to how the labour market affects the daily lives of people. The importance of labour market conditions for the transition to parenthood and family life in general is also illustrated by the changes in East European countries. Like the Scandinavian countries, former socialist countries have a tradition of policy support for working parents. However, due to the transition, labour market conditions have changed dramatically. Our Bulgarian authors note that combining work and family life is not perceived as a problem. More attention is given to survival strategies of families involving home production and additional jobs (see Chapter 5).

1.4 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

Technological, economic and socio-cultural developments cause major changes in modern organisations all over Europe, including changes in shapes of careers, changes in hierarchical structures of organisations, changes in commitments of employees towards the organisation they work in, changes in working times changes in the need for more flexible working relations and more employable employees, and changes in the composition of the workforce, due to a dramatic increase of working women in Europe during the last decades.

This increase of the female workforce and consequently the growing diversity of the workforce in European organisations, have given rise to new questions related to the organisation of work and to structures of workplaces. These new questions are the major perspective in this European study on how young parents deal with their different responsibilities and commitments and how they negotiate the work-family boundaries with their employers. Firstly, we highlight some of the main findings on workplaces and organisational changes in the countries involved in this research project.

1.4.1 Main findings from the different countries

Plantin and Bäck-Wiklund (see Chapter 4) focus on organisational structures and the traditional gender contract in Sweden. Career opportunities, assessments of work efforts are based on traditional gender norms, as they claim, even in Sweden. Women are supposed to be the primary carers at home, taking long-term parental leaves and working part-time. These forms of behaviour are associated with less commitment to employment and to the organisation. A highly segregated labour market is one of the most visible consequences of this traditional gender contract.

This segregation of the labour market along the lines of gender also holds for Norway. Sümer and Nilsen (see Chapter 7) make clear that men and women in Norway do different types of work, in different types of jobs, which are related to different wage structures. Female managers turn out to be relatively scarce in Norway, specifically in the private sector. A high number of working women is not a sufficient condition for an equal share of women in managerial positions. Apart from the specific situation in Norway, this is an interesting finding which deserves further research: even in countries with a longstanding tradition of high shares of working women, as in the case in the Nordic countries, the glass ceiling as a barrier for women to reach higher managerial positions still exists. How could this phenomenon – a large number of working women and still a limited number of women in managerial positions – be explained, and – more importantly – under which conditions will this situation alter?

Interesting also in the Norwegian case is the question whether dynamic organisations with flat and changeable structures give better opportunities to women than static organisations with solid and hierarchical structures. Different arguments are at stake. In new organisational forms, the “best” jobs generally are very time consuming. A Norwegian study in three companies in the business sector showed that that these workplaces were characterised by an increasing individualisation of responsibilities for results and performance and a blurring of

boundaries between work and private life. This development is not unique for Norway, as other national reports tell us.

An interesting study, mentioned in the UK literature review (see Chapter 2) is on workplace change and the family in two banks (Brannen, Lewis et.al., 2001). Researchers note that intensification and insecurity of work were accompanied by a replacement of old workplace values of service, solidarity and continuity with new values which celebrate selling, autonomy and flexibility. In the context of a rhetoric of greater personal autonomy, employees often experienced themselves as responsible for their own work intensification, as the authors report. In many organisations in Britain, a long hours culture exists, in which employees are expected to work longer than their official hours.

A long hours culture is also given attention in France (see Chapter 9). It is suggested that the increasing use of flexible working practices in workplaces is primarily focused on the increase of productivity and less so on creating a better fit between work and family. The reduction of working time, as regulated in French law regarding a 35-hours working week, however seems to have had positive effects on the experienced balance between work and care. The French literature review shows that family-friendly organisations are more often found in the public than in the private sector. This finding also holds for other European countries, as for instance Den Dulk (2001) made clear in her research on work-family arrangements in Italy, United Kingdom, Sweden and the Netherlands. Norwegian studies reveal that a shared “worker-carer” family model seems to conflict most with structures and culture in the private sector. In the public sector there are more flexible working time arrangements which help young parents to meet the different demands of work and family.

Major changes in organisations also occur in Portugal (see Chapter 6) , where new forms of work organisation come up as outplacement, outsourcing, temporary work, part-time work and telework. Part-time work however, is a rather exceptional phenomenon in Portugal, not often more beneficial to employers than to employees (unclear). It will be no surprise that the Portuguese labour market is also segregated by gender. This segregation appears along horizontal and vertical lines. Several studies emphasize that women tend to work in specific sectors and that women experience more difficulties than men to reach higher positions. This all sounds very familiar with the rest of Europe.

Important topics in the overview of workplaces and organisational changes in Bulgaria (see Chapter 5), are new forms of entrepreneurship and self-employment; processes of privatisation of formerly state companies and the flexibilisation of work. Flexible working relations gain in importance, in research as well as in social policies. More flexibility in working relations is seen as a tool to encourage employment and to lower the unemployment figures. Interesting in the Bulgarian literature overview is the suggestion that the diversity of meanings which are given to terms as flexibility, part-time work, atypical work, are not just a lack of theoretical precision, but also mirror the diversity in political assessments of these developments. Flexible working relations however, are primarily dominant in the so-called unofficial labour market, while the official labour market remains highly inflexible. Fewer than 5 percent of employees in the Bulgarian formal labour market work part-time. An important conclusion from the Bulgarian report is, that there is a lack of empirical studies on

organisational changes in Bulgarian companies and on how these changes relate to the work-life balance of employees.

In the Slovenian literature review (see Chapter 8) attention is given to the relative low quality of working life. Gender issues are mentioned as well. Women in general have lower incomes than men, and young women are more likely to have fixed term and limited contracts. The number of women in higher managerial positions is low and the metaphor of the glass ceiling is frequently used in Slovenian research. In terms of human resources policies, the authors suggest that a lot remains to be done in Slovenian firms. Lack of communication within the organisation, lack of managerial capabilities and the absence of career planning are common and rather problematic phenomena.

In the review of the Netherlands (see Chapter 3), it is shown that most Dutch employers are involved in the development of flexible work arrangements. In more general terms, it appears that facilities to combine work and care have become a matter of course in many Dutch organisations. Organisations are well aware that more and more workers are combining, or wish to combine work and care activities, and they are increasingly faced by the fact that workers have been making demands on this point. Dutch employers adapt to these developments in a rather pragmatic way. It is not primarily a conviction that setting up work-family arrangements is, in terms of business or strategic planning, the best thing to do. It is seen as the most sensible response to an – apparently – changing environment. Work-family arrangements are organised because it is in the interest of the employees. It does increase the satisfaction of workers, which is – as research shows – an important motive to be a family-friendly employer and so keeping in line with other organisations in the sector.

Another characteristic of Dutch labour market, in terms of family-friendliness, are the ample opportunities for workers, specifically for women, to work part-time. Generally speaking, part-time jobs in the Netherlands are not necessarily jobs in the margin of the labour market. Legislation prevents employers from discriminating between part-time and full-time workers. Career opportunities, however, are still better guaranteed in full-time than in part-time jobs. This means that men in general, face better career chances than women.

1.4.2 Working time preferences and part-time work across Europe

The European Foundation study to Employment Options and Labour Market Participation, carried out in all 15 EU Member States and Norway, shows a picture of working time preferences of modern employees (Atkinson, 2000). Only a third of the European workforce (35 percent) were content with their present schedule and 11 percent wanted to work longer hours. About half (54 percent) of those presently working, both as self-employed and dependent employees, would prefer to work less if they were able to have a free choice, taking their need to earn a living into account. The net outcome of these shifting preferences, as this research makes clear, would be that the average working week would fall from 39 to 34.5 hours. Contrasting the preferences with the actual working time profile, there is a substantial decline in the proportion of workers who want to put in more than 40 hours a week and a major increase in preferences for a substantial part-time working week, which means between 20 and 35 hours per week.

Based on the same data, Bielenski (1999) reports that the preference for working hours is not primarily indicated by the need to combine paid work and family duties, specifically the care of young children. The majority (77 percent) want to have more time for themselves and for their own activities. A substantial part (53 percent) want to work part-time in order to reduce the strains resulting from their full-time job. It is an interesting question however, whether working time reduction helps to reduce strains from work. This will only happen when there is an actual reduction in tasks and/or responsibilities. If this is not the case, a reserve effect of more strains from work seems likely.

In their cross-national study *Between Equalization and Marginalization*, Blossfeld and Hakim (1997) give a broad overview of women working part-time in Europe and in the United States of America. Three types of part-time jobs are distinguished: reduced hours work with weekly hours a little shorter than usual; half-time jobs of around 15 – 29 hours a week; marginal jobs involving very few hours a week, such as fewer than 10 or 15 hours and often exempted from income tax and social security contributions. Research on part-time work across Europe and the United States reveals broad contrasts of country-specific contexts and experiences. In the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, part-time work was fairly rare. Integrating women into paid full-time work was considered a vital strategy for achieving gender equality in the socialist development. After the breakdown of socialism, however, unemployment raised and precarious part-time employment became more common, not just for women but for all workers.

Part-time work for married women with children is particular characteristic of Northern European societies. Because of economic growth, a marked rise in demand for female (part-time) labour came into being. This demand for labour required an increasing integration of married women into the labour market. This integration of married women into the workforce was not uniform across the Western countries. Blossfeld and Hakim point out different ideological and political country contexts: the Scandinavian model, trying to integrate married women (with children) into the labour market; the liberal welfare-state regimes in UK and USA, which did little to stimulate mothers' labour supply specifically. In France, policy-makers pro-actively adopted measures to increase fertility at the end of the 1960s and 1970s. Not by discouraging women to enter the workforce, but by reducing obstacles to fertility for full-time working women. In the conservative welfare states of the Netherlands and West Germany, public policy has been committed to the traditional understanding of family life. Social policy measures have encouraged motherhood. Family services, such as day care, have been – for long time – underdeveloped in both countries. The Netherlands now has become the part-time champion of Europe. A general conclusion is that in all countries involved in this comparative research, women's increasing educational investments stimulated both women's part-time and full-time work.

"Part-time prospects" is an international comparison of part-time work in Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim, edited by O'Reilly and Fagan (1998). In the first section of this book, the authors examine the debates which seek to account for the growth and development of part-time work. In the second section, the authors make comparisons between specific countries. Among other specific research outcomes, it appears that the

quality of part-time work is improved when it is integrated alongside full-time work in labour law, employment regulations and income replacement entitlements. This prevents the marginalisation of part-time work as a cheap labour source and helps to prevent the driving down of standards in full-time jobs. Another important finding is that, when part-time work is developed within a formalised political renegotiation of the “gender contract” which encompasses home life as well as the workplace, it may develop as a bridge which helps to reconcile the demands of private care work and public waged work. It is concluded that a full understanding of the processes of possible marginalisation and inclusion of part-time work is only possible when part-time work is analysed from a life course perspective.

Households, work and flexibility

An international research project (2000 – 2003) on households, work and flexibility has been developed, with 8 participating countries: United Kingdom; the Netherlands; Sweden; Slovenia; Czech Republic; Hungary; Bulgaria; Romania (Wallace, 2002). A very broad general question is addressed: how national labour market regulations and social policies affect the emergence of specific patterns of flexibility and the impact of these flexibility patterns on households and work. Some factors appear to be common in all participating countries. Women are over-represented in flexible work throughout Europe. Flexible working relations tend to lead, as the Critical Review of Literature (2002) says, to increasing pressure on women and parents to find their own solutions for childcare and to resort to part-time work. In Sweden and the Netherlands however, there is considerable attention to improving the quality of life through family-friendly flexible policies. In the Eastern European countries priority is given to restructuring the labour market by flexible working relations in order to gain in economic efficiency. In all participating countries, it is primarily young people who are involved in flexible working relations. An important question is whether this will lead some young people into permanently marginalized positions.

Ethnic minorities and foreigners turn out to be over-represented in flexible working relations in all countries. An interesting finding is that flexible workers fall into a number of categories. Some are low paid and disadvantaged. Some are highly educated and highly paid. It seems that the labour market is increasingly segmented between core and secondary labour markets on the one hand, but also within in each sector according to pay, human capital and working conditions. This apparently also holds true for the market of flexible working relations. The amount of autonomy workers have on working time, content of work and working conditions is decisive for the quality of work. The more autonomy and sovereignty workers have, the better their working situation.

Employment systems in Europe

Crompton (1999) is the editor of an extended cross-national study on restructuring gender relations and employment, with a special focus on the decline of the male breadwinner. A central issue is the major change all across Europe in the organization of work of work in the second half of the twentieth century: the division of labour between men and women. An interesting result of this study is the development of a flexible framework that starts with the traditional male breadwinner/female carer model and explores a range of possible earning and caring alternatives. This framework is represented as a continuum, with the male breadwinner/female carer model at the “traditional” pole and the dual earner/dual carer model

at the other pole. In between these poles, three other models are distinguished: the dual earner/female part-time carer model; the dual earner/state carer model; the dual earner/marketized carer model. The dual earner/female part-time carer model has emerged strongly in some countries, particularly in Britain. But this model is also leading in the Netherlands. A relevant question is whether this model will contribute to a transformation of gender relations. of Crompton's assessment is clear: the dual earner/female part-time carer model is primarily a modification of the breadwinner model, rather than its transformation. Full-time employment of women, according to Crompton, seems to have more transformational power, although cultural conditions matter significantly. The ex-state-socialist countries constituted the conditions for women's "liberation". But, following Crompton, this economic model of liberation paid little attention to the prevailing gender culture, which is still very traditional in Eastern Europe. In opposition to this Eastern Europe situation, the Scandinavian countries developed versions of a dual earner/state carer model and encouraged the dual earner/dual carer model. The concept of a woman-friendly state has been developed in this context. Thus, in contrast to Eastern Europe, the dual earner/state carer model in Scandinavia has been associated with greater gender equality. A general conclusion is that women's full-time work in combination with substitute care is most likely to result in less traditional gender relations and greater gender equality. The dual earner/dual carer model is, by definition, associated with less traditional gender relations. The full implementation of such a model would be likely to be associated with a radical restructuring of paid employment itself, as Crompton argues. Indeed, full-time work as we know it might be superseded. One could remark that in the Netherlands, in some sectors – for instance the civil service – this development is starting slowly: large part-time jobs – 30 to 32 hours per week – which in principle keep its workers, male and female well –educated professionals, on career tracks. It is an interesting question how this will work out, specifically in relation to women's opportunities in the labour market. As yet, Dutch women are firmly underrepresented in the managerial ranks, also within the civil service.

In "Working Europe, Reshaping European Employment Systems" (Christiansen, Koistinen and Kovelainen (eds.) 1999), the relationships between European employment systems and welfare state regimes are explored in six unifying themes. From the point of view of this literature study, the most relevant themes are Gender Systems and Employment; and Work Sharing and New Working Time Arrangements. In the theme "Gender Systems and Employment", it is demonstrated that the European social contract is changing. These changes clearly affect the existing European gender contracts as well. For instance in Finland, the existing basis for the strong public full-time paid employment for women is at least in part gradually melting away, with the introduction of market mechanisms and privatisation. This structural change in employment away from secure paid employment to various flexible forms of employment and self-employment is taking place in other areas of the Finnish economy as well.

With regard to working time policies, there are different points of view. On the one hand redistributing work has been seen a way of solving structural unemployment in European countries. But on the other hand, work sharing and new working time arrangements have been seen as a positive way to increase productivity, citizens' welfare and quality of life and as a way to secure better opportunities for citizens to participate in society.

1.4.3 How gender neutral is the modernisation of work?

An important perspective in literature on workplaces and organisational change is the question of whether the modernisation of work is gender neutral or not. Does a modern workplace offer better opportunities to women than traditional workplaces did in previous days? Is modernisation beneficial, if at all, to women and to men in an equal way? Or are old inequalities between men and women reproduced by changes that take place in the workplace of today?

Smith (1997) offers a well-documented overview of the effects of organisational and employment innovations on the configuration of work settings in post-industrial United States. In elaborating this theme, two hypotheses are used. One line of thoughts, the more optimistic scenario, is that new forms of organisation primarily have positive effects on the situation of modern workers. In knowledge-based organisations, workers experience more flexibility, more opportunities for continuous learning, more empowerment and commitment, less hierarchy and more autonomy, more quality and more intrinsic satisfaction with their work. In the pessimistic scenario it is stressed that modernisation of work primarily leads to more uncertainty, to lower wages, to less protection, to more competitiveness and work pressure for larger groups of employees.

These two possible effects of new and more flexible forms of organisation could be specified to gender. Van Hoof and Van Doorne-Huiskes (1995) review developments in the European labour market from this gender perspective. They argue that organisational renewal presents women with a variety of prospects. Flexible and quality-oriented organisations meet the women's demands and do justice to their skills. However organisational renewal in many cases also means flattening the internal structure. In particular it means thinning out the ranks of middle management. In the midst of the nineties, Lindley (1994) observed in Britain a far-reaching reorganisation of managerial and supervisory job hierarchies. This also holds true for other countries of the European Union. That naturally has a negative impact on career prospects, not only for men but also for women, whose rising educational level has made them eligible for promotion to the managerial ranks. Great risk of the organisational renewal process is that gender differences simply are replicated. Perrons (1999, 2004) investigates the new economy's effects on work life balance and gender equality. A qualitative EU 6 country comparative study of flexible working in the retail sector and a UK local labour market qualitative study leads into rather negative outcomes. Gender inequality, Perrons concludes, is reproduced in the new economy. These deep-seated processes need to be addressed if the aspirations of the EU gender equality strategy are to be anything more than wishful thinking (Perrons, 2004). Before looking at the European Union, here is a brief overview of the conclusions of Smith's study (1997) on the effect of new forms of work organisation in the United States.

Smith's conclusions are two-fold. A new participative basis for production has been institutionalised in many work settings, as Smith argues, mostly for a core group of employees. Individuals in the core are exposed to a context of opportunities: opportunities to learn new skills and opportunities to self-management. Responsibility levels are raised by new production methods and in many cases decision-making opportunities are increased. But

there is another side of the coin. There is empirical evidence, according to Smith, that core workers benefit from the new approach because they are buffered by a peripheral workforce brought in to absorb fluctuations in work cycles, but specifically excluded from participation in these organisational innovations. Contingent workers are not trained in new production methods, nor are they authorised to participate in self-management groups or quality circles. Smith's hypothesis is that new forms of work organisation will most certainly redraw the lines of gender and race hierarchy in the United States. Not primarily in the sense that gender and racial inequality will be reproduced by new forms of work organisation. More so because the stable, male career model will be eroded by increased employment destabilisation and contingent hiring practices.

In a report for DG-Employment of the European Commission, Webster (2001) analyses possible gender issues in the modernisation of work and the reorganisation of working time. The general context of this report is not without worries about women's situation at the European labour market. Despite their entry into the labour market in increasingly large numbers, women remain clustered in a narrow range of occupations and at the bottom of the occupational ladder (Webster, 2001). Occupational segregation by sex is still an actual phenomenon in the European Union. Women are in less senior positions than men in the organisations all over Europe and they progress far less in their careers. The glass ceiling restricting women's career and development prospects, in particular their seniority and responsibility, remains – as Webster argues – firmly in place. Sex segregation in the labour market threatens the effective performance of employing organisations, causing massive under utilisation of women's skills and wastage of their abilities.

So, different relevant developments in the European labour market create a significant dilemma. Many women are stuck in lower occupational positions, whose human capital is systematically under-utilised, while at the same time Europe is transforming to a so-called knowledge society, in which educated human capital is vital to organisational performance. Because of this dilemma, research to possible gendered dimensions in the process of modernisation of work is extremely relevant. In the European Employment Strategy new forms of work organisation are primarily regarded and promoted in terms of their beneficial effects upon economic performance and competitive advantage. Modernising work organisation is linked to the ability of business to reorganise their internal practices to better respond to the competitive imperatives operating in contemporary European and world markets (Webster, 2001). It must be clear, however, that modernisation of work only will contribute to a knowledge-based economy if the human capital of women is also fully utilised. Modernisation of work is no gender neutral process.

1.4.4 Gender equity and new challenges for European HR management

Organizational Change and Gender Equity (Haas, Hwang & Russell, 2000) is an interesting publication regarding a more family-friendly work environment. The book covers three themes: firstly, work-family issues must be considered from a gender perspective; secondly, work-family linkages are deeply embedded in the culture of work organizations; and thirdly, work organizations are influenced by what happens in the external environment. Gender equity in work-family only exists in organizations, according to the authors, when it is taken for

granted that both men and women are entitled to compete for the whole range of positions within companies and when it is accepted that both male and female employees are responsible for family income provision and childcare. The assumption is that work-family programs and policies that are based on the idea of gender equity seem to have greater potential to benefit companies than those that single out mothers of young children as beneficiaries. Another important point of view in this study is how connections between work and family spheres and individuals' work and family roles are socially constructed. This means that organizations are supposed to have cultures that can facilitate or hinder mothers' and fathers' balancing of work and family responsibilities. There are shared values and norms in organizations that shape how management reacts to employees' need for flexibility for family purposes and how employees act, not just toward their jobs but also toward their families. To understand the social construction of work-family linkages, one needs also to consider the impact of societal culture on beliefs about gender and the culture of work organizations. National social policies could be considered as positive or negative restrictions for men's and women's sharing of breadwinning and child care roles as well as the development of gender equitable work-family policies and practices within organizations. Among other things, it is concluded in this study that more organizations nowadays recognize that work-family is an issue for men as well as for women. It is, however, still difficult for organizations and senior managers to accept that more men are seeking to be active fathers and welcome initiatives that will facilitate this change. There is also a clear move away from work and family being seen as only an issue of social justice and/or a benefit for employees. The fundamental drive for organizations, the authors conclude, is now the impact that work-family initiatives and strategies have on business outcomes. Cost-benefit analyses and research into the evaluation of the impact of work-family initiatives are becoming more common, as are arguments about the positive impacts that skills learned in the domestic sphere can have on workplaces.

Not too far from the theme of gender equity in workplaces is the concept of strategic human resource management. In 2000, the study "New challenges for European Human Resource Management" was published, edited by Brewster, Mayrhofer and Morley. The book is about developments in the area of Human Resource management (HRM) in public and private organisations in European countries. The chapters of the book are grouped around five main topics: flexibility, training and development, industrial relations, regional aspects and problems of organising and undertaking comparative human resource management research. Although there should be a connection between HRM and gender equity, it is only in one chapter of the book that a relation is made between flexible working patterns and the reconciliation of family and work. It is suggested that the growing shift towards flexibility may have, as well as its impact on competitiveness, some positive social effects. It could be seen as an important tool for reconciling work with family life. Based on research in 112 companies in Greece, it was concluded among other findings, that flexibility can only win full recognition when it is based on free choice and when flexible employees are not subjected to discrimination in relation to promotion and training.

1.4.5 Beyond Work-Family Balance

An interesting contribution to the work-family discussion is the publication of Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher and Pruitt *Beyond Work-Family Balance* (2002). The authors argue that the image of

balance is outmoded and that the new approach of work – personal life integration offers greater promise for meaningful changes in organisations. This method offers a way of looking deeply into the work culture to find inequitable and ineffective work practices that are so embedded and routine, that no one thinks to question them. Once identified, these work practices can be changed to achieve what the authors call a Dual Agenda: a more equitable workplace where both men and women can achieve their full potential and a more effective workplace where the needs of work, rather than gendered and outmoded assumptions, determine what gets done and how.

1.5 Theme 4: Well being

The transition to parenthood of employees will have an impact on the well being of these employees, considering the changes people are going through. Current research on well being is researched from very different perspectives, through a host of different concepts, sometimes overlapping and sometimes quite distinct. There are two distinct conceptions of well being.. Well being is studied as an objective measurable part of life, and it is studied as a subjective concept. Objective well being (OWB) is usually measured in terms of health conditions, while subjective well being (SWB) is typically measured by asking respondents to reflect on their feelings.

The most general term, cross-nationally, for studying well being is happiness, especially from a psychological and sociological perspective. Happiness is often studied in a macro context, where countries are compared on the level of happiness over time (Veenhoven, 2003). Psychological research is also often focussed on happiness on an individual level: the micro context. In the same general terms well being is often researched by concepts as the living conditions or the quality of life (see also Veenhoven, 2000), whereby mental, and especially physical health is often used as a main indicator for well being. Living conditions, or standard of living, is mostly studied from an economic perspective, although there is a huge amount of related sociological research on poverty and social exclusion. The measurement of living conditions is widely used to examine the well being of national populations, with income, education and unemployment as most used indicators. Although the study of living conditions is mainly focussed on OWB, there is a correlation with SWB (Boelhouwer & Stoop, 1999).

In the context of work, well being is sometimes framed in concepts like job satisfaction, job (in-) security, (occupational) stress, quality of work, and – although much less - organizational health. Important indicators in this kind of research are the mental and physical pressure people experience during their work. In relation to the workplace well being is often measured in terms of the quality of labour. There is a growing body of literature on the interference between work and home or family. Usually these studies refer to the work family interference (WFI) or work interferes with family (WIF), and the family work interference (FWI) or the family interferes with work (FIW). In the context of the family, well being is studied in relation to the way people live together (or not). The kind of relation people have (for example single, cohabiting, married or divorced), together with the relation between parents and their children, and sometimes care for elderly or disabled people is related to well being or life satisfaction. For instance, happiness and the marital status are examined with a German panel survey; the

German Socio-Economic Panel (Stutzer & Frey, 2003). In another study, happiness and the marital status are analysed in 17 different nations (Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

Fewer studies are explicitly concerned with well being and the transition to parenthood (for an overview of earlier research see Menaghan & Parcel, 1990), although there are several studies on single mothers, and dual career couples. For instance, working mothers seem slightly happier than non-working mothers, if we look at research of the past decades, although this effect is not significant (Veenhoven, 2003). For both the work and the family context most research is focussed on the negative consequences of work or family situations for well being. Research on the positive effects of work, family life, and the combination of the two is scarce, although, recently there is more research devoted on these positive effects (Geurts et al., 2002).

Below we will discuss in general terms the findings of the literature review on well being. The more elaborate discussions can be found in each country chapter. Considering the huge space covered by the concept of well being, as well as the many different operationalisations of well being, the country chapters – see the following chapters of this report – show varied approaches towards research on well being. Despite the huge variation in the kind of studies, there is some shared ground as well. Well being, objective as well as subjective, is mostly research with quantitative methods, like large scale surveys. There is very little research with a qualitative approach.

In several countries well being is not directly an object of research. In Bulgaria, Slovenia, France and Portugal research is more concentrated on living conditions and the quality of life. In post-communist Bulgaria the study of poverty, unemployment, and job insecurity took a more prominent place on the research agenda. The decline in the standard of living strongly affects people's self image. The process of impoverishment leads to an increasing marginalisation of people. Related is a decrease in trust of (government) institutions, which provide health, poverty, and pension schemes. People in Bulgaria tend to retreat into close family groups. In terms of well being, there are mainly negative feelings of well being, as a result of societal changes in the past fifteen years. In Slovenian research there is almost no use of the concept of well being. There is research on the quality of life, including the quality of working life. These studies focus on the changes in employment career, family career, and residential mobility. In France, research on well being is not common among academics dealing with family issues. There is, however, a large study on the dilemmas of the work-life balance, in which the well being of employed parents was a central focus. In Portugal the main interest are poverty and social exclusion in relation to well being research. Next to this, research on values show the importance of work, therefore working conditions and job satisfaction are studied as well.

The research in the UK is probably the most extensive on the concept of well being, although there is a huge variation in how well being is studied, and the attention on well being is relatively new. In the UK there are some studies concerning organizational well being and healthy organizations: a field slowly developing in the past 10 years. In Norway the concept of well being is approached on several levels, but most studies rely on conceptualisations of living conditions. These conditions are periodically surveyed; to have more time, a better

economy, and better health are most mentioned in relation to improved well being. Separate research is focussed on quality of life, defined as psychological well being. In Norway research also focus on the well being of children. In Sweden the research on well being really took off in the nineties, although, there is not much research on the relation between parenthood and well being. The negative consequences of work for family life, and vice versa, is analysed through the 'spill-over model'. In the late nineties the increase in sick leave caused research on the related decline in mental well being. The stress resulting from conflicting expectations of being a good parent and a good employee, became a research interest in recent years. In the Netherlands there is no explicit research on the relation between the transition to parenthood and well being. There is, however, a growing body of literature on work-family conflict, on working mothers, on the combination of work and care, work home interference, and the workplace. Especially on the latter there is much research on the quality of work and job satisfaction, both from a sociology of work perspective, as well as from a psychology of work perspective.

1.6 Plan of the report

In this literature review all the contributing countries – the United Kingdom (chapter 2), the Netherlands (chapter 3), Sweden (chapter 4), Bulgaria (chapter 5), Portugal (chapter 6), Norway (chapter 7), Slovenia (chapter 8), and France (chapter 9) – have used an identical layout to present their literature. This report style makes it easy for the reader to look up certain information on specific literature, as well as making quick comparisons possible between countries (see also the Appendix). In all the chapters the main focus will be the importance of the reviewed literature for the transition to parenthood of employees.

Each country report starts with an short introduction to important discussions in the country. This will be followed by a short overview of the main research topics. The main literature of the period 1998-2003 on the four themes – young adults and parenthood, parenting strategies and work-family boundaries, workplaces and organizational change, and well being – will be reviewed in more detail. At every theme attention will be given to the main theoretical perspectives used, the main methodology used, the most important empirical findings, and the gaps in the current research. Each country report will end with the conclusion, and this will be followed with the references used in the chapter.

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Chapter 2 The United Kingdom

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2.1 Introduction

The flexibilisation and casualisation of the labour market together with the downsizing of the welfare state, both of which increase feelings of risk for families (Perrons 1998; Perrons 2000; Quilgars and Abbot 2000; Brannen, Lewis et al. 2001); provide the backdrop against which families manage the reconciliation of family and employment in Britain. Although these are to some extent European-wide phenomena the growth of non standard employment contracts and atypical working hours in service of the 24/7 economy (La Valle, Arthur et al. 2002) have been facilitated by neo liberal approaches to risk in the labour market in Britain (Esping Anderson 1996; Quilgars and Abbot 2000). This involved widespread deregulation, notably in the economic policies and curtailment of the rights of labour by successive Conservative governments between 1979 and 1996.

Since the change to a Labour government in 1997, the reconciliation of paid work and family has had a much higher profile, with many policy changes, and a high-profile government focus on “work-life balance”. However the UK Government regards its role as limited to engendering a “family friendly culture” in business and the provision of voluntary measures which are underpinned by a fairly basic statutory framework (Harker and Lewis 2001). This can be illustrated by the government’s minimal approach to parental leave, which (Dermott 2001; Deven and Moss 2002) argue may be due to the reservations of employers who see parental leave as a further form of regulation, which they continue to resist.

Important trends in the UK include a general intensification of work and long working hours, the longest in Europe among full-time workers. White collar and particularly professional and managerial jobs are often characterised by a long hours culture in which long working hours are expected as a sign of commitment; evidence is emerging that this can reduce the aspirations of those in lower level jobs to seek promotion (Lewis 2001; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002).

The perceived insecurity of jobs (by employees) may be one factor contributing to the growth in the number of households with two earners, although there are high levels of part-time work among women and many women work short part-time hours, with one and a half earner households the dominant pattern. A high proportion of single parent households and a strong ethnic mix in cities in particular add to the diversity. The former contributes to the UK’s polarised pattern of so-called “work rich” families with too much work and “work poor” families

with too little work (Brannen and Moss 1998), although the New Deal for Lone Parents was introduced by government to increase the employment of lone parents.

British social policy has traditionally reflected the notion of private rather than public responsibility for families, resulting in citizens having low expectations of state help in reconciling paid work and family care (Lewis and Smithson 2002). Institutional childcare for working parents has been sparse in Britain until recently. There is now increasing availability of privately funded childcare but it is the most expensive in Europe.

2.2 Short overview of main research topics in the UK

The many labour market and policy changes are reflected in the major research topics surrounding the work-family interface and transitions to parenting in the UK in the last few years. A major research theme relates the changing nature of work and workplaces, including trends such as job insecurity, work intensification and long working hours (Brannen and Moss 1998; Burchell, Ladipo et al. 2002; La Valle, Arthur et al. 2002) and the long hours culture in many occupations (Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Crompton, Dennett et al. 2003). Although occupational and work-family stress has been addressed since the 1980s, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in stress, relating to these changes in the nature of work (Brannen and Moss 1998; Burchell, Ladipo et al. 2002; La Valle, Arthur et al. 2002; Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002)

Flexible working arrangements including part-time working and other patterns have also attracted research interest. Given the voluntary nature of most provisions and the resistance of many employers, the focus has been on the impact of employer policies and their consequences for employer productivity (the business case) in particular (Purcell, Hogarth et al. 1999; Dex and Scheibl 2002; Dex and Smith 2002). There is also a growing recognition of the limitations of employer policies without culture change in the workplace, a concern reflected in some work-family research (Lewis 2001; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002).

Parenthood continues to be a major research topic. Employed mothers have long been a focus of research. Recent research includes studies of single mothers (Duncan and Edwards 1999) and childcare issues (costs, effects on children in their early years, the benefits for children from least well off homes and media and policy discourse) (Crompton 1999; Walby 1999). There is also a resurgence of interest in fatherhood including the roles of fathers, and fathers' working hours (Hatter, Vintner et al. 2002; O'Brien and Shemilt 2003).

Some research focuses on the diversity of families and in the workplace. Gender and especially the gender pay gap is a major focus, including its prevalence, size, causes and solutions, especially in relation to flexible working and childcare patterns (Walby and Olsen 2002). Other forms of diversity are slowly beginning to enter onto the research agenda including ethnic minority families (Rana, Kagan et al. 1998); parents with disabled children (Rana, Kagan et al. 1998; Lewis, Kagan et al. 1999) and rural families (Mauthner, McKee et al. 2001). Household diversity is addressed through studies of social exclusion, child poverty,

unemployment and changing skills needed, especially among work poor households (Quinton, Pollock et al. 2003).

Well-being, happiness and satisfaction have received relatively little attention in the 1980s and 1990s, when stress took centre stage. However these issues are becoming increasingly considered in recent UK literature and research (Warr 1999; Donovan and Halpern 2002; Layard 2003).

2.3 Literature review per theme

2.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

2.3.1.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Much of the UK work on parenthood, choices about if and when to form a family, and how to divide responsibilities between parents, is from a gender or feminist perspective, following on from 1980s' work which exposed the gendered pattern of parenthood and paid work. Until recently, most research looked at women's experiences, but there has been an increasing interest in fatherhood and particularly masculinity. There is a debate about what fathering should look like as distinct from mothering. Fathers are expected to be "involved" in families but the ideal of paternal involvement is not well-defined (Collier 2001). Warin, Solomon et al. (2001) argue that the notion of paternal involvement assumes a maternal model of mothering, while Collier (2001) found tensions between the New Labour ideal of the "involved" father and the "breadwinner", arguing that there is much talk of the "new father" without removal of the obstacles, especially the structure of the labour market. This tension can be seen in dominant approaches to the study of fatherhood, for example the economics of fathering for young, disadvantaged men (Clarke and Roberts 2002), and a psychological perspective concerned with fathers' involvement with children.

There are many sociological studies of youth and transitions to adulthood concerned with an earlier life stage than the age group of the Transitions Project, for example on transitions to work and adulthood, and on young, often teenage, parents and social exclusion. Some adopt a life course theory approach, for example Jones (2002) demonstrates the increasing polarisation between the majority of young adults who are postponing transitions such as having children, and the minority tradition of working class young people entering parenthood early in the life course. Brannen, Lewis et al. (2002) also studied transitions to adulthood using life course theory. Youth researchers distinguish themselves from family researchers, while some adopt an intergenerational and life course perspective which inevitably work integrates the two. For example Brannen (forthcoming) explore the transitions to adulthood and parenthood across several family and historical generations.

2.3.1.2 Main methodology

Some research in this area has used quantitative methods – large scale surveys and secondary data analysis, while researchers adopting a gender perspective tend to prefer qualitative

methods though not exclusively, particularly focus groups and interviews. Some adopt a mixed method approach.

2.3.1.3 Main empirical findings

1) Experiences of Fatherhood

There is a large amount of recent UK research on fathers in the workplace and the home, coinciding with the introduction of parental leave in the UK (2000), flexible working rights and introduction of paternity leave (April 2003). (Hatter, Vintner et al. 2002) examine fathers at home and at work, including transitions to fatherhood, through interviews and focus groups in six case study organisations. They found that many fathers see breadwinning as their primary commitment, but many also view spending time with their families as important, and in tension with breadwinning. Fathers have poor awareness of family friendly policies available to them. Few fathers have made major changes to work which enable them to become more involved in family life. Part-time working was not seen as viable, for financial reasons. Expectations of taking paternity leave are driven by custom and practice, in particular by what employers offer. The study concluded that parental leave needs to be paid before it can become acceptable practice. The gender pay gap, workplace culture and poor policies were seen as main drivers of fathers' continuing commitment to being the main breadwinner. (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003) provide a key review of recent literature on fathers in employment and the home, with secondary analysis of the Department for Education and Employment Work-Life Balance 2000 Baseline Survey Dataset. Key findings included: debates about the integration of work and family life are still focused on mothers; aspirations by young men for involvement in fatherhood are high; fathers are increasingly involved in childcare, especially when mothers are at work; fathers who work long hours are compensating by being more involved at weekends than those working shorter hours. Like (Hatter, Vintner et al. 2002) they concluded that there is substantial unmet demand for flexible working arrangements among fathers.

(Warin, Solomon et al. 2001) studied parents and teenage children, the ways in which family members define and engage in fathering and men's experience of fathering in both 'work rich' and 'work poor' families. They found that breadwinning is still seen as the central aspect of fathering; sick or unemployed men do not necessarily take on more involved fathering (also found by (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003)). Fathering is constrained both by women's reluctance to cede their role as primary carers and fathers' reluctance to cede the providing role. The review of (Burghes, Clarke et al. 1997) suggests a 'contextual approach' to the study of fathering, which takes account of circumstances in which fathers practice the different dimensions of their lives. Research on the transition to *young fatherhood* (an economically and socially disadvantaged group) found normative assumptions about the "correct" age for becoming a father related to their breadwinning capacities, and that involvement in fatherhood depended heavily on relationships with the children's mothers (Quinton, Pollock et al. 2003).

There is much consensus that parental leave provision in the UK is unsatisfactory and will do little to change gendered patterns of parental responsibility. (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003). Consequently the majority of studies on parental leave in this area (e.g. (Dermott 2001; Deven and Moss 2002) compare other countries' experiences, highlighting the limited nature of the UK's parental leave provision, in extent of benefits and restricted timescales, which tend to reinforce a gendered approach to taking leave. A special issue of the journal *Community Work and Family*

(2002) considers parental leave from a cross-national perspective. (Deven and Moss 2002) argue that the UK government needs to move beyond a narrow focus on early parenthood to a broad, life course approach to the management of time. (Dermott 2001) explores the nature of assumptions about fatherhood in UK parental leave policy, concluding that the system is designed to promote work-family balance but in practice the gendered pattern of take-up is perpetuating traditional childcare responsibilities. (Burgess 1998) suggests a 'valorisation' of 'fathering through encouragement of paternity/parental leave and flexible, family friendly working which lead to 'quality time' with children.

II) Decisions about combining Motherhood and paid work

There is little research focusing on parents' decisions about having children, though an earlier study (White 1995) suggested using the (Rapoport and Rapoport 1980) triple helix model of work, family and leisure as three strands which vary in importance and convergence over the life course. More emphasis has been placed on women's decisions about how to combine employment and motherhood. There has been a long UK debate on whether part-time working represents a lifestyle choice (Hakim 2000) or a constraint for women in the context of lack of childcare (Walsh 1999). Hakim's theory was refuted by (Crompton and Harris 1998) among many, who argued that women's work patterns are a product of their responses to circumstances, opportunities and constraints. They suggested that work and home orientations fluctuate depending on life course phase, occupation and national context. (Himmelweit 2002) takes an *economic* perspective to mother's decisions about work and childcare and the consequences of these (no empirical evidence is available yet). (Creighton 1999) found that the decline of the breadwinner model has reduced gender inequalities but is hindered by long working hours which perpetuate the breadwinner/homemaker dichotomy. Other studies (Mauthner, McKee et al. 2001) show that mother's employment decisions are influenced by what are considered to be the characteristics of a 'good mother'. (Dex and Joshi 1999) looked at the compatibility of employment careers and motherhood, calculating the loss in earnings for low and high earning mothers. They recommended paid parental leave, cash benefits for childcare, and family working time policies, as ways of making careers and motherhood compatible. Like much UK work (Janssens 1998; Crompton 1999), they draw substantially on cross-national evidence and particularly the experience of Scandinavian countries.

III) Divisions of tasks/paid and unpaid labour and negotiations between parents

It is symptomatic of the little public support for parents that popular UK literature typically constructs work and care as *private or individualised decisions made by couples*. For example (Ghazi 2003) produced a guide for parents on how to bring about work-life balance. Before our time-scale there were several studies of dual-earning, the division of domestic labour and career choices but few recent UK studies. Empirical feminist work (Dryden 1999) argues that prevailing gender discourses perpetuate men's privileges in taking lesser responsibility for care and domestic labour and make wives' subordination seem chosen rather than imposed. (Speakman and Marchington 1999) studied male shift workers and noted domestic responsibility was more associated with models of masculinity in relation to breadwinner/housewife roles than hours of work. (Dean 2000; Dean 2001) analysed time use statistics in the UK: where wives moved from being non-employed to take full-time jobs, they reduced their housework by about 10 hours per week, and their husbands increased theirs by

about four hours per week. Gershuny's work suggests that gender inequalities are reducing in more recent cohorts and also if women work full-time (Gershuny 2000). (Lewis, Kagan et al. 1999) looked at negotiations between partners about their involvement in paid work after having a disabled child, and found that decisions were constrained by beliefs about gender and caring, causing most mothers in this situations to give up paid work or work very short hours. (Windebank 2001) compared UK and French dual earner couples with young children, and concluded that despite different policies, patterns of women's employment and welfare structures, there was little difference in the domestic division of labour – women in both countries, whatever their paid working hours, did more of the domestic work.

IV) Divorce, lone parenthood and work

In the UK the policy of encouraging employed parenthood has effectively been driven by a concern to push non-employed *lone mothers* into work. Since the fathers of these children under the 1991 Child Support Act are required to provide economically for them (Holtermann, Brannen et al. 1999), mothers continue to have most responsibility for their care (Collier 2001). Policies have simultaneously devalued full-time motherhood by not providing support for practical caring after divorce (Duncan and Edwards 1999). Like the latter researchers, (Neale and Smart 2002) found that parents after divorce worked out their caring and employment obligations in relation to a variety of ethics – of care, of justice, and also employment opportunities and constraints.

2.3.1.4 Gaps in research

There is little recent work on the transition to parenthood and especially on decisions whether to become a parent. There is a lot of work on post-natal depression among new parents (i.e. mothers), with little attention given to the impact of the recent changing nature of work and the workplace upon mothers' mental state or on the enhancement of well-being. There is increasing work on fathers and on a continuing stream of work on how mothers manage childcare and employment but little focus on how different groups of new parents manage their careers in work and family life in particular contexts.

2.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

2.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

British studies on this area have been influenced by North American research. This includes work-family interface models, particularly work-family conflict, segregation/segmentation, spillover and crossover. More recent influential theoretical perspectives, taking an interpretist approach come from (Nippert-Eng 1996), who considers the relative *meanings of home and work* in Canada, and (Campbell-Clark 2000) who, based on research in the USA proposed a *work-family border theory*; that people are daily border-crossers between the domains of work and family, negotiating between these domains (with integration or segmentation or a mixture) to maintain balance. (Brannen, Lewis et al. 2001) use *work-family boundary theory* in their recent UK study of organisational change and family life.

2.3.2.2 *Main methodology*

Most work on work-family conflict uses quantitative survey data. There is an increasing interest in qualitative approaches in this area, with individual interviews and organisational case studies being the most frequent approaches. There is some ethnographic research.

2.3.2.3 *Main empirical findings*

I) Integration of work and family

There is some evidence of a relationship between long parental working hours and experience of work-family conflict (Cousins and Tang 2002). Recent research distinguishes between work to family conflict (work interfering with family) and family to work conflict (family interfering with work), and a study of British accounts confirms the prevalent US finding that work to family conflict is more often reported than family to work conflict (Lewis, Smithson and Brennan, 2002).

Several recent studies have looked at how diverse groups integrate work and family. (Mauthner, McKee et al. 2001) carried out in depth interviews with mothers and fathers in an ethnographic study of work and family life in three rural communities. Many parents found a rural community an ideal environment for integrating work and family life because of community networks and patterns of reciprocal help. Mothers and fathers worked at the integration of work and family across the life cycle, reducing and increasing involvement at different stages. (Skinner 2003) looked at 40 families' co-ordination of work, childcare and school, focusing on the time and negotiation skills of parents, mostly mothers, as part of a wider European study. She concluded that complexity of childcare/education arrangements is a deterrent to mothers working. Part-time working mothers had the most complex arrangements, full-time working mothers had delegated more arrangements to other carers. (Lewis, Kagan et al. 1999) described family strategies for combining employment and the care of disabled children; family patterns adopted in two parent families included modified breadwinner, one and a half earner, dual earner and flexible dual earners. Other research has considered ethnic minority experiences of integrating work and family (Rana, Kagan et al. 1998). This qualitative study found that British Asian women often deliberately segregate work and family to manage cultural expectations.

A nationally representative survey (La Valle, Arthur et al. 2002) reported widespread growth in atypical working hours (e.g. evenings and weekends, traditionally considered "family time") and the effects on work-family integration. Mothers often preferred atypical hours, as a strategy for working without needing formal (expensive) childcare. Parents in lower socio-economic groups were most likely to feel they had no choice. The greatest family disruption was caused by Sunday working or both parents working atypical hours.

II) Negotiation of work-family boundaries

An exploratory study of workplace change and the family in two banks (Brannen, Lewis et al. 2001) developed an organisational case study employing focus groups and interviews. The study found that the intensification of work contributed to a blurring of the boundaries between work and family life. Those with home and family responsibilities (typically women) reported the pace at life to be pressurised both at work and at home. Work-family boundaries were managed at household level; at one extreme, household members treat the boundary as impermeable while, at the other, they maintain a constant state of connection. Individual

strategies included: trying to switch off; restructuring priorities; seeking satisfaction and a sense of control from elsewhere - 'not bringing their whole self' into work. Similarly, a study of the impact of experiences at work on family life, involving interviews with mothers working in a public and a private sector organisation, and their partners (Reynolds, Callender et al. 2003) found that mothers' work-family strategies affected the extent to which work was allowed to affect family life, distinguishing between "connectors" who allowed work to spill over into family life and "separators" who took steps to avoid this. Some of the partners expressed preferences, for example that wives should not bring their work-related stories into the home.

There has been interest in the possibilities of working from home (teleworking) for integrating or balancing work and personal life. Using interview and survey data, (Sullivan 2000; Sullivan and Lewis 2001) found that women teleworkers were more likely than men to integrate roles by multitasking, reconciling family and paid work by deliberately blurring boundaries. Men were more likely to work long hours and to isolate themselves from family when working at home. (Felstead, Jewson et al. 2002) also studied the interaction of working from home and work-life balance, analysing a large-scale management survey. They conceptualised work-life balance as autonomy over the interactions in time and space of work and home life, and concluded that working from home is only useful for improving work-life balance when it is a choice, rather than a requirement. (Perrons 2003) conducted interviews with media workers working flexible hours and location, concluding that new technologies and patterns of working which allow blurred temporal and spatial boundaries between home and work do permit opportunities for negotiating a better work-life balance, but only for those with considerable autonomy, and in practice a marked gender imbalance remains. Like (Sullivan and Lewis 2001) she found that men in particular tended to work long hours when based at home.

III) Negotiations between employers and employees

Employees in the UK are in a weak position for negotiating with employers for achieving work-life integration, particularly for lower skilled employees. For example (Purcell, Hogarth et al. 1999) found from detailed case studies that fixed part-time hours are a particularly successful way of managing work-personal life integration when used by employees with marketable or scarce skills, but caused problems for those with little control over their working conditions or type of flexibility. Men are perceived as having less entitlement to negotiating time off for family reasons, and requests for flexible working or parental leave are often considered likely to be rejected by employers. Moreover it is viewed as a career risk even to ask (Smithson, Lewis et al. forthcoming).

A report on job relocation (Green and Canny 2003) found that it had a major impact on partners, children and elderly relatives. They found an increasing tendency for employees to refuse relocation for work-life balance reasons. Adverse effects on partner's careers, childcare, children's education, and supporting elderly relatives were significant.

2.3.2.4 Gaps in research

There are many gaps in this area. There is little recent qualitative work in the UK on the work-family interface, and particularly on young adults and the transition to parenthood. Work-family conflict theory is little used in current research, but there is widespread interest in negotiating and achieving work-life balance or integration. While attempts to negotiate work-life balance with

managers are perceived as risky in career terms, there is little research to show if this is actually the case.

2.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

2.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

A range of theoretical perspectives has been used to study workplaces and organisational change, including gender theory and feminist critiques, work-family boundary theory, debates on social exclusion, institutional, organisational change and social justice theories, psychological contract and organisational commitment perspectives.

2.3.3.2 Main methodology

Methods used in this field include surveys of nationally representative samples, identifying new trends, smaller scale surveys and also qualitative research, especially individual interviews with employees and managers which provide more in depth data on the ways in which changes are experienced. Many studies combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Organisational case studies are becoming more prevalent Action research is also a promising approach.

2.3.3.3 Main empirical finding

1) Organisational and work family (and diversity) policies and practices

The term “family friendly policies” which was popular in British policy research in the 1990s was largely interpreted as policies for women, especially mothers, and has been supplanted by the term “work-life” (Hogarth, Hasluck et al. 2000) in an attempt to be more inclusive and reduce “backlash” (Sinclair 2000; Liff and Ward 2001). Others have suggested “work-personal life integration” (Rapoport, Baily et al. 2002), to acknowledge that work is part of life, or argue for a work-family-leisure triad to reflect women’s caring work (Kay 1998; Kay 2000). (Williams 2001) notes that the shift from family friendly to work-life parallels a shift from *family wage bargaining* to bargaining around *family time*.

Initially, research on work-family policies described their prevalence, indicating that implementation is patchy but growing (Hogarth, Hasluck et al. 2000), especially in organisations where unions are recognised (Bond, Hyman et al. 2002). Large organisations often have more official policies while SMEs often have more informal arrangements (Cooper, Lewis et al. 2001; Dex and Scheibl 2001). Implementation is usually in response to a “business case” (Bevan, Dench et al. 1999), though this is applied in different ways. (Dex and Scheibl 2001) found that large organisations cited turnover, retention and absenteeism as reasons for developing policies while SMEs were more likely to make incremental and ad hoc arrangements. Institutional pressures on employers to implement work-family policies may have increased with recent Government policy and campaigns. However, surveys of parents and of women revealed that although at a general level they believe government has done a lot to help women and to improve work-life balance they find it difficult to relate this to specific initiatives in organisations (Brooker 2002; Williams and Stevens 2002).

Research examining employees' experiences of policies highlights the gap that often exists between formal policy and practice. Overall, employees tend to have a low sense of entitlement to flexible working practices in Britain, unless they can see a business case (Lewis and Smithson 2001). Informal policies in smaller organisations are often experienced more positively than high profile formal policies with low take-up in larger organisations (Cooper, Lewis et al. 2001; Lewis, Smithson et al. 2002).

Several studies illuminate barriers to the success of work-family policies. These include lack of awareness of policies among employees and managers (Cooper, Lewis et al. 2001; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002); the long hours culture and "presenteeism" as discussed below; lean staffing which can make substitution difficult (Brannen, Lewis et al. 2001; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002); and unrealistic workloads (Lewis, Smithson et al. 2002). The role of managers emerges as crucial in case studies of implementation and experience of policies in both public and private sector contexts (Lewis 2001; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002). Managers are often sympathetic to carers' needs but many feel they lack training and guidance (Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002).

Management discretion on flexible working is crucial but can also lead to perceived inequities. Debates on management decision making about requests to work flexibly (based on US research) draw on both disruption theory (managers are more likely to favour those whose flexibility would cause least disruption) and dependency theory (managers are more likely to support those on whom they depend) (Lewis 2003). The UK literature lends support to both theories. Managers' decisions depend on ease of substitution, perceptions of employee input of time and commitment, and general attitudes towards flexible working (Bond, Hyman et al. 2002).

II) Flexibility: policies and practices

The term "flexible working arrangements" is also substituted for family friendly policies. (See (Lewis 2003) for a review of recent UK and US literature on flexible working, including studies of flexibility introduced as an employer-led productivity measure and as a work-family initiative.) Part-time working policies have received much attention; this has long been a feature of the UK labour market, although often concentrated in less skilled occupations, with poor pay and promotion prospects (EOC 2001; Warren 2001; Walby and Olsen 2002; Whittock, Edwards et al. 2002). A relationship between increasing opportunities for flexible working, and the maintenance or increase in the gender pay gap, is regularly noted (Walby and Olsen 2002) but little acknowledged in formal policy or government publications (Smithson, Lewis et al. forthcoming). There is evidence from both qualitative and quantitative research suggesting that employees working shorter hours are often more efficient or productive than full timers (Stanworth 1999; Lewis 2001). Yet reduced hours workers are often perceived as a problems for managers, particularly in the context of a norm of long working hours (Edwards and Robinson 2000).

III) Changes in the nature of work

Flexible working arrangements are only one aspect of increasing flexibility in the UK. Other UK labour market changes include contractual and location flexibility, which can undermine work-family policies. Surveys point to the growth of work intensification and job insecurity

(Burchell, Day et al. 1999; Perrons 2000; Purcell 2000; Green 2001; Burchell, Ladipo et al. 2002), usually attributed to the impact of globalisation and/or information technology (Green and McIntosh 2001). There is contention about whether an increase in objective insecurity is exaggerated (Taylor 2002), but much evidence of subjective feelings of insecurity (see a national survey conducted by Michael White and Stephen Hill cited in (Taylor 2002)). Consequences of intensification are reported in terms of stress, dissatisfaction manifested in absenteeism, lower productivity, inefficiency and inflexibility and turnover (Burchell, Day et al. 1999; Perrons 2000; Purcell 2000; Green 2001; Green and McIntosh 2001; Burchell, Ladipo et al. 2002). Other research describes the social costs of these trends, for example postponement of family formation because of job insecurity (Smithson and Lewis, 2000; Brannen, Lewis et al, 2002).

In their study of workplace change and the family in two banks (Brannen, Lewis et al. 2001) noted that intensification and insecurity of work were accompanied by a replacement of old workplace values of service, solidarity and continuity; with new values which celebrate selling, autonomy and flexibility, creating identity dilemmas for longer serving staff. In the context of a rhetoric of greater personal autonomy employees often experienced themselves as responsible for their own work intensification. Work intensification can also lead to “invisible work”, that is work that is carried out at home or beyond normal working time at the workplace but is not accounted for or remunerated (Lewis et al, 2002; Lewis and Smithson, 2001; Brannen et al, 2002).

Long and intensive work hours in Britain are also a symptom of a long hours culture in many organisations, that is, a prevalent expectation that employees will work longer than their official hours, often to demonstrate commitment (Lewis 2000). This is mainly characteristic of white collar, professional and managerial work, but has been identified in case studies in many different occupational contexts in public and private sectors (Lewis 2001; Beynon, Grimshaw et al. 2002; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Lewis, Smithson et al. 2002). Moreover, the impact appears to trickle down to affect other workers, for example supermarket staff reported low aspirations for promotion because of an assumption that this would be accompanied by expectations of working long hours (Crompton, Dennett et al. 2003). The long hours culture has been attributed to unrealistic workloads, the need to be competitive, the commodification of time and individual preferences (Lewis 2001; Bond, Hyman et al. 2002; Yeandle, Wigfield et al. 2002) (Beynon, Grimshaw et al. 2002) An action research project with a professional services firm points to the role of deeply held but implicit assumptions about relationships with clients, professional identity and ways of accounting for time in perpetuating the culture of long hours and also reducing effectiveness in this context (Lewis and Smithson 2002). More research of this nature is needed in other contexts. The long hours culture, with its implicit gendered assumptions has been offered as a prime reason for women’s limited success in breaking through the “glass ceiling” in studies of women bankers and managers (Rutherford 2001). (Beynon, Grimshaw et al. 2002) found that approaches to renegotiating working time in UK organisations could be described as ‘employer led’ models, and concluded that the strongest pressure for changing working time is likely to come from legislation, mainly from the EU.

IV) Career perspectives of new parents

Research in the 1980s and 1990s suggested that new mothers put their paid work careers on hold (Brannen and Moss 1991) while new fathers typically invested more in maximising their employment hours. This may be changing. For example in a study of four generation families, (Brannen, Moss et al. forthcoming) found new models of paid work/nonemployment and parenting among the current generation of parents (born 1970). However, equality in parenting in terms of involvement and commitment only occurred in working class families.

V) The Psychological Contract and organisational commitment

Some UK research has explored the impact of flexible working, job intensification and changes in the working environment in relation to Psychological Contract theories e.g. (Herriot, Manning et al. 1997; Brown, Deakin et al. 1998; Guest 1998; Guest and Conway 2001), often linking job insecurity to changes in the psychological contract (Martin, Staines et al. 1998; Smithson and Lewis 2000). (Smithson and Lewis 2000) and Lewis et al in (Brannen, Lewis et al. 2002) consider the concept of the psychological contract and the transition to parenthood in cross-national perspective Younger British workers were sometimes prepared to accept compromise psychological contracts, exchanging flexibility for security, although some security was seen as essential for parenthood. There is evidence that levels of organisational commitment have declined in the UK (Taylor 2002) which may be related to changes in the nature of work (Green, Gallie et al. 2001). (Lewis, Smithson et al. 2002) in a study of accountants found younger employees were more likely to reject the dominant long hours culture and to focus on working efficiently - which was associated with low levels of organisational commitment.

2.3.3.4 Gaps in research

Workplace practice, rather than policy, is an under-researched area. More research is also needed on factors influencing management decision-making about flexible working and on ways of promoting organisational learning in this respect. Action research challenging gendered assumptions in a wider range of organisational contexts may be a useful way forward (Rapoport, Bailyn et al. 2002).

2.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

2.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

The field of 'positive psychology' is growing in popularity in the UK as a way of studying positive wellbeing, in contrast to earlier psychological models of stress. A distinction is made between general and context specific well-being (Warr 1999). Organisational well-being is studied almost totally from a management, or management psychology, perspective, although an emotions at work perspective focuses more on individuals. Family well-being focuses on satisfaction and on children.

The concept of well-being is psychological and largely though not exclusively individualistic; it contrasts with the more collectivist concept of welfare employed by social policy researchers. It also enters popular vocabularies in countries in particular national and cultural contexts

where GNP is high and where material needs are met at least at a basic level. Recent research on well-being and happiness in the UK is heavily influenced by US research including (Headey and Wearing 1992; Diener, Suh et al. 1999; Kahneman, Diener et al. 1999). An increase in interest in well-being and happiness in the UK is indicated by, for example: the first UK Positive Psychology conference in 2002; a recent edition of the *Psychologist* dedicated to the topic. As in EU's Framework 5, the study of well-being is now a key element on the Economic and Social Research Council's research agenda, and an ESRC seminar series (www.wellbeing-esrc.com).

2.3.4.2 *Main methodology*

Dominant methods use questionnaires which assess individuals' well-being, with single item measurements of happiness and multi-item measures of affect and satisfaction. Qualitative work is rare in this area, though some recent work looks at satisfaction and quality of life through interviews and other qualitative methods.

2.3.4.3 *Main empirical findings*

I) Well-being and happiness (subjective well-being)

UK perspectives on well-being and happiness include psychological (Argyle 2002) and economic approaches (Layard 2003). A recent Government publication (Donovan and Halpern 2002) found strong links between work satisfaction and overall life satisfaction, and also between active leisure activities and overall satisfaction, concluding that there is a case for government intervention to boost life satisfaction, by encouraging a more leisured work-life balance. Layard reviewed evidence showing that above a certain level, economic growth (GDP) does not increase overall societal well-being, as people evaluate their income in relation to changing standards. Another approach emphasises a set of practices, rather than a state of happiness. For example (Perri 2001) argued that well-being is about what people recognise, within particular institutions, as a shared life – a life well lived and worth living together.

II) Well-being and work

Well-being in psychology is a growth industry with positive measures increasingly included in studies (Anderson, Herriot et al. 2001). Most research on individual well-being in the workplace focuses on job satisfaction; surveys reveal a recent decline in employee satisfaction with every facet of the job, but particularly in relation to working hours workload and deadlines (see (Taylor 2002) as noted in Theme 3). Other recent British research looks at emotions at work. For example (Briner 1999) critiqued the almost exclusive focus on stress and satisfaction which, he argues, are too vague, obscuring the specific feeling states that may be experienced, such as anger, envy, excitement which may prove more useful for predicting outcomes such as effective work performance. A wider variety of emotions are now being studied.

Research examining well-being in relation to changing patterns of work has found little difference between full-time and part-time workers' well-being (Warr 1999), nor between job-specific well-being among employees on temporary contracts and those with more permanent workers (Parker, Griffin et al. 2001). However, (Green and Gallie 2002) looked at the implications of increased skill requirements and job insecurity for workers' well-being and

found that higher skilled jobs engender greater enthusiasm but also greater anxiety, and greater levels of (self-reported) stress. They found a positive relation between well-being and pay, and also a relation between job security and well-being. They saw the main implication of these findings as the importance of seeing the full effects of upskilling on workers' welfare, beyond the effects on wages.

III) Work-life integration and well-being

(Boniwell 2002) studied ideas of balanced time and well-being, concluding that well-being is associated with time well balanced between paid work and leisure. There is, however, some debate about the notion of balance (Taylor 2002) and the different ways in which “balance” or integration are experienced. Although there is concern that as the boundaries between work and non work become fuzzier, paid work may be crowding out time and energy for personal life and leisure (Lewis forthcoming), there is also a view that for some people post industrial work could be viewed as an activity of choice and a source of enjoyment, even as “the new leisure” (Lewis forthcoming) and that the blurring of boundaries between work, care work and leisure may be an inevitable and even desirable feature of post-modern life (Gershuny 2000; Perrons 2000).

(Primeau 1996), an influential American researcher, argued that it is not possible to say what is a healthy work-life balance, but suggested instead that occupational psychologists should examine the range of affective experiences that occur during engagement in one's customary round of activities in daily life, notably ‘flow’ and optimal experiences. (Haworth 1997; Haworth and Veal 2003) showed that ‘flow’ came more from work than leisure, and that the incidence of flow was associated with standard measures of well-being. In other words, well-being is increased by participation in paid work for many people. (Bryce and Haworth 2002; Bryce and Haworth 2002) looked at flow and well-being among office workers, using a questionnaire study. They found that enjoyable flow experiences, together with the financial and social rewards of work are associated with standard measures of well-being. They found some gender differences in flow: male non-work flow tended to be found in leisure pursuits such as sport while women's non-work flow tended to be in caring for and spending time with family. Studies of work-life integration and well-being have also highlighted gender differences in experience of work and non-work. (Kay 1998; Kay 2000) studied women's approaches to reconciling the interests of ‘self’ with those of ‘family’, when giving priorities to paid work, domestic work and leisure, and questioned the extent to which we can realistically talk of families, collectively, being equipped to resolve work-life dilemmas, emphasising the distinction (and often the conflict) between women's well-being and family well-being. Family well-being has been shown to be sometimes lessened (Kay 2000) by women increasing their sense of entitlement to paid work and/or leisure time, highlighting problems in measuring concepts such as “family well-being”. (Kay 2000) suggested we consider a work-family-leisure triad, instead of the problematic work-life dichotomy.

IV) Family well-being

Kay's studies illustrate the problems of studying family well-being. Nevertheless a number of studies have examined family satisfaction and quality of family life. For example, (Sullilvan and Lewis 2002) examined family satisfaction in a survey of home-based teleworkers and their partners and found that men's satisfaction with family closeness was significantly

reduced if the homeworking female partner worked long hours, although women's satisfaction was unrelated to the hours their male partners worked. Other research examines the ways in which experiences of work affect family life, usually defined in terms of parents' relationships with children and with each other (Mauthner, McKee et al. 2001; La Valle, Arthur et al. 2002; Reynolds, Callender et al. 2003).

Recent UK research on children's well-being has focused on children in poor families, and on the effects of children on working parents (Dex and Joshi 1999). (Bradshaw 2002) looked at children and poverty, in a comparative study of how children's well-being is monitored in various countries, based on comparative social survey data. This highlighted a need for monitoring the state of children and impacts of poverty on their well-being (or welfare). (Dean 2000) reported on an project looking at working parents on low incomes (lone and joint parents) and effects on child and family well-being/ welfare. He found that low-income families cannot rely on wages to survive, but rely heavily on unregistered childcare and state benefits, concluding that making working parenthood the norm in a low-wage economy is problematic as poorer workers do not have equal access to family friendly benefits, and are not adequately protected against discrimination. (O'Brien and Jones 1999) found in a study using surveys and time use data that children from working class backgrounds did better at school, and on measures of physical well-being, when both parents worked, though gains dropped off when both parents worked full-time. There is increasing evidence in the UK that early years experiences are vital to later well-being. (James 2003) found that the care received in the first six years determines ability to enjoy adult affluence, and concluded that prioritising children's needs should be a higher priority than economic growth, in the aim of a happier healthier society.

V) Organisational well-being

There is recent work on healthy organizations and organizational well-being, influenced by work from the US (also Canada, Australia and New Zealand). Both these concepts link financial health to employee well-being, in various ways, with a healthy organisation often defined as one which makes larger profits (Worklifedesign.org 2003). A forthcoming New Zealand conference on "Organisational well-being" describes "the co-dependent relationship that exists between people and profit" (hrinz.org 2003). In the UK academic literature, (McHugh and Brotherton 2000) argued that the concept of the "healthy organisation" has been regularly used from the early 1990s but only vaguely defined. They suggested that a healthy organisation is one which generates economic gain for the whole organisation - whose "structure, culture and management processes contribute to high levels of organisational performance" and argue that individual and organisational health are interdependent. They studied links between organisational health (judged by employees' stress, sickness and self-esteem levels, and involvement in decision-making) and organisational wealth in the clothing industry in Northern Ireland, finding few differences in employee health levels between financially healthy and unhealthy organisations. (McHugh 2001) used absentee levels as a measure of a healthy organisation in Northern Ireland local government, this time finding positive links employee health and well-being levels with organisational financial health.

The UK literature on healthy organisations is mainly work done as management consultancy rather than research (Kriger and Hanson 1999; Dive 2002). (Randall 1998) argued that organisations can become “structurally” (e.g. layers of management, or decision-making processes) or “behaviourally” (e.g. management style, interpersonal relationships) ‘sick’, and provide management strategies for diagnosing and treating these maladies. Some non-profit organisations have redefined organisational well-being for their purposes, for example (Tearfund 2003), a UK development charity, defines a healthy organisation by how it communicates and performs.

2.3.4.4 *Gaps in research*

Overall, research on well-being and work-life integration is at an early stage in the UK, with most of the existing research focusing on conceptualising what is meant by wellbeing, and what is a good measure of wellbeing, rather than providing concrete research findings.

There is little explicitly on well-being or satisfaction of new parents in the UK, except for studies of mothers’ mental health after childbirth. There is a lack of debates on child or family well-being in relation to parental leave and flexible working practices. Few studies make links between care, well-being and leisure; the areas of leisure and of family care have been studied as separate fields in the UK. Most research conceptualises well-being only at an individual level. Few studies have examined conceptual links and differences between well-being and other social science concepts. Studies of family well-being tend to overlook the complexities of gendered perspectives within families, while studies of organisational well-being or healthy organisations focus disproportionately on economic outcomes. Issues for employed parents are not addressed.

2.4 Conclusions

Studies show that the UK government’s “light touch” approach to the regulation of working hours and flexibility may have increased the number of employer-based work-family policies. However that these are undermined by changes in the nature of work and by workplace cultures which have often adverse effects on employees’ and managers’ working hours and their abilities to manage work and non-work commitments, especially caring for young children. Some studies (e.g. White and Hill reported on by (Taylor 2002)) do demonstrate that some issues have improved in the UK workforce in the last decade. For example, there is now a greater right to work flexibly or part-time; there are more people doing so; and they have greater entitlement to benefits than in the past. But there remains a gap between policy and practice. Much of the literature compares the UK to other countries, especially Northern European countries and, in this context, the UK looks a particularly difficult place for new parents and especially for lower income families. Lack of paid parental leave, and inflexible rules about how it can be taken, is a particular issue for the transition to parenthood.

Work-family balance/integration is affected by these realities of UK working life. Time pressures are increasingly cited as a factor which decreases an individual’s and a family’s opportunities to reconcile paid work, caring and a personal life. Individual employees are in a weak position to negotiate for flexible working, despite new regulations which aim to improve

this. The concept of a healthy work-life balance is however increasingly debated and viewed as an issue with political as well as individual ramifications.

Experiences of parenthood are also to a large extent constrained by structural factors. The main studies on fatherhood are reporting the same phenomena – long working hours, few effective provisions for involved fathering, and a breadwinner emphasis for men both from families and in policy – and coming to similar conclusions, whether approached from an equality perspective (Hatter, Vintner et al. 2002) or from a more organisational perspective (Reeves 2002). Negotiations between parents are subsumed by these structural factors.

Studies of motherhood have traditionally focused on mother's choices and constraints for combining paid work – usually part-time – and childcare, and demonstrate the complex juggling of paid and informal childcare with work which is often low paid and with few prospects for promotion. The continuation of gendered ideologies, both among parents and the wider society, which view mothers as the primary carers and fathers as breadwinners, is perpetuated by the continuing gender pay gap despite the growth in women's education and employment opportunities, and contributes to maintaining gender inequity in family responsibilities and in the distribution of paid and unpaid work. Government policy and discussion often reflects the contradiction noted in the research, for example between encouraging mothers into paid work and the inadequate provision for parenting time and childcare.

Research demonstrates the many problems for low-income families in integrating paid work with family life, especially lone parents. Low wages, high costs of childcare, difficulties with transport and coordinating childcare, and unpredictable or long working hours cause particular difficulties, with implications for child well-being and welfare.

In the context of the changing world of work, the responsibility individuals are expected to take for keeping themselves employable and the increasingly close linkage between paid work and limited welfare and citizenship rights, well-being is emerging as an important research area, with recent studies focusing on well-being at work, and on the impact of long working hours and increased job pressure on the reconciliation of employment and family life. There is little UK work on organisational well-being but new research is beginning to address this, in both private and not for profit organisations.

A number of gaps in research have been identified. There is a paucity of research on decision-making about the transition to parenthood despite the falling fertility rate, the rise in age at first birth, and the changing nature and experience of work. Although there is widespread rhetoric about employees negotiating and achieving satisfactory work-life integration, there is little research on the practice of employees in negotiating, for example, with managers. More also needs to be known about how managers make decisions about employees' requests to work flexibly and about how their experiences can be incorporated into organisational learning. With a few exceptions research in organisations tends to focus on policy rather than practice. There is little British research explicitly on the well-being and satisfaction of new parents especially in particular organisational contexts, and a need to

develop research on well-being conceptually and to include collective as well as individual approaches. The conceptual issue is a central challenge in cross-national research.

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Chapter 3 The Netherlands

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3.1 Introduction

In the Netherlands, the development of the welfare state has been strongly influenced by the breadwinner model. For a long time, social policy was based on the traditional division of paid and unpaid work between men and women. Tendencies to individualisation and support for working parents in order to realise an independent position of women came relatively late. In the 1980s, gender equality reforms focused on individualisation accompanied by demands for a more equal division of paid and unpaid work between women and men (Sainsbury, 1996). However, it was not until the 1990s that the Dutch government started to develop measures to support the combination of paid work and caring tasks.

The increasing attention for the combination of work and family in the 1990s is mainly due to changes in society: the increasing labour market participation of women with children since 1970, the increasing demand for childcare, the changing workforce, which was no longer dominated by the male single earner but more and more characterised by diversity of employees and changing attitudes and opinions towards the combination of work and caring tasks (Niphuis-Nell, 1997).

In terms of social policy since the late 1980s, Dutch government sets two important goals. First of all, more women should become independent in an economic sense. Secondly, a more equal division of paid work and care between women and men should be realised. As is targeted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, at least 60 percent of women between 15 and 65 years of age should be economically independent in 2010. In 2000, this only held true for 38 percent of all women, while 70 percent of all men could be defined as economically independent.

With regard to a more equal division of work and care, it appears that in general women are still the prime caregivers, doing the unpaid work at home. The increase of women in paid work has gone faster than the extension of men's contribution to care. The Second National Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Women's Convention (February, 2003) concludes that in the Netherlands, besides a relatively modest campaign on men and care in the media, no clear policies are developed so far to change the situation of unequal shares of men and women in unpaid work. A rather stable pattern is that the majority of women in the Netherlands – 70 percent – have part-time jobs. This is the highest amount of female part-time workers in the European Union. One of the consequences of this situation is a significant under representation of women in managerial and visible positions in society. Interesting

enough, a modern and liberated country as the Netherlands is in many ways, still has deeply rooted traditional traits when it comes to relations between men and women in some (public) domains.

3.2 Main research topics in The Netherlands

The trend of having children later in life gave rise to several studies focussing on the decision on having children and the timing of children in the life course. In relation to this topic, attitudes of young adults towards work and family issues are studied as well as future expectations of Dutch people regarding the combination of work and family life.

The division of paid work, household work and care for children is another major research theme in the Netherlands. Time budget studies show a persistent inequality regarding the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women. In particular, new parents have an unequal division of task. Several studies try to explain the unequal division of work within couples by looking at differences in resources between partners, attitudes towards working women, the supply of childcare, and social and cultural norms concerning motherhood and fatherhood. Increasingly, negotiations between couples become the focus of research as well as caring fathers.

Flexible working and employability are relevant themes in Dutch research on organisations. In the Netherlands flexibility in working relations increased during the last decade for several reasons. Important factors in this process are an increase in competition; fluctuations and uncertainties in the market; technical innovations and modernisation; employees who are interested in flexible working in order to combine work and family life. Generally in research and literature a distinction is made between numeric flexibility (flexibility of time and contracts) and functional flexibility, which is focussed on the employability of personnel.

It is not very often in Dutch research that flexible working relations are explicitly linked to work-life issues, gender and current changes in family life. In more general terms, it can be concluded that research on organisational issues is still rather separated from research on work-life issues and gender. In fact, these are two different traditions in social research. Organisational mainstream research would gain in relevance, when the gender perspective would be more explicitly taken up.

The transition to parenthood has not yet been widely studied in relation to developments in the area of work. However, work/family policies in organisations and supportive facilities included in collective agreements are a topic of research. Studies look at the supply of work/life policies included in personnel policies of organisations and collective agreements. In addition, statutory provisions, such as parental leave, have been evaluated with respect to utilisation. Another relevant research theme concerns working hours: actual and preferred working hours and part-time work. The so-called OSA (Organisation of Strategic Labour Market Research) panel reports every two years on (changing) preferences on working time, developments in these preferences, gender differences in preferences. Important is also the question, whether men and/or women succeed in getting the number of working hours they

prefer. There is evidence that women are more able to settle the working schedule they wish, than men. Partly this is true because women are more determined in what they want. They are more willing than men, generally speaking, to pay the price of loss of career perspectives by working fewer hours than a formal full-time contract. In addition, employers consider part-time working for women more “natural” (taken for granted) than for men.

The well being of working mothers is also a topic of research. Generally, studies show that working mothers are feeling well and satisfied with their life. Although the burden of combining work and family life differs according to patterns of paid work in households, on average women are equally happy with their life. Moreover, most working mothers do not consider their burden of paid and unpaid work as extremely heavy (Knijn and Well, 2001). This contradicts with the general belief that combining paid work and caring responsibilities result in a double burden, guilty feelings and tiredness (see also Groenendijk, 1998).

3.3 Literature review per theme

3.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

3.3.1.1 Main theoretical perspectives

The literature around young adults and parenthood is concentrated around the decision on having children, the opinions on family, parenthood and marriage, and the value orientations that influence the decisions that young adults make. Literature concerning the decisions on having children often uses sociological theory about the influence of norms and values on human behaviour as a point of departure. According to this theory, social approval is gained by adhering to norms and values of significant others and social disapproval is seen as a cost of deviant behaviour (Mertens, 1998).

A theoretical approach that focuses more on the negotiating process in general – and also on the negotiation about having children – is the so-called Interaction-Based Approach. It starts from the notion that gender roles – the social behaviour that is expected of men and women – are produced and maintained in everyday life through interpersonal interaction, and that the enactment of gender primarily takes place within the context of social interaction (Kluwer, 1998).

Within cultural theory, individualization is the main factor behind the huge changes in demographic behaviour (the so-called second demographic transition). The second demographic transition, which has started during the sixties, is characterized by a weakening of the family as an institution. According to cultural theory, it is the strong emphasis on the need for personal freedom, self-development and independence that is seen as competing with the collectively of having a family or even a relationship and are possible important reasons why marriage and fertility have been declining (Lesthaeghe, van de Kaa 1986).

From a more economical perspective, it is stated that there are more structural factors behind these demographic transitions, such as the increased demand for higher educated employees, and the expansion of the schooling system and of welfare (Liefbroer, 2001).

3.3.1.2 *Main methodology*

Mainly, large scale cross-sectional surveys and monitoring studies.

3.3.1.3 *Main empirical findings*

Since the mid sixties, enormous changes have taken place in demographical trends in the Netherlands. Marriage and childbirth are being postponed, divorce and cohabitation rates have risen, and the traditional patterns of family life are fading.

Young adults increasingly become parents later in life and some of them never get children. The Netherlands, in fact, has the highest average age of mothers having their first child. The average age of mothers having their first child was 29 years in 2002 (NGR, 2003). Postponement may lead to childlessness; currently about one fifth of Dutch women do not get children. Among highly educated women the percentage of childless women is 30% (De Graaf and Steenhof, 1999). Having children is no longer taken for granted and has increasingly become a choice, although there appear to be many factors of influence that are not directly related to personal preferences.

The far most decisive factor that influences the late timing of the first child is the level of education (CBS 2002, Mertens 1998, Beets, 2001). Both the risen level of education and the increased number of highly educated women, delay the timing of the first-born. A higher level of education means longer time spent in education and because women generally don't have children while studying, the timing of children is delayed. Besides the time consuming aspect of education, the increased opportunity cost of having children is a second factor of influence. With a higher level of education, the income one could earn when not having children rises. Finally, the attitudes and preferences change with the rise in education. A less traditional attitude towards the male breadwinner model and the obviousness of having children, and also the attitude that having children is a constraint in having a professional career, are signs of changing attitudes that are related to a risen level of education (Beets, 2001, CBS 2002). The Dutch family council argues, however, that a higher level of education only partly explains the relatively high average age of Dutch women getting their first child. In other European countries, the level of education among women is similar but women get their first child at a younger age. It is argued that the level of work/family policies in the Netherlands is relatively low. Policies that support the combination of work and family life are relatively new and not yet widely developed (Hooghiemstra & Pool, 2003).

Jansen (2002) shows that the choice of having children is influenced by both the value orientations of men and women. In the Netherlands, it appears that partners are mostly looking for consensus while negotiating in their households about children. Parental values (the importance attached to children) are important in the decision of having children and the numbers of hours that women work in paid employment.

There is also the increased lack of agreement on whether children are wanted that causes delay (CBS 2002). Postponement of the first child is related to the modernisation of the life course. Nowadays, partners usually cohabit or live as singles before they get married and have children. According to Mulder (2003), there is a marked difference in the proportion

becoming parents between those who start their first union cohabiting and those who start as a married couple. Voluntarily or involuntarily, young adults who start in lower commitment partnerships with a high rate of dissolution (like cohabiting), have a higher likelihood of postponing or not having children. Because of the changed preferences and because of the above-described reasons for postponement in having children, there is an increasing amount of women who don't or can't have children at all.

The effects of these decisions can be seen as both positive and negative. The stronger socio-economic position of women in today's society is of course a positive effect of this delay. In a study by Mertens et al. (1998) it is shown that the wage rates of women rise through the delay in childbirth. This is however a reciprocal effect because a rising wage rate increases the delay again (Mertens, 1998). The increased presence of women in the labour market makes expectations towards the ability to combine work and childcare rise (Beets, 2001). On the other hand, the delay in childbirth leads to a faster shrinking of the (future) population, which implies a faster aging of the population. In addition, having children later in life leads to an increase of so-called rush-hour families; i.e. families in which working parents have caring responsibilities for young children and their own parents simultaneously, which increases the amount of caring responsibilities (NIDI, 2003). Finally, the medical effects of the late timing of children on the health of babies and mothers are discussed, such as miscarriages, caesareans, waiting time to conception and an increased chance of breast cancer (Beets, 2001).

Even though the lack of institutional arrangements is not a direct cause for the delay in childbirth, these arrangements could help to reduce the financial stimulus to postpone having children, so that the trade off between financial and biological aspects becomes less acute (Mertens, 1998).

Families, parenthood and marriage

During the nineties, the ideas about the roles of parents in the families have been changing. The traditional family ideal – whereby marriage and family have a central place, and the division of tasks is gender specific – has been replaced by a more modern family ideal, where marriage and family are still important, but have been placed in perspective (Esveldt, 2001). It is broadly accepted nowadays that parents of two or more children both work in paid employment. This means that attention has also been focussed on the combination of work and care, and the availability of childcare facilities. Another issue that is related to these changing roles in the family, is the expected economic independence of women. In practice however, more women have engaged in paid labour but the number of hours worked have not increased (Esveldt, 2001). In families with small children, the preferred situation would be that men work a little less hours and women hardly any more hours. Because childcare facilities are seen as the most important condition for mothers to keep working in paid employment, it is expected that extended childcare facilities have a positive effect on female labour participation and the timing of childbirth (Esveldt, 2001).

There appears to be a huge variety in combinations of work and family, varying from full time housewives, to full time working women. The differences in combination strategies that occur

with differences in age, educational level and ethnical group, make it necessary for policy to develop combination facilities from a life course perspective (Schippers, 2001).

Future expectations

Among female students and other women who don't work and don't have any children (yet), 43% of them expect to have children in the future and to fully commit themselves to motherhood, and 47% of these women hope to combine their motherhood with a part-time job in the future (Esveldt, 2001). The national youth monitor from 2003 shows that, among youth between 15 and 29 years old, the attitudes towards the division of tasks are gender specific while they are younger. Half of the boys between 15 and 24 think that the task division should not be equal between men and women, while 75% of the girls think the tasks should be divided equally. As boys grow older their attitudes become more emancipated (CBS, 2003). For the Dutch in general, the finding of the right balance in labour, work and care is an important issue in daily life (Ester et al., 2002). Although there is a lot of pressure perceived among the people who combine multiple tasks, the majority of Dutch people is fairly optimistic about the possibilities to combine work and care in the next 25 years. According Ester et al. (2002), the optimism of the Dutch comes from the expectation that facilities such as childcare, leaves and also a more equal task division between men and women, will be present in the future. In particular, women and highly educated people are confident about combining work and care in the future. There is still a strong gender specific traditional division in work and care, and it is mainly women who are expected to be searching for the balance in paid work and (child) care.

3.3.1.4 Gaps in research

Most research in the Netherlands on having children and timing of birth is based on large-scale data sets focussing on individuals at one moment in time. Longitudinal research as well as research that takes both partners into account is limited. Exceptions are Jansen (2002) and the *gezinsmonitor* 1998, 2000 (Hooghiemstra & Pool, 2003). Little attention has been paid towards the decision-making process between partners about having children. The research of the Dutch family council is one of the first studies that paid attention to interaction processes between partners. In this research 20 couples were interviewed first separable and after that together about differences found in the individual interviews. This method revealed the influence of men on the decision process on having children. Doubts and a reserved attitude of the male partners slowed down the decision-making process of couples and often results in (a further) postponement of having children (Hooghiemstra & Pool, 2003).

3.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

3.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

In the Netherlands there is a substantial body of research on the division of paid and unpaid labour between men and women (e.g. Hooghiemstra & Pool, 2003; Keuzenkamp & Hooghiemstra, 2000; Knijn & Wel, 2001; De Jong & De Olde, 1994; Van der Lippe, 1993). Research is not only conducted by social scientist from different disciplines, but also government agencies (SCP, CBS) have collected data on a regular basis regarding the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women, and other related issues in the

last 25 years (e.g. SCP, 2000; Portegijs et al., 2002). However, studies that focus more in particular on the transition to parenthood and on how young parents (25-39 years of age) negotiate their work-family boundaries are less common. Research does show that the birth of a first child is a striking event affecting the division of labour between couples. In spite of the huge number of dual-earners and a more or less equal division in paid and unpaid work between couples before the birth of a child, gender roles become much more traditional after the birth of the first child (e.g. Kluwer, 1998; van der Lippe, 2000). Other relevant research topics related to the transition of parenthood are caring fathers and the use of work/life policies (e.g. Duindam, 1997; Duindam & Spruijt, 1997; Grootsholte et al., 2000).

Explanations for the division of paid and unpaid labour between partners are often based on three theoretical perspectives: role theory, exchange theory and new home economics (e.g. van der Lippe, 1993). The first two perspectives are sociological and the third economic. Role theory considers sex-role expectations as the fundamental force behind the division of labour. In the exchange theory the division of labour is considered as a form of exchange, which is dependent on the resources available to each of the partners. Partners differ in their resources, such as education, occupation and income. Basic assumption is that individuals do not like to do household work and that the partner with the most resources has more power in the relationship and will use this power to minimize time spend on household work. According to the new home economics, "human beings strive for goals and they make choices given the constraints they face. A household can be viewed as a 'small factory' where partners divide labour according to their relative productivity." (Van der Lippe, 1993:163). Not only resources such as time and money determine the choices made by partners but also the normative context in which they live. It is assumed in this theoretical perspective that the partner with the highest earning potential, will focus on paid work, while the partner who is most productive regarding caring tasks will primarily focus on household work and care for children. Because men, on average earn more than women do, it is a rational decision for the household that the men spend most of his time doing paid work. However, research has shown that also within couples in which both partners have the same earning potential or in cases in which the women earns more than her husband, an unequal division regarding unpaid labour is found.

Women studies on the division of tasks between men and women use the "gender" perspective; gender as a social and normative construct in which common divisions of labour between men and women are taken for granted. Komter (1985), for instance, shows how mechanisms of power maintain existing divisions and prevent new divisions. She in particular refers to the taken for granted ness of the traditional division of labour. Kluwer (1998), in her study on marital conflict over the division of labour, also uses a more Interaction-based approach. She starts from the notion that gender roles – the social behaviour that is expected of men and women – are produced and maintained in everyday life through interpersonal interaction, and that the enactment of gender primarily takes place within a context of social interaction. Hence, instead of treating the division of labour as an outcome state as many other studies do, she treats the division of labour as a continuous interpersonal process in which partners actively negotiate the division of tasks.

3.3.2.2 Main methodology

At first Dutch research concentrated on working women and their decision to either reduce working hours or to withdraw from the labour market after they got their first child. In the 1990s researchers started to collect data among both fathers and mothers. Most research on the division of paid work and household and caring tasks is cross-sectional considering one moment in time. A lot of the research concerns quantitative data collected by surveys (e.g. Keuzenkamp & Hooghiemstra, 2000; Knijn & Wel, 2001). However, there are also an increasing number of studies that combine a quantitative design with open interviews (e.g. Knijn & Wel, 2001; Groenendijk, 1998; De Jong & De Olde, 1994)). Less common are longitudinal studies that follow couples over time. Van Der Lippe (1999) investigated changes in the division of labour after the birth of a first child among a sample of 930 couples. Respondents were asked how they divided household work before and one year after the birth of the first child. Although this research takes into account two moments in time, it does not follow couples over time. Rather the research was based on retrospective questions. Kluwer (1998), on the other hand, conducted a 2-year longitudinal survey among 293 Dutch couples making their transition to first-time parenthood. Spruijt & Duindam (2002), analysed two Dutch longitudinal studies on caring fatherhood. Knijn (2000) investigated social and cultural norms concerning motherhood by conducting a content analysis of Dutch women's magazines in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

3.3.2.3 Main empirical findings

Division of paid work between partners with and without children

Like in other countries, the number of dual-earners in the Netherlands is increasing. In 1998 56% of couples were dual-earners, compared to 30% in 1986 (Keuzenkamp & Hooghiemstra, 2000). Most dual-earners are in fact one-and-a-half-earner families, in which the men has a fulltime job and the woman is working part-time. These one-and-a-half earner families, however, can be divided in *small* (woman works less than 12 hours a week) and *large* one-and-a-half-earners (woman works between 12 and 32 hours a week). Small one-and-a-half-earner families are characterised by the presence of young children and mothers working in lower-educated jobs. Men in those couples are least positive about the combination of tasks and often work at organisations with few work/life policies. In large one-and-a-half-earner families, men are more positive towards an equal division of tasks, they more often work in organisations that offer work/life policies which enable them to do more caring tasks, and women are on average higher educated (Ibid.). A small scale study among couples in which both partners have a substantial job and share household and childcare tasks, also showed the importance of the workplace; i.e. the availability of part-time work and flexible working hours (Lenning & Willemsen, 2002). Couples in which both partner work full-time are young and childless. Single earners have in general the most traditional norms and values about working women. Many Dutch couples prefer a situation in which both partners have a large part-time job but only very few couples have realized this arrangement. Least popular is the arrangement in which both partners are working full-time (Keuzenkamp & Hooghiemstra, 2000).

Knijn & Wel (2001), looked at internal and external family factors that influence the labour market participation of mothers with young children, division of paid and unpaid work with their partner, the externalisation of care and their well-being. They found that it is mainly

internal factors, preferences and choices that explain women's behaviour on the labour market. Generally, higher educated mothers participate more on the labour market than lower educated mothers. Compared to higher educated mothers, lower educated mothers are more care oriented than work oriented. They find it more difficult to let other people care for their children and they are less in favour for an equal division of tasks with their partner. Among lower educated women financial considerations influence their labour market participation. Financial independence, however, is not considered that important, rather financial considerations focus on the insufficiency of the partner's income or the need for some extra luxury for the family. The breadwinner status of the men is still taken for granted. In addition, labour market participation of lower educated mothers is to a large degree conditional to the caring needs of their children, that is, they think it is more appropriate to care for their children themselves and they also want to do so. Lower educated women prefer to work part-time and they adjust their working hours to the (changing) needs of their children. Main strategies of lower educated women to combine work and parenthood are: adjusting working hours, taking leave in case of child-related emergencies, working at hours when the father is at home and/or limited use of childcare provided by others than grandparents. Very few lower educated fathers in paid work adjust their working hours to their wife's paid job.

Changes in the division of labour after the birth of a first child

De Jong & De Olde (1994) focussed on the preferences of parents with young children about the division of labour and whether these preferences were realized in practice. In their sample 50% of couples are having a traditional division of labour (men having a full-time job, woman not working); 37% are one-and-a-half-earners (men fulltime, woman part-time job); 13% "trendsetters" (both partners having a large part-time job). Of the young parents, a majority (70%) said they had realized their preferred division of tasks after the birth of their first child. The research showed, however, that a traditional division of labour is more easily realized than a more equal division. Half of the couples were satisfied with the division of labour. In particular those with a more equal division had less intentions to change, while one-and-a-half-earners and single earners more often wanted to change towards a less traditional division of tasks. In addition, once a couple had chosen a traditional division of labour it proved to be difficult to change this division later on. Very few couples with children in the Netherlands prefer the situation in which both partner are having a fulltime job (see also Employment Outlook, 2001). Although for some couples a lack of childcare was a reason to choose a traditional division of tasks, the attitude towards childcare is a more important factor. To realize a more equal division of tasks the availability of part-time work is important. The research pointed out that one of the main barriers is that men are afraid to make a request for a reduction of working hours. Working in the public sector increases the chance of a more equal division (see also Keuzenkamp & Hooghiemstra, 2000). The research included also young parents of ethnic minority groups. None of the ethnic minority couples interviewed expressed a preference for an equal division of labour. Some of them wanted both partners to work fulltime and they had a more positive attitude towards childcare. Van Der Lippe (1999), also looked at changes in the division of labour after the birth of a first child. She found that even before the birth of a first child no equal division of household work existed but that after the birth the division of tasks became even more traditional (women doing more household work). Both the level of education of the mother, as well as the norms and values of the couple are important determinants.

Conflict and fairness

The study of Kluwer (1998), shows that couples experience more conflict over housework than over paid work. Conflict over housework was related to wives' but not husbands' dissatisfaction with the division of housework. Conflict over paid work revolved around both spouses' dissatisfaction with the husband's working hours. Traditional wives and wives with a traditional husband are more inclined to avoid conflict about the division of labour – despite their discontent – than egalitarian wives and wives with egalitarian husbands. In addition, the way spouses negotiate the division of labour across the transition to parenthood affects wife's satisfaction and their perceived fairness. Independent of the actual division of labour, wives' satisfaction and perceived fairness are related to whether the division of labour was discussed in integrative ways before they became parents.

Van der Vinne (1998) investigated the finding that although couples often have an unequal division of labour they perceive the division as fair and are satisfied with the situation. She considers three factors that might explain the fairness judgement: comparison standards, allocation rules and legitimations.

Caring fathers

Spruijt & Duindam (2002) investigated whether there has been an increase in caring fatherhood in the 1990s. Data from two longitudinal studies showed that there was on average no significant increase in the amount of care given by fathers between 1991 and 1997. The two studies point out that the father's working hours at t1 have an effect on t2; the more the father worked at t1, the less he cared at t2. Also a happy relationship between the father and mother contributed to the amount of care provided by the father, as well as modern value orientation of the father and the relationship of the father with his own father in his family of origin led to more caring at t2. In addition, in both studies, the division of income between the partners at t1 was important: the larger the mother's share in the family earnings, the more the father's caring increased.

Knijff & Selten (2002) discuss changes in fatherhood over time in legislation and social policies in the Netherlands. They conclude that in the Netherlands there are two striking developments concerning fatherhood compared to other (Western) countries: the emphasis on recognition according to past performance of the father in terms of commitment and care and the weak financial obligation of fathers outside marriage.

Use of work/life policies

In 2001, 24% of employees with an entitlement to parental leave made use of the scheme. Women continue to do so more frequently than men (44% and 12% respectively). When paid leave is offered the take up increases, in particular men are less motivated to take up unpaid parental leave (Grootscholte et al., 2000).

In a comparative case study of two retail companies Veenis (2000) investigated how work/family policies and workplace culture affect parents with young children who are combining work and family life. In the two retail companies, many more women than men use work/family policies. Part-time work appears to be the key benefit. However, while part-time

requests are honoured, promotion opportunities are limited when working part-time. The more important the job, the more firmly rooted the norm of the full-time workweek. Moreover, Veenis found a clear distinction between higher- and lower-income jobs; people in higher-income jobs have more access to informal arrangements such as flexitime, but less access to part-time work. While for lower-income jobs the opposite is the case. Within the two firms, units and departments differ in the way work/family policies are put into practice. Some departments are characterised by an 'open family culture' in which there is a positive attitude towards dual-earners, others by a 'defensive culture' with little support for working parents, strong commitment to the firm and combination of work and family life is not discussed and remains invisible. Most units are in between this two opposite cultures and parenting is discussed among women employees and mainly seen as a women issue. The dominant business view among both management and employees seems to be that combining work and family life is okay as long as it does not interfere with business too much.

3.3.2.4 Gaps in research

There are very few longitudinal studies that follow couples over time as well as studies that focus in particular on the transition to parenthood. Although several studies reveal that the workplace is an important factor for working parent's strategies this has not yet been a major focus in research; i.e. the way (expecting) parents negotiate the use of work/life facilities.

3.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

3.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Organisations are rapidly changing. Developments in organisations get much attention in Dutch sociological, economic and psychological research. De Korte and Bolweg (1994) analysed the so-called new employee. Their main conclusion is that new employees often are part of a two-earner couple today. New employees value opportunities to combine work and a private life in a balanced way. New employees find training possibilities extremely important and are looking for a challenging environment, interesting work, independency and autonomy.

Technical developments cause major changes in modern organisations. The book *Working in an information society* (Steijn, 2001) focuses on the consequences of information and communication technology for the organisation of labour. Relevant themes in his study are: management of change; flexible working; human resources management; employability. Another interesting study is *New organisations, new careers* (Van der Heyden, 1995). Important questions in this book are: which new forms of organisations (network organisations, less hierarchical organisations) are developing and which consequences will these new types of organisations have for the shape of careers. These questions are linked to American research on careers. Moss Kanter (1993) identifies a new career asset: from organisational to reputational capital. In the past, careers in traditional corporations were institutionally driven and people accumulated "organisational capital". Today, people more and more have to rely on their own human capital. They need, so to speak, portable assets: i.e. skills and reputation that can be applied anywhere.

Flexible working and employability are relevant themes in Dutch literature on organisations. Sometimes these themes are related to work-life issues and current changes in family life (Ester, *et al.*, 2001). Van Doorne-Huiskes (2001) addresses the fact that people, women and men, increasingly wish or need to combine paid work with care. Do labour organisations respond to these changes in family and social life, and if so, in what ways? Part-time work is an important means in the Netherlands, to combine paid work and care. But what other measures are taken by employers to help reconciling paid work and care?

Remery, Schippers and Van Doorne-Huiskes (2002) analysed the attitudes and behaviour of Dutch employers with regard to work-family arrangements in organisations. Den Dulk (2001) focussed, in an international comparative study, on relations between institutional conditions at the macro-level of societies and employers' policies, i.e., the development of work-family arrangements in organisations. In *Babies and Bosses: Reconciling work and family life* (OECD, 2002) Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands are studied.

Part-time work is important in the organisation of labour in the Netherlands. In 2000, the Adaptation of Working Hours Act passed Dutch parliament. This Act allows employees under certain conditions to change agreements that were made earlier on the number of hours one works; i.e., to extend or to reduce working hours. Van Beek, *et al.*, (2002) investigated, in commission of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, whether employers are familiar with this new law, how they deal with it in daily practice and whether they think this law is useful within social policy. Interesting is the study of Veraart-Maas (2001) on part-time work in a performance-oriented culture. Her assumption is that a policy of part-time work at all levels requires an investment. Part-time work needs to be embedded in organisational culture. In an organisational culture that values performance, autonomy and balance between work and private life. The acceptance of part-time work, in other words, is part of organisational culture.

Main theoretical perspective in studies on organisational change, is how organisations respond on changes in social, economic and technical environment. Responses are not supposed to be mechanically given. A relevant proposition is that employers should be considered as rational actors, who are seeking benefits and are trying to avoid costs. This model is also suitable to explain why some employers offer an extended programme of work-family arrangements and others do not. We come to this in more detail, when describing relevant research findings.

3.3.3.2 Main methodology

A broad scope of methodologies is used in studies on organisational change, organisational culture, work-family arrangements, part-time work and the behaviour of employers as change agents. Part of the relevant research in this field is based on large samples of firms and/or of employees, collecting new data by written questionnaires or by telephone interviews. Other research uses a qualitative approach, by interviewing key persons (general managers; HRM-managers) and/or groups of employees within organisations. Mostly, the method of so-called focus groups and free or semi-directive personal interviews is used. Written documents are important sources of information in most organisational studies.

3.3.3.3 Main empirical findings

Attitudes of employers towards work-family arrangements

Research on the acceptance of work-family issues reveals the following. Remery, *et al.*, (2002) found, in a survey among 870 organisations in the profit-sector and the non profit-sector, that work-family arrangements have become rather common in Dutch organisations. Many organisations offer at least one arrangement in the field of flexible working hours, childcare or leave. For many employers the supply of work-family arrangements is something they cannot “avoid”. They know and accept that the reconciliation of work and care has become an issue for an increasing number of workers. Large organisations offer more arrangements than smaller ones. Explicit and extended cost-benefit analyses are seldom made among employers, partly because of the “inevitability” of work-family arrangements. That does not imply that employers do not have any idea about costs and benefits. Usually their ideas about costs are more specific than their ideas about benefits. Talking about costs many employers point out the risk of discontinuity of work. According to employers this risk is involved with part-time work and with leave. Costs related to childcare arrangements do not seem to be a major problem; it is “just” a matter of money. According to employers the most important benefit from offering work-family arrangements is the increase in workers’ satisfaction. This is also the major reason for offering these arrangements. Only few organisations wish to distinguish themselves as frontrunners with the supply of work-family arrangements. Employers prefer to be frontrunners on other issues: training opportunities, career perspectives for employees, using all available human capital and being a learning organisation.

Partly, the findings of the OECD rapport *Babies and Bosses* (2002) apply to Dutch organisations. Leadership has two effects on the implementation of family-friendly work practices. First, high-level commitment is necessary to overcome internal institutional barriers to introducing such measures. Second, without such leadership from senior management the workforce will not take advantage of any measure, which are put, in place. In practice, firms do not usually appear to introduce family friendly practices, because they have engaged in some profound assessment of the costs and benefits. Instead, they are introduced because someone very high up in the organisation takes a leadership decision about how the company should behave as an employer. “There clearly is a bottom line advantage, but we had not modelled the effects before we introduced our various policies – it was a strategic decision”. “We did not explicitly set ourselves up to be family friendly – it resulted from treating people with respect”.

Psychological contract in labour relations

Traditional aspects in so-called psychological contracts between employers and employees are certainty, continuity and loyalty. In “new” psychological contracts, it is suggested that employers value employability and mobility, while employees seek to broaden their competences, in order to have good perspectives elsewhere. Huiskamp and Schalk (2002) analysed psychological contracts among 1350 employees in 27 organisations in the Netherlands. They found significant differences in psychological contracts between firms. New types of agreements between employers and employees are developing about the length of the working week, schedules of working hours, efforts, training opportunities, competences and performance. Employees, generally speaking, appeared to be satisfied with

the “old” values as certainty and continuity. They feel, however, that their needs for more modern labour conditions are not (yet) entirely fulfilled by their employers.

Part-time work

Research on the assessment by employers of the Adaptation of Working Hours Act (2002) shows that employers in general have no severe objections against working part-time, as long as people work in jobs without managerial responsibilities. Employers report some advantages of part-time work: more flexibility in the availability of personnel; a means to be an attractive employer for some categories of employees; and – interesting from a perspective of organisational change – looking for creative solutions to meet peoples’ wishes to reduce their working hours: more teleworking, more meetings by telephone instead of physical presence, more autonomy for teams in determining the working time patterns of their members. Replacement problems, specifically in small firms, are seen as the major disadvantage of part-time working. Employers report also problems with organising meetings, when many employees work part-time. Complicating as well is or could be an increase of the managerial span of control, when many people in a department have part-time contracts.

Flexible employee benefits

In modern society, an employer cannot just impose a set of standard labour conditions on employees. (S)he will have to reckon with employees’ preferences and opinions. Employees’ preferences for different types of rewards will depend on age, sex, family situation, education and socio-economic position. Some workers may prefer additional leave or childcare facilities, while others prefer long holidays, a higher monthly wage or a more extended pension scheme. Van den Brekel and Tijdens (2000) analysed workers’ interest in a system of flexible employee benefits. They found that employees who have a heavy workload and are not able to take up all the days off they are entitled to, appreciate the possibility to sell days for extra money. They also found that the permission to work part-time and to have flexible working schemes was more relevant for parents who need to combine paid work and care, than a system of flexible employee benefits. The latter turned out not to offer much extra freedom of movement for parents of young children, given possibilities for part-time and flexible working.

Dutch employers compared to employers from other countries

Den Dulk (2001) found in her international research on work-family arrangements, that compared with Italy, Sweden and United Kingdom, in the Netherlands medium-sized and large organisations are most actively involved in childcare. Dutch employers are also actively involved in the development of flexible work arrangements. Besides the existing legal and unpaid leave arrangements, Dutch employers are not very much in favour of further development of leaves. Work-family arrangements are more often found in the public sector and in large organisations.

Work and private life: a challenge for innovation

Work and private life, a challenge for people who wish to change organisational culture, as Boelens and Van Ieren (1999) wrote. Their approach is based on *Rethinking Life and Work*, a project carried out by the Ford Foundation in United States. Aim of these projects is to develop strategies that combine two things: realisation of the goals of the company and improvement of the well being of employees, i.e. a Dual Agenda ({Rapoport, 2002 #135}).

Interesting in this approach is not just the focus on specific work-family arrangements, but also on the planning of work, on the taken-for-granted procedures, habits and culture of the organisation. For instance: will a more effective anticipation and planning of work lead to reduced working hours for everyone (so that people might go home in time)? Or: could output be the criterion of performance, instead of availability and daily presence of employees? This approach leads to new thoughts. The search for a better work-life integration in organisations must not get stuck into the relative margin of labour conditions. Work-life integration has to become part of rationality and efficiency of the working process itself. By going this way, work-life integration belongs to the domain of strategic organisational choices and decisions.

3.3.3.4 Gaps in research

An interesting field of research that deserves further development is, whether and how innovation in organisational cultures and in the organisation of work is to reconcile with themes as work-life integration, family friendliness and opportunities for women to extend their shares in managerial positions. What new types of careers are coming up? Do these new types of careers offer room for work-life integration? And at what costs? How could organisations, without losing their economic functions and goals, build a culture that is truly concerned with helping and not hampering employees better integrate their work with their private lives?

A more concrete and practical question that needs further research is how the principle of work-life integration could be settled in small and medium-sized firms. Most research on these issues is done in larger organisations. But the majority of Dutch employees works in smaller firms.

3.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

3.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

In the Netherlands the extension of the welfare state in the 1960s gave rise to a switch in the debates, as well in the general media as in the scientific journals, from welfare to well being. As being the case in most affluent, western societies well being is becoming more important when the basic needs in life are satisfied. However, the concept well being is very general and broadly used.

In general the concept of well being is studied in two ways: objective and subjective well being (OWB and SWB). The objective approach is mostly used in psychological research, where well being is defined in terms that measure the absence of sickness, or more general, health problems. Some studies focus on a more theoretical level towards the use of well being. In this research related, and sometimes identical, concepts are life satisfaction, happiness (Schyns, 2003), and quality of life (Veenhoven, 2000). Another line of research is devoted to the relation between well being and parenthood. For instance, Groenendijk (1998) is focussing on the well being of working mothers in the Netherlands, using an interpretative sociological perspective. Earlier research in the 1970s was concerned with the question if getting children makes you happy (Veenhoven 2000).

Besides happiness, health is a very common indicator for well being. Especially, when the studies are about work and the workplace. A lot of (inter) national research is focussed on the negative consequences of work towards well being, and therefore well being is usually defined as the absence of sickness, or sometimes death (Groenendijk, 1998). The main question here is, does work damage your health? The two most used theories (in international research) are: the scarcity thesis, and the accumulation/expansion or enhancement thesis (Groenendijk, 1998). There is also considerable attention paid to the quality of labour (Tap et al., 2002), whereby the quality of labour functions as a kind of measurement of the well being on the work place. The concept of well being is defined in a lot of different ways. Next to being healthy, well being is sometimes equalled with finding a good balance between work and private life (Rijswijk et al., 2002).

There is also research on work/family conflict, or, with a more neutral term, work home interference (Geurts et al., 2002; Geurts et al., 2003; Wagena & Geurts, 2000). For instance Bekker et al. (1999) examines the relationship between the combination of work and care, and its influence on stress, health and gender. Although the majority of studies focus on the negative consequences (Peeters et al., 2003), recently there is more attention to the positive effects of the combination of work and care (Geurts et al., 2002).

3.3.4.2 *Main methodology*

The measurement of well being is usually done with quantitative research, i.e. surveys. The concept is measured via different scales, or sometimes by asking only one question of subjective well being (SWB) of the respondent. In the latter case it is assumed the subjective element of well being is highly correlated with objective measures of well being (Groenendijk 1998). Much of the studies are cross-sectional (Geurts et al., 2002; De Jonge, Bosma, Peter & Siegrist 2000; Peeters et al. 2003). There is little qualitative research, however Groenendijk (1998) combined a small survey with open interviews. 74 working mothers were scanned over the phone, asked to fill out a questionnaire and were orally interviewed. Based on the Living Conditions Index 1974-1997, from the Netherlands Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), Boelhouwer & Stoop (1999) give an overview of the measurement of well being in the Netherlands. Well being is in this article understood as living conditions.

3.3.4.3 *Main empirical findings*

Working mothers

Groenendijk (1998; 1999) distinguishes four groups among women's meaning of work and care and its relation to the strive for promotion. First, for women who have a positive judgement (administrative employees, hair dressers and nurses), the caring for children has a positive meaning from which mothers experience pleasure. The positive meaning of both work and care is realized when both work and care can be varied evenly. Work should be a small part-time job, in which promotion is not desired, because making promotion would mean either another working environment or a full time job with extra education.

Second, for women who have a moderate positive judgement on work and care (teachers, nurses, physiotherapists, analysts, socio-cultural workers), work means certain societal status and a provider of identity. Working in general is more important to these women than the work as such, and the care of children is experienced as a logical consequence of having children.

Making promotion is not seen as something to enjoy but rather as something that is energy and time consuming. Meanwhile, the care taking will deteriorate, because it is dependent on the women's effort.

Third, for women who have a moderate negative judgement (teachers, nurses, physiotherapists, analysts, socio-cultural workers), the meaning of working and caring is to be seen in their combination. Combining work with care prevents a person from becoming a workaholic and combining care with work prevents a person from becoming entangled in care. For these women, making promotion would bring their precious combination of work and care out of balance.

And fourth, for women who judge negatively (doctors, project-managers, researchers), the combination of work and care is a 'tour de force'. These women already have a demanding job with a lot of overtime work. They receive little understanding at work and lack practical and emotional support from their partner. Making promotion with all the extra engagements is a scary thought to these mothers.

Work and care

There are three perspectives in approaching the relationship between the combination of work and care, and health (Bekker 1999). First, combining work and care is good for the health. This positive effect occurs because positive experience in one domain, protect people from negative influences in another domain. Experiences at home can also have a positive spill-over effect at work. Multiple social surroundings provide the opportunity to share positive experiences and relive them. Finally, an increased meaning of life, financial independence and social autonomy could also be positive effects of multiple role fulfilling.

A second perspective says that the combination is a risk to health because of overload and role conflict. Mainly for working women, stress and mental health is determined by the interaction between work and home conditions. In the Netherlands, the stress, double burden and role conflict influence physical processes, psychological well being and cognitive functioning.

The third perspective argues that the effects of combining work and care on health depend on the quality of roles and other moderating variables. Role quality is defined as the balance between the worries from a certain role and the rewards of that role. The more rewarding and the less worrying a role is, the higher the well being. The sphere where role quality is defined, seems to be gender specific. For men, role quality stems from the work-sphere, while for women, role quality stems from the home-sphere. Besides the quality of independent roles, personal variables also influence health and well being. The amount of hours that one works, flexibility of working time, and the number of children living at home are examples of these variables.

The fulfilling of multiple roles generally has a positive effect on health and well being. However the quality of independent roles and personal factors is decisive at the question whether the combination is helpful or harmful to health and well being. Mainly working women run the risk of lacking possibilities to recover. Of great importance hereby is an individual

balance. When too many demands, tasks and hours are spent, the enrichment of multiple roles turns into a situation that is experienced as uncontrollable and too demanding.

From the perspective of the socio-technique and human recourse theories, the quality of labour is increasingly defined by the amount of autonomy and challenge that it contains (Tap et al., 2002). However these highly autonomous employees are having trouble keeping their working life and their private life in balance. To live up to the demands of organizations, employees fall back to a Tayloristic handling of the household in order to gain time. In other words: when home becomes work and work becomes home (cf. Hochschild). It is because of this increasing time pressure that the quality of labour should be judged from a work-care perspective.

A rethinking is required about the criteria on the quality of work. In a time where people work increasingly both at home and in an organization, Tayloristic aspects in work are of great importance in the balance of work and private. This is because routinized labour brings rest. The replacement of an employee means that they can easily work part-time or use other flexible work arrangements. Jobs that are in balance regarding task demands and arranging possibilities *within* the organisation but not *outside* the organisation, are equally stress amounting as other stressful jobs. Routine seems to be an instrument with which people can control their lives by balancing their private- and their working demands.

Work home interference

Recently the interference between work and private life has been the focus of several Dutch studies. In their overview article of (inter) national research to the relation between work and private life, Geurts et al. (2002) conclude that 30 to 40% of the Dutch and American labour force experience difficulties in combining work and private life. Both work and private life can influence each other positive and/or negative. The negative influence of the work situation on the private life is the most common influence. They discuss several possible causes: personality, situation in the nuclear family, job characteristics, and attitudes. Related is the question of coping; how do employees cope with the experienced dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion (Van Emmerik 2002). To measure the interaction between home and work, Wagena & Geurts (2000) developed a 33 item scale: Survey Work home Interaction Nijmegen (SWING).

Peeters, de Jonge & Montgomery (2003) examine in their study if and to what extend home demands are related to well being at work (Home Work Interference, or HWI) and job demands are related to well being at home (Work Home Interference, or WHI). The WHI and HWI are defined as the process whereby emotions, cognitions, and or behaviour experienced in one domain (work or home) are influencing the emotions, cognitions, and or behaviour in the other domain. The interference can be positive or negative. They conclude, based on surveys between two groups (N=66 and N=108), well being or satisfaction in the one domain is partially mediated through the interference into the other domain.

Work, the workplace, and health

Geurts et al. (2003) find, by studying the intermediate effect of Work Home Interference, workload has a negative effect on well being. In an earlier study Geurts et al (1999) found one

home characteristic (having a spouse who frequently works overtime) and three work related characteristics (an unfavourable work schedule, a high workload, and a problematic dependency on the supervisor), put pressure on the interface between work and home life. Dijkers et al. (2003) found also significant gender differences, whereby female employees reported more interference. Van Rijswijk et al. (2002) conclude, based on a literature review, flexible working times (perceived in this way by the employee), as well as part-time work could help to maintain a healthy balance between work and private life.

De Jonge et al. (2000) study the role of personal characteristics in studying associations of stressful job conditions and health. They examine whether the two used models (Job Demand-Control Model & Effort-Reward imbalance model) explain employee well being in a comparable way, or whether the model that addresses recent trends (such as increased emphasis on occupational rewards e.g. job instability) more fully, produces relatively stronger effects.

In overcommitted as compared to non-overcommitted employees, effects of effort-reward imbalance on employee well being are substantially stronger. The Job Demand-Control Model postulates that the primary sources of job stress lie within two basic job characteristics itself: psychological job demands, and job decision latitude or job control. According to the ERI Model, the effort at work is spent as part of a socially organized exchange process to which society at large contributes in terms of occupational rewards.

There is evidence for both the JD-C Model and the ERI Model. When comparing both models one can say that occupational rewards seem to be more significant than job control. Occupational rewards and effort-reward imbalance are in line with recent changes in the nature of work. Flexibilization of work, together with the rise of new technology and the global economy, has had an enormous impact on today's working life. It has led to the end of life-time employment, to a growth in short-term contract and as a consequence to increased job insecurity. Unmet reward expectancies following high intrinsic efforts are most likely to provoke poor subjective well being.

3.3.4.4 Gaps in research

There seems to be not much research on the positive aspects of combining work and personal life, most research on well being is focussed on the negative aspects. In their overview article, Geurts et al. (2002) mention several gaps:

- There is not much research where the marital status is measured as possible intervening variable for work-home conflict, home-work conflict;
- Not very much attention has been paid to the positive interaction between work and home;
- The concepts and measurement need more coherence;
- There is not much attention being paid to the measurement of the home situation, compared to the measurement of the work situation;
- Instead of the now used cross sectional surveys, longitudinal studies are proposed.

There is almost no research on "healthy organizations" in the Netherlands.

3.4 Conclusions

It seems that most Dutch couples are happy about the way they have organised work and family life, despite the unequal division of paid and unpaid work within couples and the persistent inequality on the labour market between men and women. Although becoming a parent is a key event in couple's lives, the transition to parenthood is not yet widely investigated. In spite of the huge number of dual-earners and a more or less equal division before the birth of a child, research shows consistently that gender roles become much more traditional after the birth of the first child (e.g. Kluwer, 1998; Van der Lippe, 2000). Most Dutch women reduce their working hours after becoming a mother, while fathers remain in fulltime employment. The strategy of part-time work combined with a strong believe that children should be cared for at home has led to a new dominant family model: the one-and-a-half-earner model. The route to equality as promoted in the Netherlands is that both parents have a large part-time job. This model is especially favoured among highly educated women and men. However, part-time work is associated with less career opportunities, which so far only women are prepared to give up.

Research has shown that couples often prefer a more equal division of work that they have realized in practice. De Jong & De Olde (1994) in their key study, argue that an equal division of work between partners will only be realized when explicit negotiations take place. A longitudinal design would be appropriate to study the relative influence of economic resources of both partners, attitudes to division of tasks and parenthood, available social policies, and working conditions on parent's strategies to combine work and family responsibilities.

There is also a lack of research that investigates the relation between developments in the area of work and parenthood. Research so far has shown that work-life policies have become a matter of course in many Dutch organisations. For many organisations providing facilities seems to be an issue that "they cannot escape". Organisations are well aware that more and more workers are combining or wish to combine work and care activities, and they are increasingly confronted by the fact that workers have been making demands on this point. Employers feel they have to do something, because – apparently – the world has changed. This argument touches upon the so-called business case, which Lewis (1996) describes as the view that recognising the connectedness of people's work and personal lives is a strategic business adaptation. The business argument moves away from the view that organisational change is a luxury or a moral imperative, as Lewis argues. This adaptation, however, from Dutch employers to changing conditions, is basically pragmatic. It is not primarily a conviction that setting up arrangements is, in terms of business or strategic planning, the best thing to do. More so, it is seen as the most adequate or sensible response to a changing environment. Research among Dutch employers shows that when employers set up provisions, the interest of their own employees is the decisive factor in doing so. Few organisations see opportunities and/or have the need to make use of work-family facilities to raise their profile, whether on the labour market or towards customers or society in general. No real "leader in the field" can be pointed to in this area, and employers certainly do not seem to be contending for that position. Their strategy is "to go with the flow". Far more important for employers to raise their profile in society, is the issue of human capital and learning. To be a learning organisation, where employees feel that their skills are used and respected and where there are opportunities for workers to grow and develop, is a picture that contributes much more to status and prestige of

a company than being a family friendly organisation. Furthermore, the presence of work/life policies in organisations does not guarantee a wide utilization of policies (Veenis, 2000; Den Dulk, 2001).

In 2000, University of Utrecht and University of Groningen started the research project 'Time Competition, Disturbed Balances and New Options in Work and Care'. This research program aims to test a new explanation for the growing tension between competing time claims from the spheres of paid work and the household. Two fields of research are brought together in this program: work and family research and organisational sociology. The focus is on multi-actor data. Main data have been collected in large-scale surveys among firms, where managers and employees have been interviewed as well as employee's spouses.

The utilisation of work/life policies in organizations and the behaviour and attitude of managers towards work/life policies is also a topic of new research (e.g. Dijkers et al., forthcoming; Peters and Den Dulk, 2003). Also the utilization of work/family policies by the employees will be studied². However, in these new research projects the focus remains on large organisations, there is little attention for small businesses and firms.

² See the website for more information: www.fss.uu.nl/soc/cwl

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Chapter 4 Sweden

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4.1 Introduction

The Swedish welfare state has for a long time, in an international perspective, distinguished itself for its unique and radical social policy in the reproductive area. For more than 30 years the government has driven a progressive family policy with clear ambitions for gender equality. The debate on gender equality and parenthood changes towards new modern ideals has not, as in many countries, been idle words but also deeds put into practice through a number of regulations and benefit systems. Today's fathers and mothers benefit, for example, from equal legal rights in work life, have access to well-developed municipal childcare services and are offered large possibilities through a generous parents' insurance. Both women and men have the possibility to profit from a long-term parental leave with an 80% compensation of their regular pay. Two months of the total parental leave are reserved for the mother and father respectively, while the remaining 9 months may be split freely between the two parents. Furthermore, they dispose of yet another 3 months with a lower, guaranteed compensation amount. Parental leave may be taken until the child reaches the age of 8 and may be used in the form of whole workdays or part of a workday, i.e. as shorter working-hours. In this respect, we note that Swedish parents have great options to split the care of the child and to balance work life demands and the new family life. This means that Swedish parents are offered unique possibilities to combine parenthood and gainful employment.

As a result of this policy, the number of women in professional life has increased dramatically the last decades, at the same time as the number of births has been maintained on a relatively high level, but with considerable variations. For a long time, Sweden has had the highest percentage in the world of mothers with children less than 7 years in professional life.

Nevertheless, in the beginning of the 1990s, Sweden suffered a severe financial recession, which resulted in mass unemployment and large reductions in the public security system. For the first time the support to families with children suffered cutbacks and, in combination with the rising unemployment, many parents were sat under hard economic pressure. The number of poor families raised dramatically and the fertility figures were rapidly declining. A new pattern emerged where gainfully employed were more likely to have children, and even more so if they were well educated and well paid. The reverse was true for low educated, low paid or unemployed - they tend to put motherhood and children on hold. This trend, giving the signal "no job no kids", is still reality as poorly educated and unemployed women are the least likely to have children compared to well-educated and well-paid. Thus it is possible to argue that we are witnessing a new identity where a secure job is one of several prerequisites for parenthood. The class dimension has still to be taken into consideration in order to understand how young adults' reason in relation to parenthood, but in an opposite direction than earlier.

In many ways these experiences have presented clear indications that family life is tightly coupled with both the welfare state and the labour market (see also Hobson 2002). Well-developed family supportive policies are important, but not enough, to keep up the balance between work and family life. The birth rates are, for example, receding when the labour market wavers. Sweden is therefore, one can say, now in the need of seeking new complementary strategies in the family policy, -strategies that in a clear way link to the labour market.

4.2 Short overview of main research topics in Sweden

Reforms and policy changes concerning the family and gender equality in Sweden have, historically, been built on a close relationship between politics and research. Consequently a large part of the family research has been carried out within the framework of governmental institutes and reports, often with the purpose of examining the need of or the effect from different socio-political measures. Today there is a considerable amount of research, which on Swedish ground has examined why traditional gender patterns in work and family life are reproduced despite radical changes in the institutional conditions. This means that a major part of the Swedish research has come to focus mainly on the relation between social policy and family life and the market, as an important factor in creating conditions for family life, has attracted less attention.

However, over the last years a broader interest to understand how work life and the private sphere relate to and influence one another has developed. Contrary to previous research paradigms, in which work and family life were considered as parallel existing universes without reciprocal influence, today the relation is rather considered to be intimately connected and to have different “spill-over effects” between the spheres. Studies have, for instance, demonstrated how stress and exhaustion in work life may have negative side effects on the private sphere. At the same time, it has become more and more evident that the intentions behind the government’s socio-political reforms in many cases have had a low impact in work life practice and in the organisation culture. Many employers accept the institutional rights in this area, but remain often passive or indirectly reluctant to men’s possibilities to take a long-term parental leave.

Both in research and in the public debate, these conditions have come to be associated with the development in a number of different areas, such as in discussions about men’s lack of interest to take parental leave, the increased amount of stress both in family and work life, the decline of the birth-rate and the bolting sick-leave figures. A small but growing amount of studies has therefore now started to focus on how the labour market influences the conditions on these areas.

4.3 Literature review per theme

4.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

4.3.1.1 *Main theoretical perspectives*

The Swedish research on parenting has lately shown a more diverse picture of how men and women perceive and conduct their parenthood. As a consequence, parenthood has more and more come to be considered a social construction that is shaped in the interplay between a number of surrounding relations and structures in the parents lives. This includes both relationships within the family, where parenthood is put to the test and shaped in everyday practice, and the societal expectations and conditions that surround both motherhood and fatherhood. Thus, most qualitative research in Sweden on parenthood, during the last years, has used theoretical perspectives emerging from the sociology, with a special emphasis on a gender and social constructive perspective.

But, much of the research on the transition to parenthood has mainly focused on the experience of becoming a mother/ father or the division of household labour and the parental leave. There are very few qualitative studies that have deeper analysed the childbearing decision or how young people view their future work and family trajectories in the context of changing employment conditions and social provisions. Instead, most of these studies are still based on questionnaire surveys, often with small analysing discussions and a lack of a clear theoretical perspective.

4.3.1.2 *Main methodology*

The Swedish research discussing why, when and under what circumstances young people decide to become parents are mostly based, as mentioned above, upon statistics and quantitative studies/questionnaire surveys (i.e. SCB, 2001; Barn och ungdomsdelegationen, 1998; Bernhardt, 2000). But there are also some qualitative studies dealing with these questions as part of a larger perspective on parenthood (i.e. Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten, 1997; Hagström, 1999; Duvander, 2000; Plantin, 2001).

4.3.1.3 *Main empirical findings*

As mentioned earlier, the Swedish welfare state has successfully created good possibilities for today's parents to combine work and family life. This means that the Swedish family policy has been designed according to the idea that both women and men shall be able to lead active working and family lives. As a result of this policy, the number of women in professional life has, despite a rise in part-time jobs, increased dramatically the last decades, at the same time as the number of births has been maintained on a relatively high level.

In the beginning of the 1990s, Sweden suffered a serious financial recession, which resulted in mass unemployment, large reductions in the public security system and rapidly declining fertility figures. During 1990-1999, the fertility figures declined from 2.13 to 1.50 children/woman, which is the lowest number of births ever, registered in the country. These experiences have in many ways presented clear indications that well-developed family supportive policies are important, but not enough, to create a balance between work and family life. Birth rates are receding when the labour market wavers and prospective parents

have their belief in the future obscured by a deteriorated supply situation. Furthermore, the relation is reinforced by the fact that Swedish security systems often are linked directly to gainful employment. The weaker the link to the labour market, the worse the possibilities and the lower the compensation levels.

To young couples, this condition involves often a difficult balancing act and also a contradictory situation, since the years prior to and after childbirth coincide with a period when they also establish themselves on the labour market. Individual desires of becoming parents must meet the labour market demands, the possibility to supply for the family and the institutional conditions to combine work and family life. The results from different priorities and decisions vary but, as we will see below, the present research shows a number of general patterns concerning the transition to parenthood and the decision to have children.

(I) The childbearing decision

Considering the extensive social transformations over the last decade, it is relevant to initially put the question – how do young people of today view the possibilities of becoming parents and simultaneously establish themselves on the labour market? Do they wish to have kids and if so when and how many?

Despite that the assessment of the 1990's period of depression has shown that it was, above all, young people and families with small children who suffered the most from this recession, most surveys show that the attitude today's young people adopt towards having children and forming a family is still intact and positive (SCB, 2001; Barn och ungdomsdelegationen, 1998; Bernhardt, 2000). A recent questionnaire study showed, for instance, that 95% of all the childless between the ages 23-25 answered positively on the question if they sometime in the future wanted to have kids (SCB, 2001). This means that having children and becoming a parent still is a part of most people's vision of the future and is by many considered as an important and meaningful variable in life (Barn och ungdomsdelegationen, 1998). A majority also expresses a wish to have two kids and more and more conceive of having three or more kids.

In this picture of the view on childbirth there are, however, certain gender and class differences. The men are somewhat less inclined than the women to take up a definite position about childbirth, and women or men who plan for shorter education are more family-oriented than those who plan long-term educations (Gustavsson, 1997; Socialdepartementet, 2001).

However, in general both men and women plan and organise their entry into parenthood most carefully (Hagström, 1999; Duvander, 2000). It is, above all, the importance of being ready and feeling "mature" enough, which are being emphasised, i.e. to have attained a number of conditions and individual goals in life before having children (Plantin, 2001). This means that one wants to find the right partner, get an education and to establish oneself on the labour market and housing market before one becomes a parent.

The reason behind this strong focus on *when* and under *what* circumstances it is considered convenient to have kids, is often claimed to be connected with young people's dismal future

prospects, the deteriorated supply situation and the difficulties in establishing themselves on the labour market (Socialdepartementet, 2001). Concurrently with the rationalisation on the labour market, demands on education have increased and as a result more people apply for admission on higher education programmes. The most significant increase has been among women who today have a slightly higher education level than the men have. However, many people find it most difficult, not least financially, to combine studies and parenthood (Duvander, 2000). This worry is based on the fact that compensation levels in the Swedish social insurance system are linked to the employee's establishment on the labour market. Those who find themselves outside this system are often directed to other support systems e.g. social benefits. In 1998, 87% of all single parents (mostly women) who were granted study allowances also benefited from social allowances at some time during a year, and globally students with children recurred to social benefits twice as much as students without children (SOU, 2001).

But, even after they have finished their education, young people pursue a wait-and-see-policy towards childbirth. A questionnaire survey among young people of the ages 22, 26 and 30 revealed that more than 80% of the interviewees were of the opinion that to have a permanent job was far more important and women, above all, emphasised the importance of a permanent job before having children (Bernhardt, 2000). At the same time, young people's opportunities to get permanent jobs and a secured income have considerably diminished during the last decade. Instability on the labour market has increased concurrently with the number of appointments on a temporary basis, employment freezes and redundancies (Socialdepartementet, 2001). Mainly women tend to establish themselves later on the labour market and more often to get time-limited employments. The establishing age, i.e. the age when at least 75% of an age group are occupied on the labour market, increased constantly during the 1990s and is today 29 years for women and 26 for men (SCB, 1999). The gender differences are even more evident concerning appointments on a temporary basis in the age group 25-34 years, where approx. 21% of the women and only 13% of the men have time-limited employment's. In a comparison over time, statistics shows that women's appointments on a temporary basis have increased with 57% in this group the last 10 years (SCB, 1992; SCB, 2002). In several quantitative studies of occupation, income and education, it is also established that this evolution has a strong influence on the rate of childbirth. Childbirth is, for instance, related in a positive way to income and labour-market standing both to men and women, which a higher birth-rate among people with permanent jobs shows (Socialdepartementet, 2001).

We certify thus that the difficulties involved in combining studies and parenthood and the increased demands and the deteriorated possibilities to establish oneself on the labour market strongly have contributed in postponing young people's entry into parenthood. Consequently, the average age for women to have their first baby in Sweden has increased the last 30 years from 23 years to 28.6 years. To the men, the corresponding age is on an average 2.5 years older; i.e. 31 years of age (SCB, 2004). The decline in first-child fertility has during the 1990s been most significant in the age group 20-29 years. A similar evolution is also discernible in second-child fertility, which has diminished in all ages under 35 years. On the whole, this has meant that the fertility rate has decreased from 2.13 children/woman in 1990 to 1.7 children/woman in 2002. In comparing, one should, however, bear in mind that

the fertility rate was unusually high during the end of the 1980s, when the municipal childcare services expanded, the parents' insurance was improved and the financial situation was booming.

4.3.1.4 Gaps in research

The literature review shows that we have a quite clear quantitative picture of how different variables correlate to young adult's tendency to have children. Economy, level of education and employment status is some examples that seem to have great impact on this process. However the impact of ethnic background is not well documented and analysed. We also know very little about how the variables mentioned above intersect to each other or how these preconditions are handled or perceived differently in various families. How do, for example, young adults create meaning in their work and family trajectories and how do emotional aspects and equality between the prospective parents effect the decision to have children? Questions like these haven't been investigated in the Swedish research, especially after the radical societal changes that occurred in the economic crisis during the 1990s. Thus, we can say, there is a lack of qualitative research that deeper examine, not only the structural preconditions, but also the way young adults create meaning in their views on parenthood and the childbearing decision.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work – family boundaries

4.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

As mentioned in the introduction, much of the Swedish family research has had a strong focus on examining the relationship between social policy and family life. This means that many studies have examined the need of or the effect from different socio-political measures. A leading focus in this work has been to study the gap between ideology and practice though much of the research has shown that Swedish family life, despite a radical family and equality policy, still is characterised by traditional patterns and patriarchal gender relations.

The research has mainly been concentrated on three different areas or aspects of family life. The first area concerns how parents negotiate the parental leave. The theoretical perspective in these studies has mainly been pro-feminist with a strong focus on power relations. But on recent years there has also emerged some studies, mostly from the research field of men and masculinities, with a point of departure in a social constructive perspective.

The second area concerns how parents combine work and family life after the parental leave. Even this area has strong roots in the conflict perspective but, under the last decade, the consensus perspective has gained territory. Today, most qualitative studies in this area are based on a symbolic interaction and social constructive perspective.

Finally there is a massive amount of research dealing with how parents organise their time and responsibility for children and domestic labour. The knowledge in this area emerges from both quantitative and qualitative studies and shows the same theoretical mixture as the previous research areas.

4.3.2.2 Main methodology

The Swedish research on parenting strategies and work family boundaries contains of both quantitative and qualitative studies. The statistical and quantitative material is often collected through time study surveys or registers from Statistics Sweden. The qualitative studies are mainly based on interviews and case studies.

4.3.2.3 Main empirical findings

(I) Negotiating the parental leave

Even if childbirth to most people is planned, this step into parenthood often means a whole new situation with many new considerations. One of the first decisions to make that Swedish parents are facing is the distribution of the parental leave. As mentioned in the introduction the Swedish welfare state has generous terms for parents to be on paid leave. Despite this, statistics on parental leave shows evident features of traditional gender patterns. In 2002, the male part of the total number of parental allowance days was only 15.5%, while the female part was 84.5% (Riksförsäkringsverket 2003 (www)). Certainly, this means that the male part has more than doubled since 1990 when the corresponding figure was 7.4%, but it must still be considered as a slow evolution. A similar picture emerges if you examine how large a part was represented by men among the parents who at some time during the years had taken parental leave. In 1990, men represented 26.1% of the total number of parental allowance days, while the corresponding figure today is 41.6% (Riksförsäkringsverket 2003). Differences exist, however, between different groups of men. In general, middle-class men show a slightly faster evolution pace, since it is mainly men with a longer education, higher wages and employment in the public sector who take the most days of parental leave (Sundström & Duvander 1998). Women's socio-economical position also influences the distribution of parental leave. Men who are married to/cohabiting with women with higher education often take longer parental leaves than other men do. Some qualitative studies claim that women's education level is more important than men's, since women with higher education value their work and the prevailing equality ideology higher than less educated women, who often are considered to adopt a more instrumental attitude towards work (Tyrkkö 1997; Bekkengen 2002).

The traditional distribution patterns concerning parental leave have for a long time puzzled both government authorities and the research world. Since the end of the 1970s, a number of different governmental inquiries and research reports have been presented in Sweden, which have attempted to explain the reasons behind and to propose measures against this uneven distribution between the sexes. In this great variety of research results and explanatory models, it is mainly four different reasons or obstacles against a fairer equality in the distribution of parental leave which stand out:

- *A remaining traditional view on the mother's and the father's tasks in family life.* Despite an increased consciousness regarding the expectations on equal and gender transcending behaviour patterns, men and women still reproduce a series of different traditional gender patterns in parenthood, both in theory and in practice (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten 1997; Elvin-Nowak 2001; Bekkengen 2002). In accordance with traditional development psychological bonding theories, it is often motherhood that is associated with the primary care responsibility for the children, not least during the first year of their

lives. Fatherhood, on the other hand, is more often connected with a secondary care responsibility, with a stronger emphasis on the family's financial and material supply situation. This means that many men primarily take the position of a "back up" to the family, while the children are small. Not until later, when the children have grown older and are able to play and communicate, the men distinguish a more evident fatherhood responsibility in relation to their kids (Plantin 2001).

- *Financial reasons.* Since men often have higher wages and are more established in working-life than women and that the compensation levels in the parents' insurance are related to income, it often results more profitable for the family if men go on working and women take parental leave (SOU 1998; Plantin 2003). Research has also shown that men to a higher degree than women lose wage-wise on a long-term parental leave, since employers expect women, and not men, to take long-term parental leaves (Albrecht et al. 1998).
- *Employers' negative attitude towards men taking parental leave.* Swedish work organisations are characterised by masculine norms and employers often stay passive or indirectly reluctant to encourage men to increase their days of parental leave (Andersson 1997; Sundström & Dufvander 1998; Haas & Hwang 2000). In times of manpower shortage employers tend, however, to become more family supportive and to take more initiatives to increase the men's number of parental leave days. This mainly to entice attractive manpower.

The superior position of the liberty-of-choice-principle in the design of the parents' insurance. Some researchers argue that the design of the parents' insurance, with the possibility to transfer days between parents, is based on a masculine hegemony, which in practice gives men larger possibilities than women to renounce from parental leave (Bekkengen 2002; Klinth 2002). This "liberty of choice" in combination with the expectations on mothers to take long-term parental leaves results, thus, in a reproduction of traditional distribution patterns in the way men and women take their parental leave. At present, two of the 13 months of parental leave are allocated each parent respectively by quotas, but a majority of the governmental reports considers or suggests more individualised months (Wetterberg 2002; SOU 2003).

There is a predominantly consensual view in all these explanatory models concerning the negative influence the male hegemony and the patriarchal power structures have on the distribution of parental leave. At the same time, the scope of the causal explanation, which concerns all areas in the relational triangle "state – market – family", shows that the issue on distribution patterns in the parents' insurance system not only is understandable from a structural power perspective. Negotiations about parental leave are often more complex than that and depend, among other things, on the economic fluctuations, the situation on the labour market, education, individual life experiences, the family situation etc (Plantin 2001). We have, moreover, only a vague picture today of how the construction of gender, parenthood and the distribution of parental leave are influenced by other social categories such as class and ethnicity (Plantin 2003). Certainly, there are statistic data which indicates that working-class men take less parental leave than middle-class men do or that fathers with a foreign background take less parental leave than Swedish men do (Bekkengen 1996). However, which factors that influence these conditions on a deeper level, we know very little about. As for Sweden, it is therefore important to from now on increase the efforts to not only

examine the structural conditions, but also to examine how they are handled and implemented in different ways in the practice of everyday life.

(II) Strategies for combining work and family life after the parental leave

Even if parental leave is an important statutory instrument, which makes it possible for Swedish parents to stay home with their children, it constitutes nevertheless only a temporary solution. At the term of parental leave, when the parents have to return to work life, a need of new adaptation strategies for combining work and family life arises.

At this point, the Swedish welfare state offers, as it did at the moment of the child's birth, several different forms of support. All children in Sweden have the right to municipal childcare in return for a low state-subsidised fee. In 2002, the fee for one child was approx. $\text{€}125/\text{month}$ comprising 40 hrs/week. If you at the same time have more than one child registered in childcare services, fees drop for the following children; the second child costs approx. $\text{€}80/\text{month}$ and the third child approx. $\text{€}40/\text{month}$.

Likewise, the parents are guaranteed the right to stay home to care for a sick child with an 80% compensation of their regular pay during a maximum of 120 days/year/child. As a complement to parental leave and to the right to temporary cash benefits (to care for a sick child) parents with children under 8 years of age also have the right to reduce their hours of duty and only work 6 hours/day.

There are, however, significant differences in women's and men's adaptation strategies and their ways of relating to these rights. Men adapt to a lower extent than women their work according to their family life and are usually of the opinion that the problem is solved by placing the child in childcare services (Bekkengen 2002). As a consequence, almost all fathers with small children in Sweden keep their full-time employment and concentrate instead on short-term strategies to solve opposing demands from work and family life (Tyrkkö 1997). It may, for instance, be a question of staying home to care for a sick child, to take time off to bring the children on dental visits or to occasionally leave early from work to collect the kids at school or at the day-care centre. There is no clear picture as to the extent to which the men adapt their work life in favour of their family life in this way. Statistics shows, however, that men during 2002 profited from approx. 35% of the total number of days registered as temporary cash benefit days (Riksförsäkringsverket 2003 (www)). At the same time, there are qualitative studies, which indicate that many men in order to avoid a 20% loss of income stay home to care for a sick child without profiting from any temporary cash benefits (Plantin 2001). Instead, they solve this problem through other strategies such as teleworking, using flexitime or exchanging working-hours with colleagues. Women use, on the other hand, in general various and more long-term strategies in which work to a high degree is adapted to family life. Ensuing parental leave it is, for example, very frequently the women who reduce their working-hours to part-time in order to get more time for family life. Even if the number of part-time workers has decreased with 17% the last five years, 41% of all Swedish mothers with kids under the age of 7 works part-time at present (SCB 2002). Other strategies that have been detected in different research studies are:

- To reschedule working-hours.
- To put the career aside while the kids are growing up.

- To postpone childbirth, to limit the number of kids or not to have any kids at all.
- To hire external assistance for domestic work.
- To use the social network.
- To change the place of work internally to departments which are more obliging/flexible.
- To work much harder and sometimes overtime to compensate the occasions they stay home to care for a sick child or their part-time.
- To finish work in the evening or during weekends in order to spare the workplace any negative side-effects due to their motherhood (concerns mainly women in executive positions).

The different adaptation strategies are not only gender-related, but depend also on other structures such as class, professional groups or organisation structure (Kugelberg 2000). Tyrkkö's (1997) study revealed, for example, large differences between different professional groups and social groups in terms of conditions and adaptation strategies concerning the balance between work and family life. The results show that "professionals" (women and men with a high education and a work-oriented lifestyle) worked to a greater extent than others did, but at the same time they enjoyed a larger flexibility in work life, which they were able to convert into efforts in family life. Women in this group had a less traditional opinion of their own domestic role, which manifested in the way they often gave less priority to domestic work and also shared it with their husbands. "Workers", on the other hand, worked less, but had at the same time limited possibilities to control their own work situation, i.e. they had less liberty to dispose of their working-hours. In this way a clearer boundary emerged between work and family. Domestic work appeared mostly in traditional distribution patterns between the sexes and women adapted work life to family life. Between these two groups were the "civil servants", who despite the fact that they had a more flexible work life, often showed a traditional domestic work distribution.

Research in this area shows, thus, that a number of different factors influence the strategies parents use to combine work and family life. However, women seem generally more family-oriented than men are, since they to a higher degree adapt their work life to family life. This means that women often force through more long-term radical changes in their professional life, for instance by working part-time or by changing assignments to cope better with the needs from children and family life. Men, on the other hand, maintain often their full-time employment, take only shorter periods of parental leave or temporary cash benefits and concentrate rather on "temporary" efforts to solve the problems, which arise between work and family life. And then again, it is mainly a question of investing compensatory leave for overtime done or "flexitime" into concrete situations, which may appear in family life. At the same time, a good deal of the research suggests that motherhood and fatherhood in a historical perspective have approached each other in a larger overlapping of family responsibility (Tyrkkö 2001). Men have moved their positions closer to family life, while women spend more time in professional life. Furthermore, in the latest time-observation survey in Sweden, it was discovered that fathers with small children during the last decade have reduced their working-hours (SCB 2003). Research has also showed that family life to a larger extent has become the subject of negotiations, which consequently has established new family patterns parallel to the remaining old patterns (SOU, 1997).

(III) Time for children and domestic labour

A great amount of the Swedish policy debate and research on how young couples distribute the joint family work bring often forward a connection between the distribution of parental leave and the distribution of other domestic tasks. That men take part of the parental leave is claimed to be important not only to their relation to the children, but also so that they will “learn” from the start to share responsibility for domestic tasks with their partners. There are, however, as of today no studies, which unambiguously prove that men who take parental leaves are more socialised into a fairer distribution of household work. However, results show that men on parental leave still perform considerably less domestic tasks than women on parental leave do (Bekkengen 2002). The conditions are the same regarding the picture of men on parental leave and their relation to the children – we lack basic data to judge whether men on parental leave have a better contact with their children than other men do.

Lacking research results to verify any connection between men on parental leave and an increased equality in family work, the governmental argumentation should perhaps be perceived as a need to take a step in the right direction in order to find a solution to the negative equality evolution taking place in the transition to parenthood. Studies show that young couples without children have the most equal domestic work distribution. 32% of these households present an equal work distribution. When the kids enter the scene, conditions change radically. The woman take over a majority of the household work and only 13% of the families with small children under the age of 7 have an equal domestic work distribution (SOU 1997 table 2). This pattern remains over time even if equality in the work distribution seems to increase, as the children grow older.

In the same way, the gender differences manifest themselves clearly in the figures over how much time parents with small children spend on their kids, despite the fact that both women and men have increased the time spent with the kids on the whole (SOU 1998). Even if the figures vary in different surveys, mothers seem in general to spend a considerable amount more of time on the kids *at home* than the fathers do.

At the same time, a number of studies indicate that the fathers have broadened their behavioural repertoire and that they to a large extent take part in the direct care of the children. In the 1960s, only 1% of the fathers fed, changed clothes or dressed and undressed their kids. Today, more than 85% of the fathers participate in these activities (SOU, 1998). Various qualitative surveys have, moreover, shown that fathers spend considerably more time with the children *outside the home* in form of plays and the presence in other recreational activities (Plantin, 2001, Olsen, 2000). Part of the explanation to why men, but also women, have augmented the time spent with their children is that the demands on parental knowledge concerning children’s needs and development are higher today than they were in the past. Society focuses more on children’s well-being and has raised new demands on parents to show interest in their children’s schooling, leisure activities and social life.

In total, we may observe that Swedish mothers still perform considerably more of the unpaid domestic work than fathers do. This in spite that men, in numerous quantitative surveys, claim they are in favour of more equality between the sexes (Hagström 1999; Plantin 2001; Bekkengen 2002). Judging by the discernible changes, it is clear that fathers to a higher

degree seem to have increased their commitment in their children rather than in the regular domestic work. An explanation to this condition, offered by the Norwegian researchers Berith Brandth and Elin Kvande (1998), is that women and men interpret the concept of equality differently. They claim that mothers often have a considerably more extensive project concerning parenthood and equality, which both includes the children and domestic work. Fathers, on the other hand, have a more limited project excluding household work or on the basis of “lending a hand”, time allowing. In this way they tend to participate only in the attractive parts of parenting, while they leave the unattractive parts to the woman.

Lisbeth Bekkengen (2002) argues that this calls for an important distinction between the equal fatherhood and the child-oriented fatherhood. The equal fatherhood concerns the relation between man and woman, while the child-oriented fatherhood concerns the relation between father and child. That fathers show a greater commitment to their children does not necessarily mean they also share the parenthood equally with the women, given that it is fundamentally two different relations. She claims that in this way patriarchal gender supremacy remains, which is counterproductive to change towards a more equal fatherhood.

Research results disagree on this point. Some studies indicate the existence of a reflexive relation between an increased care for the children, a participation in domestic work and the view on gender patterns (Coltrane 1996). A similar comparative study between Swedish and British fathers reveals that the view on the new, equal fatherhood was more accepted and established in Sweden than it was in Britain, on all social levels. In practice, this meant also that Swedish fathers performed more of the domestic work and spent more time with their children than their British counterparts did (Plantin, Månsson & Kearney, 2000, 2003).

4.3.2.4 Gaps in research

From this literature review it becomes clear that we still need more knowledge about how the socio-political conditions and support systems are perceived and handled within different families. We know for example very little about how different parents, behind the official distribution figures, develop different strategies in everyday life when they balance work and family life. There is also a lack of knowledge of how this process evolves over time and in relation to more individually specific life circumstances. We have, moreover, only a vague picture today of how the construction of gender, parenthood and the distribution of parental leave are influenced by other social categories such as class and ethnicity.

Thus there is a need in Swedish research to not only continue the examination of the structural conditions, but also to examine how they are handled and implemented in different ways in the practice of everyday life.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

4.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

The relation between parenthood, workplaces and organisational change has for a long time been a rather under-developed research area in Sweden. It exist a whole range of studies on organisations, organisational change, work psychology etc, but clearly a fewer has specifically examined the relationship between work life and parenthood. A part of this might be seen as

a result of the historically strong focus in Sweden on the responsibility of the welfare state to create good conditions for parents to combine work and family life. But, during the last years there has been a growing interest in how companies are changing to help individuals combine work and family roles, in a way that would make progress for gender equality and contribute to the well-being of employees and their families.

Studies on this area come from different academic disciplines but mostly from sociology, work and organisation psychology. Several studies have emerged from the new fatherhood research. Most studies have considered the work – family issues from a gender perspective and regarded these linkages as socially constructed.

4.3.3.2 Main methodology

Methods used in this area include some bigger national scale surveys on attitudes and policy changes to parenthood and equality in organisations. But there are also some qualitative case studies based on interviews with employees and managers in different positions.

4.3.3.3 Main empirical findings

This far in the literature review, we have presented a description of how Swedish parents through a series of different rights and possibilities receive a strong state support to be able to combine work and family life. At the same time, it is evident that the ambitions in the Swedish equality policy, which to a high degree permeate its family policy, in many ways have had a weak practical impact. Distribution patterns in family life and adaptation strategies to combine work and family life are still to a high extent characterised by traditional gender patterns. This is why the Swedish example with a strong socio-political support for equality, but with a lack of practical impact, in many ways underlines the need of an active contribution from the other actors on the labour market to create good conditions for changes. It is, in other words, not only in the relation between state and family, but between state, *labour market* and family, where the real conditions for today's parents are created.

(I) Working life and gender equity

Most of the present research to examine the conditions in work life from a gender perspective shows that the labour market as well as family life is permeated by evident patriarchal power relations. Women are being segregated both vertically and horizontally – partly because they are mostly found working within the public sector, which in general offers less paid jobs, partly because they within each organisation are given less career opportunities, lower positions and lower wages than men are (SOU 1998). This condition is easily illustrated with statistics on Swedish work life. Only 3% of the board members in Swedish companies listed on the stock exchange are women, and there is only one woman MD among the 229 largest companies on the list. On 43% of the Swedish workplaces, there are no female superiors and on 5% there are no male superiors. Women's hourly wages are on average 20% lower than men's are and the cost for being a woman, the so-called "negative woman effect", is estimated at $\text{SEK} 1.8/\text{hour}$. The list is longer, however, the examples above show how the labour market to a greater extent favours men and discriminates women.

Sex discrimination is, however, prohibited by law and the Swedish government has in different ways attempted to straighten this unsatisfactory state of affairs on the labour market.

According to the Equal Opportunities Act, all employers with more than 10 employees are bound by law to establish an “equal opportunities plan”. The purpose is to decentralise equality work by having employers identify and attend to injustices due to gender, ethnicity and sexual inclination. A number of different follow-ups, done by the Swedish Equal Opportunities ombudsman show, however, that this reform has had a very limited real impact. A questionnaire survey including 7000 Swedish companies in 1999 (7 years after the introduction of this reform) revealed that only every four employer had established an up-to-date equal opportunities plan (Jämställdhetsombudsmannen 1999). Even if you may assume that the number of workplaces that have established an equal opportunities plan has increased over the last years, random sample surveys in different lines of business show that this has made no substantial alterations (Jämställdhetsombudsmannen 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). Between 80-90% of the companies’ equal opportunities plans are of such insufficient quality they cannot be approved. In many cases they lack concrete and measurable goals possible to follow up and include only isolated parts of the stipulated areas in the Equal Opportunities Act.

But, even if the companies establish an approved equal opportunities plan, this seems to have a very limited effect on the equality work in the selfsame companies. The Equal Opportunities ombudsman’s examination of the 7000 companies showed also that only a very small part of private and public employers were of the opinion that the equal opportunities plan had improved the equality balance at their workplace. The Equal Opportunities ombudsman establishes that an important reason to this is that equality work does not figure high on the list of priorities in work life. The intensified equality debate in work life and in public life seems, on the other hand, to have contributed to an increased consciousness about equality issues among employers. The number of reported matters that have been recorded by the Equal Opportunities ombudsman concerning work life problems in connection with pregnancy and parental leave has, for instance, increased drastically over the last years. During the 1990s, the number of reported matters/year were approx. 4-5 compared to the years 2000-2001, when a total number of 40 reported matters were recorded (Jämställdhetsombudsmannen 2001d).

(II) Organisational structures and the traditional gender contract

The problem with the lack of interest shown in work life for equality work and the discrimination of women is due to the masculine character of the work organisations (SOU 1998; Alvesson & due Billing 1999). Career opportunities, assessments of work efforts and general employment criteria are based on traditional gender norms, which facilitate for men and not for women, to establish themselves or be promoted in work life. Invisible “glass roofs and glass walls” are being constructed on the gender-segregated labour market, as it is put in the Swedish “Women’s Power Commission” (SOU 1997). Several qualitative research studies have discovered that full-time job and over-time work are associated with loyalty and high productivity and that the cultural picture of how a boss is supposed to behave or how work must be organised, is designed by men whose partners are either housewives or working part-time (Andersson 1997; Haas & Hwang 2000; Kugelberg 2000; due Billing 2000). In this traditional gender culture, women are also mainly regarded as the primary parent (Haas, Hwang & Russell 2000). Consequently, they are also expected to have a higher rate of absence in form of part-time work, long-term parental leave or a more frequent use of the

temporary cash benefits, which in its turn is associated with a lesser commitment to gainful employment. This is why it is still relatively usual that women on employment interviews are asked whether they have or plan on having children. Julén (2000) refers to a questionnaire survey in "Platsjournalen"³, which revealed that half of all women in the age of 20-30 years who had applied for a job at some occasion had been asked whether they planned on having children. A different survey, in the same journal, showed furthermore that 63% of all companies claimed that pregnancy might be an obstacle to get an employment.

That the work organisations in this manner support the traditional gender contract between the sexes does not only create problems to women but also to men. Kugelberg (2000) discovered in a qualitative study of a larger Swedish company, that there among the employees existed another discourse, more based on experience, which clearly differed from both the management and the labour union perspectives. In this discourse, the employed parents, women as well as men, regarded themselves as both parents and employees. Work life was viewed in the light of parenthood and the picture of the men as being uninfluenced by parenthood, which was the basis of the company discourse, formed a sharp contrast to the fathers' own experiences and actual behaviour. Mainly the fathers with small children showed a parental practice, which in many ways trespassed on or influenced their work life.

There exist also surveys, which indicate that this state of affairs has attracted the employers' attention. A recently published quantitative survey show, for instance, that both women and men, in this case expecting a baby, run a greater risk of unemployment than others do (Jans, 2003). Thus, it seems as if employers have begun to expect a lower loyalty also from fathers and not only the mothers. However, the study shows that pregnant women run a considerably higher risk of unemployment than the future dads do, which in the end indicates that employers generally still consider women as the primary parents.

Another example of the companies' unwillingness to adjust their internal organisation structures to the employed parents' needs and realities, is revealed in studies which have examined the employers' view on parental leave. Haas' & Hwang's (2000) study of 200 major, private companies in Sweden showed that only 3% of the employers had developed an actively supportive organisation around the employees' right to parental leave, despite the fact that they are bound in law according to the 5th paragraph in the Equal Opportunities Act. The rest had taken isolated measures or accepted, albeit passively, their employees' needs and rights in this area.

These results resemble in many ways the conclusions in Tyrkkö's (1997) study on work life and parenthood. Above all, she discovered that during men's parental leave, negative reactions appear more often on an executive level than among colleagues. Officially, many employers claimed to be positive about men taking parental leave, but emphasised at the same time the numerous problems this caused the company. In a similar way, it has been established that Swedish labour unions show a weak interest in speeding up a change within the companies. Instead of pursuing a strong institutional support around parental leave, the measures are often in form of assistance to single individuals (Haas & Hwang, 1996). TCO

³ The situations-vacant journal of the National Employment Bureau.

(the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees) has, however, lately drawn attention to men's reluctance to take parental leave and started to pursue this issue on a central level.

However, the gender segregated organisation structures do not have to be identical neither between nor within different companies. Numerous studies focusing on parenthood and work life have established that conditions are different from one workplace to another and also depend on where in the organisation you work. Due Billing's (2000) comparative study between 3 different Danish and other Scandinavian companies revealed, for instance, major differences in the way family life and parenthood are viewed. In two of the workplaces, the airline company SAS and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they were of the opinion that family is a private matter, which not concerns work life. The work organisation was structured according to "male" principles and the higher (male) superiors always had a partner who supported them on a full-time basis. The female superiors, on the other hand, showed difficulties in being loyal at the same time to work and family. Their way of handling conflicts was either to not have a partner, not have children, to divorce, change jobs or to be loyal alternatively to the family during certain periods in life and to work during others. In the third workplace, the Danish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, they viewed, on the contrary, not family as a problem, but rather as a resource. Women and men were considered being equally good parents with an equal responsibility for the family. Family life was often discussed at work, the possibilities to bring the children were satisfactory and the employer organised often excursions or other activities for the families. Superiors as well as other employees were expected to take their parental leave or to adjust their working-hours according to the different needs in their family life. The women's career opportunities seemed, furthermore, as ample as the men's did.

Similar differences were discovered also in Näsman's (1997) comparative study between Norwegian, Danish and Swedish industrial work organisations. Contrary to the Norwegian and Danish examples, parenthood was much more heavily sanctioned and manifest on Swedish workplaces. This was explicit in the employees' discourse and behaviour and also in the management's positive policy.

Different conditions have also been established in relation to the gender composition on different workplaces. The perhaps clearest example of this was revealed in a vaster Nordic research collaboration in the mid-1990s, which had the objective to examine how work life and parenthood may be combined within the framework of formal and informal regulatory systems on different workplaces. The project was mainly aimed at examining predominantly male or female workplaces or workplaces of a mixed composition (Bonke 1997). The project showed, for instance, that parenthood conditions vary between different workplaces and professions. Skjortnes' (1997) progress report discovered that the best possibility to combine parenthood and gainful employment was given on more sexually mixed workplaces. Näsman's (1997) earlier mentioned progress report within the same project showed that the child-specific range of action for practical childcare (e.g. parental leave, part-time work etc) was wider on predominantly female workplaces. Other forms of flexibility such as availability during working-hours, the possibility to go home for a shorter period of time during the day, exchanging shifts or at short notice take compensatory leave and flexitime were, on the other hand, suppler on predominantly male workplaces.

In the same way, Kugelberg's (2000) study shows that parenthood and work life cultures vary on different levels within the same company. Kugelberg discovered that on the lowest echelon of the hierarchy, viz. at the production line, any form of absenteeism caused major difficulties and family life trespassing on work life met also less understanding with superiors. The preparedness to find substitutes at short notice was minimal and the possibility to take any form of leave practically excluded, without interrupting the whole assembly line. On administration and management levels, on the other hand, these possibilities were in theory better, but differing priorities concerning family life were in practice not really appreciated by the system. Work on this level offers a larger amount of individual self-determination and is as a consequence met with more understanding and granted the liberty to let family life, in different ways, influence on work life.

Some researchers claim, however, that these variations not only should be seen in relation to the gender compositions or the professional positions on a workplace. Haas and Hwang (2000) argue that these, in a wider perspective, may be considered as signs of a slow but positive transformation of the Swedish company culture towards a better understanding of the employees' needs to manifest their work life. It is also evident, they observe, that more and more companies start to take different initiatives independently, to increase their employees' possibilities to combine work and family life.

To conclude, we will therefore look closer into the existing work life initiatives to create more family friendly workplaces.

(III) Organisational change and family supportive initiatives

The government has for a long time argued that increased possibilities to combine work and family life secure the supply of manpower and increase equality between the sexes. Over the last years, also other arguments, with a more directly pronounced profile of business profit, have appeared in the debate. The degree of family friendliness on workplaces is, among other things, supposed to influence people's interest in applying for a job in a certain company and to have an effect on the employees' absenteeism. It is also supposed to effect their commitment to work, their ability to concentrate on different work tasks or their tendency to resign (Haas, Hwang & Russell 2000).

Discussions about a more family friendly work life tend, however, to intensify in times of manpower shortage and to diminish during financial depressions. Initiatives by the employers are therefor rarely on a long-term basis or institutionalised. Instead, they are often designed as individual advantages, mainly addressed to employees with special competences or in positions high up in the work organisation. Perhaps this situation is clearer in Sweden than in other countries, since general rights to a high degree already are guaranteed by the state. Consequently, employers are less exposed to formal pressure to initiate far-reaching support programs in order to facilitate for the employees to combine work and family life.

A Dutch study, which compared work organisations' family supportive initiatives in 4 different European countries, exposed this state of affairs clearly (den Dulk 2001). This study showed that Swedish employers offered considerably fewer arrangements to create family friendly workplaces in comparison to Dutch, British and Italian employers. Important differences

between these countries were also established when it comes to the type of arrangements the employed parents were offered, which often is explained through the countries' different welfare systems. When the companies in the other countries generally concentrated on offering childcare services, the Swedish companies mainly offered a flexible work situation, meaning a possibility to flexible working-hours, telework or to work part-time during certain periods. A major part of these offers is, however, the result from legal rights the Swedish parents with small children have. Globally, the study revealed also that the differences were lesser between different companies in Sweden in comparison with other countries. Swedish workplaces offered thus more or less the same (and few) arrangements to increase family supportive initiatives on workplaces.

A complementary initiative to the institutionalised rights, which has come to spread rapidly within the Swedish work organisations, is the financial compensation for the loss of income during a parental leave. Within the public sector, the employees are often offered a 90% compensation of their regular pay on parental leave and within the private industry the additional supplement usually varies between 5-20%. In some companies, they have concentrated particularly on stimulating more men to take their parental leave by offering a full compensation during 1-3 months and in certain isolated cases even extra pay outside the regular wages. To judge from the different time limits in these perquisites, they are surely mainly offered to encourage a short-term parental leave and not a long-term absence. In general, research also shows that the decisive factor for the amplitude of different family supportive arrangements varies depending on whether the companies are profit or non-profit oriented.

The reasons why employers initiate different perquisites vary, but a usual argument to try and persuade men to stay home and spend more time with their children is the personality developing dimensions a parental leave produces. Some employers claim that men who have taken parental leaves return to work as more "mature" persons. In Haas' & Hwang's study a personnel officer says the following: "The dad who has been at home is a much more mature person, and he has a little more depth than what others have" (Haas & Hwang 2000:151). In support of this idea, many men also claim to feel more "mature" after a parental leave (Plantin 2001). However, it should be observed that this argument rarely is brought up in the debate on women and parental leave. It seems rather to be the "goodwill", which different offers create in relation to the workplace in the public equal-opportunities discourse that is the strongest motive force, on part of the employers. Single initiatives often get vast media coverage, especially since the companies not are slow to press release their offers. A couple of years ago, the telecom company Ericsson initiated, for instance, special "daddy groups" for their superiors to influence the traditional gender patterns associated with parental leave. This project lasted, however, only a shorter period of time and was discontinued when the initiator changed assignment. The preconception of Ericsson as an unusually offensive company concerning parental leave still remains in the public discourse, despite the fact that the company not offers greater perquisites than other companies do today.

4.3.3.4 Gaps in research

On basis of statistical data from registers and larger quantitative surveys we have started to know more about the broad patterns in both work and family life. Still, even if there are some

qualitative studies in the area, there is a need for more in-depth analyses of the relations between the two spheres. We know, for example very little about how different work cultures influence different parents or types of families and how women and men create meaning through the view on themselves as both parents and employees. We also know relatively little about how different work organisations in reality handle the increased visibility of parenthood in work life or how to develop strategies, which protect both company and employee needs and interests to balance family and work.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

4.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Since the debate on the bolting sick-leave figures and the increased amount of stress both in family and work life started in Sweden during the end of 1990s, there has been an increased interest in research on well-being. This is evident in both family sociology/psychology and worklife research. There is also an increasing number of government reports trying to mapping out and find solutions on the problematic situation of the public ill health and bolting sick-leave figures. However, research especially focused on the relation between parenthood, work life and health is still very rare and an undeveloped research field.

Studies in the area has mainly been based on social psychology theories with a focus on coping strategies. Some studies emerge also from the social medicine and has a more positivistic approach to analys the concept of well-being.

4.3.4.2 Main methodology

The most common used methods are different questionnaire surveys that assess individuals well-being. At the moment there are hardly any qualitative studies strictly focusing on the relation between parenthood, work life and health.

4.3.4.3 Main empirical findings

(I) Well-being and young, working parents

Ideas about how work life and the private sphere relate to and influence one another have changed over time. As both work and family life have changed or been charged with new demands and meanings, new explanatory models have emerged. During the last decades, it is above all the so-called “spill-over model”, which has come to gain most support within the empirical research (Johansson 2002). The basic idea in this model is that strains in one sphere tend to affect the other. Weariness and stress in work life may, for instance, “spill over” on private life so that leisure time partly is spent recovering from work. As of lately, research has evolved further and even come to be oriented towards a conflict model, which in a clearer way delimits the time an individual spend in the different spheres. The idea is that each individual has a limited amount of time and strain endurance at his/her disposal that the different life spheres must share equally. If you give priority to one sphere, it is at the expense of the other. If the demands are high in both spheres, this may provoke a conflict and the risk of ill-health increases.

The last years, the bolting sick-leave figures and the increased ill health have been under intensive debate in Sweden. A number of governmental inquiries and statistic reports show that sick-leaves have increased concurrently with the decrease in mental well-being (SOU 2002, SCB 1999, 2002). Statistics on the so-called "sickness figures" (the number of sickness benefit days compensated by the state, following the first 14 days paid by the employer) show, for instance, an increase in the number of sickness benefit days with 65% between 1999-2002. Today, the sickness figures are at 21 days/person/year. In financial figures, this has meant that the state expenses for health insurance have tripled the last 5 years. The registered increase in the number of sick-leaves must also be considered from the perspective that the "presence in spite of illness" figures have increased dramatically over the last years, i.e. more and more people go to work despite being ill (Aronsson & Gustavsson 2002). Important reasons to the increased ill-health and sick-leave figures, which have been detected, are the increased amount of stress in work life, a gradually deteriorated work environment and an increased number of elderly manpower (SOU 2002).

Knowledge about the situation of parents with small children and the connection between parenthood, work life and health is relatively limited. In most studies the family situation is often used only as one out of several other background factors, and at present there are few surveys with a special focus on gainfully employed parents' ill-health and their sick-leave situation. This despite the fact that the public debate often put forward the assumption that gainfully employed parents with small children are stressed and on sick-leave to a higher extent than others, due to their "double roles". However, in Swedish research there is no proof to support this idea. On the contrary, some studies indicate that other factors, such as the psychosocial work environment, age or the physical work environment have a stronger influence on the sick-leave pattern. Recently, a report on long-term sick-leaves was published by the Swedish Social Insurance Board, where it is established that "the individual's family situation has shown to have no influence on long-term sick-leaves" (Riksförsäkringsverket 2003 (www)). Also Margaretha Voss' questionnaire survey *Work and health* (2001) shows similar results. Voss maintains that there exists no general and strong connection between having children and a higher rate of absence due to illness. In a more detailed analysis she discovered, however, that mothers with small children tend to be on sick-leave for a longer time, above all, in connection with a longer stay at home to care for a sick child (infections being transmitted from child to mother). Even married/cohabiting women with children living at home, who worked full-time and had the main responsibility for the domestic work, turned out to be more often on sick-leave than others were. The most recurrent reason to sick-leaves was physical exhaustion and weariness.

That parents with small children often suffer from stress, feelings of guilt, weariness or feelings of insufficiency has also been established through qualitative questionnaire surveys within family and parenthood research (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten 1997; Elvin-Nowak 2001). It is mainly women, who often are torn between traditional and modern mother ideals, who seem to live with permanent pressure:

The interviewed women's dream appears to be a combination of "the bun-baking, kind house-mum" always at hand to see to everyone's needs and the equal professional who also covers

her own needs. When this combination fails, stress appears (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten 1997:142).

Also fathers with small children are stressed, in different ways, by the problem to combine work and family life (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten 1997). They express often to be dissatisfied with the lack of time to make both ends meet, what with all demands from family life, professional life and the social surrounding. It is mainly when the demands and expectations increase in the different spheres that a conflict of interests appears, which leads to stress. However, numerous indications of clear gender differences exist as to the way father's and mother's experience stress, which among other things is due to remaining traditional parenthood ideals and an enhanced focusing on the child's psychosocial development. To women, stress and feelings of guilt are to a higher extent connected with the children and family life, while men's experiences of stress are more linked to work life and the traditional supply situation (Bäck-Wiklund & Bergsten 1997; Elvin-Nowak 2001).

That the experience of stress and feelings of insufficiency both in family and work life, which many parents express not are clearly manifest in the sick-leave figures, may seem peculiar. However, a spill over does not have to entail negative side-effects to the health, but may as well, one has come to realise, have positive side-effects. Work and family life may thus also mutually stimulate and influence one another positively. Research shows that women, who shift from domestic work to part-time work or from part-time to full-time work, prove better health than unemployed women do. The connection is not unique to women; also men's health is stimulated by the relation between their different roles as a husband, parent and professional worker (Johansson 2002). In Plantin's (2001) study on Swedish fathers, this pattern emerged clearly. Several among the men emphasised that the combination of professional work and parenthood not only generated problems in itself, but served also as a springboard to an ampler personality development, which had positive side-effects on their behaviour in both life spheres. Understanding and experiences gained in family life were described to enrich their efforts in professional life and, at the same time, work and the value of the social contacts at the workplace were experienced as stimulating to their well-being in family life.

4.3.4.4 Gaps in research

Research on the connection between parenthood, work life and health is relatively limited in Sweden. In most studies the family situation is often used only as one out of several other backgrounds factors which make the knowledge very fragmented. This means that we lack of a more solid, general view on the well-being situation for different parents in different families. However, some research shows that the "spill over" between work and family life may have both positive and negative impacts on parents' well-being but still, we know very little about the mechanisms behind the balance of this process. Thus the knowledge about which mechanisms that control the connection between health and the number of social roles is still limited.

4.4 Conclusions and guidelines for the future

Despite that the Swedish welfare state, for a long time, has pursued very progressive equality and family policies, our literature review shows that both work life and family life are to a high degree permeated by patriarchal power structures and traditional gender patterns. Women still take the main responsibility for children and domestic work in family life and adapt to a greater extent their work life to family life. As for the men, they work more often full-time, take less responsibility for the internal family work and have more short-term adaptation strategies to deal with conflict situations between work and family life. The Swedish example shows in many ways, that strong welfare state supports alone is not sufficient to create thorough transformations in the construction of gender and parenthood. However, the situation is more complex than that and depends on a number of other factors in the relation between state, market and family. On a general level there is a theoretical gap in knowledge about the relation between state and market from a family perspective, and that class and ethnicity matters in everyday family life. Such a theoretical development will benefit from an international comparative perspective.

In this review we have also among other things discovered:

- That childbirth is heavily influenced by the economic situation and the state of the labour market. Birth-rates recede when labour market and economy waver.
- That the possibility to balance work and family life is influenced by the organisation structure in work life. Work life is often structured on the basis of traditional gender norms, where women are expected to be loyal to family life and men loyal to work life. This has, above all, negative consequences to women's situation in work life, but also to men's situation, since fathers as well as mothers consider themselves as both parents and employees.
- That the welfare system's clear connection to gainful employment circumscribes the possibility of larger groups to fully use the support system. Those who find themselves outside, on their way in or who are not fully established on the labour market have worse opportunities than others do.

At the same time, we have also observed many indications of a slow breaking-up of the traditional gender patterns within both work and family life. In a historical perspective, motherhood and fatherhood have approached each other in a larger overlapping of family responsibility, even if gender differences remain. The number of mothers with small children in work life has increased and fathers have reduced the time spent at work and at the same time they have started to clearly manifest their parenthood at work. As a result of this, more employers have also initiated different forms of supportive measures to facilitate their employees' possibilities to combine work and family life. Despite this, the process towards change seems to be slow and progress relatively limited. In Swedish research in this field, knowledge about the general picture seems, however, greater than the knowledge about changes and variations. This means that we more often know about the broad patterns in both work and family life, but lack in-depth analyses of the relations between the two. We know, for instance, still extremely little about how different work cultures influence different parents or types of families and how women and men on a deeper level create meaning through the view on themselves as both parents and employees. We also know relatively little about how different work organisations in reality handle the increased visibility of parenthood in work life or how you may develop strategies, which protect both company and employee

needs and interests. In this matter, we may also note that we are in an extreme lack of knowledge about the connection between parenthood, work life and health. Research shows that the “spill over” between the different spheres may have both positive and negative impacts on the parents’ well-being, but the mechanisms behind the balance of this process is relatively unknown. In the same way, we have limited data on the relation between state and family. We still need more knowledge about how the socio-political conditions and support systems are perceived and handled within different families. Which are the strategies parents develop in their everyday life, behind the official distribution figures, when they have to balance work and family life? How does this process evolve over time and in relation to more individually specific life circumstances or how is gender, parenthood and parental leave influenced by other social categories such as class or ethnicity? To research, it is thus an important task to examine this area closely. However, considering the low birth-rate, the increasing number of sick-leaves, the lacking equality and the increased industrial mobility, it is a matter of interest also to the state, families and the market that these issues be brought out for an in-depth analysis.

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Chapter 5 Bulgaria

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5.1 Introduction

In the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, Bulgarian society experienced a profound social transformation changing the very social order. The regime change, which started as a reshuffle at the top in November 1989, spread to all social spheres, leading to results unexpected by its initiators. The political and economic liberalization intermingled with significant reformation of social policy. The wide-scale reforms could not but affect individuals' and families' social practices and cultural norms in the workplace and at home.

One of the most prominent social costs of the societal transformation in Bulgaria has been the sharp reduction of the population. The growth that has been achieved for 30 years since the 1960s has been totally lost for less than 10 years. For the twelve years of market reforms the country lost one million people as a result of the drop in the fertility rate and outward migration. The peak of the negative population growth was in 1997 when it reached -7 per thousand. Since then the reduction has not been so steep but the rate of natural population growth has remained negative. Bulgaria is among the former Soviet Block countries where the thawing of the population has been the most pronounced in the 1990s (UNICEF 1998).

The ageing of the population is the other trend, which Bulgaria shares with the post-communist countries, as well as with most Europe as a whole. In the country the share of the population below employment age is declining while that of the population in retirement age is growing. The ageing of the population is largely due to a decrease of the population in the youngest ages (NSI, 2000b: 193). The growth in the share of the third generation would have been more pronounced less for the increase in death rate in this group and the decline in life expectancy. At present the share of the population aged 0-14 is already smaller than the share of those aged 65 and over. The average age of the population is rising – from 37.5 in 1990 to 39.6 years in 1999. The ageing of the population is unevenly distributed in the country's territory. Over a third of the rural population is beyond retirement age.

A major factor for the above trend is the declining birth rate in Bulgaria. The average number of live-born children per woman has dropped from 1.81 in 1990 and 1.09 in 1997. In 1997 the number of babies born was the lowest in the written demographic history of the country, as well as the lowest in Europe for the same year (NSI, 2000a: 11). It can be attributed to the postponement of marriage and especially of the birth of the first child. Unlike most European countries, mother's average age for giving birth is quite low in Bulgaria. It was 32 in the beginning of the twentieth century and remained high till 1920. Since then it started to decline and in the 70s it stabilised around 24.4. At present mother's age at first birth is about 24 – a significantly low figure in comparison even with other Balkan countries such as Greece and Turkey where it is over 27. This early age of giving birth for the first time is matched with a

short fertile period – 35 is the upper age limit up to which in practice Bulgarian women have all their children (Keremidchieva, 1998:46).

To understand the multiplicity of family forms and household strategies in Bulgaria it is necessary to consider the dropping rates of marriage and divorce. The number of marriages in the country has been constantly declining in the 1990s due to the postponement of the event in time, the increase in the average age for first marriage and the growth in cohabitation. In 2000 the marriage rate (per thousand) in the age group 16-24 was 19 for men and 37.8 for women, which is a steep reduction from the 1989 rates, which were 64.5 for men and 91.7 for women (NSI, 2002). There is a growth in the share of unmarried persons in their thirties among the population. The trend in the divorce rate is the only demographic process, which does not register changes in a negative direction. The coefficient even dropped from 1.3 per thousand of the population in 1990 to 1.13 in 1997. This is a manifestation of the tendency to strengthen the family in the difficult economic situation and a reflection of the rising price of divorce cases in court.

In this way Bulgaria is among the European countries with the lowest birth rate, the highest death rate and the lowest natural population increase. Demographic changes have closely intermingled with the radical restructuring of employment patterns in the country.

The transition period in Bulgaria has been a period of decrease in the number of the economically active population. In 2000 the coefficient of economic activity was 47.5% and was higher for men (52.4%) and lower for women (42.4%). This is a drop from a rate of over 70% for both genders and is due not only to demographic processes such as ageing or the worsening health status of the population, but most importantly to the drop in economic output. A strong indicator for the strenuous situation in the labour market in 2000 is the rise of 'discouraged workers' - with 30% from the previous year.

The decline in the share of economically active persons among the population as a whole is linked to but does not follow strictly the reduction in economic output in Bulgaria in the 1990s. The index of employment has been constantly declining despite the fluctuation of the index of the gross domestic product. Comparative data about the economies of the countries in transition show that they follow different dynamics patterns in their economic development. In the second half of the 1990s Bulgaria and Romania have had the greatest decline in GDP, the Czech Republic slowed down its growth in the same period and registered a drop while Hungary demonstrated steady growth. Poland reached the level of the starting year of the transition in 1993, Slovenia in 1996. Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have also done so by 2000. In GDP per capita Bulgaria is on the lowest position among Central and East European countries – its value constitutes 57% of that in the candidate countries and 23% of the that in the EC countries (NSI, 2000b: 96).

The reduction of employment in Bulgaria in the 1990s has been linked to the inflexibility of the labour market. One reason for the low employment rate in Bulgaria is the slow development of the private sector and its dominant pattern – the small businesses. In 1998 in the private sector almost a half (47%) of the firms did not have employees. Companies with more than 50 employees constituted only 4.7% of all registered ones (NSI, 2000b: 91). Nevertheless, the

share of employment in the private sector is constantly rising in the years of reforms. While in 1990 it was only 5.9%, it surpassed the 50% barrier in 1997, and in 2000 it was 70%. This trend was fed by the processes of privatisation of state enterprises and creation of new small and medium size businesses, particularly in the sphere of services. Another trend, which gave impetus to the growth of employment in the private sector, is the liquidation of the state controlled agricultural co-operatives. By the end of 1999 96.4% of the land had restored its private ownership (NSI, 2000b: 152).

Cuts in employment have affected all socio-economic groups in the country but in varying degrees. The reduction in women's employment was more radical in the first years of reform, in the second half of the 1990s it slowed down but is still higher than men's. At present age seems to make a bigger difference. The decline in employment is much stronger in the younger age groups while in the older groups (over 55) there is even some growth, which is particularly high in the group over 65. The employment growth in the age group 55-64 is closely linked to the rise in the upper age limit for retirement and is due mostly to self-employment. Activity rates have declined in all groups according to educational level but the hardest hit are those without qualifications. The international comparison shows that in Bulgaria a high share of the labour force is with low educational level – close to a third have completed primary or lower secondary education. Yet, the country has a very high share of the workforce with university degrees – 15%, which is lower only to Hungary and the Netherlands (NSI, 2000b: 167).

This brief outline of the main demographic and labour market trends shows that there has been a profound transformation in the practices of family formation and employment patterns in Bulgaria and particularly in strategies for their reconciliation, which await adequate social research.

5.2 Short overview of main research topics in Bulgaria

Combining employment and family life is not perceived as a social problem in post-communist Bulgaria and has not been a major focus of empirical studies. Other issues are seen as more 'significant' public concerns: privatisation of major state companies, liberalisation of economy's regulation mechanisms, democratisation of political life and institutions. A common time frame for both media and social research is the period starting with the regime change in 1989 and ending with the country's expected accession to the European Union in 2007. The first date opened the ground for reforms toward liberalisation of the political, economic and social life while the latter is viewed as an official recognition of the success of those reforms. With the approaching of the second date the debate about the European integration is overarching other issues which are gaining public attention only in their relation to the accession and the EU preconditions for this. In the accession rhetoric, the dominant question posed is 'when' Bulgaria will join the union rather than 'what next' (Kovacheva, 2002a). It is felt that Bulgaria lags far behind the more successful transition stories such as Slovenia or the Czech Republic.

In the social sciences the overarching debate is the societal transition, its social consequences and whether it has already ended or not (Baytchinska, 1998; Mitev, 1998;

Tilkidziev and Donchev, 2002). This was the main focus of the debate at the last Congress of the Bulgarian Sociological Association held in Sofia on 19 April 2003. Other major themes of recent conferences and published books are the middle class formation in the country (Tilkidziev, 2002), the new entrepreneurship (Manolov, 1998), the informal economy (Chavdarova, 2001), and poverty (Raychev et al, 2000). Labour market research focuses on the changing status of employment, particularly in the new private sector (Beleva et al, 1997; Nikolova, 1997) and on mass unemployment (Lekov, 2000; Vladimirov et al, 1999). The problems of youth, family formation, and parenthood are not present in the transition discourse and are rarely made research targets (See for exceptions Mitev, 1996 and 2003; Belcheva, 2002; Kovacheva, 1999).

In social policy debates the leading concern has been the changes in the Labour Code toward a greater liberalisation. While employers' organisations demand less state regulation and more freedom to hire and fire employees, the trade unions insist on preserving employment in the big companies that are being privatised, and more legal protection of employment. However, their claims are directed toward the security for adult workers mainly, while expressing much less care for the young, their career prospects or training opportunities. The government tries to mediate in-between, being preoccupied with reduction of unemployment and poverty and these concerns, together with the reform in the health system, consume the lion's share of the social budget. The parliamentary and media discussion of the new Family Code to be adopted in the autumn of 2003 focuses on the legal regulation of child adoption in view of the public concerns of 'exporting' Bulgarian children to foreigners but not on family friendly policies.

Social policy research more often explores households' survival strategies involving home production and additional jobs than highlighting their efforts to find optimal combinations of paid work and family life (Vojnova, 1998; Dobрева, 1997; Daskalova et al, 1996; Baytchinska, 1998). Women's poverty (Georgieva, 1998; Dobрева, 1999; Koleva, 1999) and domestic violence (Zlatanova, 2001; Zografova, 2001) are popular themes for researchers and civic sector activists. The focus of state policy on reducing unemployment, rather than raising activity rates, matched with a state withdrawal from active interference in family relations both for ideological and financial reasons act to form an unfavourable context for solving the mounting problems at the work-family boundary.

The available literature in the country concerning the reconciliation of paid work and child rearing is, as a whole, very scant. Even less attention has been given to the problems of individual or organisational well-being and quality of life. By rule, sources are to be located in the specialized journals. The predominant approaches are statistical analyses of official data; research publications based on qualitative methods are a rarity. Representative nation-wide empirical surveys on the topic after the end of the 1980s are difficult to find. The dynamics of the social change in the transition towards a civil society and market-oriented economy together with the chronic shortages of research funding are the main reasons for this state of conditions in the last twelve years.

5.3 Literature review per theme

5.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

5.3.1.1. Main theoretical perspectives

Youth studies have been a burgeoning interdisciplinary research field in Bulgaria in the 1970s and 1980s but it experienced a significant decline with the closure of the Youth Research Institute in 1992 and the outflow of researchers into the newly founded marketing and opinion polling agencies. For the first years of regime change youth was considered a communist concept (See for an overview Kovacheva, 2001) that contradicted the new official discourse of political and economic liberalisation. In the late 1990s youth research found new grounds, developing thematic, methodological and institutional pluralism. The dominant themes that attracted research interest were youth unemployment (Lukanova, 1995; Kovacheva, 1999; Sredkova et al, 2000), emigration (Mitev, 1998; Kovacheva, 2000) and the interplay of ethnic, national and European identity (Mitev, 1998; Topalova, 2000; Kovacheva, 2002a). While the new opportunities and risks in young people's integration into the world of work are relatively well documented (Stoilova, 2001; Manolov, 2000; Mitev, 1996), much less attention is paid to family and housing transitions.

Aspects that have been targets for observation and analysis during this period concerning the theme of parenthood are:

- Young people's sexual behaviour and attitudes;
- Readiness for marriage and family formation;
- Preparation of the young for the social role of parent;

A major concern in publications on parenthood is the difference between the 'ideal' and 'realistic' number of children young people intend to have (Mitev, 2003; Belcheva, 2002; Filipov, 1999). There is a general neglect of the question how they plan to take care of their children and how they will reconcile this with paid work.

In the new Law on Physical Education and Sports adopted in 2002, youth was defined as those aged up to 35, thus recognising the prolongation of the youth phase. In all other legal provisions regulating youth policies in the field of health, education, employment, and crime protection, there is a flux of understandings and definitions of the lower and upper limits of youth. There is a remarkable lack of a life course perspective, both in policies and research and little recognition of the different problems of adolescents and young adults.

5.3.1.2 Main methodology

Young people's attitudes to family and parenthood in Bulgaria have been studied predominantly by the National Statistical Institute. The analysis is based on the regular household surveys with a sample of twenty thousand households. Other sources of information on this topic are thematic national representative surveys as for example the 2001 survey on fertility and reproductive behaviour (Belcheva, 2002).

At the end of 2002, Youth Studies Foundation conducted a survey commissioned by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers, with the aim to develop a state strategy for a national youth

policy. The research report (Mitev, 2003) presents the most recent data and analysis of the social situation of young people in Bulgaria. The study highlights the change in the attitudes of the new generation towards education and professional success, market economy, party politics, European integration, leisure, ethnic and generational relationships. There is a paragraph focusing on attitudes to sex and the model family. The methodology of the research comprises of a representative survey with a thousand-case sample of the whole population, matched with standardised interviews with 400 young people in each of the three basic ethnic groups in Bulgarian society.

As a result of the predominant methodological perspective, the bulk of the information comes from attitudinal surveys, which do not provide insights into the processes of planning, negotiations and actual experiences of young people from parenthood. Qualitative studies using in-depth interviews, focus groups and life history have also been applied in youth studies in Bulgaria in the 1990s but on other topics.

5.3.1.3 Main empirical findings

In the 1980s and the most of the 1990s, Bulgaria was a unique country in Europe for its low marriage age. Filipov (1997) attributes this to the strong influence of the political system in Eastern Europe and particularly in Bulgaria. The totalitarian system curbed the diffusion of new modern types of behavior and consequently preserved the traditional ones. Early marriages and negative public attitudes to pre-marital sex, to births out of wedlock and to divorce corresponded well to the authoritarian state-party control in society. We could add that social policy also encouraged early marriages with its generous benefits to young families. These largely patriarchal values and practices were radically shattered with the overthrow of the communist regime in 1989. Considerable changes are still to be expected in the process of family formation because many of the factors specific for the previous system are no longer present.

The attitudinal surveys in the late 1990s reveal that among the young there is a growing tolerance toward cohabitation. The fertility study of the National Statistical Institute in 2001 found out that most Bulgarians were supporters of the traditional legally registered marriage. However, a significant majority of the young did not think that marriage was necessary even if the couple was already having children. Citing the official statistical data that 40% of the children were born to parents without a legal registration of their marriage, Belcheva (2002) inferred that the so-called “new couple” phenomenon, widespread in the West, could now be observed in Bulgaria as well. On the other hand, parenthood was perceived mostly as an important prerequisite for complete personal success and finding a meaning in life. For the young being a parent was closely related to happiness and personal fulfillment (Belcheva, 2002:59).

One of the major changes in the attitudes to parenthood is the new perception of the ideal marriage age – among those aged 15-29 this has definitely shifted toward the 25-29-age bracket. Official statistics confirms that early marriages are still typical for the country – in 1997 the average age of first marriage was 26.7 for men and 23.4 for women, which is quite low in comparison with other European countries. Yet, this represents a rise with almost two years for both sexes from the 1980s. Child rearing is also being postponed and the number of children

reduced. While having two children is still the dominant ideal among young parents, the shares of those wishing to have one or no children are rising. In practice, families have less children than the number they consider ideal.

A significant factor for this re-evaluation of marriage age and child rearing is the changing pattern of young people's social-professional start. The lack of social protection and favorable credit conditions force young people to postpone family formation, which now occurs more often only after getting a secure job and achieved stability in the professional career. During communism, starting paid work in the teenage years was a rare practice. By the middle of the 1990s, half of the teenagers had done paid work and even more so declared that they would work even if they had enough money. In the beginning of the 21st century, already two-thirds of teenagers have some work experience.

Nevertheless, this practice does not give young people financial independence. In the new labour markets in post-communist Bulgaria young people tend to concentrate in low-paid, fixed-term and often precarious jobs (Kovacheva, 1999). Matched with persistent high youth unemployment, this situation endangers their family transitions and affects their value system.

A contradictory mixture of liberal and paternalistic attitudes is measured in the latest youth survey (Mitev, 2003). There is a growing acceptance of sexual relationships before marriage and of cohabitation among all generations, but particularly among the young. At the same time, over a half of the respondents consider that it is natural the man's word to have a greater weight in family decision-making, and almost a half (45%) declare that housework and child rearing is most of all a woman's responsibility. The paternalistic tradition is stronger among the older generation, the Roma and Turkish families, the lower educated and in rural areas (Mitev, 2003:67-68).

Table 1. Attitudes to Gender Roles and Power in the Family*

15-25			26-60	61+
Bulgarians	Turks	Roma	Country sample	Country sample
<i>Housework and childcare are most of all a woman's job.</i>				
35	62	71	45	61
<i>It is natural that man's word weighs more in decision making in the family.</i>				
40	73	81	52	66
<i>In some cases it is justified the man to use violence to restore the order in the family.</i>				
13	26	34	15	18

* Shares per cent of those agreeing to the statements.

Source: Mitev, 2003:67.

Similar research evidence provides Aadnanes (2001) from a survey among Bulgarian students. Attitudes to gender equality remain rather ambiguous not only among those socialised under the previous regime but also among the young generation. While female students expressed modern attitudes aspiring to equality both within the family and society, male students maintained more conservative attitudes in favour of traditional gender roles.

Data show the accumulation of problems and risks in child rearing. One factor feeding this process is the continuing practice of giving birth at a too early age, when the parents themselves are not prepared for child raising and educating. Another, perhaps more important, factor is the material standard of the family. Overwhelmingly parents (80%) declare that their family income is not sufficient to raise children properly; 78% feel that they do not spend enough time playing and talking with their children; 30% feel they deprive their children of enough toys; over 20% - of holidays; 10% - of clothes and 5% - of food (Belcheva, 2002: 60). Over three quarters of the young parents state that their housing conditions are not adequate for the upbringing of their children.

The value crisis in society further worsens the situation. Parents consider that in the radically changed circumstance they cannot be role models for their children and often feel at a loss how to take care and educate them. Additional burden for parenthood comes from the tense family relationships. The 2001 survey measured that about 20% of the parents are dissatisfied (somewhat or very much) with their marriage and 60% declare that their children witness quarrels between parents often or regularly.

The 2001 survey does not provide information about child rearing practices. There is only 1994 data about the desired model of child rearing by young parents. Parental preferences follow both social policy provisions and newly introduced market practices.

Table 2. Parental Preferences for Child Rearing

	Children 1-3	Children 4-6
At home by a family member	86.4	24.6
At home by a private baby sitter	2.6	6.7
At a private kindergarten	3.2	24.1
At a public kindergarten	7.9	47.8

Source: Belcheva, 1994: 57.

For the youngest age group – children from 1 to 3 – the best model is a parent staying at home, while the public kindergarten is most popular for the next group aged 4 to 6. The preferences for this group are quite varied. Private care outside the home has become as popular than the care at home by a parent on leave. These data concern only people's preferences, not their practices. Besides, we do not know how these have changed ten years later.

5.3.1.4 Gaps in research

The attitudinal surveys do not provide a full picture of the reproductive behavior of young people and the underpinning values. There is more information about their readiness (or rather the lack of it) to become parents rather than about the actual experiences of being parents. Particularly under-researched is the process of planning to have a child and the expectations of how this will affect young people's employment careers. There is little knowledge on how mothers make decisions on having children and practically no studies or policy discussions on the role of fathers. While legislation since the 1980s has allowed men to take the paid childcare leave from the fourth month to the end of the second year of the child on an equal basis as the mother we lack official statistics or interview data on who and how

really uses this leave. There is no information about the actual age of leaving home and the sequence of housing and family transitions of young people.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

5.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

During communism the sociology of the family did not develop as a legitimate research field largely due to the fact that the communist regime's family policy was also a neglected area. For the first two decades of the one-party rule it was expected that the state rather than the family would be the main socialising agency (Kovacheva 2002b). The growing concerns with the declining birth rate in the late 1960 gave grounds for the adoption of the first policy measures and most importantly, the Government Decree on Fertility (1968). Later, the legislation was developed to provide one of the most generous policies of maternity leaves, securing the mother's job during a three-year absence. The transition to a market economy, which started in 1989, once again changed the strategy of the country's family policy, resulting in an almost total neglect to the family and its role in child rearing. Indicative for this total lack of attention on the part of the state and the wider public is the fact that the 1968 decree is still the main regulator in the field. In contrast, the changes in the labour market regulation (employment and unemployment) in the 1990s have included two new laws (in 1997 and in 2002), and more than ten government decrees introducing significant alterations.

In the current transition period there have been demographic surveys (Zhekova, 2002; Mirchev, 1998); ethnographic and historical studies of marriage and the family in Bulgaria (Makaveeva, 1991) and sociological analyses (Spasovska 2000; Yachkova, 2002). Stoilova (2001) and Kovacheva (2002b) have addressed the problem of the division of housework and childcare arrangements among household members. These studies have been mostly descriptive rather than based on or developing their own particular theory.

The family has been the target of many policy analyses in the 1990s (Stoyanova, 1996; Stoyanova et al, 1997; Keremidchieva, 1998). However, publications using this perspective focus more on the regulations for the provision of benefits and services for the poor families, than on the reconciliation of work and childcare by working parents. Occasionally, the issues of balancing work and family find their way in publications, particularly in the field of social policy (Kirova, 1997; Popova, 2002). They include extensive overviews of Western models of family policies and European Union regulations and highlight many of the deficiencies of the state family policy in Bulgaria.

More interesting empirical studies have been done on the life and parenting strategies of particular groups among parents: very young mothers (Chalakova, 1996); single mothers (Boyanova, 2001), women employed in private companies (Nikolova, 1997) women entrepreneurs (Stoilova, 2000) and managers in the state sector (Kotzeva and Todorova, 1994). While there are some studies on rural communities (Tilkidziev et al, 2000; Dobрева, 1999; Koleva, 1999; Draganova, 2002), they do not address the question of parenthood and child rearing in this specific social context. Rather they focus on the inequalities in educational

level, employment, and political participation from the perspectives of theories on social stratification.

5.3.2.2 *Main methodology*

Family studies in Bulgaria use a wide range of methods. The dominant approach is quantitative surveys and analysis of official statistical data. These methods allow quite high comparability among social groups and different points in time but remain limited to economic indicators and very rarely examine the link between economic behaviour and cultural values.

The publications on women in management, self-employment and rural communities are usually based on more innovative and often qualitative approaches – case-studies of communities, in-depth interviews and focus groups. However, the methodology for analysis of such qualitative material is still under-developed and it is used mostly as illustration to statistical data rather than as an in-depth analysis of personal and family strategies.

Policy studies remain highly theoretical and rarely use research information. Their analysis of policy documents is mostly descriptive and when it is backed with data, it usually comes from official statistics. Thus the only publications which address the problem of reconciliation of 'the labour and family functions of women' are either purely theoretical (Popova, 2002) or based mostly on official data about Bulgarian women' employment and unemployment, provided by the National Statistical Institute and the National Labour Agency (Kirova, 1998).

5.3.2.3 *Main empirical findings*

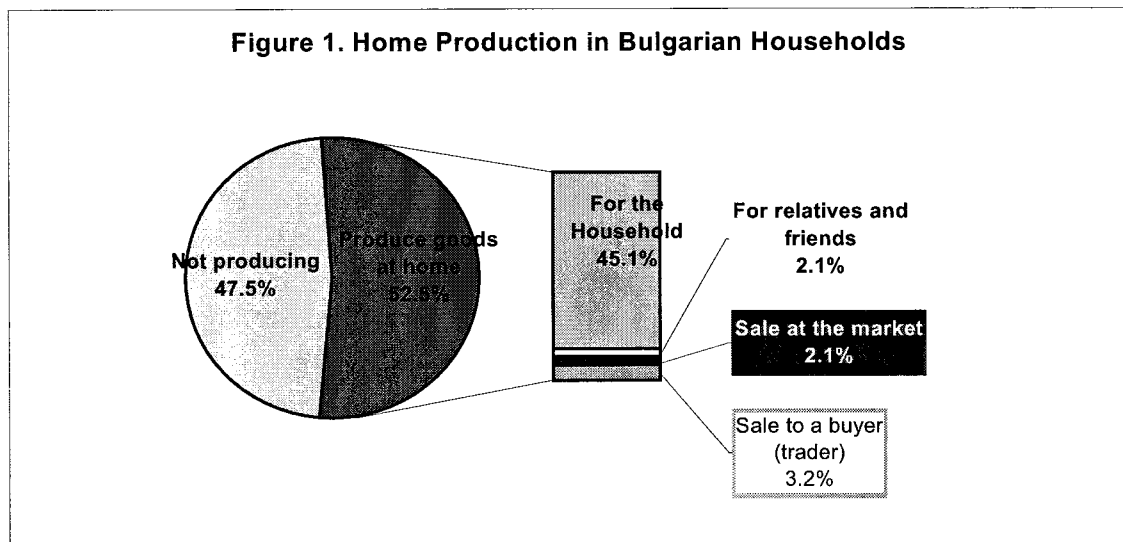
There have been significant changes in the reproductive behavior of women in Bulgaria. The decline in fertility that has been registered for the most of the 20th century has been particularly sharp in the 1990s, after the start of reforms in the country, to reach one of the lowest values in Europe. Economic constraints play a major role for the reduction of the number of children that a family has (Zhekova 2002). Belcheva (1994) points at an additional factor - the shortage of leisure time, which severely obstructs parents in the raising, and bringing up of their children. The deficit of leisure time is again a result mainly of the shortage of financial resources, which is compensated with longer working hours.

Many studies have revealed strong gender inequalities in paid work (Stoilova, 2001; Zlatanova, 2000; Kotzeva and Todorova, 1994). It is measured in the lower employment rate among women that that among men, in the type of employment men and women hold (women are twice less among the employers, and significantly less among the self-employed, while they are twice more among the unpaid family workers. Women's businesses are much smaller than those of men and when employed their salaries are about 70% of men's salaries (Zlatanova, 2000: 91).

Kirova (1998) estimates that in 1995 women in Bulgaria did unpaid housework for 31 hours per week while men did only 15. While the ratio of 2 to 1 for the female and male unpaid hours is similar to that in other European or advanced countries in the world, what is specific for Bulgaria is that women do very similar hours of paid work to that of men – 37 to 39. We can conclude that Bulgarian women do two full shifts of work.

The economic liberalisation and restructuring toward a greater share of services in the economy did not bring significant changes in this practice. Kovacheva (2002b) argues on the basis of the ‘Households, Work and Flexibility’ survey carried out in 2001 in Bulgaria and 7 other European countries that women in Bulgaria continue to work predominantly full-time despite their preferences for less hours of paid work. In the same way, they still carry the main responsibility for most of the household tasks including caring for young children and sick relatives.

What is specific for Bulgaria, unlike the situation in advanced market economies, is that not only services on the market are underdeveloped but that a lot of food is produced by the household for its own consumption, thus playing an important part in household economy. Home production is a specific form of integration of home and work in Bulgarian context. The HWF survey revealed the mass scope of home production, even among households living in urban areas. Over a half of the households (52.5%) in Bulgaria were engaged in some pattern of informal agricultural production



Source: Kovacheva, 2002b: 205.

The agricultural land possessed by Bulgarian households who took part in the survey, was usually split into small plots of several Hectares, the average being 5, where the households usually grew vegetables and fruits and up to twenty percent raised livestock for meat and milk. Poultry production was also common – a third of the households used meat and eggs produced at their plot of land. Only 5% of the households produced for the market. For the rest – almost a half of all Bulgarian households – the goal was household consumption. The share of the households producing goods for home consumption declined from 58.5% in the lowest-income households, through 52.9% of the second poorest, 48.8% of the middle-income group, and 47.4% of the second richest group to 33.9% of the highest income group. While home production was a widely spread strategy in Bulgaria, it was more typical for those with less income than for those with the highest incomes.

A common form of home production for Bulgarians is the preservation of fruits and vegetables in bottles or jars for the winter season even by households who do not produce their own material and buy them on the market. This starts in spring and reaches its peak in the autumn. While during socialism the main objective of home preservation was to fill in the shortages of the centrally planned economy, under post-communism this is predominantly a strategy to save money income. Under the previous regime, the jars were not only intended for the household, they also circulated between relatives and friends as a form of support, usually from the rural to the urban relatives and from parents to children. It could be expected this to subside with the development of the market, as well as with the rise in the prices of vegetables and fruits, oil and electricity. However, the survey found that this practice continued under post-communism. Close to 90% of Bulgarian households had home preserved fruits and vegetables at their table. Close to fifty per cent consumed home preserved meat. The incidence of exchange, though, was not very high. While we cannot compare the incidence and the proportion of market and home production of fruits and vegetables, the involvement of household members in self-production of food seems to be a common strategy for Bulgarian households in 2001. The high spread and importance of subsistence production in Bulgaria is not equally divided among household members and is perceived as mostly a woman's task.

In congruence with this conclusion, Stoilova (2001) measures highly unequal gender division of household tasks – out of seven regular activities, six are done mainly by the woman (See Table 3). Data about childcare shows two types of family strategies – one traditional where the woman bears the main responsibility and one modern where both parents are involved. The care for the elderly is somewhat more equally divided among the spouses but still in a third of the households this is mostly a female task. The table also suggests that comparing the older and the younger generations, the older ones adhere more strongly to the traditional division of gender roles.

Table 3. Division of Unpaid Work among Household Members (%)

Activities	Done by	In your own family	In your parents' family
Shopping	Mainly the woman	54.9	64.5
	Mainly the man	10.4	10.1
	Both	32.7	24.4
	Someone else	1.9	1.0
Washing	Mainly the woman	93.1	96.3
	Mainly the man	1.4	0.7
	Both	4.6	2.7
	Someone else	0.9	0.4
Cleaning	Mainly the woman	79.1	90.1
	Mainly the man	1.7	0.8
	Both	18.1	8.6
	Someone else	1.1	0.5
Cooking	Mainly the woman	82.3	89.1
	Mainly the man	2.9	1.6
	Both	13.3	8.4
	Someone else	1.5	0.9
Repairs	Mainly the woman	8.6	8.2
	Mainly the man	57.1	61.2
	Both	26.4	24.5
	Someone else	7.9	6.1
Childcare	Mainly the woman	39.0	49.5
	Mainly the man	1.5	1.2
	Both	58.1	48.4
	Someone else	1.3	0.8
Elderly Care	Mainly the woman	29.7	39.7
	Mainly the man	2.5	1.5
	Both	63.0	57.0
	Someone else	4.4	2.0

Source: Stoilova, 2002: 125.

Kirova (1997) recognises the fact that there is no sufficient statistical information to measure women's contribution to family budget by her unpaid labour in the home and family production. She estimates that the share of women's unpaid labour in the GDP in 1995 was 32%. She argues that the growth of unpaid work is a result of the mass impoverishment during the transition period. Stoyanova (1996) provides statistical evidence for the high incidence of poverty among families with children in Bulgaria. The greater the number of children in the family, the greater the risk of falling below the poverty line. There is little social protection for families with dependent children. Besides economic consequences, the lack of state support for the reconciliation of paid work and child rearing, as well as of company family friendly policies lead to stress and frustration among working mothers. Similar are the conclusions of Kirova (1997) who provides a long list of negative consequences from the overburden of Bulgarian women with paid and unpaid work. She argues in favour of the

restructuring of women's employment among business branches, household education in lower secondary school, better conditions for women's training and retraining, part-time work and home working.

5.3.2.4 *Gaps in research*

Despite the growing attention to women's employment and unpaid work in the household, there is little information about family time budget and the place of child rearing among other tasks. The question of how young parents negotiate work/family boundaries in Bulgaria has not been sufficiently discussed. Quantitative data do not provide understanding of the processes of negotiation within the family, nor indeed on the level of the company or society as a whole. There is a total lack of reliable data – official statistics or survey – about trade union membership and the role of trade unions in establishing family friendly policies.

While surveys reveal that paid services for child care are used by a minute share of Bulgarian households while public care is still the most widely used, we know little about the values of men and women on child rearing and the preferred options. Very few studies consider the importance of social networks in balancing work and care. There is no research evidence as to the involvement of the older (third) generation into childcare although it is publicly discussed to be very significant.

5.3.3 **Theme 3: Workplaces and organizational change**

5.3.3.1 *Main theoretical perspectives*

Organizational practices in the country have also undergone radical changes with the transition from a centrally planned economy to a liberally oriented market economy. They have experienced diverging and often conflicting influences from the processes of privatization of state owned companies and the creation of new ones, the sharp reduction of economic output and persistent mass unemployment, frequent legislative amendments, loss of Soviet markets and opening up for global competition. Under the conditions of high insecurity the strategies of both state and privatised companies are dominated by the need to reduce their staff rather than to recruit new employees, while employees try to stick to their jobs in view of the growing insecurity. The newly established companies, often joint ventures with foreign ones, do not find difficulties in recruiting low qualified and low paid staff in view of the mass unemployment while the better salaries and promotion opportunities are strong incentives for recruitment of highly qualified personnel.

Many publications have addressed the problems of social organisations, organisational change and patterns of managing the change. However, most of them are theoretical and interpret Western concepts and sometimes Western research models (Donchev, 2002, Khodza, 1998; Kirov, 1998; Geraskova, 1999; Khadziev, 2000). Social research in Bulgaria has problematised and studied the following organisational changes in the transition period:

- the new form of self-employment and entrepreneurship,
- the process of privatisation of state companies
- flexibilisation of work.

Self-employment has been studied from the perspectives of economics and sociology. Self-employment is a new, non-standard form of labour in Bulgarian economy. During the previous regime less than one per cent of the work force were involved in activities not associated with the two dominant forms of property - state and co-operative. The large-scale national survey 'The Town and the Village' estimated that 0.61% of the economically active population were self-employed and a further 0.34% belonged to the category 'others', including free-lancers and missing data (Michailov, 1986). By mid 1990s the self-employed and private employers have overpassed 10% (NSI, 2000a).

Bulgarian sociologists have widely accepted Shumpeter's definition of the entrepreneur, underlying flexibility, innovation, new combinations of organisational elements, a creative response to market dynamics (Todorova et al, 1997; Manolov, 2000; Rakadzijska, 1998a). Stoilova (1999) sees the specificity of self-employment in the lack of outside regulation, a greater degree of autonomy in the work, and direct economic dependence upon the results. She argues that in this field there is a process of formation of a personality type with greater flexibility, adaptability and mobility. The flexible personality type includes a sense for the empty market niches, inclination to risk and readiness to adapt your economic activity to the changing requirements of the clients. Monolov (2000:144) argues that flexibility and security are the main aspects of the new entrepreneurship ethos, which allow Bulgarian businessmen to survive in the market competition with a very low degree of predictability.

A comparative study of self-employed youth in four East Central European countries, including Bulgaria, focused on the family and educational background of the self-employed, their previous work experiences and current economic behaviour (Roberst et al, 2000). Most of the papers presented by Bulgarian authors at the international conference on the middle class, held in Sofia in 1998 and subsequently published in a volume (See Tilkidziev, 1998), discussed the new role of the entrepreneur in theoretical terms in the concern to judge whether middle class as a category or rather ideology was relevant in Bulgaria. There was very little empirical consideration about the conditions of their work. Not so preoccupied with the theoretical classifications were the presentations at the national conference 'Social Sciences and the Social Change in Bulgaria', held two years earlier (See Baytchinska, 1998). Here Pavlova (1998) presented results from a study of the types of economic organisation based on different forms of contracts, following Williamson (1991). From this perspective, the hybrid organisation was between the market type and the hierarchical type and was typical for societies in transition. According to the author, these organisational forms were more flexible, informal, open for entrepreneurship and demonstrated better adaptive capabilities. Characteristics of the hybrids in Bulgaria were their mixed type form of ownership, limited autonomy, and semi-legal regime of functioning. In Bulgaria they were born by the liberated enterprising spirit and the unstable institutional milieu.

The large-scale privatisation of Bulgarian economy is the other major change that has attracted much research attention in Bulgaria. Analysis of the phenomenon is done from economic, legal, political and sociological perspectives. The major focus is on the norms and mechanisms, providing a 'fear' transition of the state property into private ownership, on the rights of new owners and former managers and employees, on economic effectiveness and political consequences. A major focus of the discussions is on the 'nomenclature privatisation'

or the so-called transformation of the political capital of the former communist elite (nomenclature) into economic capital (Minev, 1996, Kostova, 1998, Genov, 1997; Rakadzijaska, 1998a). Privatisation turned into a myth through which the new political elites were trying to gain legitimacy (Najdenov, 1997).

Very few projects have studied the organisational change in the privatised companies. There are no longitudinal studies to show what has changed in their human resource management. At present the dominant strategy seems to be the reliance on personal business contacts and very few private companies have used the services of legal and accounting consultants (Rakadzijaska, 1998b:77)

Organisational psychology has also tackled the issue of privatisation and organisational change. Ilieva (1995) studied the occupational differences in determinants of organisational commitment and job involvement in three types of organisations: university, school and factory. She followed the model of Angle and Perry (1983) underlying the influence of work characteristics such as work content, organisational policy, relationship with supervisors, work overload, and relationship with co-workers. The group that was influenced most strongly by the policy of the organisation were the scientists at the university – their commitment depended most strongly on factors such as pay equity, promotional opportunity, fringe benefits, working conditions, job security, convenient work hours.

Zinovieva et al (1995) studied human resource management in ten Bulgarian companies. They distinguished between three types of management: a policy focused on human relations, a policy dominated by business relations (oriented towards achievement of company's goals) and the third – a nomenclature style policy (oriented towards the group of power holders in the company). The third pattern was dominant in all ten companies. It was directed toward the protection of the group interests of the managers, there were high inconsistencies in decisions about assessment and remuneration, and application of double standards. Under such circumstances the leading motivation of the personnel was security and preservation of status quo, followed by financial awards.

Bodurova (1999) applied the concept of 'organisational profile' in a survey in 500 companies from different economic sectors. She found that the typical reactions to change are a desire to know more about its course, a disposition to avoid conflicts of all kinds, and unwillingness to take up responsibilities. From an organisational perspective the greatest problems were the inadequacy of communications, too great a distance between higher management and lower levels, and an inflexible organisational structure.

Flexibilisation of employment as a form of organisational change is becoming an increasingly popular issue in Bulgaria. The flexible work was the theme of a recent national conference held at the University of Plovdiv on July 4, 2003, which focused on aspects typical for Bulgarian businesses: extra work, flexibility of dismissal and recruitment of employees, and work without a contract. Most papers addressed policy solutions in the advanced Western economies comparing them with the gaps in Bulgarian legislation but little presented research findings about the current state of flexibility in Bulgarian economy.

Previous publications have recommended flexible work as a desired policy model for Bulgaria: a way for encouraging employment and lowering unemployment (Problems of Labour, 1996,1997). These are based on data from Western Europe, most often the Dutch Polder model. Atanasova (1998) describes the flexible company as a model for Bulgaria's new businesses, following the concept of Atkinson and Meager, (1986) while Todorova et al (1997), Genova (1998) and Shopov et al (1999) recommend flexibility as a new form of human resources management. These publications are mostly theoretical, based on Western literature and providing no data on Bulgarian conditions.

Other empirically based publications have highlighted various aspects of flexibility in terms of work conditions, place and time variations, and adaptability of household strategies. 'Under-employment' (Dimitrova, 1995), 'inferior employment' (Varbanova, 1997), 'part-time work' (Lukanova, 1998), 'temporary work and insecure jobs' (Vladimirov et al, 1998) 'informal work regulations' (Chavdarova, 2001), 'atypical employment' (Beleva et al, 1997), 'additional work' (Lekov, 2000) are all concepts used to study and explain the new processes comprising the growth of flexible labour under post-communism. Flexibility in terms of working time, place and legal conditions have been the object of a large comparative study where Bulgaria was one of the 8 partner countries (Kovacheva, 2002b, Pancheva and Kovacheva, 2002). This diversity of terms in Bulgarian literature is not only a lack of theoretical precision. It reflects the different meanings and political judgements of the authors in the same way as Felstead and Jewson (1999) have discovered in their survey of the debate in Western and (Far) Eastern literature. To now social sciences in Bulgaria have been concerned more with the policy implications of flexible labour, giving them either optimistic or pessimistic interpretations rather than with data collection, trend analysis, scrutiny of everyday practices, legal regulations, individual and group identities.

5.3.3.2 Main methodology

As these are new topics for Bulgarian social sciences, many publications remain theoretical and interpret Western concepts explaining organisational change. The varied perspectives in the empirical studies of the workplace have given birth to a wide diversity of research methodologies. Among them the most common are the quantitative surveys. Many authors use official business statistics, unemployment statistics and crime statistics. Bulgarian psychologists most often employ attitudinal surveys with Likert scales in self-completed questionnaires with usually small samples. Face-to-face interviews with national representative samples of the whole population or particular groups such as the self-employed, managers, and employees are more typical for the sociological perspective in Bulgaria. A few studies make use of biographic interviews but again the methods for analysis of the qualitative material are rather limited and the latter is used mostly for quotations.

Instead of being designed in an 'either – or' manner, the study of the young self-employed (Roberst et al, 2000) combined qualitative with quantitative methods. The sample was based on two contrasting labour markets in each country, one relatively buoyant and the other relatively depressed (Roberts et al, 2000) The self employed were chosen by quota, from business registers, so that the main business sectors were represented adequately. The methods for data collection included semi-structured interviews, site visits and interviews with key personnel in state and NGOs providing support to the young self-employed. In this way

the single data set from all countries was enriched by qualitative biographical information exploring proprietors' experiences, reflections and hopes for the future.

5.3.3.3 *Main empirical findings*

Individual entrepreneurship and privatisation of state companies have created a new social group in Bulgarian society defined as the 'new middle class' in Eastern European context while in the West it is perceived as the 'old middle class' (Koleva 2002). Manolov (2000) argues that a risky behaviour and flexibility are the typical features of the entrepreneur under post-communism. In his study of entrepreneurs in Bulgaria he found that the leading type of motivation in all subgroups was economic, that is financial rewards, followed by the strife for professional development and the desire to get power, etc. His respondents employed three types of strategies to develop their business: high quality of goods, accessible prices, and good organisation of work in the firm. Manolov links flexibility mainly with price alterations and does not analyse the organisation of the company, nor the types of human resource management used by the employers.

Chavdarova (2001) revealed a high degree of flexibility in the entrepreneurs' activities. A common practice among the self-employed was to register their firms with a very broad scope of activity, which was subsequently limited. The owners frequently changed their main activity or added activities for the time being to react to the economic situation. Often the company was engaged in one type of activity in the informal economy while officially the owner was reporting quite another. All this was possible by the practice of double entry.

In her study of entrepreneurs in Bulgaria, Rakadzijska (1998a) addressed the problem of workplace cultures. She maintains that when corporate culture is discussed, the owners perceive it as a loyalty to the company of the close inner circle of high level management. The personnel as a whole is not seen as a problem, and most businessmen do not see it necessary to make them supportive to the business goals. The high remuneration in itself is considered enough compensation for the lack of conditions for training, improving working conditions or social-psychological climate (Rakadzijska, 1998a: 87).

The survey of the National Statistical Institute (NSI, 2002) gives the following portrait of the young entrepreneur in Bulgaria. Most of them had small and medium size companies. The age of 84% of the companies was between 1 and 4 years. The young entrepreneurs did not expect serious changes in the privately owned companies in the near future. For business needs they hardly used the Internet, fax or computer. The majority of young people with a business of their own (81%) did not have the intention to develop it further. Between 40% and 50% of youth considered their financial state satisfactory. Almost a half of the respondents (49%) were married. The predominant pattern was the childless family - 53%, followed by the family with one child.

Kostova (1998) also studied the social group of the entrepreneurs, highlighting their ability to change and adapt to the new situation. She examined the work histories of representatives of the economic elite in state and private companies in Bulgaria and found that they tended to be male (in a ratio of 5 to 1), in the age group of 40-60, with higher education and that 80% of

them currently were or previously had been members of the Bulgarian Communist (now Socialist) Party (p. 191).

The work histories of the young self-employed in the Bulgaria (Roberts et al, 2000) found a much higher readiness to change their field of activities among the self-employed youth than that of the unemployed youth and to start business in fields different from their qualifications received at school. While the successful businessmen were the most likely to have planned to become self-employed when they were still at school, their career plans have often changed. The parallel samples of young unemployed were more likely than the self-employed to have stuck to their initial career plans despite that it was unlikely for them to be soon realised. The greater success in business was related among other indicators to flexibility as foresight and planning (Roberts et al, 1999). This study established that self-employment was associated with longer working hours - three fourths of the respondents worked over 40 hours a week and more than a third - over 60 hours. The share of those over-working was the highest in Bulgaria in comparison with the self-employed in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The greatest resource was their industriousness matched with workaholism – the most typical form of flexibility of work for this group.

The research into flexible labour and household strategies (Kovacheva, 2002b) outlines the specific features of this globalising trend under the conditions of economic transformation in Bulgaria. Flexibility is great in the unofficial labour market while the official labour market remains highly inflexible with less than 5% of the employees working with a reduced working schedule and even less working from home. Jobs 'on call' basis, for a temporary work agency, subject to performance are very rare, as are the flexible schedules of working only at weekends or with a varying working time. In contrast, almost a third of the employees work fully or partly off the register. Flexibility is greatest among the young generation that are most often employed on a fixed-term contract or without a contract and with a flexible working schedule.

In the recent youth survey (Mitev, 2003) it was established that young people's preferences were definitely in favour of private sector jobs while the older generations tended to prefer employment in the state sector. Over a third of those aged up to 25 had their own business plans. The survey revealed a major change in the attitudes to work – the dominant attitude among young people was the orientation towards a highly paid job over a highly interesting job. Previously young people's attitudes had been more idealistic while those of older generations - more instrumental, now both generations shared the orientation toward the instrumental value attached to work. Young people preferred an easier job with less responsibility to a more difficult job with more responsibilities. Mitev (2003) argues that the typological differences between generations based on the character of labor and its pay have dwindled. The young have become adults in their ways of thinking. Money has transformed their conscience. The 'flower-in-a-pot' infantile attitude has disappeared. Moreover, "to have" seems to be again more important than "to be".

5.3.3.4 Gaps in research

While there are a lot of publications in human resource management in Bulgaria, they are predominantly texts translated from Western (typically American) literature. Managerial

practices are discussed on a theoretical level, and conclusions are rarely based on research findings. There is a lack of empirical studies of the organisational change in Bulgarian companies and how this relates to the management considerations for the work-life balance of the employees. No information is available on the career perspectives of young parents, nor how changing organisational cultures view the prospects for work-life integration.

Both policies and practices of balancing work and parenthood should be researched more deeply, using more qualitative methods such as biographical interviews, focus groups and action research.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

5.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Well-being is neither discussed nor studied in Bulgaria. Quality of life, family happiness and good psychological climate at the work place were topics more often debated during communism in the 1980s mainly for ideological reasons but also in an attempt to raise economic effectiveness when sociologists and psychologists were employed in the big enterprises. Under post-communism survival has become the dominant term, used in relation to household strategies from a sociological perspective (Vojnova, 1998; Dobрева, 1997; Daskalova et al, 1996; Baytchinska, 1998, Rakadzijaska, 1998b). Instead of well-being, discussions from a psychological perspective focus on stress in the workplace (Vendov, 1996; Georgieva et al, 1997; Rusinova, 1998) and 'self-destructing behaviour' (Tomov, 1999), such as drug addictions, alcoholism, suicide, traffic accidents. Psychologists also deal with the negative consequences of unemployment, job insecurity and poverty (Dermendzieva, 1995; Minev, 1995, Rusinova and Vassileva, 1998). Minkov (1997) underlines the need to add qualitative indicators of the quality of life to the economic indicators for a fuller understanding of Bulgaria's development but has not developed the concept, nor has he tried to apply it in empirical research.

Another widely discussed topic is the living standard of the population, which is most often analysed by economists (Stoyanova, 1996). Sociologists study poverty focusing on the shaping of the new social stratification (Tlikidziev, 2000; Raychev et al, 2000; Stoilova, 2001; Mitev, 2002). A related subject of analysis is the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the material situation of the household and people's expectations for the future on an individual, family and country level (Vladimirov et al, 1998; Mitev, 2003). An interesting contribution to the study of individual and family well being comes from the concept of social capital. It has been applied in Bulgaria by the Centre for Liberal Strategies and Sova-5 (UNDP, 2000).

The UNDP has included Bulgaria in the measurement of the Human Development Index since the mid-1990s. The index is formed by the following three indicators: life expectancy at birth, educational level calculated on the basis of the degrees of literacy of the adult population and of the enrollment rates in the first, second and third educational degrees, and the living standard measured by the GDP per capita (PPP\$). Since 2003 the Gender Development Index is also measured in Bulgaria (Metanov and Petrov, 2003), which provides information about gender equality, women's political participation and women's contribution in the country's GDP.

5.3.4.2 *Main methodology*

The dominant methodology is again quantitative surveys in the form of attitudinal scales, self-completed questionnaires and structured face-to-face interviews. Official statistical information, mostly economic indicators are also widely used. Qualitative interviews and life-history approaches have been applied very rarely.

5.3.4.3 *Main empirical findings*

The latest Human Development Report of the United Nations for Bulgaria registered a shift forward in the Index of Human Development. In the global ranking of 175 countries, led by Norway, Island and Sweden, Bulgaria moved from the 62nd place in 2002 forward to 57th place in 2003 (Metanov and Petrov, 2003). This improvement of Bulgaria's record is mostly due to the Women's Development Index. According to it, Bulgaria is on the 51st place on the indicator for gender equality with 26.3% of MPs being women and on the 53rd place on the indicator for women's share in GDP. These indicators place Bulgaria among the countries with average degree of human development.

However, the living standard in the country is still very low. One of the most common findings of all studies on households in Bulgaria is the mass scale of impoverishment. For the first five years of the transition the real income of the average Bulgarian household was reduced by 50% (Stoyanova, 1996: 48). She calculates that the share of households living below the existence-minimum has risen from 24% in 1989 to 47% in 1995 and those living below the social minimum - from 41% to 62%.

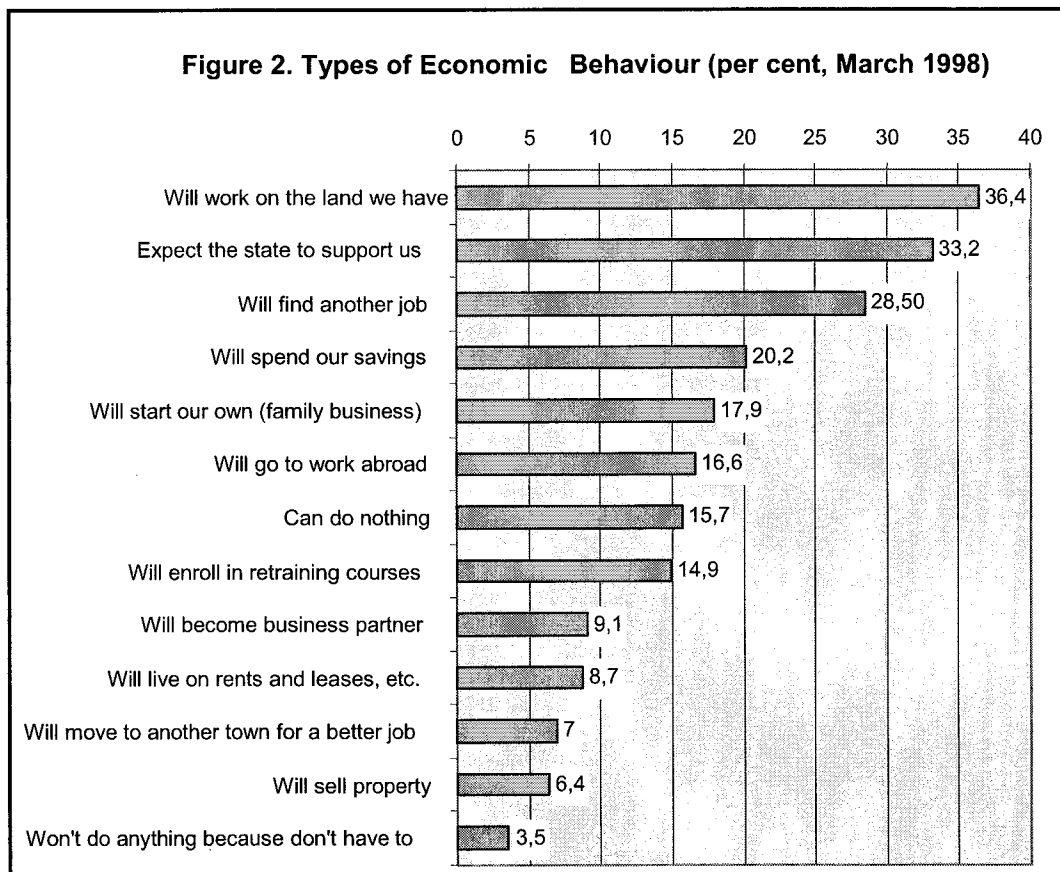
The fall of living standards strongly affects people's self-evaluation. Vladimirov et al (1998) have measured that 78% of the respondents consider that their household is worse off than 10 years ago (before the start of the transition), 16% do not see a significant difference and only 6% declare that they are better off now than before. When they compare themselves with the rest of the population, the majority of the respondents feel that they have moved down the social ladder (Vladimirov et al, 1998: 27). Studies of the economic situation of the households commonly reveal a mass feeling of impoverishment. Rakadzijska (1998: 80) presents data from a study about poverty in 1995: only 3% of Bulgarian households declare their financial situation as very good. Another 32% consider it passable, 41% - very bad and 17% say they can hardly manage to make both ends meet. Rakadzijska argues that for the Bulgarian context the most significant problem is not so much poverty itself as the process of impoverishment, which leads to marginalisation.

Raychev et al (2000) conducted a study on poverty commissioned by the World Bank. They found that two thirds of the population believed that they had belonged to the middle layers of society before 1989. At present only one fourth claims the same. In the country the cultural model of poverty has already been formed with the specific feelings for powerlessness, pessimism, apathy, passivity, hopelessness, and living from day to day.

Yossifov and Naumov (1998) make an attempt to create a typology of the cultural models of poverty in Bulgaria. They distinguish between 'normal', 'ideological', 'fatal', 'pauper', and 'pseudo' poverty. These categories remain rather theoretical and separated from the empirical

data, which the two authors provide in their article. Although they did not reveal the link between 'the models of poverty' and the types of economic behaviour, the data on the latter are interesting in themselves (See Figure 2).

Research conducted by the polling agency ASSA-M has shown that passive strategies dominate among the population in the country. Less than a half of the respondents rely on their labour for improving their situation and are future oriented. Mirchev (1998:212) argues that there is an 'amazing passivity, lack of enterprising spirit, resignation to the threats of poverty, preferring to stretch out a begging hand instead of ensuring incomes through hard work and flexibility'. Studies done from a psychological perspective also find a predominance of the passive against the active attitude (Georgieva et al, 1997:186).



Source: Yossifov and Naumov, 1998.

Atanasov et al (1995) have established a low adaptability of the population in the face of the new social risks: high crime rate, organised crime, unemployment, mass impoverishment, drug abuse. They have found the following groups concentrating risky factors in the course of the transition: the young, the children, the unemployed, and the poor. The dominant strategy is that of survival - passive expectations for the things to improve and the state to restore order and material well being of the population.

A study of Dimitrov (1998) on attitudes toward the system of social security has shown a wide spread distrust toward all forms of health, property and pension security schemes and a manifested inclination to seek greater reliance upon the family, close group of friends and co-

workers. Many surveys have measured the tendency of rise in the importance of the family. In the current curve of Bulgaria's modernisation, (the value of the family far overpasses other social goods. The above study reveals a high degree of economic solidarity among generations. About 70% of the respondents are involved in the intergenerational exchange of money, food, housework and house repairs, child rearing, and care for the elderly. Only 7% have said that there was a total break in the relations between parents and children.

The turn toward a closed family life is a strategy that was common for communist Bulgaria both for political and economic reasons. The family was a non-political niche, a (relatively) free place from state interference and Party mobilisation. Kinship relations helped households and families survive under the conditions of permanent shortages of goods and services. The present retreat into the private family life is accompanied with a decline in social trust and in general, with a reduction of the social capital in society. The Centre for Liberal Strategies and Sova-5 (UNDP, 2000:69) measured a very low level of social capital in the country. Commonly Bulgarians were not inclined toward trust and co-operation, or toward long-term strategic thinking. The study showed that a high concentration of social capital in a given segment of society did not always lead to the development of the wider community. Examples for such negative concentration were the closed criminal circles who used their high social capital against society as a whole and the closed village households who limited their support inside the family. It is this lack of diffusion of social capital from the particular segment toward a wider circle that limits human development in Bulgaria. The authors contend that the traditional models of behaviour in the patriarchal families contradict and prevent the development of the modern culture in which most important values are participation, engagement, and civic involvement.

Another trend, which affects people's well being, is the decline in territorial mobility. Raychev et al (2000: 65) measured that 56% of the population had not left their town or village in the past year even for a day, that 500-800 villages in the country were excluded from the system of public transport, 80% had not been abroad at all in the past 10 years. The authors (Raychev et al, 2000:75) evaluate this tendency as a binding (enslaving) of the labour force in their lining place. The decision for the young is out-migration, semi-criminal or criminal business.

Low territorial mobility was confirmed in the research conducted by Vladimirov et al (1998) - 87% of the respondents have lived in the same town or village for over 20 years. The authors see this as a precondition for closeness, solidarity and mutual help (p. 30). The reliance upon the family and friends is a guarantee against the drastic fall in incomes. The authors argue that it is the mutual support floating down the channels of kinship relations that provide households with additional income and security.

The intergenerational social mobility is quite low according Vladimirov et al (1998) The authors measure it by the self-evaluation of the respondents - two thirds of them consider that they are on the same place on the social ladder as their parents. A third consider that they live worse than their parents did when they had been at the same age as the respondents. The greatest social mobility in Bulgarian society has been established in terms of educational degrees. Over a third of the respondents in Vladimirov's study (1998) have a higher education

than their parents. However, most of them consider that this has not helped them to find a better paid job.

Mitev (2003) gives an interesting interpretation of the intergeneration differences in the living standards. During state socialism the standard grew with age. During the transition the picture changes. Inflation ate people's savings and pensions do not correspond to work experience and qualifications. Aging keeps its biological minuses while losing its social advantages. At present young people have a definitely higher standard of consumption than the aged. This means that the parent generation makes huge efforts to push up their offspring. The young are in a privileged position – the father works and has no money to buy new clothes, the son studies and has enough to buy not only new but also fashion clothes. Among the young and the adults the dominant attitude is that parents should support their children as long as they can, even when the young themselves have children. Parents try to open a generational umbrella over their offspring to lessen the consequences of the impoverishment in every possible way.

Young people aged 15-30 live with their parents or in their own housing bought with parents' money. Only 12% of young people rent housing, of these 4% rent a public housing. The situation of mass private ownership of housing in Bulgaria (92% of the households own the dwelling they live in) has not changed during the transition. The growing impoverishment has led not to the loss of housing but to its amortisation.

The perception of the personal and family perspective is in a high correlation with the material standard of the household – the majority of the poor see bad and very bad perspectives in the future, the well to do commonly are optimistic. Expectations for the future have a clear age differentiation. The young (15-24) expect better perspectives, the adult – worse. Personal optimism combines with national pessimism and global pessimism as well. The greatest anxiety among young and old alike comes from the fear of unemployment. Especially pronounced are these concerns in small towns and regional centers (80-83%), less in villages (74%) and the least in the capital (64%). The older people look for protection against unemployment in outside work and survival through auxiliary natural husbandry and organization of the family household economics. The young look for new opportunities for success through mastering the modern codes (the English language, computer), economic initiative in the country or emigration out of it.

5. 3.4.4 Gaps in research

The concept of well being has not been developed in Bulgaria. While individual and family material standards and expectations for the future have been studied, the issue of organisational well-being has not been addressed at all. Emotions at work have been neglected, as well as the opportunities and constraints for healthy organisations. There have been some studies on family happiness and parental satisfaction, but very little on gender specific differences. There is lack of debates and inquiries into the willingness and preferences for parental leave and flexible employment.

5.4 Conclusions

Social change in European societies has multiple dimensions and finds different channels for spreading out. In Bulgaria it is perceived as a transition from an authoritarian toward a democratic state and from a centrally planned to a market economy. The social transformation however encompasses much more processes than the restructuring of politics and economy. There are profound shifts in people's experiencing of work, family life and leisure pursuits.

Existing sources in Bulgarian social research reveal a trend toward the delay of family formation and parenthood due to career concerns and economic pressures. The average age at first marriage, while remaining low in European comparisons, moved up with more than two years for both men and women. Cohabiting and living single become more common particularly among the young generation. Young parents significantly reduce the number of children they plan to have, responding to the opportunities and constraints at the workplace and wider society.

Young people's views on when it is preferable for a young person to live alone, independent of his/her parents is indicative of the changes in their ways of thinking. In the 1980s on the question about when one should leave the parents' home, youth replied most often than not in the same way as adults: 'When one marries'. Fifteen years later the most common reply connects independence with work 'When one begins work'. The wish of the young people to live on their own has grown. At the same time, the need of parental support is still valid and for some groups it is getting even stronger. This discrepancy is one of the most crucial in the post-communist social condition of youth.

Research data show that the liberalization of the attitude towards sex life is inevitable and goes through a phase in which the value of marriage is radically re-evaluated. A consensus majority among the young deems it normal and allowable for a man and a woman to live as a family without having a marriage certificate. What is more, this view is shared by people in the adult generation, as well. Only a half of young people think that a person cannot live one's life fully without raising children; one-fifth of them are of the opposite opinion, whereas the rest do not have an opinion. The emancipation of sex grows into emancipation from marriage. The opportunity for fulfilling singleness completes the picture of freeing the sexual relationship. It is not a coincidence that in the last few years 40% of children who are born in Bulgaria are out of legal wedlock. After the church lost its position of an institution legalizing marriage, the tendency shows a diminishing role of the state as well.

Economic change has opened up new prospects for young people – to start their own business initiative, to work in state or privatised companies, to travel abroad. At the same time many young people find themselves in low paid, low qualified precarious jobs or in continuous unemployment. Privatization in Bulgaria took considerably more time than in the countries in East Central Europe. In 1995, still most companies were state-owned. Today in 2003, most are private. Nevertheless, sociological surveys show the same typical and consistent differences between generations. Young people prefer working in a private company either as employees or as managers. This is a break with the attitudes of the older generations for whom the state sector remains the preferred option despite its being drastically narrowed.

It is typical of the young to have their own business plans, yearning after their own economic initiative. Those of youth who go through the longest occupational preparation strive to independent entrepreneuring activities to the greatest extent. On the other pole are young people with low qualifications, poor family background and from ethnic and religious minorities (ethnic Turks, Roma, Muslim Bulgarians) who prefer a state job. The accomplishment of the business initiatives encounters numerous problems: unfavorable economic macro-environment, lack of business ethics, shortages of financial resources and personal skills.

The change in the orientation towards the type of working place is accompanied by a change in the attitude towards the kind of work: pronouncedly dominant is the preference of a job with higher pay, although less interesting, over a job, which is more interesting but with a lower pay. More than ten years after the beginning of the transition in the course of market reforms there is a considerable social differentiation, a true social inequality. Money in the new reality is perceived as a universal symbol of success in life. This attitude is common for all generations and such a statement is categorically put forward by the young as well. Self-fulfillment through a more challenging job is not appealing if the pay is low.

How do these cultural shifts and new practices intermix to define young people's desired options of combining work and family life? This question is unjustly neglected by social sciences in Bulgaria despite the indication for the accumulation of serious problems. There are grave gaps in research on parenthood, work/family balance and organizational change in Bulgaria. In particular, the scientific community lacks an answer as to how young parents negotiate the boundary between paid work and childcare in the changing workplace and how they are assisted by management, colleagues, state and larger family. Research into these questions will address the rising public concerns with the negative population increase, will assist business efforts for greater efficiency, will allow working parents to find a better life balance and provide valuable knowledge for informed policy and individual decisions.

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Chapter 6 Portugal

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6.1 Introduction

In many ways, Portugal is nowadays a country immersed in the main trends of modernity taking place in Europe. 40 years ago, Portugal was mainly a traditional and agricultural country, where large sectors of the population lived in precarious conditions and were illiterate. Since the 70s, life patterns in Portugal have been under a deep structural change, with production, consumption, practices and lifestyles, being increasingly near the European standards. This process was reinforced by the integration in EU in 1986. Major structural indicators confirm this deep transformation.

Nowadays, the major part of Portuguese society is embedded in urban modern society life patterns in their different dimensions: work, family, education, leisure and consumption, technology, etc. In this sense, facilities, values and lifestyles available in Portugal, as well as the problems and challenges they face, are not very different from the other European societies, specially the southern countries.

However, Portugal has also important specificities, even in comparison with other Mediterranean societies. First of all, Portugal is a country raven by inequalities, with some sectors of the population remaining outside the modernity trends, closed in circles of illiteracy, underemployment and poverty. The productive sector is very asymmetric, varying from some innovative and modern areas to very traditional non-competitive (and sometimes informal) ones. Despite recent important improvements, the welfare system is also dichotomous, containing very innovative services but also missing some basic services. This complex picture has taken some influent sociologists to consider recently that Portugal lives in “different ages”, in a state of “unfinished modernity” or in a “semi-periphery position in the global system”.

In a more situational analysis, Portugal is passing now through a turbulent moment, with a very unstable economic situation, increasing redundancy and unemployment rates. However, it is difficult to be certain of how deep and extensive this crisis is. The recent deficit and the lack of competitiveness of our economy may threaten the major tendency toward modernization and well-being developed throughout the last decades.

Transition to adulthood is under much discussion, as the moment of transition is becoming increasingly more complex and diverse, what led to a progressive delay in parenthood projects. Work-life balance is rising, now a day, as another important issue, although there is still some lack of data on this subject. Organizational change is now a major topic of research

and also of public discussion. On the other hand, well-being is a concept absent both from Portuguese research and national debates.

6.2 Short overview main research topics in Portugal

We considered seven major lines of research in Portugal. Youth is not a well-developed area of Portuguese social sciences, but there are some interesting researches produced or promoted by José Machado Pais. At first, youth cultures, values and lifestyles emerged as the exclusive focus of research, but the scope is widening to new topics, as transitions to adulthood and life projects.

Sociology of family is one of the main research lines in Portugal, having already a strong tradition, raised by researchers Ana N. Almeida, Maria D. Guerreiro, Karin Wall and Anália Torres among others. Most studies seek to explore changes on family patterns, namely decrease of fertility rate, increase of divorce rate, new forms of conjugality and different notions of parenthood and childhood. These studies underline that new family dynamics are a part of a wider social change process, that comprise alterations on practices as well as on values towards family. The reproduction and changes of gender roles is also a subject of research, both by sociology and social psychology.

Work–family reconciliation has more recently emerged as a research area. A major part of the literature on this subject focuses on actors' agency – for instance parents' strategies for division of housework, and childcare solutions. Main topics of research are the division of work between men and women, uses of time, care services such as kindergartens, professional domestic services, family support networks and social policies. There is also some research conducted on organizations, which discuss politics and measures on work-family reconciliation, mostly by the family researchers above mentioned.

There is a broad scope of literature on organizational change, highlighting major changes such as the implementation of new technologies and the emergence of new forms of labour and employment (e.g. telework, part-time, temporary contracts). Research on this subject includes contributions from social psychology of organizations and human resources management, by authors including Jorge Vala, António Caetano and Brandão Moniz. These researchers, among others, emphasize the importance of studying attitudes towards change, and also the importance of professional training. The presence of women in organizations, and the subsistence of vertical and horizontal segregation is another subject of research, discussing values and measures on equity of opportunities between men and women.

Recently, an interest on organizational culture has emerged, this field has not had a long tradition in Portugal, but it is now being strongly promoted by different research departments including sociology of work, social psychology of organizations and human resources. Work satisfaction, labour relations and resistance/promotion of organizational innovation may be considered as the main topics in this field.

Since it's beginning, Portuguese social sciences always focus on values, both through theoretical essays and empirical studies. We may realise through these studies some

important changes on values and orientations in Portugal's changing society, including significant gaps between generations and social classes. Extensive surveys on values have been developed periodically, specially by the Social Sciences Institute (ICS), enabling a broad picture of Portuguese society. Studies on specific groups, produced by research centres as CIES, give a more detailed characterization of some specific subjects.

Social exclusion is an important and strong line of research in Portugal, subject of some of the most influent and interesting works developed during the last decade, by researchers such as João Ferreira de Almeida, Luís Capucha, among others. Although social exclusion is not a topic of our present research, some of these studies are relevant as they highlight the fact that some groups are structurally excluded from well-being and are characterized by differential family, work and life patterns.

6.3 Literature review per theme

6.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

6.3.1.1 Main theoretical perspectives

In Portugal, there is little theoretical background on the specific topic “young adults and parenthood”. However, we find some relevant references in studies from two different research lines: youth and family.

On one hand, concerning youth, some texts underline that Portuguese youth lives today in new scenarios, dealing with increasing cultural, leisure and academic opportunities (Pais 1991; Pais 1993; Conde 1998), as well as greater? Restraints and risks in the work sphere (Pais 2001). Thus, youth changed from a linear and fast model of transition to adulthood – leaving school, marrying and having children at an early age – to diverse and complex models, entailing “yo-yo life courses” (Pais 2001). This situation has led to an increasing delay in parenthood projects. Not having a great support from public services and institutions, young people tend to stay longer in their parents' home, in a semi-dependence system – involving affective autonomy and material dependency – dealing with many difficulties to get their own independence (Schmidt 1990).

Moreover, theoretical perspectives on youth stress a huge gap between a world of opportunities, complex transitions and experimentalist conceptions in the upper classes and a world of constraints, linear transitions and traditional values defining lower classes (Nunes 1998). In the working classes, many young people, still facing few educational and leisure opportunities, engage early in work and family life (Pais 1991). By accident or as a strategy of emancipation, some of them (specially girls) enter early into parenthood, even when they are teenagers. In middle and upper classes, seizing new educational and leisure opportunities (but also increasing rates of unemployment), young people tend to organize the transition to adulthood in two different steps: studying, getting a job and having fun, first; getting married and having children, later, sometimes after 30 years old (Guerreiro and Abrantes 2003).

There are some important studies about changes in family structures and dynamics, associated with recent processes of modernization occurred during the last decades, specially since the 60s. This changes include a completely different notion of parenthood, from an instrumental and non-planned model, where children were seen as inevitable and frequently as important suppliers for family work and income, to a modern model, based on planning, self-fulfilment and welfare, and in the dissociation of sexuality, conjugality and procreation (Torres 1995; Almeida, Guerreiro et al. 1998; Cunha 2000; Torres 2001; Torres 2002).

Note that female paid work has a strong tradition in Portugal – for economic as well as cultural reasons – and has increased during the last decades (Torres and Silva 1998). But it coexists with a very asymmetric conception of gender roles, in which women assume heavier familiar and domestic responsibilities. Meanwhile, notions such as “life project” and “protected childhood”, have become dominant in new generations (Almeida, Guerreiro et al. 1998; Torres and Silva 1998). Thus, the great decrease in the fertility rate observed recently is explained by a variety of factors: a) the spread of female professional aspirations; b) the growing demands of children needs and education; c) the deficit of formal and informal child care institutions (Almeida, André et al. 2002). Even if parenthood is not always planned in the lower classes, having the “right number” of children (usually 2) at the “right time” – after finishing studies, having some fun, meet the right partner and get a safe job – becomes almost an imperative to the middle and upper classes (Cunha 2000; Guerreiro and Abrantes 2003).

6.3.1.2 Main methodology

During the 90s, quantitative research on values and attitudes of Portuguese youth towards family (including parenthood) has been developed, based on data from National Institute of Statistics (INE). Meanwhile, some scientific inquiries about young people in general, or some specific groups, such as university students, were also developed. Direct application of inquiries allowed a deeper analysis of some theoretical questions or specific groups.

On the other hand, some qualitative researches were produced, using in-depth interviews, striving for a better understanding of youth conceptions and practices. In this second group, we may distinguish a more ethnographical trend, based on life-course analysis, and a more classical trend, based on direct interviews, exploring young peoples’ choices, conceptions and projects. Some researches have mixed both traditions.

6.3.1.3 Main empirical findings

All empirical researches on this field stress the huge transformation in parenthood patterns occurred specially during the 70s, entailing a great decrease of birth rate and a considerable growth of average age for engaging in parenthood. Thus, Portugal has changed from a very high birth rate until the 60s to a low one since the 80s, even comparing it with European standards (Almeida, Guerreiro et al. 1998; Rosa 1998; Almeida, André et al. 2002).

Research on youth has shown that family remains a central institution for new generations (specially girls), reproducing cultural traditions but also providing economic support (Almeida 1990; Almeida, Avila et al. 2000). However, a recent study on values of Portuguese

population underlines significant changes on value patterns, specially towards family and marriage (Vala, Cabral et al. 2003).

Dealing with little public support and low salaries, Portuguese youth enters into adulthood in a variety of ways, but most of them only get complete independence at around 30 years old (Schmidt 1990). Even if the majority of young people want to marry and to live with their spouse, in practice, half of them are single at age 30, living in their parents' home (Nunes 1998; Vasconcelos 1998).

Recently, the great increase of educational rates has provided new opportunities for youth but also a considerable delay of parenthood projects. A study of university students shows that more than 90% are supported by their parents, not having other income sources, nor living with a partner (Mauritti 2002). Besides, traditionally high female paid work rate has continued to increase during the 90s, so that we observe, in the new generations, almost a complete absence of housewives without paid work (Nunes 1998). Meanwhile, the increase of unemployment and sub-employment rates in Portugal (Pais 2001), specially affecting young people and women (Guerreiro 2000), has created new risks for parenthood. So, in spite of a huge diversity on values and conceptions, the great majority of Portuguese youth considers that their low incomes and unsafe professional condition make it unreasonable to engage in parenthood, considering the growing expenses with home and children (Vasconcelos 1998; Cunha 2000). The great spread of an ideology stressing individualization, self-responsibility, welfare and "protected childhood" make young people consider "young parenthood" as an irresponsibility (Guerreiro and Abrantes 2003).

However, if young people from the middle classes tend to follow long-term strategies, in the lower classes, traditional and immediate strategies of dealing with risks are still in use (Pais 1991; Pais 1993). So, in lower classes, empirical studies found a very different family pattern, entailing high rates of (young) parenthood (including teenage parenthood), sometimes before marriage, in situations of cohabitation or "lone motherhood" (Cunha 2000; Almeida, André et al. 2002; Ferreira and Aboim 2002; Lalanda 2002). A lot of girls from these classes, educated for a subordinate role in family and work (Fonseca 2001), continue to enter motherhood very young, sometimes accidentally, but other times as a strategy of affirmation and to begin an independent life. Simultaneously, they try to engage and be succeeded in work life (Torres and Silva 1998). Therefore, some studies show that "young parenthood" is a source of stigmatization and exclusion, restraining opportunities of young people, but may also be a source of valorisation, defining identities and relationships, projects and lifestyles (Vilar and Gaspar 1999; Guerreiro and Abrantes 2003).

Concerning children, a considerable change is also found. Traditionally a female task, in new generations, a notion of "co-responsibility" seems to be taking place, at least in the middle classes. In fact, despite the persistence of great asymmetries, some empirical studies observed a significant growth of fathers' participation in children education (Torres and Silva 1998; Balancho 2001; Perista 2002).

6.3.1.4 Gaps in research

In this field, the major gap seems to be precisely the lack of *qualitative studies* exploring the conditions, experiences and strategies of Portuguese young adults facing parenthood. This also may be an important factor of relevance for our study, if we focus on those questions. How do people become parents, in Portugal, a society thwarted by deep and fast changes, for instance in parenthood patterns? What are the difficulties faced by young parents? What kind of support do they have from formal and informal networks?

6.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

6.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Sociology of the Family has some tradition in Portugal, and there are several recent studies on this subject, dealing mostly with changes in family structure and 'new' kinds of family. These studies emphasize the impact of women's entrance in the labour market (Ferreira 1999; Rebelo 2002) and try to understand new family dynamics and new orientations and values concerning family. António Teixeira Fernandes (1994) underlines that family dynamics are a part of a broader social change, including alterations on conjugality, sexuality, and employment, stressing transformation rather than crises. Sofia Aboim and Karin Wall (2002) listed several family models based on two main concepts: internal cohesion and external integration, proposing a typology of interaction dynamics. For other theoretical approaches in sociology of family and family transformation – see also (Wall 1993; Amâncio 1994; Fernandes 1994; Wall 1995; Almeida, Guerreiro et al. 1998; Wall 2000; Aboim and Wall 2002; Almeida, André et al. 2002). For a classical Portuguese study on gender roles see Amâncio (1994).

Simultaneously with the growth of female professional work, domestic labour and childcare underwent large changes. The reconciliation of professional and family life has emerged as an important issue, and several Portuguese studies try to understand what strategies parents use (Cunha 1998; Guerreiro 1998; Guerreiro 1998; Diniz and (coord) 2000; Fernandes 2000; Guerreiro 2001; Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003).

Studies on work-family reconciliation tend to explore housework as well as childcare arrangements. On this last subject, and although most authors agree that a combination of several different arrangements is made, there are a strong debate between those stressing *family support* (for instances grandmothers) and those studying '*outsource*' to external services.

Anália Torres and Francisco Vieira da Silva devaluate the importance of family networks in Lisbon and its suburban area (except as a complement, on holidays, etc.), stressing the use of external solutions such as kindergarten, nannies, and occupational centres. These solutions often imply a great effort from families, since public formal care is still incipient and private institutions are expensive (Torres and Silva 1998).

Since family members are no longer available to accomplish some of traditional domestic practices, families have started to share some of their functions with other social institutions. Specialized services of childcare, housework and medical assistance came out and are increasing considerably, becoming an interesting research object. These services - both formal and informal – are mostly performed by women and tend to be associated with bad work conditions, low qualifications and low social status (Guerreiro 2002).

On the other hand, some studies underline the importance of family support. For instances, Pedro Vasconcelos stresses the importance of support networks, mostly within family, pointing out how social class structures these networks (Vasconcelos 2002).

Note that domestic housework has also to be balanced with professional work. Heloisa Perista refers that the common concept of work refers to paid work, giving less visibility to domestic work, done mostly by women, raising the fact that women tend to accumulate a double journey of work, as they are working outside and also doing the huge part of housework. Therefore, her study raises the question of time pressure on women (Perista 2002).

6.3.2.2 Main methodology

As already mentioned, some extensive quantitative research has been developed, trying to understand new trends on family structure. These kinds of studies are often based on data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE).

As national surveys' information on this subject is insufficient, scientific inquiries to specific groups have been developed, for instance, with family groups, mothers, family services workers, habitants of certain geographic areas – either rural or urban areas. Some comparative studies for instance between single and married young people were also developed.

Meanwhile, some qualitative research has been conducted, mostly using focus groups interviews and, occasionally, in-depth interviews.

6.3.2.3 Main empirical findings

As mentioned above, Portuguese literature includes collections of empirical data, both extensive and intensive, concerning specific groups. As shown above, several studies were conducted in order to identify new trends in family life (Wall 2000; Aboim and Wall 2002), including also specific studies concerning particular groups such as, for instances, single parents (Lobo 1995; Wall and Lobo 1999; Wall, José et al. 2002) or step families (Lobo 1995) and also specific issues as divorce (Torres 1996) and marriage (Torres 2001; Torres 2002; Torres 2002).

Other studies try to capture daily life, understanding childcare arrangements, housework and labour division. A key study on work-family reconciliation (Perista 2002) points out that the difference between male and female professional work time is one hour per day, while women spend three hours more on domestic/care work than men. This kind of data (reinforced by other studies) shows explicitly that women's larger participation in labour market is not

followed by a larger male participation in housework. The same study identifies specific arenas of male participation in family life – such as administrative affairs, shopping and gardening - while cooking meals, and taking care of clothes remain female domains. However, several studies emphasize that father's participation on childcare is increasing (Perista 2002; Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003).

Some findings stress the effective women's desire for work-family reconciliation (Torres e Silva, 1998). However, some data, often based on theoretical approaches to male-female inequalities, emphasize gender inequality and accentuate the difference between ideal representations (of work-family reconciliation and of housework and childcare division) and daily practices. A recent study (Wall, José et al. 2001) indicates that almost 70% of women agree that domestic tasks should be shared, but it is possible to identify a large gap between this ideal model and everyday practices. This kind of data stresses the idea that ideal conceptions differ from daily life. Striving to understand the ways in which inequalities between men and women are meant within the couple, Gabrielle Poeschl concludes that women tend to compare their situation not with an ideal model of reconciliation but, instead, with an even bigger inequality observed in other couples and in older generations (Poeschl 2000).

Other studies explore how daily life is managed, trying to point out different actors' strategies and solutions, as they are chosen by mothers and fathers (for empirical data on work-family reconciliation strategies, see (Torres 1997; Torres and Silva 1998; Fernandes 2000; Wall, José et al. 2001; Vasconcelos 2002; Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003).

In some empirical research, typologies arise from data analysis. Several studies register different kinds of childcare arrangements, highlighting the mixing of different solutions. One research (Wall, José et al. 2001) identifies four different childcare arrangements: (1) strong family support, based on grandparents involvement, (2) formal care supplying mothers, involving a large amount of hours in childcare services and little fathers' participation; (3) shared parental care plus formal care: shared between mothers, fathers and formal services and (4) several other varied arrangements – such as all day employees in high income families or paid informal services on average income families.

A typology of male and female participation on housework is found in another study (Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003), identifying three basic types of participation - (1) based on women's responsibility (and therefore on female double work journey); (2) based on a more or less equal share (with three subtypes: equality, husband's specialized help and tension-imposition); (3) outsource to external institution/services.

6.3.2.4 Gaps in research

There is a lack of extensive data, for instance, on childcare arrangements. Some informal solutions – such as nannies - don't appear on official statistics. Since several studies underline different strategies, it would be useful to map work-family reconciliation practices in a more extensive way, including different kinds of workers, and in both rural-urban regions (Portugal is marked by deep regional asymmetries).

6.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

6.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

There is a wide range of literature on organizational change, highlighting the major changes on labour, employment, organizational structure, etc...This literature covers several disciplines (mostly sociology of organizations, psycho-sociology and human resources management), aiming to identify major changing dynamics (Vala and al.] 1994; Kovacs 1997; Pimentel 1999; Caetano and Tavares 2000), patterns of innovation and modernization (Stoleroff 1994; Freire 1998) and also attitudes towards change (Pinto 2000; Teixeira 2002).

Most studies look closely into specific aspects of organizational change, for instances: new kinds of labour organization as outplacement (Ramalho 2001), precarious work (Rosa 2000), new kinds of contracts (Almeida 1999) or part-time work. For a debate on how part time work – affecting mostly women - can be seen both as a form of precarious work and as a chosen work family reconciliation strategy see (Santana, Centeno et al. 2001).

The impact of new technologies is an important issue mentioned in several studies (Moniz 1998). Concepts such as skills, competences and attitudes rise as determinant. See, for example, a study by António Caetano and Jorge Vala on attitudes toward new technologies of information and communication (Caetano and Vala 1994); an important article by Manuel Mira Godinho on the relation between human resources and science and technology (Godinho 1999); and a specific study on the mobile telecommunications sector (Patrício 2002).

Professional training and life-long learning appeared as important related topics, being essential to the acquisition of skills and competences that ease adjustment to new work realities (Moniz and Kovacs 1997; Santos 1997; Madureira 2000; Neves 2000; Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2002).

The attitude of actors toward organizational change is another important topic of research, involving approaches to different kinds of actors, namely trade unions (Alves 1993; Sampaio 1998). Women's presence in trade unions is focused on two interesting works, one considering female sindicalists as chief agents for equity (Almeida 1995) and another discussing how trade unions conceptualise inequality between men and women, trade unions' closure towards women and new trends to equity (Ferreira 2002).

Another line of research is related with organizational culture (Vala, Monteiro et al. 1994; José 1997), and also with labour relations (Stoleroff 1995; Guerreiro 1996; Guerreiro 2000).

Particularly important for this study are studies on work-family reconciliation politics and measures. However, (as seen in the previous section), most work-life balance literature focuses on employee's agency and strategies. There is also some literature on organizational measures and practices (as well as on public politics). See, for exemple - (Fernandes 2000; Guerreiro 2001; Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003). See also, for literature on equity of opportunities between men and women (Amâncio 1989; Lopes 1999; Rego 1999).

6.3.3.2 *Main methodology*

A broad scope of methodologies is used for studying organizational change, organizational culture and organizational measures on work-family reconciliation, using both extensive data collection (mostly studies on change trends) and intensive research (for instance, monographic approaches to specific organizations, in order to identify cultural processes and particular measures). This intensive approach is often based on interviews with human resources managements and small groups of employees (using mostly focus groups interviews, but also individual, semi-directive interviews), but there are also some more ethnographic approaches.

6.3.3.3 *Main empirical findings*

The several studies on organizational change highlight some of the major changes in Portuguese organizations, as they follow European trends. New labour forms as outplacement, outsourcing, temporary work, part-time or telework are subjects of research. Although Portugal seems to generally follow the tendency for organizational change, part-time work remains relatively undersized (Rebelo 2002). Part-time may be seen both as involuntary and precarious or as a voluntary choice, acting, for instance, as a work-family reconciliation strategy (Santana, Centeno et al. 2001; Rebelo 2002). Gloria Rebelo stresses the way part-time work, like other new forms of labour organization often operate for employers benefit, rather than for employees.

Part-time and telework, although under strong discussion, aren't yet spread among a wide range of organizations. Still, temporary contracts, outplacement, outsourcing, and flexibility are important arenas of change, present in several organizations (Soares 1986; Cordeiro 1997; Kovacs 1997; Freire 1998; Almeida 1999; Pimentel 1999; Rebelo 1999; Caetano and Tavares 2000; Ferreira 2000; Rosa 2000; Ramalho 2001).

Mário Bella Pimentel, in a study on organizational change and future tendencies for organizations, uses the concept of *dejob* as a way of present organizations tendency to more precarious and uncertain employment – stressing, for instances, the resource to temporary contracts (Pimentel 1999).

Several research projects, mostly on sociology and social psychology, seek to approach the way people act in response to these changes. See, for instances the work by Gloria Rebelo on (in)adaptation to work, focusing particularly on new technologies (Rebelo 1999). On this subject, see also an article by Manuel Mira Godinho, stressing structural fragilities and the severe gaps between skilled workers and those who are excluded from the use of new technologies (Godinho 1999; Patrício 2002).

As most studies in this area underline structural fragilities and the inadequacy of the labour force toward some of the latest developments, there is also some important work emphasizing the importance of training, stressing for instance, the need to support pilot projects (Moniz 1998). A study that tried to list some of the best practices on professional training, stresses the difficulties faced by enterprises, such as the difficulties of gathering funds. Big enterprises, with a stable financial situation and large human resources departments are most likely to have good training practices, although some smaller

organizations also present examples of good practice in this area, mostly when their activity requires specific skills and abilities (Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2002).

The feminization of labour market (from seventies till now) is also under research, stressing the both vertical and horizontal discrimination that affects women. Several studies emphasize that women tend to work in specific sectors or departments (horizontal segregation) and have greater difficulties in reaching higher positions (vertical segregation). Simultaneously, other research stresses the gap between women's and men's retribution (Albuquerque 1999; Ferreira 1999; Lopes 1999; Rego 1999; Blass 2002; Ferreira 2002; Rebelo 2002). As Gloria Rebelo points out, women tend to be more inactive, more often victims of unemployment and more likely to work in precarious conditions (Rebelo 2002).

Studies on specific sectors support this kind of data, see, for instance, a study by Margarida Chagas Lopes and Heloísa Perista, underlining the tendency of low salaries, precarious and even clandestine work, and pointing out some measures for a better equality of opportunities between men and women (Lopes and Perista 1999).

Finally, there is some empirical research on work-life reconciliation from the organisation's point of view, stressing the lack of generic practices for work-family reconciliation, in close association with legal measures as collective contracts or enterprise agreements (Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003). This data call attention to time pressure on the workplace and to the importance that availability often assumes on one's career (Guerreiro 1998; Fernandes 2000; Perista 2002; Guerreiro, Pereira et al. 2003).

6.3.3.4 Gaps in research

As deep changes are being identified, it would be determinant to see how different actors react towards change. Specially on youth, and with the increment of temporary and precarious work for younger population segments, it would be important to look as young people manage these kinds of employment situations.

Research on work-family reconciliation measures should continue to be developed, covering different sectors of activity and several kinds of organizations.

6.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

6.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

There is no scientific production on well-being in Portugal. However, many studies with very different concerns include useful contributions to this topic. For a better understanding, we separate them into 2 groups: those who focus on objective (or material) dimensions of wellbeing; those who explore the subjective (non material) ones.

In the first group, we include the extensive literature about welfare state, social policies and citizenship in Portugal, by influent authors in Portuguese sociology (Santos 1990; Mozzicafreddo 1992; Cabral 1997; Mozzicafreddo 1997; Silva 1997; Santos and Ferreira 2002; Silva 2002). We may include also other important line - exploring the reverse of well-being - composed by studies on social exclusion, from global approaches (Almeida, Costa et al. 1992; Capucha 1998; Rodrigues, Samagaio et al. 1999; Capucha 2000; Costa 2002) to sectorial studies focusing on specific groups (Sebastião 1998; Pegado, Gonçalves et al. 1999; Garcia, Jerónimo et al. 2000; Pais 2001). Recent work on literacy (Benavente, Rosa et al. 1996; Gomes 2002) shows the importance of basic competences for achieving leisure, professional and political opportunities and rights and thus for well-being.

Still in the objective dimensions, there are studies on income patterns and inequalities (Pereirinha 1986; Albuquerque 1999), working conditions (Soares 1986; Dias 1999; Cruz 2002; Lameira 2002), housing strategies (Caldeira 1998) and uses of time (Torres and Silva 1998; INE 2001; Perista 2002). Finally, there is an interesting research project on life patterns (Costa, Mauritti et al. 2003), combining data from employment structure, educational qualifications and consumption routines.

In the subjective dimension, there are many studies on values concerning family, work as well as other dimensions of life. Some of these studies focus on the entire Portuguese population (Almeida 1990; França 1993; Cabral, Vala et al. 1998; Cabral, Vala et al. 2000), while the others are restrained to specific groups of Portuguese population (Silva 1989; Cabral and Pais 1998; Marques 1999; Almeida, Avila et al. 2000; Gaspar 2000; Reis 2002), or to specific regions (Almeida 1996). There are also some studies exploring the complex topic of personal relationships with partner (Torres 2002), parents (Cunha 2000) or relatives (Vasconcelos 2002). And there are studies focusing on quality of life in Portugal, specially related with environmental conditions (Freitas 1990; Baptista 1996; Almeida 2000; Ferreira, Casanova et al. 2000; Farina 2001; Pimenta and Ferreira 2001; Rocha 2001). Finally, a recent research explores the relationship between family dynamics, values and housing conditions (Ferreira 2002).

Another string is composed by studies on organizational culture and work satisfaction (Lima, Vala et al. 1994; Lourenço 1997; Brites 1998; Carochinho 1998; Barbosa 1999; Alcobia 2001; Oliveira 2001; Reis 2002), recently improved by a Masters Program in human resources strategies.

6.3.4.2 *Main methodology*

There are significant differences between all these studies, but most of them use quantitative methodology, based on questionnaires applied to a representative group of the population. Data is organized and analysed in statistics computer software. This methodology allows a broad characterization of the Portuguese population. In bigger projects, this methodology is complemented with case studies, using a qualitative methodology, to a deeper exploitation of complex processes involved in a given reality. This is frequent, for instance, in research projects on social exclusion.

6.3.4.3 *Main empirical findings*

In the empirical level, we must consider a huge gap between objective and subjective data on well-being. Objective restraints and conditions to well-being affecting a major part of Portuguese population don't fit with their subjective statements and feelings emphasizing positive values and representations. This gap is very difficult to analyse and to understand, if we consider that both dimensions are fundamental elements of social reality and if we consider there is a logical relationship between them.

So, in the objective dimension of well-being, data shows that family income in Portugal is lower than in all other Western European countries and there is a huge inequality in its distribution (Albuquerque 1999). Thus, there is a significant number of low income families in Portugal, living and working in bad conditions (Almeida, Costa et al. 1992; Dias 1999; Cruz 2002; Lameira 2002; Costa, Mauritti et al. 2003), getting precarious and/or informal works, immersed in circles of poverty and social exclusion (Almeida, Costa et al. 1992; Rodrigues, Samagaio et al. 1999; Capucha 2000). In recent years, the fast growth of the unemployment rate (traditionally very low) as well as the retirement rate adds new difficulties to this scenario (Garcia, Jerónimo et al. 2000; Pais 2001; Costa 2002). Since public support to these situations is very weak, lots of families make a great effort to support unemployed or retired members.

Note that a great part of Portuguese society has only attended basic school, and rates of illiteracy remain very high, which means a strong handicap for adaptation to a new society based on knowledge and information (Benavente, Rosa et al. 1996; Sebastião 1998). The Welfare system and civil society are traditionally weak and public services are far from addressing all the population's needs. However, last decade, it's important to mention a considerable growth of educational levels of Portuguese population and also significant improvements to public welfare networks (Cabral 1997; Mozzicafreddo 1997; Santos and Ferreira 2002; Silva 2002).

Data on uses of time reflects this picture. Cultural activities and leisure are not included in the routines of many Portuguese people (Conde 1998), immersed in professional and family hard responsibilities and living with a very tight income. Lots of people, specially women, consider that they are usually in a hurry, with no time to do what they like, namely, being longer with their family or enjoying leisure time (Guerreiro 1998; Perista 2002).

However, this dark picture doesn't fit with positive values and representations addressed in subjective indicators. Many studies show, for instance, that Portuguese people consider

family the most important dimension of their life and that they consider themselves generally happy with their family life (Almeida 1990; França 1993; Cabral, Vala et al. 1998; Cabral, Vala et al. 2000). These studies conclude that most Portuguese are quite satisfied with their houses and neighbourhood, even if their conditions are very poor and precarious (Ferreira 2002). In the cities' old centre, tight social networks and strong local identities partially explain these positive images of their place (Costa 1999).

On the other hand, research on values shows that, just behind family, work remains a central dimension of people's life, being reinforced in the present context of unemployment increase (Cabral, Vala et al. 1998; Cabral, Vala et al. 2000). Even working in bad conditions, people are generally satisfied with their job, most of them considering that they are lucky for not being unemployed. Yet, satisfaction with work varies significantly according to organizational cultures, professional identities and employment safety (Lima, Vala et al. 1994; Brites 1998; Neves 2000; Oliveira 2001; Reis 2002).

Besides, studies on values shows that, if family and work remain crucial spheres, other dimensions, such as leisure, culture and environment, emerge as relevant for increasing groups of Portuguese population. Specially young people, in contrast with old generations, have new aspirations and values concerning non-material dimensions of existence (Cabral and Pais 1998; Almeida 2000; Almeida, Avila et al. 2000; Ferreira, Casanova et al. 2000).

6.3.4.4 *Gaps in research*

There is no significant research on well-being, considering simultaneously objective (material) as well as subjective (non-material) dimensions. This would be useful for a better understanding of gaps between both representations of reality. Besides, there are few studies on social networks, for instance, based on extended family, friendship ties or neighbourhood. There are some references to its possible relevance in Portuguese society, but there are no systematic studies in these fields, using theoretical and methodological tools of social sciences.

6.4 Conclusions

Although social sciences are recent in Portugal, some of the current research lines may be useful contributions not only for our understanding of Portuguese reality but also for the construction of a general theoretical background.

Research conducted in Portugal illustrates the coexistence of very different values and orientations towards family, parenthood, youth and adulthood. This may be seen in all modern societies reflecting their diversity and openness. However, in Portugal, recent social transformations (from mid seventies till now) explain deep asymmetries between different social classes, regions, and generations. Empirical data on this matter reveals a variety of ways of living conjugality, transition to adulthood and parenthood.

Data collected from empirical studies on work – family reconciliation highlight the difference between ideals of what should be done – for instance, equal share of housework and childcare between men and women – and daily practices. This is an important topic to take into account considering that values and models presented by people may not fit well with

effective reality. The fact that young women tend to compare their situation with the previous generation may explain the acceptance of inequality practices, especially considering the previous context of deeper inequalities.

A similar gap may be seen in studies on organizations, emphasizing the difference between the existing discourse on equality of opportunities between men and women and the current practices of vertical and horizontal gender segregation.

Note that studies on organizational change also emphasize deep asymmetries among different sectors of economic activity. If some areas of activity are rapidly changing, other segments show strong resistance towards innovation. In particular, professional training, skills and competences are unequally spread. Thus, in our research it's important to take into account the existence of different attitudes towards change. There are some studies useful for understanding these differences,

In Portugal, there is not a strong tradition of studying work – family reconciliation from the organizational point of view. However, researches on this area show that good practices on work–family reconciliation as well as on long-life training and equity of opportunities between men and women are more likely to emerge on specific sectors, for instance on larger companies with strong human resources management policies. However, most Portuguese enterprises don't fit into this model of organization, having no strong policies for work-family reconciliation.

Finally, well-being is not a strong research field on Portugal. In fact there are no significant research lines focused on this topic. However, there are some important studies that stress some specific dimensions of well-being. For instance, literature on social exclusion underlines the existence of marginalized segments of society - an underclass characterized by illiteracy, unemployment and poverty, which live structurally outside positive well-being patterns.

To finalize, some of the most important Portuguese researches emphasize the need to take into account the diversity of situations and the asymmetries between different social arenas – like social classes, generations, genders and regions. So, it is necessary to understand personal strategies in their social context. At the same time, it is essential to look at practices as well as at representations and ideals and to understand the possible misfit between them.

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Chapter 7 Norway

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7.1 Introduction

The underlying principle of the Norwegian welfare state model is universalistic. Social homogeneity and strong egalitarian traditions are distinctive characteristics of Norwegian society. Egalitarian values are important for the widespread support for a public policy to promote gender equality, both in the labour market and in the family.

Compared to many other European countries, Norway has low unemployment, a low poverty level and a high level of income equality. The Norwegian context is characterised by the continuing existence of the welfare state as a major actor. During the 1990s, the institutional features of the welfare state have been strengthened regarding labour market, gender-equality and especially family policies. At the same time, there have been developments in the labour market, induced by globalisation, increased dominance of neo-liberal market logic, and individualisation which paved the way for polarisations and new hierarchies.

The Norwegian Welfare State's official ideology is "gender equality in both public and private spheres" (Norway's report to CEDAW 2003). There is a close link between family and gender equality policies. The objective of these policies is to give both women and men equal opportunities to combine work and parenthood. However, until the 1990s, policies that enabled women to combine motherhood and employment were less developed in Norway, compared to other Scandinavian countries. Due to its oil revenues, Norway has avoided recession and managed to introduce more generous parental leave benefits in the early 1990s. The percentage of fathers taking advantage of the daddy leave quota to care for their new born children increased dramatically. The last decade witnessed a "politicising of parenthood" (Ellingsæter 1999) with an emphasis on men's parental duties and on the need to develop policies that support a symmetric, "dual-earner/dual-carer" family model. However, ambiguities and controversies continued, exemplified by the recent cash-for-care reform (Wærness 1998, Leira 2000).

As in most industrialised countries, important changes have taken place in gender relations and family practices in Norway since the 1970s. Women's increasing education levels, participation in the labour market and politics have been important factors influencing these changes. Women's increasing participation in the public sphere led to changes in the traditional "gender contract" and the male breadwinner-female housewife family model lost its dominance. Major changes in family patterns in the last three decades have been more cohabiting without formal marriage, marriage and child-bearing later in the life course, first reduced, then stabilizing fertility, more births outside marriage, more divorces and more single parents. The family, in its traditional institutional form has lost its dominant position in society

and marriage has become one of several alternative forms of cohabitation, for couples with or without children.

Issues related to gender equality in both public and private spheres rank high on the political agenda. The Gender Equality Act, which was passed in 1979, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

In spite of improving gender equality, the labour market is still highly gender segregated, both horizontally and vertically. Almost half employed women work part-time and female dominated jobs have lower income levels. Men dominate in the higher echelons of private sector jobs, and women form the majority of the work force in the public sector in occupations related to care and service.

The division of labour between the family, the labour market, and the state is decisive when analysing gender relations, the distribution of power and decisions related to the transition to parenthood. A great majority of research projects in this field are financed by various public institutions and focus on evaluations of different policies and policy changes. The Norwegian Research Council has several research programmes related to the general fields of the welfare state, labour market, gender and family practices and coordinates numerous studies in these fields. The purpose of this review is to provide a summary of the key Norwegian studies in this field that have been carried out since 1998.

7.2 Short overview main research topics in NORWAY

The relationships between changing family patterns, gender and welfare state policies have been major research fields in Norway. Changes in family patterns have been analysed by both qualitative and quantitative research projects. Research projects have documented dramatic changes in attitudes and expectations related to gender roles and relations (Knudsen & Wærness 1996, Brandth & Moxnes 1996, Noack 1999). Survey results also show that Norwegians have ambiguous attitudes concerning support for mother's employment (Knudsen & Wærness 1998). Increase in cohabitation and divorces and their consequences have been the subjects of several research projects (e.g. Moxnes et al. 1998, 2001, Jensen 2000). There are also studies on new family forms, like couples who live in separate homes and stepfamilies (e.g. Levin 1994, Levin & Trost 2003).

Theoretical and empirical approaches to the concept of "care" have traditionally been prominent in Norwegian social research (e.g. Wærness 1998, Christensen & Syltevik 1999, Isaksen 2003). Child care and care for the elderly are two major research fields. There have been important policy changes in these fields and many surveys have been carried out to evaluate these changes. Especially the effects of the recent cash-for-care reform have been analysed from different perspectives (Baklien et al. 2001, Hellevik 2000, Sletvold 2000, Bungum et al. 2001, Rønsen 2001).

Several studies have focused on the division of labour in the households and care arrangements within families, as well as time-use and consequences of different social policies (Wærness 1999, Kitterød 2003). Single parenthood and especially lone mothers have

been important research areas in this field (Syltevik 1999, Skevik 2001). Fatherhood has received greater attention in the last decade. Fathers' time-use, employment patterns and use of the father's quota have been analysed in qualitative and quantitative studies (Brandth & Øvreli 1998, Brandth & Kvande 2003, Kitterød & Kjeldstad 2002).

The changes in the labour market and the emerging characteristics of the "new" post-industrial work life have attracted research interest in various academic disciplines. Issues of gender and power have been analyzed. Different studies focus on the gendered division of labour (both vertical and horizontal segregation) as well as problems of equal pay (Ellingsæter & Solheim 2002, Forseth & Rasmussen 2002). Flexibility, new time-norms, working time patterns and especially part-time work have been major research topics as well (Torp & Barth 2001, Ellingsæter 1999, Birkelund 1999, Olsen & Torp 1998).

Research on well-being has mainly been related to the general surveys on living conditions ("*levekårsundersøkelse*") and the quality of life. Analyses of dominant values held by Norwegians, changes in values and the definition of "the good life" are other vital research fields.

7.3 Literature review per theme

7.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

Parenthood has been an important topic for social research in Norway and the focus has been on parents with children under school age. Parents of small children and gender equality concerns have been widely discussed in the last decade. This group, called "*småbarnsforeldre*" in Norwegian, has been the target of several new policies (The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs: See the web-site: "The Rights of the Parents of Small Children"). The main questions have been related to the "time-squeeze" and heavy economic burdens that these couples experience and the needs to offering them a wider set of choices in balancing their work and family lives (e.g. Wærness 1999). An important part of the literature in this field consists of evaluations and assessments of policy changes, carried out by different academic institutions and research centres (Bungum and Kvande 2001, Baklien et al. 2001, Magnussen et al. 2001, Rønsen 2001, Hellevik and Koren 2000).

In Norway, there is massive media focus on choices in partnership arrangements for couples. The most popular tabloids frequently publish articles on changing forms of couple relationships and women's careers and motherhood choices.

A key change has taken place in Norwegian society concerning definitions of 'good motherhood' and 'good fatherhood,' induced by the interacting influences of the feminist movement, women's entry into higher education, female labour force participation, and the institutionalisation of gender-equality policies. Expectations related to fathers' participation in childcare have increased. Several studies focus on changes in fatherhood and masculinities (Brandth & Kvande 2003, Løkke 2000). There has been growing interest in fatherhood and on the "caring father."

7.3.1.1 *Main theoretical perspectives*

Questions of how social policies influence parenthood practices are prominent in Norwegian research.

A gendered power perspective and the division of labour between the welfare state and the family have been central theoretical perspectives.

Various theoretical perspectives are collected in a recent seminar report with the title: “Research on the daily lives of parents with small children: Theoretical Approaches and Data” (Gulbrandsen 2002). Most of the research projects presented here have been financed by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and The Norwegian Research Council and were related to the general project of evaluating the consequences of the cash-for-care reform.

7.3.1.2 *Main methodology*

The Central Bureau of Statistics of Norway (SSB) is a state institution that has the main responsibility for the collection, production and dissemination of official statistics. In addition, their research teams publish a large quantity of reports and other publications. Their English web site offers updated statistics and research reports on various themes (<http://www.ssb.no/english/>).

SSB has carried out several surveys to analyse family patterns and gender relations (e.g. Abrahamsen and Storvik 2002). Systematic collection of time-use data over 3 decades has given a basis for several interesting analyses and research reports (e.g. Kitterød 2003, 2002; Wærness 1999; Vaage 2002). Qualitative studies on couple relationships and family dynamics are fewer in number, but they have gained increasing attention lately (e.g. Syltevik 2000). There are several qualitative studies on relationships between parents and children; experiences of being a family; arrangements after divorce (Most of these studies are master theses that are not included in this report).

7.3.1.3 *Main empirical findings*

Pressure on time resources (the “time-squeeze” and related stress, especially influencing parents of small children) is a main finding of several studies.

Gendered time use patterns are common findings in these studies. Even though father’s have increased their participation in childcare, they have not significantly increase the time they spend on housework. Organisation and performance of care-work is still predominantly women’s responsibility.

Studies also document a diversification of life-styles and differences according to level of education and type of occupation. Studies that focus on gender have looked into the increasing differences between groups of women and men with respect to age, education level and position in the labour market (Skrede 1999, Wærness 1999).

Research on men and masculinities is a rapidly developing field in Norway (Holter 2000, Løkke 2000). Researchers who focus on masculinity and men as fathers argue that gender equality is an issue for men and men are also negatively influenced by gender discrimination.

They demand that men should be accepted as care-givers equal to women, both in the labour market and in the private sphere (Holter 2000). The popularity of the father's quota in Norway is exceptional. After the introduction of this quota, which is a one month paternal leave (non-transferable to the mother), the number of fathers taking paid leave of absence to care for their children has increased dramatically (Brandth & Øvreli 1998).

Increase in cohabitation has been one of the most significant changes in family patterns. However, as Noack (2001) argues, this is still a relatively under researched field. A study on new family constellations that focused on cohabitation and its influence on children's lives documents that the risk of parental separation is markedly higher for children in cohabitee families than with parents who are married (Jensen & Clausen 2000).

Divorce, its reasons and consequences has also been a central theme for social research (e.g. Moxnes et al. 2001). Children's experiences of and perspectives on divorce has received more attention in the recent works. There are also several studies on custody arrangements and cooperation opportunities after break-up and divorce. Stepfamilies have also been the subject of research, although not a very prominent research field as yet (Levin 1994).

Fertility rates and patterns of development in this have been the focus in several studies (Rønsen 2001, Lappegård 2002). The rise in fertility rates in the early 1990s raised interest in the possible pronatalistic effect of generous family policies and stimulated research in this area.

Studies on the relationship between field of education and fertility show that women educated towards female-dominated occupations (mainly nurses and teachers) have more children than other groups of women. However, there is also a high fertility rate among women whose education has a high career orientation (e.g. doctors and dentists). The lowest expected number of children is found for women educated in fields of social sciences, aesthetics, economics and law. In her study on the connection between field of education and fertility, Lappegård concludes that due to the existence of generous family benefits in Norway, a combination of work-career and childcare is possible in all parts of the labour market, and that there are relatively small variations in how many children women in different education groups will have (Lappegård 2002).

7.3.1.4 Gaps in research

An explicit focus on young adults forming a couple is not very prominent on the research agenda. There are few studies that focus on decisions to have children. Studies that focus on differences between social classes are also few in number and scope.

There is an apparent need for more research projects which have a dynamic approach to transition to parenthood with a life-course perspective.

7.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

Balancing work and family responsibilities has been a popular theme, both in the political arena and in the field of social research. There is an increasing interest in labour market changes and in how arrangements in the labour market influence the daily lives of individuals (e.g. Forseth and Rasmussen 2002).

“Parenting strategy” is not a widely used concept in Norwegian family research. Focus has been on different aspects of motherhood and fatherhood, with an emphasis on changing expectations related to these “roles”.

In the Norwegian context studies of welfare state policies that influence parenting strategies and work-family boundaries have been central. In the Scandinavian welfare model, the issues of care for dependents and of combining parenthood and employment are defined as public issues, and the state is seen as a responsible agent in offering support in these areas. State interference in family matters is widely accepted.

The Ministries and The Norwegian Research Council fund the majority of research projects.

The main focus of research has been on social policies and their influences on family practices and gender relations. Main objectives of family policies can be specified as:

- to facilitate more flexible arrangements between work and family for both mothers and fathers
- to ensure more freedom of choice between various childcare arrangements
- to enable parents to spend more time with their children
- to encourage a more equal sharing of income producing and family work among mothers and fathers (Kitterød & Kjeldstad 2002).

There is a close link between family policies and gender equality policies and the main purpose of policies is to offer financial support to all parents and to make it easier to combine employment and parenthood. Norwegian law seldom refers to ‘the family’ as a unit, but deals rather with the rights and duties of individuals who are related to one another by ties of descent or marriage, or by legal contracts (Leira 1996). The Marriage Act contains an explicit assumption that spouses are under a reciprocal obligation to economic maintenance. The Children and Parents’ Act assumes that parents are under the obligation to maintain their dependent children, but not adult children. On the other hand, adult children have no formal obligations towards their aging parents. Parents of children under the age of 12 are entitled to parental benefits and a tax allowance for childcare.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Norwegian family policies tended to provide support for women in their traditional roles as full-time housewives (Wærness 1999). In contrast to the rest of Scandinavia, the large-scale investment in public childcare in Norway came too late to facilitate mothers’ entrance into the labour market. However, starting in the early 1990s, important reforms took place with the general purpose of enabling *both* parents to combine employment and parenthood responsibilities. Policies are more and more based on a model of a symmetric family of two worker-caretakers (Ellingsæter 1999).

Costs of the child care services are shared between the state, the municipality and the parents. In Norwegian society, at least among middle-class families, it is widely accepted that attending state subsidized day-care institutions (*barnehage*) is a positive factor for the psychological and social development of children. Percentage of children in the age group 1-5, attending *barnehage* has increased from 19.3 in 1980 to 61.1 in 1999.

The period of paid parental leave has been gradually extended, and in 1993 was set at 42 weeks with full pay, or 52 weeks with 80 percent wage. Women who do not qualify for paid parental leave receive a lump sum grant which in 2000 was around 4.000 Euro.

Three weeks before and six weeks after birth are reserved as mother quota. A father quota –4 weeks' paid leave which cannot be transferred to the mother– was introduced in 1993. Though fathers had the opportunity to share paid leave with mothers earlier, only 2 per cent of them took advantage of it. After the introduction of this quota the percentage of fathers taking leave increased to over 80 per cent. Studies show that the likelihood that a father will use the quota increases when the mother works full-time and earns a relatively high income (Brandth & Överli 1998). If the father chooses not to make use of his four weeks, the weeks must be forfeited. In addition there is an opportunity to take two weeks of unpaid 'daddy leave' in connection with childbirth. Parents have the right to unpaid leave for up to 2 years. Each parent with a sick child under the age of 12 has the right to 10 days of fully paid leave per year. Parents with more than 2 children are entitled to 15 days each. Single providers are entitled to 20 days' leave to look after sick children, or 30 days if they have the care of more than two children under the age of 12. Nursing mothers are entitled to at least one hour off each day, or as necessary for this purpose. Alternatively, if she prefers to do so, a nursing mother can reduce her working hours by one hour per day by arriving one hour later or leaving one hour earlier than her normal working hours.

A time-account scheme allows parents to take portions of their paid leave in combination with part-time work. Parents have the opportunity to work shorter hours without a reduction in income until the child is two or three years old. The period of full-time leave of absence is reduced, but the size of the parental or adoption benefit remains the same. The benefit period is extended and the parents can combine work with care of the child without loss of income.

In 1998, a new cash-for-care (*Kontantstøtte*) policy was introduced. This policy implies that parents can choose a cash benefit instead of public day-care if they choose to take care of their children themselves, or hire a nanny. This is an entitlement for all parents who have children between 1 and 3 years of age, who do not use publicly sponsored childcare.

Childcare policies have been controversial in Norway. The official childcare policy has been declared as providing full coverage in state subsidised day-care centres however there is an historical legacy of a lack of political consensus on the issue of public childcare (Ellingsæter 1999). Daycare institutions for children over 3 years of age have traditionally been more widely accepted than for those under 3. The new 'cash-for-care' policy has been one of the hottest topics in social policy debates (Wærness 1998). Evaluations of the reform document that cash-for-care did not have highly significant effects, neither on the work and time-use patterns of parents, nor on the implementation and demand for state-subsidised day care

centres (Knudsen and Wærness 2001). The government has proposed an increase in the coverage of day-care for children under school age from 70 to 80 per cent within 2005.

School entry age was recently changed from seven to six years. In the wake of this there has been a debate about the care for children between six and ten since the normal school day for this age group is far shorter than parents' working hours. In most cases parents have to pay for the after-school-hours care. As the cost is decided by the local municipalities, these vary hugely across the country.

In 2000, the National Insurance Act has been amended to allow the father to receive parental or adoption benefit based on his own rights regardless of whether the mother has earned rights in the labour market. This change has been advocated by many researchers working in the field of gender and the labour market.

7.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

As the focus of research in this area varies immensely, the theoretical perspectives applied are numerous, depending on how this concept is defined. Small scale qualitative studies tend to have a 'bottom-up' perspective, focusing on how families interact under changing conditions. Most studies into this area have been done from what can loosely be called a 'women's perspective'. The connection between women's research, the women's movement and the state, was strong in the seventies when the research into women's and families' conditions started in earnest. As the 'essentialism' debate took hold in the eighties, there has been a marked change towards problematising gender as a research topic of its own right, and studies focusing on gender identities, variations in life-style etc. have become more prominent. Such studies are often carried out from a social constructionist perspective, which has also come to influence the research agenda in the fields of families and the labour market.

Effects of policy reforms on work-family patterns have been evaluated from different perspectives. The effects of the cash-for-care reform on mothers' and fathers' employment, arrangements for childcare and time-use have been analysed (e.g. Rønsen 2001, Magnussen et al. 2001, Hellevik & Koren 2000).

The gendered division of care work, negotiations related to division of housework and childcare, relational aspects of gender and power structures within families have also been central perspectives guiding research (e.g. Wærness 2000, Syltevik 2000, Brandth & Kvande 2003). In studies focusing on interaction within families, symbolic interactionist perspectives have been prominent (Levin 1994, 2003).

7.3.2.2 Main methodology

Several surveys administered by (SSB) and The Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) provide up-to-date data on different aspects of social life in Norway.

Time-use surveys are useful in studying work-family interactions and gendered division of labour. Statistics Norway administers time-use surveys which capture people's time allocation by asking representative samples of individuals to keep a diary of two consecutive days. The

surveys are compiled in the beginning of each decade since 1970. Activities are coded according to a list of approximately 100 categories. Work activities are separated from leisure, personal tasks and unpaid work (covering housework, childcare, maintenance work and purchase of goods and services).

There are also small scale qualitative studies based on face-to-face interviews with individual family members, mothers, fathers and children, or with couples (e.g. Levin 1994, Moxnes 2001; Syltevik 2000, Sümer 2002).

Among the Norwegian researchers, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of combining qualitative and quantitative research methods.

7.3.2.3 *Main empirical findings*

Surveys on attitudes document that a great majority of Norwegian parents support public child care institutions (*barnehage*) as the best pedagogical offer, but there is disagreement about how old children should be when they start and how much time they should spend there (Gulbrandsen 2002).

The main finding of the several projects that have evaluated the cash-for-care reform is that it did not have very significant effects on parent's working hours and labour force participation. Mothers have only slightly reduced their working hours in the labour market. Approx. 20 per cent of the mothers who use cash-for-care did decrease their working hours, while only 5 per cent of fathers did so (Sletvold 2000). The demand for state subsidised day care did not decrease. Many surveys document that parents of small children have positive attitudes towards day-care centres and demand an increase in coverage rates and decrease in prices (e.g. Gulbrandsen 2002, Hellevik 2000).

The likelihood of a family receiving cash benefit increases with lower socio-economic status. There is also a correlation between the mother's labour force participation and the use of a cash support scheme: The distribution of users is higher among part-time working mothers than among those who are full-time employed, and highest among unemployed mothers (Hellevik 2000). Among the users of cash-for-care, mainly women with weakest links to the labour market have reduced their working hours. The weak or strong attachment to the labour market is influenced by level of education, income and working conditions.

There are also qualitative studies evaluating the cash-for-care reform. Magnussen et al (2001) administered a study based on semi-structured interviews with 40 mothers. They found that parents have different decisions concerning childcare. Out of 40 families, 10 used day-care centres and did not receive cash-for-care. Out of the 30 who received cash-for-care, 10 used paid care (nannies). According to the mothers that were interviewed, cash-for-care has had limited influence on their decisions concerning work and care arrangements.

Mothers who have decided to be home for a longer period said that the reform made it easier for them to take the decision of being home or reducing working hours. Parents tend to base their choice of childcare arrangements by referring to what is best for the child and not to economic factors.

The main criticism against the cash-for-care reform is that parents do not spend much more time with their children as a result of the benefit (as was the intention), that fathers do not devote more time to them and that the cash benefits scheme is therefore an obstacle to gender equality. Those who are positive to the reform have underlined the fact the cash-for-care can give some women the opportunity to leave bad working conditions.

Another significant research finding is the fact that work-family balance is still mainly a “feminine dilemma.” It is mainly mothers who prefer to decrease their work hours after becoming mothers. This is true even in families in which both the mother and the father are professionals with relatively equal income levels (Sümer 2002). Time-use surveys show that women have increased the time they use in paid work and have dramatically decreased the time they use on housework. However, this is not balanced by an increase in men’s time on housework. Both women and men have increased the time they use for active childcare (Kitterød 2002).

A recent study on housework (Blekesaune 2000) investigates the relationship between family phases and time spent on household work and leisure activities among occupationally active adults 22 to 58 years of age. Having children has a significant effect on time-use.

Several studies also document that fatherhood has been changing. Qualitative studies of fathers’ use of parental leave show that many fathers reflect actively on how to practice fatherhood and on how their working hours should be adjusted to their parental responsibilities (Brandth & Kvande 1998). Studies on fathers’ parental leave show that the likelihood that a father will use the quota increases when the mother works full-time and earns a relatively high income (Brandth & Överli 1998).

Syltevik (2000) provides a complex picture of the Norwegian family practices, based on in-depth interviews with couples and focuses on differences among these couples in terms of the ways they combine their work and family lives and their decision-making patterns. The study shows that the labour market and the individuals’ position in it has a decisive effect on how daily life is formed. Another finding is related to differences between couples with higher and lower education: those with higher education feel that they have more choices in their life-planning.

Changes in public policy has increased awareness of the social cost of reproduction and the necessity of a fair division between the private and public spheres with respect to the responsibility of these costs (Skrede 1999).

7.3.2.4 Gaps in research

Though there are a number of studies that focus on the work-family balance, a specific focus on parenting strategies, decision-making and a life-course perspective are the main gaps in this field. There are also few studies that focus on differences between types of families, in terms of social class and education.

7.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

In Norway, the labour market is highly regulated and the welfare state is a strong actor in this field as well. Generous unemployment benefits, a large public sector and active labour market policies are the main characteristics.

The employment rate in Norway is very high. In 2000, 80.7 per cent of Norwegians participated in the labour market. This rate is 84.8 per cent for men and 76.5 per cent for women (SSB Norway). Around 43 per cent of Norwegian women work part-time. This rate is very high compared to the European average of 37 per cent. This is mainly due to the large female dominated public sector and a result of the welfare state monetising women's traditionally unpaid work (Kitterød & Kjeldstad 2002). Generally, a well developed welfare state is seen as a notable factor in the improvement of women's status in the labour market since the task of caring for the non-productive groups in the population have been moved out of the private, unpaid arena, to paid work for women in the public sphere. The development of formal welfare state caring supported Norwegian women's earning opportunities, reduced their dependence on individual men and strengthened the mutual dependence between the women and the state (Wærness 2000; Leira 2002).

Employment is characterised by a high public-sector dependency, especially for women: 46 per cent of women work in the public sector (Ellingsæter 1999). Differences in earnings are the largest in private sector jobs. Workers are well organised in the public sector: about 80 per cent are union members, compared to less than 50 per cent in the private sector. The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) is the main trade union body, organizing 29 per cent of all employees.

In Norway, the Work Environment Act regulates daily and weekly working hours. Maximum working time is 40 hours weekly. According to collective agreements in all industries and sectors 37.5 hours per week is standard working time (Torp & Barth 2001: 9). Average working hours were 37.8 for men and 30.8 for women in 2002 (Gunnes & Tørres 2002).

One of the major challenges to the Norwegian labour market is the shortage of labour in several sectors of the economy, especially the health and care sector.

Women's (and especially mothers') labour force participation has been constantly increasing in the last two decades. Women's employment in Norway is facilitated by the public take-over of the provision of education, health and welfare services such as day care for children and services for the elderly.

7.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Characteristics of the labour market and different organisations have been analysed widely in Norway. In the recent years, numerous research projects have been carried out which specifically focus on gender hierarchies (e.g. Ellingsæter and Solheim 2002, Kvande 1998). Working time, flexibility, hierarchy, power relations, gender equality and segregation have been popular research topics.

Gender composition of the top-management and the scarcity of women at the higher levels of the hierarchy has been a major research focus (The so-called “glass-ceiling” *Glasstaket*).

There have been many studies on income differences between women and men (For a review of these studies, see Høgsnes 2000). Most of these studies have been based on information on individual workers and the aim has been to document the effects of gender on income differences by controlling for other variables.

Changes in the labour market are also analysed with a focus on changing time regimes and contracts (Ellingsæter 2001, 2002).

Theoretical perspectives in this field have recently been debated in one of the major social science journals, the main focus of the debate was how to theoretically understand the horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market (Nilsen and Raam 2003).

7.3.3.2 *Main methodology*

SSB has various surveys that highlight the characteristics and patterns of the Norwegian labour market. Employment patterns are continually monitored through the national Labour Force Surveys. There are also numerous research institutions that specialize on labour market analyses. For example, the Institute for Social Research (ISF) in Oslo conducts research projects on employment, working conditions and gender and publishes a periodical with the title “Focus on the labour market” (*Søkelys på arbeidsmarkedet*).

There are also several qualitative research projects based on in-depth interviews in different sectors and organizations, as well as studies that combine different methods.

7.3.3.3 *Main empirical findings*

Numerous studies of gender segregation in the labour market show that women and men do different types of work, in different types of jobs, which are related to different wage structures (Ellingsæter 1999).

Reasons for the lack of female top managers in private sector organisations have been the topic of several studies, that to some extent have produced contradictory results (Storvik 2002). Some have found that the image of the ideal leader that prevails in organisations is a masculine one, while other studies document that the ideals include both masculine and feminine traits. Some studies focus on women’s own priorities and motivation, while others stress their care responsibilities and remaining traditional care arrangements.

In the public sector, the percentage of women among managers has increased to 20 in 2001, while it is still around 6 % in the private sector.

Studies on sector differences reveal that a shared “worker-carer” family model seems to conflict most with structures and cultures in the private sector (Ellingsæter 1999). The public sector accommodates the greatest flexibility in its work force and also offers better economic compensations to its employees.

Studies on working time arrangements show that flexible working hours are quite common in some administrative and business services. National survey data reveal that the fraction of employed people stating that they have flexible working time arrangements (that they “either perfectly or to some extent decide the start and the end of the daily working hours”) increased from 8 per cent in 1980 to 50 per cent in 1999 (Torp & Barth 2001).

Studies of preferred working hours show that among men and women with small children, the percentage who would prefer shorter working hours is higher than the average, especially for women (28 per cent).

Differences between women’s and men’s working hours are structured by occupational and company cultures. Abrahamsen (2002) finds that the norm about the “normal worker” and the “normal working hours” is less strict in female dominated than in male dominated occupations. The norm for the worker in male dominated occupations is full-time or more, while employees in female dominated occupations (mainly women) have a variety of part-time arrangements.

Consistent gendered differences in salaries have been documented by various studies. A main finding is that women working in female-dominated occupations earn much less than men who work in male-dominated occupations (Høgsnes 2000). Work in the care sector has low status and retain low wages.

There have been several studies of reproduction and employment. The concern for working mothers in Norway has historically been centred around the protection of biological motherhood: pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding. There is legislation to prevent discrimination because of pregnancy (Ellingsæter 1999). However, complaints to the Gender Equality Ombud suggest that discrimination against pregnant women is occurring in Norway. Studies on pregnancy and employment conclude that general flexibility of the work organisation is important for obtaining satisfactory job adjustments for pregnant women.

Analyses of fathers’ use of different parental benefits (parental leave vs. time-account scheme) indicate that state imposed leave systems provides legitimacy for taking leave from work. Time accounts open for more negotiations with the employer. When use of family-friendly policies become an individual option, the employee risks becoming marginalised (Brandth & Kvande 2001).

The time account scheme gives parents the opportunity to combine parental leave with part time work. It was introduced in 1994, but has been very little used. In 1998, only 2,6 per cent of the mothers and 0,8 percent of the fathers used the time account (Holter & Brandth 1998). Parents with higher education and work status dominated the group of time-account users. Both little knowledge about the scheme and a low degree of flexibility in relation to regulations were mentioned as main problems in negotiations with the social security office concerning the time-account scheme (Holter & Brandth 1998).

Several studies focus on the structures and cultures of the “new” labour market and attempt to illuminate its gendered aspects (Forseth & Rasmussen 2002, Ellingsæter & Solheim 2002). Increase in the knowledge-based service industries and growth in the flexible employment, as

freelancing, seasonal working and teleworking have also attracted interest (Bakke et al. 2001). A general finding is the increase in over-time work among the employees working in knowledge industries (Bungum & Kvande 2002). In general there has been a widening gap between formal regulations and actual practices: For example, while paid overtime is formally restricted, unpaid overtime has increased (Ellingsæter 1999).

Some researchers argue that dynamic organisations with flat and changeable structures give better opportunities to women than static organizations with solid and hierarchical structures (Kvande 1998, Rasmussen 2002). However, many also point that the “best” jobs in the new work life are also those which are most time demanding. For example, a broad qualitative study in 3 organizations (in finance, advertising and Information Technology) has shown that these workplaces were characterised by an increasing individualisation of responsibility for the results and a blurring of boundaries between work and private life (Rasmussen 2002). These jobs demand a lot of time and are especially difficult to combine with parental responsibilities. Such studies illuminate negative consequences of the focus on “flexibility,” leading to problems of overtime and difficulties in boundary setting.

Norwegian equality politics, which expects work life and family life to be combinable contrasts with the new trends in work life whereby the workplace is becoming more and more seductive and greedy (Brandth & Kvande 2001).

A study in progress (Bø 2001) analyses the daily passages and adjustments between the home, the nursery and the work place, based on interviews with managers and parents. A preliminary finding is that women working in male-dominated organisations tend to quit work. A main reason is the organising of the working day and the lack of flexibility. Women still have the main responsibility for domestic work, and even though there have been positive developments in this field, the sphere of production is still seen as having a higher status than the sphere of reproduction (Bø 2001).

7.3.3.4 Gaps in research

The interaction between the demands from the labour market and familylife needs to be studied with a focus on decision making and negotiations. The stabilities in the labour market, continuing segregation and devaluing of typically female jobs call for more in-depth studies. There is also need for more comparative, qualitative research projects to reach a better understanding of the characteristics of the “new” work-life. Norwegian research into questions relating to the intersection between work and family has not been particularly focused on employer-employee relationships. As the welfare state is changing and will perhaps become less regulating for the employer-employee relationship, such research is important for understanding both the historical context of such changes, as well as the directions future change might lead in.

7.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

During the course of this literature review, a translation problem concerning the term “well-being” became clear. In Norwegian there are at least three different words that could be used to describe three different levels of “well-being.” The Norwegian word *velferd* translates into

English as welfare. It refers to phenomena at the national or state level, measured as a whole population's welfare in terms of income, access to health services, housing, etc. The word *trivsel* is being used as a concept in studies about how people *like* for instance their workplace or their lives in general. It refers to an interpersonal level, the relationship between the individual and her/his surroundings and how these affect her/him positively or negatively. Closely related to *trivsel* is *tilfredshet*, what translates into English as satisfaction. The third word, *velvære*, is the term that is the direct Norwegian translation of well-being. This term refers to a personal, subjective feeling that relates to individual level aspects of life. In most cases *velvære* refers to a personal and bodily level.

7.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

In Norway, studies that attempt to measure general well-being of individuals have been carried out in the tradition of Scandinavian surveys on living conditions (*Levekårsforskning*), sometimes referred to as “level of living.” In this tradition the most important components of living conditions are conceptualized as the following resources (Fyhn and Dahl 2000):

- Health and access to medical treatment
- Employment and work conditions
- Economic resources and consumption
- Education opportunities and competence
- Family and social relations
- Housing
- Recreation and culture
- Security
- Political resources and democratic rights

Statistics Norway has carried out comprehensive surveys on the living conditions of the Norwegian population since 1976. The main purpose of these surveys is to map the distribution of central goods and “bads” in Norwegian society (Fyhn & Dahl 2000).

There have been many discussions on the living conditions surveys concerning the measures used and their objectives. A main critique has been related to the focus on “objective” measures and the need to include subjective evaluations of individuals (Sandbæk 2002). A differentiation between living conditions and quality of life was introduced.

There have also been studies on how people define “the good life.” These studies focus on ‘values’ and how they vary between different social groups, with the purpose of reaching a better evaluation of changes in society (Barstad 1999). There have also been a number of studies on “quality of life” defined as psychological well-being. In these studies the focus is on subjective evaluations of well-being.

A recent study titled “Quality of Life as Psychological Well-being”, Siri Næss (2001) provides a detailed analysis of the different uses of the concept of “quality of life” drawing on both international and Norwegian studies. She also presents widely used instruments and discusses the methodological problems related to self-reports. The study gives a summary of research findings on quality of life. This book is a comprehensive source for a review of research related to well-being in Norway.

7.3.4.2 Main methodology

Statistics Norway has periodical surveys (the so-called “omnibusundersøkelser”) on living conditions, that include questions related to personal happiness and satisfaction.

Statistics Norway has also executed a survey on values and “the good life” in 1999 based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of people aged 16-79 (Barstad 1999).

There are several academic studies that rely on qualitative data and analyze individual quality of life and coping mechanisms (“mestring”). Most of these studies are related to specific health problems, old-age, psychological problems or addictions. Numerous master theses in the fields of nursing, pedagogy, social work and psychology are produced yearly (These are not included in this literature review).

7.3.4.3 Main empirical findings

Norwegians show a considerably high degree of life satisfaction according to international surveys. The series of surveys carried out by *Norsk Monitor* show that the level of happiness among Norwegians has been stable in the last 15 years (Hellevik 1999). Moreover, women tend to report a higher level of happiness than men, and those with higher education are slightly happier than those with lower education. Level of happiness decreases with increasing age, after reaching a top level between the ages of 25 and 35. Family situation has a clear connection to the level of happiness: divorced persons (especially men) and those who live alone report a lower level of happiness. Hellevik argues that value orientations have a strong influence on feelings of happiness. His analyses show that individuals who score higher on materialism have a lower level of happiness than those who score higher on idealism (Hellevik 1999: 24).

Living condition studies show that the wishes and problems of the Norwegian population vary for different groups: For example, parents with small children wish for more leisure time while single parents wish for a better economy to get a better life (Barstad 1999). In general, more time for personal use, better economy and better health are the most frequently mentioned factors for a better life.

Most studies show that working conditions and unemployment influence individuals’ levels of life satisfaction, as well as mental health (Næss 2001). Another area in which quality of life research has had important contributions and which has been well-developed in Norway is “evaluation research.” Several care institutions and medical programmes have been evaluated by studying emotional well-being of patients.

There are also studies that focus on the living conditions and well-being of children. A recent study focusing on children, their family relations, school activities, health and social problems documents the need for separate surveys of children’s well-being from their own perspectives (Sandbæk 2002).

7.3.4.4 Gaps in research

Though there have been systematic collection of quantitative data to analyse living conditions, quality of life and well-being, there is a growing need to administer dynamic studies that follow individuals over the life-course.

Another important gap relates to studies that aim to combine several levels of well-being, especially by focusing on inter-personal and relational levels.

7.4 Conclusions

In Norway the last decade has been a period of “more state” in reproductive and labour market policies (Ellingsæter 2000). Historically, Norway has differed from the other Scandinavian countries in terms of family patterns and formulation of social policies. The ‘ideology of the traditional nuclear family’ (Wærness 1999) has been a basis for Norwegian social policies for a longer time. However, the last decade has witnessed important changes. The employed mother has received greater attention and the dual-earner family model became the prototypical family for social policies.

Studies show that, even though there is a diversification of family patterns, family relations retain their centrality in the lives of Norwegians. The majority of Norwegians choose to live with a partner and have children and most children live with both parents. However, the family has lost its institutional characteristics. For the first time in history, in 2002 a majority of children in Norway were born to parents who were not married. Fathers’ participation in childcare is increasing and around 85 per cent of fathers use their “quota” of parental leave. Time-use studies show that education has a significant effect on fathers’ participation in housework and childcare and that mothers still use more time on unpaid domestic work: a dual earner family is still not a dual-carer family.

An area that needs more attention from social scientists is the direction of the development in the status and organisation of low skilled care-work, both in the private and the public spheres. In the public sphere, low skilled care-workers are predominantly women and are poorly paid. These female-dominated occupations have low status in society and face serious recruitment problems. In the private sphere of the family, the major responsibility for organising care work still belongs to women. Positive development traits are evident in this field but change is slow.

A remarkable development in the 1990s have been a slightly increasing fertility rate and a combination of high fertility and high employment among women. The introduction of the controversial cash-for-care reform did not have dramatic consequences for the employment patterns of parents. There is an increasing demand for state subsidised child-care. Recently, the Norwegian Parliament agreed on a new action plan for day-care centres which aim at full coverage and reduced payments from parents.

Studies on living conditions and quality of life show that parents of small children differ from the rest of society concerning the higher pressure on their time resources. In general, Norwegian society is characterised by a scarcity of time, rather than a scarcity of money and time has become a major welfare problem.

Mothers’ attachment to the labour market is a decisive factor for the decisions concerning use and division of parental leave. Women who have marginal attachment to work (those with

lower levels of education and part-time workers) mainly decide to leave the labour market for longer periods during the phase when they have small children.

A more symmetric family model, in which both the mother and the fathers are earner-carers, can be supported by policy measures, such as access to reduced and flexible working hours. In the Norwegian context, unpaid care work is expanding as a basis for social citizenship rights. Various entitlements to care, such as parental leave vs. cash-for-care might have different implications for the right to work (Ellingsæter 1999). Studies show that it is easier to use “family friendly” policies when they are formulated as a universal right for all parents (like parental leave), rather than those that demand negotiations with employers (like the time-account scheme) (Brandth & Kvande 2001).

There are important differences between the public and the private sector in terms of gendered work patterns, attitudes and time norms. More national and international comparative research is needed to reach a better understanding of the emerging patterns in the “new” labour market, as well as the remaining gendered and social hierarchies.

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Useful Links

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs:

<http://www.odin.dep.no/bfd/engelsk/>

The Rights of Parents of Small Children in Norway

<http://www.odin.dep.no/bfd/engelsk/publ/handbooks/004071-120005/index-dok000-b-n-a.html>

Norway's National Follow-up to the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women

<http://www.odin.dep.no/bfd/engelsk/publ/rapporter/004005-990227/index-dok000-b-n-a.html>

The Center for Gender Equality

<http://www.likestilling.no/engelsk/english.shtml>

Norwegian Information and Documentation Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research

<http://kilden.forskningsradet.no/english/index.html>

Labour market conditions in Norway:

<http://www.globalpolicynetwork.org/data/norway/norway-analysis.pdf>

<http://odin.dep.no/odin/engelsk/norway/economy/032005-990439/index-dok000-b-f-a.html>

Statistics Norway:

<http://www.ssb.no/english/>

Minifacts about Norway:

http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/minifakta_en/en/

Chapter 8 Slovenia

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8.1 Introduction

Slovenia covers about 20.000 km and has just below 2 million inhabitants. Before the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, Slovenia was the most prosperous and industrialised among six constitutive Yugoslav republics. It became an independent state in 1991 and has endured the drastic economic and political transitions and the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia rather well. Among the factors beneficial for progress in transition were earlier experience of influences from democratic and market economies not only in trade but also through the relatively free mobility of people (Sicherl et al., 2002). During the first phase of its transition to market economy there was a drastic fall in economic activity and the standard of living, serious market instability and increasing unemployment. In the middle of 1993, the economy bottomed out of the recession and entered a period of intensive restructuring of production and consumption. The second phase of transition is indicated by intensive ownership, financial, status and managerial restructuring (Hanzek et al., 1998). Although the process of privatisation is coming to its end there are quite a number of organisations where the state has significant ownership share.

From 1945 until the nineties Slovenia was a socialist country whose welfare state regime resemble to social-democratic, after its independence it has started to get more and more corporatist elements. Compared to other post-communist countries the transformation processes have been slow and the reforms of social policy have been gradually taking place and only during the last years some attempts have been indicated in the direction of integration of policy measures from various sectors. Although there has been the reduction in welfare programmes, the social policy measures that ease work-family balancing, have not been reduced and some of them has been even improved. Some elements of these social policy measures have been already in the eighties comparable with public policy measures from Scandinavian states. However the employer- employee relationships have drastically changed, both partners find themselves in a situation, which demands new knowledge, skills and patterns of behaviour. Increased conflict situation for parents is accompanied with high level of insecurity due to flexibilisation of labour market and employment relationships. Although the young women have achieved higher educational level compared to young men we could say that the transition has significantly affect both males and females.

Empirical research on living conditions and gendered patterns of behaviour has begun already in the middle of 60'ies (Szalai and Scheuch, 1972; Boh and Saksida, 1972) and since that time the reasearch on family, women and employment has continued with more or less interruptions on various Faculties of University in Ljubljana and the research institutes.

8.2 Short overview main research topics in SLOVENIA

The researches focused on transition to parenthood and young families are rather rare. During the last years these research topics have been investigating at the Faculty of social sciences (Centre for social psychology, Organisations and human resources research centre, Welfare studies Centre), at Institute for economic research and Scientific research centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

National fertility surveys give the most information regarding the decisions to have children and about value orientations of young people, young parents and other population segments. The research topics related to young families are: the reasons for postponed parenting, motivation to have a child, the problems and quality of life of young families. However there is quite a number of researches regarding family issues, division of labour, work - family relations, quality of life on representative samples of Slovenian population and organisational policies and practices on representative samples of organisations with more than 200 employees. Besides already mentioned fertility surveys, the only systematic and longitudinal studies have been Public opinion surveys and Quality of life surveys. The most popular empirical research topic in Slovenia, which is rather relevant for understanding the transition to parenthood and young families issues, is gender division of labour in private and public sphere and the problem of gender role attitudes (Cernic-Istemic, 1994, 1998; Cernigoj Sadar, 2000a, 2001; Kanjuo Mrcela, 1996; Jogan, 2000, 2001; Salecl, 2003; Stebe, 1999). All the other studies, which might be relevant for our project, are rather partial or mainly cover the theoretical perspectives with some statistical illustrations from Slovenia or other countries. The later cover the following topics: individualisation, pluralisation of family forms and life courses, changing gender roles, new fatherhood, myth of motherhood, marginalisation of some family forms and social groups.

Research on parenting strategies and work family boundaries begun in early 80's with two extensive project, those were "Testing of new methods for extending family use of social and rehabilitation services" (Boh and Cernigoj Sadar, 1985) and "International comparative study: Changing patterns of European family life " (Boh et al, 1989). The results of these studies indicated a combination of great variety of formal and informal resources in satisfying the family needs. As far as work family boundaries are concerned the strong interconnection between work and family life has been indicated however with a strong gender differences in content as well as an intensity of influences. Later the studies have been more focused mainly on child-care (Cernigoj Sadar and Vojnovic, 1992; Stropnik, 1997, 2001), which confirmed the earlier studies that parents mainly rely on family or informal resources for children aged up to 3 years, while for older children the formal forms of child-care are prevailing.

The systematic research on organisations regarding gender and family issues, flexibilisation of work and family life and research on careers have just started in the early years of this century. Compared to other European countries Slovenia has low number of formal human resources policies and the high number of informal ones (Svetlik et al, 2001). The researches about organisation are mainly focused on organisational culture, leadership and motivational

aspects for work (Konrad and Susanj, 1996; Konrad, 2000b; Konrad et al., 1999; Mesner Andolsek and Stebe 2001).

In the mid 70's the level of living studies begun, which in the second part of 80's transformed in to quality of life studies. On the basis of objective and subjective indicators it has been confirmed in several studies that the families with preschool children has the worse material conditions compared with the other social groups (Cernigoj Sadar and Bresar, 1996). The studies taking in to account quality of life in family, work and leisure indicated gender differences and different determinants coming from above mentioned life spheres on health and subjective well being (Cernigoj Sadar, 2001, 2002a).

8.3 Literature review per theme

8.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

8.3.1.1 Main theoretical perspectives

The Slovenian researches on young adults and parenthood are dealing mostly with family forming postponement and the reasons for it. The economical theory (Becker, 1981, cited in Cernic Istenic, 1998) and the sociological theory (Blossfeld and Jeanichen, 1992, cited in Cernic Istenic, 1998) of forming family are investigated. The first explains the postponement of marriages and the birth of the first child with increasing level of education of women and increased employment opportunities. According to this theory the education influences the demographic behaviour of women during the whole life period. The second also underlines increasing educational level of women, which influence their demographic behaviour. However this theory underlines that education of women influences only the transition from youth to adult life but not on their family roles.

The "doctrine of responsible parenthood" (Preston, 1986, cited in Cernic Istenic, 2000) explains the postponement of births as a consequence of parents conviction that they are primary responsible for their children and their well being. Therefore they want to assure them the best living conditions, it means to get a job, achieve financial stability, form a stable relationship and to solve housing problem before having a child.

Some studies examining the family forming postponement focus on life course theories and recent changes of life courses characteristic (Cernic Istenic, 2000; Beck, 1996, Habermas 1994). They emphasise the extension of youth into childhood and adulthood and its increasing importance. On one hand the education is prolonging, on the other young people would like to experience as much as possible (travelling, sports, having fun etc.) before having their own family. These ideas are connected with another group of theories usually applied in researches on parenthood: theory of risk perception related with family forming (Beck, 1996) and the theories of individualisation.

Theory of »the second demographic transition« and theory of "post-materialistic values" (Inglehart, 2001) explain the changes in social and demographic behaviour as a consequence of values changes, that is the rising of values such as: individual self-realisation, satisfying

personal preferences, liberation from traditional authorities, especially religion. People do not follow the traditional norms as much as they did in the past, they build their own autobiography (Giddens, 2000). One of the consequences is also a pluralisation of family forms and courses, which is another theme explored in connection with parenthood (Cernic Istenic, 2000; Renner, 2002; Svab, 2001; Ule, 2002; Ule et al., 2002).

The increased women's participation on the labour market, their focusing on career as well as their growing preference for self-affirmation are underlying elements of gender roles changes theory (Cernigoj Sadar, 1991; Frieze and Ferligoj, 1995) and also mentioned in social equality theory (Jogan, 2001).

Gender division of labour is another important theme in relation to motherhood based mainly on gender and feminist theories. Fatherhood is becoming an important theme, but the parenting role of the fathers is not clearly defined (Zavrl, 1999; Svab, 2000).

8.3.1.2 Main methodology

Empirical researches on representative sample are: Slovenian public opinion, Quality of life in Slovenia, Fertility survey, Youth survey, Labour force survey, Time budget survey, Population, family and welfare: attitudes towards policy, measures and its implementation (part of "Population related policy acceptance and attitude survey"- PPA. Social network research is applied to quota sample. In qualitative surveys on Social-economic position of young family in Slovenia directed interviews and focus groups have been applied.

8.3.1.3 Main empirical findings

Transitions

All transitions from school to employment, to parenthood and to autonomous housing have been postponed and are characterized as risky. During the 90s as well as in the new century economic reasons have been most often mentioned for decreasing the birth rate. These are the following: low and insecure income, poor access to social housing and chances to resolve housing problem and the cost of children. Besides the already mentioned the late decision for parenthood is due to changing value system of young people on one hand and high criteria for responsible parenthood and inconsistencies within individual value system on the other. There has been low variation among various social groups regarding this topic. Low labour market mobility prevents young people the relatively smooth entrance on labour market. The share of young people having fixed term contracts are significantly higher compared to older segments of population, which means also lower social security.

Social networks

During the transitional processes young people mainly rely on their family networks. The same happens with young parents. Partners and parents of young parents give the most support in resolving family problems. Neighbourhood networks are relatively weak. There is a tendency to solve all family problems within the family.

Values, interests, attitudes

The research findings show the growth of individualistic values, autonomy and self-realisation, connected with pluralisation of family forms and courses, as well as with family forming

postponement due to greater focusing on career development. Inconsistencies in individual value system are present as well.

Division of labour

The division of labour is still very traditional, especially in the private sphere. Due to family friendly public policy most mothers are full time employed and do not interrupt employment. Men take over only the minority of the care-giving tasks.

8.3.1.4 Gaps in research

In some cases the theoretical backgrounds are not elaborated or could be better elaborated. Also it has been happened that in some empirical researches the samples are not clearly enough defined, therefore the generalisations of conclusions are questionable. There is no continuity in research on relevant topics. The quantitative methodology is prevailing.

8.3.2 Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries

8.3.2.1 Main theoretical perspectives

The macro-changes in production and working life, when agricultural production changed into industrial production and production of services, influence the position and the role of family and its members as well as new division of labour and exchange between the family system and other institutions. The Parsonian structural-functional concept of the ideal family, which emphasised as functional the complementarities of the gender roles, has been criticized. Most of the empirical research on work-family issues referred to the contradictions of the contemporary family life already identified by Dahlstrom (1989:7): 1) the contradiction between production and reproduction, which is reflected in difficulties of combining parenthood and paid work; 2) state and its institution could not provide the bulk of caring, reproductive and socialisation work in society; policies which involve the family highly depend on the ideological assumptions about the most appropriate family forms and division of labour between the family members; 3) the contradiction between increased freedom of choice and change in conjugal relations and the need for the stability in children's life; and 4) the contradiction between a patriarchal heritage and the ideals of gender equalisations. In relation to the latter contradiction many feminist assumptions (Jogan, 1998, 2001; Oakley, 2000; Lewis, 1992) about the gender division of labour have been empirically tested with respect to asymmetrical potential for power and access to resources. The resources are not only material ones but are also cultural and symbolic in nature. All resources are weighted and evaluated in relation to family and individual identities of family members' self-images and self-knowledge therefore the individual family members may choose and also create different resources (Cernigoj Sadar, 1983). Social integration of the families and the types of the social support they have been receiving have been investigating by analysis of social network data (Igljic, 1988; Ule et al., 2003).

8.3.2.2 Main methodology

Besides the questionnaires and individual interviews also focus groups have been used to identify the access to various formal and informal resources. The samples: representative for specific age groups and quota sample.

8.3.2.3 *Main empirical findings*

Resources pulled out from regular employment are not enough to cover people's need. The deficit is compensated by mobilisation of additional economic resources such as extra work, moon-lightening and /or by intensification of household production of good and services for own production. Partners and the extended family members are those who most often help to solve the problems that have family members. Formal resources, even when available are mobilised mostly when family/kinship resources are exhausted and when professional criteria determine resource mobilisation and utilisation (Boh and Cernigoj Sadar, 1985, Ule et al., 2003); these coping strategies are especially in favour in case of resolving psychological problem and conflicts within the family. During the last decades persisting low level of trust is indicated in case of institutional help. The use of formal and informal resources is dependent on the need people want to satisfy, their age, education, gender, family structure and the place of living. One-parent families are the most disadvantaged regarding instrumental and emotional support networks (Ule et al., 2003). Women are the most burdened part of the social support networks. These results have the long lasting tradition since the first empirical research of resources family members use to satisfy their needs. Parents mainly rely on family and informal resources for caring the children aged up to 3 years. The percentage of small children in public childcare institutions has not changed significantly after nineties. Most of the children over 3 years of age are during the day in public childcare centers. However those parents who do not want their children due to various reasons to be in public child care centers have not much alternative options when they want to combine paid work with caring obligations (Cernigoj Sadar, 2003). Significant number of young mothers would like to work part time but only few of them realize it (Cernic Istenic, 2001).

From the subjective point of view family and work life are strongly interrelated, no matter to what extent family life and paid work are formally segregated. Both life spheres are rewarding for men and for women however it does not exclude conflicting relations between paid work and family. Due to existing social, economic and individual limitations for women the family is the source of conflict in relation to work while for men is just the opposite (Cernigoj Sadar, 1989).

8.3.2.4 *Gaps in research*

Quite a number of the researches have not clear theoretical starting points and do not take into account of the research that has been done on this subject in Slovenia before. Only some of recent researches take into account multiple relations between the variables used in the research; usually only two dimensional statistical analysis has been applied. The recommendations for the social policy measures are rather general.

8.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

8.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

Most of the researches in the organisations have been focused on organisational culture, work motivation and work satisfaction. These researches are based on Hofstede's theory explaining individualistic versus collectivistic culture (Konrad and Susanj, 1999; Mesner-Andolsek and Stebe, 2001; Svetlik and Ignjatovic, 2003), motivation theories (Maslow, Herzberg, Vroom), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck explanation of variations in value orientation (Treven, 2000) and cognitive theories on human action (Konrad, 1992)

Researches focused on organisational changes needed to adapt to market and global economy (Cvetko, 2002; Svetlik et al, 2001; Zupan, 1998, 1999) take into account the recent knowledge derived from empirical studies on human resource management in Europe and USA. In relation to work-family issues the most relevant are the researches on active employment policies and flexibilization of working arrangements (Ignjatovic and Kanjuo Mrcela, to be published; Cernigoj Sadar and Vladimirov, 2002; Sicherl, 2003).

Equal opportunities between men and women to enter the labour market, to choose the desired job and having promotion are analysed in the perspective of gender and feminist theories (Cernigoj Sadar and Versa, 2002; Jogan, 2001; Salecl, 2003; Kanjuo Mrcela, 1996, 2002). While the career development, which is very relevant for the empowerment of young parents combining work and family life, is mainly the issue of theoretical discussions (Cvetko, 2000; Konrad, 1996; Cernigoj Sadar, 1993).

Related to problems of employed young parents are also the researches on reconciliation of work and family life (Cernigoj Sadar, 2000) and analysis of the possibilities given by social policy measures regarding maternity/parental/paternity leave and financial assistance to children families (Cernigoj Sadar, 1996; Javornik, 2002; Belopavlovic, 2001; Stropnik, 2001b). Researches and discussions on theories related to quality of working life have been the extensions of quality of life researches done during the late 80s and 90s (Svetlik, 1996, 1998; Cernigoj Sadar, 2002). The recent analysis in progress are on learning organisation, life long learning and competencies.

8.3.3.2 Main methodology

Questionnaires, an analysis of organisational documents and social policy measures.

8.3.3.3 Main empirical findings

During the transition to market economy working conditions worsened above all in the primary sector and in public services. In market services the proportion of employees who have mentally taxing work significantly increased during the nineties (Svetlik and Trbanc, 1994). Although the quality of working life is relatively low the researches on satisfaction with work indicate that most employed people are satisfied with their work and have good relation with their work colleagues (Svetlik, 1996). Gender discrimination is indicated in human resource selection and promotion, in salaries and atypical forms of employment (Jogan, 2000). Young people, especially women more often experience the contract for limited period compared to older generation (Cernigoj Sadar and Versa, 2002). There are few women in high

management positions and the 'glass ceiling' is frequently mentioned (Kanjou Mrcela, 2000). Parents do not take advantage of legally offered flexible forms of work arrangements. Compared to other European countries organisations in Slovenia have low number of formal human resources policies and the high number of informal ones (Cernigoj Sadar and Vladimirov, 2003; Svetlik et al., 2001). Few recent case studies or studies on representative sample of organisations that are available to public (Cvetko, 2002; Svetlik et al., 2001) indicate the following serious hindrance for organisational development: lack of communication in organisations, lack in management skills and the absence of career planning.

8.3.3.4 Gaps in research

Although the theoretical articles on organisation take into account the most recent knowledge on this subject, the empirical studies available to public are rare. Most studies in organisations are based on questionnaires, which cover rather general issues and do not take into account the so-called vulnerable groups. There is a lack of investigation on career and communication problems and action research. The aspect of gender is missing in organisational research. The research on work-family issues in organisations reflecting the experience of various groups is yet to be done.

8.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

8.3.4.1 Main theoretical perspectives

The term well-being has been rarely used in Slovenian professional literature. In the literature review from 1992 to April 2003 this term has been found in 57 titles. Most of them have been found in articles in the field of socio-medicine (Premik, 1996), probably it has been the response of the professionals to the severe critics and limitations of biomedical model of health. However in these articles the concept well-being has not been elaborated. The concept has been most often mentioned in relation to chronic illness (Petek and Kores-Plesnicar, 2000), psychological disturbances, old age problems and in relation to healthy way of life. While in sociological and psychological literature it has been found only in few articles (Cernigoj Sadar, 1998; Musek and Avsec, 2002). Professionals in the later mentioned scientific fields usually used the terms similar to the denotation of well-being such as self-realisation, personal growth, satisfaction with life and quality of life.

In the first Quality of Life in Slovenia research in 1984 the Swedish model – the Level of living Study was adapted – which put forward man's/ woman's capacity to satisfy various needs. Level of living was defined as 'the individual's command over resources in the form of money, possessions, knowledge, mental and physical energy, social relations, security and so on, through which the individual can control and consciously direct his living conditions (Johansson, 1970:20, citation from Erikson and Aberg, 1987). In this study we have used so called descriptive approach. Later in the theoretical discussions as well in the interpretations of empirical results the concepts of basic needs (Allardt, 1973; Maslow, 1954; Mc Call, 1986) has been taken into account. At the beginning of 90s the subjective perceptions of need satisfactions (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976) indicators evaluative/subjective indicators) have been added to so called 'descriptive/objective

indicators'. It has been in tune with Allardt's alternative to Swedish model of Welfare research (1993). He has focused on the level of need satisfaction rather than on resources and the use of both objective and subjective indicators for the research into living conditions. His concepts of having, loving and being have been the most often cited theoretical frame of reference for quality of life studies in Slovenia. Although the conceptualisation of quality of life has been changed, the general term quality of life (*kakovost življenja*) has been still used in professional articles.

The term quality of life has appeared in more than 300 professional articles in Slovenian language. The concept appeared in the same context as already mentioned for well-being however, it covers more spheres of life in depth such as for example quality of working life (Svetlik, 1996, quality of family life (Cernigoj Sadar and Bresar, 1996; Cernic Istenic, 1994), health (Cernigoj Sadar, 2002) and leisure (Cernigoj Sadar, 1996, 2001) and more population groups (such as employed, unemployed, youth, women etc.).

8.3.4.2 Main methodology

In the first study on quality of life in Slovenia in 1984 the cross-sectional approach was applied, which has been repeated in 1987 and 1991. In the 1994 study data were collected retrospectively for the period 1974 – 1994. The changes in employment career, family career and residential mobility from 1974-1994 have been covered. In the later study we distinguished between changes within the life cycles of the individual, the cohort effect and period effects, which affect all members of a community regardless of their stage in the life cycle and whether they belong to a particular cohort and event history approach, questionnaire.

8.3.4.3 Main empirical findings

The most vulnerable groups are: unemployed, having unstable work contract and the groups live in atypical family forms (one parent family, extended family). Families with pre-school children are in the worse position regarding housing standard, average income per family member, although the share of employment of both parents is the highest compared to families in other life cycles.

The achieved level of education is decisive for the distribution of resources. Parents of pre-school children having vocational education or less compared to parents having higher educational level on average work longer hours but having lower income. The young people who have had children in their early twenties have lower quality of life compared to those who entered parenthood later.

8.3.4.4 Gaps in research

The term "quality of life" has been the term most often mentioned in social sciences literature during last five years, however it has never been sufficiently elaborated and critically theoretically reflected. It seems to be an ideal umbrella term, which could be easily combined with particularistic theories in the sphere of work, family, leisure etc. in sociology and psychology. The qualitative researches, which would explore the meaning of well-being in various social groups, are missing.

8.4 Conclusions

Although the researches directly connected with transition to parenthood and young families are rather rare in Slovenia, there are quite a number of studies on other related issues, which might be useful for understanding the background for family forming, the problems of young families and the work-family reconciliation. The empirical research on the position of women in society began in the sixties with time budget and media studies. In the middle of the 70ies there has been an increase in research on gender division of labour, fertility research and research on living conditions which have been the forth comers of quality of life research. Due to traditional high share of women on the labour market and the fact that young generation of women has achieved higher level of education compared to that of young men the professional and public interest in work –family issues increased in the new century. The main problem is that most empirical investigations have no continuity; the exceptions are Fertility surveys, Public opinion surveys and Quality of life surveys. These surveys having multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach and well-elaborated methodology give a solid starting base for the research on gender, parenthood and changing workplaces.

An overview of the literature has indicated that the authors follow recent theoretical discourses in Europe (mainly those published in English) and USA, however the critical reflections of them are often missing. Empirical studies should also consider to a greater extent the results of previous empirical studies already in the phase of their conceptualisation as well as in the phase of the interpretation of the new results. Such an approach would give the possibilities to answer why the patterns of behaviour are so slowly changing, why some results have been repeating over decades and why so many people do not take advantage of relatively good public family policies. The topics that have been poorly or not at all covered up to now in Slovenian empirical research, but relevant for understanding work-family relations, are: changes in the role of men in the family, motivational basis of men's behaviour in public and private life, the relations between the perceptions of men and women, the integration of public and organisational policies, relationships among generations and organisational studies on work-family issues and also the studies that would combine quantitative and qualitative methodological approach. There are also many studies on children but they cover mostly specific and/or vulnerable groups or only isolated problems regarding children.

Due to long tradition of public policy that enable employment of women Slovenia could be a valuable resource of information on advantages and shortcomings regarding full time employment of women and young parents, while on the other hand the country needs more information how to integrate work and family life or even more how to achieve balanced life in a highly competitive society.

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Chapter 9 France

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9.1 Introduction

In the context of a rise in unemployment and casualisation of the labour market (almost 10 per cent), the issue of balancing paid work and family life has been relegated to a second position onto the policy agenda. Public opinion is actually much more concerned about the impact of the reforms of pension systems and the educational system that is in predicament. However, the implementation of the 35-hour week since 2000 has been accompanied by a resurgence of interest in the ways in which parents can reconcile paid work and family obligations and debates have taken place about the impact of the reduction of working time on the daily life of family members. The issue of 'active fathering' has also gained momentum with the recent paternity leave, put in place in 2002.

Against this background, public opinion surveys (Credoc, 1998, 2001) demonstrate that a rising number of dual-earner couples are still dealing with a shortage of publicly subsidised child care arrangements. However, in comparative and cross-national research, France is always one of the cluster of countries with policies that provide extensive support for maternal employment. A spate of literature (Letablier, 2000) has demonstrated that support for the dual breadwinner family is much more generous in France than in most European countries. However, in spite of the fact that there is a strong tradition of policies to help to combine paid work and family responsibilities (Commaille, Martin, 1999, Fagnani, 2000, Martin, 1998), there is still a lot of debates related to the difficulties working parents are coping with in the management of their daily life and in particular in child-care arrangements (Flipo, Régnier-Loilier, 2003, Leprince, 2003).

Debates and controversies around the topic of the reconciliation of professional and family life - largely echoed in the media, in particular when the annual "Family Conference" takes place - mirror the fact that public decision-makers are becoming more aware of the paramount importance of improving the schemes which have been progressively put in place by family policy since the 1970's. Against this background, research is being currently carried out and funded by CNAF, the National Family Allowance Fund, one of the 3 branches of the Social Security.

9.2 Short overview main research topics

It is worth noting that relatively little research has been devoted to the work/life balance issue *per se*. This contrasts with the fact that social scientists in the 1980s and 1990s generated a flurry of important and interdisciplinary research into the causes of the growing labour force participation of young mothers and into female employment patterns (Glaude, 1999, Maruani, 2000). Recently, a lot of studies have also been focusing on the gendered-division of labour within the family and how paid and unpaid work is shared between partners in different social categories (Algava, 2002, Barrère-Maurisson et al., 2001, Barrère-maurisson, 2003, Brousse, 1999). Attention has also been paid to how working mothers and fathers combine a job with family life and the extent to which they rely on the different schemes provided by family and social policies (Fagnani, Letablier, 2003a, Guillot, 2002, Leprince, 2003). Research investigating the complex bundle of factors explaining gender discrimination in the labour market, such as the enduring wage gap has also taken into account the role of some public schemes such as parental leave and child rearing benefit (Duclos, 2002, Laufer, 1998, Meurs, Ponthieux, 2000,).

In the area of family life and family interactions, fathers' involvement in child care has been one of the main concern over the last three years. Qualitative research has emphasised the fact (Castelain-Meunier, 2002, Cicchelli, 2001, Neyrand, 1999, Singly de, 1996) that many young fathers say they would like to play a bigger part in their children's lives. Authors argue that "male identity" is in predicament and focus on the cultural changing attitudes between generations that have occurred over the last decades in France.

Attention has also been paid to the development of flexible working hours and to its impact on the reconciliation of family life and paid work which has often created tensions in families coping with difficulties in the management of their daily life. Moreover, *Creches* and nursery schools are not accommodating of varied employment schedules: the operating hours of public childcare facilities often don't match the flexible working hours of working parents. One of the main topic in this area is the shortage of publicly subsidized child care provision and the long time spent outside of the home by young children as a result of the long working hours parents are putting in (Fermanian, Lagarde, 1998, Ruault, Audrey, 2003).

The impact of the new Law that mandates a 35-Hour Week has also drawn attention. Research has explored the impact of the reduction in working time on the ways in which parents combine their job with their family obligations. Most of the employers were reluctant about this law and strongly opposed the view of the government when the law was passed by 1999. However, employers have been obliged to come to terms with the implementation of the law. Therefore, in exchange and to offset the drawbacks of this law, they have tried to increase flexibility at the workplace. As a result, a bigger part of employees are now obliged to work later in the evening or to work on Saturdays.

Eventually, following the implementation of the "PACS", a lot of debates have taken place around the right for gay couples to adopt a child. In this context, questions have been raised as far as the meaning of being a "parent" is concerned (Blöss, 2001).

9.3 Literature review per theme

Although some recent studies have shown that the gender gap in family housework is slightly diminishing since the eighties (Brousse, 1999), research indicates a continuing discrepancy in the performance of domestic tasks, even when both spouses or partners are employed full-time. Against this background, many researchers have explored the reasons for this enduring asymmetry in family involvement and have dealt with the issue of the meaning of “active fathering”. Therefore a lot of research has been devoted to the topic of men’s activities as fathers and correlatively to the current changes in family relationships (Singly de, 2000, Théry, 1998) and to the emergence of a new “gender contract” (Letablier, 2000, Letablier, 2002). P. Bourdieu (1998) also wrote an important essay on “male domination” in our societies, in particular putting emphasis on the reasons why gender ideologies are still so potent in our societies.

9.3.1 Theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

A spate of literature is devoted to this topic and emanates from different disciplines (sociology, psychology, anthropology). There is a consensus in this literature that having children is no longer considered to be as important as it was previously, since becoming a parent is no longer regarded as necessary to achieve accomplished partnership. Public opinion surveys (CREDOC, 2001, 2003) show the importance of stability of the couple and their economic situation in deciding to have children. Another important factor is the availability of suitable housing. However, surveys confirm that the majority of young people want to have children (between two and three), but economic uncertainty leads some of them to downsize their expectations and restrict the number of children desired.

9.3.1.1 *Main theoretical perspectives*

They are very diverse: human-capital theory, gender-ideology theory or family-systems theory are the most frequent perspectives adopted by the researchers.

9.3.1.2 *Main methodology*

Some research has used quantitative methods (statistical analysis) and some others give precedence to qualitative methods. Results of Méron and Widmer (2002), for instance, are established for women born between 1952 and 1973, on the basis of data from the Youth and Careers Survey carried out by INSEE in 1997. Data collection covered women aged 19 to 45 from among the outgoing third of the Survey sample. The sample is representative of the population and is made up of 20,770 individuals. Biographical analysis is used to shed light on the impact of female unemployment on childbearing plans, by including the timing of life history events of individuals among the variables that explain behaviour.

The study of Ekert-Jaffé and al. (2002) relies on data from the Longitudinal Study of England and Wales and the Permanent Demographic Sample in France, that link birth registrations to 1971-1991 and 1968-1990 census data, respectively.

Robert-Bobée (2002) from INSEE carried out a statistical analysis whose aim is to analyse family building and to forecast demographic behaviours of young people. He used microsimulation of demographic behaviours based on two alternative data sources 1) the

1997 INSEE Survey about Young Adults and Professional Trajectories 2) the 1999 INSEE Survey on Family Histories. People aged from 19 to 45 were interviewed.

9.3.1.3 *Main empirical findings*

I) The decisive role of unemployment in family formation

As far as family building is concerned, M. Méron and I. Widmer (2002), working at the “Institut National des Etudes Démographiques” (INED), have carried out a study which highlights the trade-offs made by young couples in this area: they have demonstrated that unemployment, more than other activity statuses, prompts childless young women in union to delay a prospective maternity. Their results confirm that economic fluctuations have an especially important impact on the early working life of the young, at the very time when they may be starting a family.

Méron and Widmer (2002) provide strong evidence that young women confronted with a period of unemployment choose to forego their first child for a while, rather than take advantage of the “free” time imposed on them. In contrast, homemakers especially at the beginning of their union tend to have their first births much more rapidly. This result confirms that a period of unemployment is not tantamount to a period of inactivity. In matters of fertility, unemployed women are not homemakers. The influence of intermittent employment on family building is similar to that of unemployment among the younger cohorts. The authors demonstrate that economic fluctuations have an especially important impact on the early working life of the young, at the very time when they may be starting a family.

Ekert-Jaffé and her colleagues (2002) conducted a comparative research on family building in Britain and France. As stated by the authors “Comparison of family growth and the timing of births in France and Britain calls for consideration of the role of family policy and women’s economic conditions in determining their demographic behaviour”. Over the period studied, the 1970s through the 1990s, in Britain state intervention has been minimal, while France practised a generous family policy. In parallel, social polarization in fertility behaviour was larger in Britain, and differences in fertility between those women who leave the labour force and those who do not were larger still. In France, differences by socio-occupational group are observed only at third births, although by the second birth there is already an association between parity progression and having left the labour force as of the census observation. In France, almost all married women in managerial occupations become mothers, while in Britain one quarter of such women do not. Fertility in Britain is higher at all birth orders among those not in the labour force and in less-skilled occupations, while in France family policy tends to increase third births in those categories too.

Comparing women born in the 1950s to those born in the 1960s reveals that the postponement of marriage and fertility, in particular among highly educated women, appreciable in both countries, is more marked in France. Among married women, however, changes in fertility have been negligible. All other things being equal, the differences in fertility by socio-occupational group has been decreasing in France, but not in Britain.

Robert-Bobée (2002) showed that if demographic behaviours remain the same as the ones observed in 1995-1996 or in 1996-1998, completed fertility may decrease to a little less than 2

children per women (born around 1970 and after 1975), i.e. around 1.91. These simulations rely on several assumptions which may prove inadequate in the future. Some other uncertainties stem from the size of the sample.

II) The influence of the educational level

Demographic studies carried out by INSEE (Daguet, 2002) and INED (two public institutions dealing with demographic statistics) show that in France, as in all the countries in the European Union, there have been profound demographic changes over the last three decades. Correlatively with the increase in divorce rates, the number of lone parent families and reconstituted families has been rising. Mean age of women at childbearing has also risen, reaching 27.9 years in 2001. Moreover, like all over Europe, fertility rate has been declining since the mid-sixties. However, total fertility rate (TFR) in France has steadily remained higher than in most of the European countries. Coinciding with economic growth and a decline in unemployment figures, the TFR in France increased from 1.65 in 1994 to 1.9 in 2001. France now has the highest fertility level within the European Union, after Ireland.

Moreover, F. Daguet (2002) has demonstrated that the more educated women are, the more they seem to forego motherhood. Level of education is a strong discriminating factor of mean age at childbearing. Around one third of highly educated women have their first child after the age of thirty.

III) Young men and active fathering

A spate of literature highlights the fact that tensions are becoming more intense for young fathers because family needs and demands at the workplace are increasingly at odds. Compared to older generations (Delumeau, Roche, 2000), young men now express their desire to get more involved in their role of fathers. Blöss (2001), Neyrand (1999), Castelain-Meunier (2002) all agree that young men now have to cope with contradictory demands as far as their professional constraints and family life are concerned. Likewise mothers they are facing dilemmas and their identity is becoming more "plural". The "paternity leave" established in 2001 which enable them to take advantage of a two-week leave after the birth of their child, fully paid (until a certain ceiling), is therefore relatively successful (take-up rate was around 40 per cent of eligible fathers in 2002).

IV) Kinship in France

The analysis developed in some part of the literature (Singly de, 2000, Théry, 1998) challenges the dominant explanations (often voiced by policy-makers and largely echoed in the media) of the so-called "crisis of the family" which are premised on the assumption that individualism prevails within this "sub-system" and that solidarity is restricted to mutual support between parents and children. Grand parents, in particular, play an important role in supporting their offspring and often care for their grand children when their parents are at work (Leprince, 2003).

J. H. Déchaux (2003), for instance, calls on sociology to examine the « kinship system » of modern western societies, in particular in France and argues that a structural approach requires a critical reworking of some classical notions of anthropology. He emphasizes the

need to abandon the false dichotomies (tradition versus modernity) which are obstacles to the study of kinship ties.

9.3.1.4 *Gaps in research*

As far as the research of Méron and Widmer is concerned, the model presented does not account for all the potential explanatory factors. Cross-national comparisons would be useful to refine the explanation. For the research of Ekert-Jaffé (2002) qualitative approach would be relevant to further investigate differences between France and Britain.

9.3.2 **Theme 2: Parenting strategies and work-family boundaries**

There is a large consensus in the literature dealing with these issues that work/family boundaries are blurring.

9.3.2.1 *Main theoretical perspectives*

Conflict theory, contractual gender approach, relative-resource theory. Many research are only descriptive and empirical.

9.3.2.2 *Main methodology*

Is parental time transferable between partners? A. Pailhé and A. Solaz (2003) are addressing this issue in the case of couples facing unemployment. They established a distinction between different types of activities included in the time spent with children: leisure, care, homework, transport, using the French Time Use survey. Their sample includes 1885 families with at least one working parent. They used a bivariate tobit model in order to take into account firstly the participation and the quantity of time spent with children, and secondly the possible correlation between the time devoted by each partner. Covariates are generation, age, education, household income, number and age of children, outside domestic help, etc. R. Gallou and M. O. Simon (1999) conducted face to face interview with a representative national sample of former recipients of the Child Rearing Benefit (APE) having two children.

Other research rely on empirical approach and often use secondary analysis of national surveys carried out by INSEE.

9.3.2.3 *Main empirical findings*

1) "Parental time" and conjugal interactions

According to Pailhé and Solaz (2003), unemployment has a double effect: a financially negative effect and a positive time effect, since unemployed persons have additional time to devote to their children. Parental time is usually the most evenly shared part of domestic time. Does this mean that the time spent by the father or mother is substitutable (either parent could do the task) or complementary (child production needs both father and mother times)? The authors tested these hypotheses in the context of a sudden change in time constraints, such as that caused by unemployment.

Substitutability involves a transfer of time between partners, whereas 'complementarity' does not. Previous analyses made by A. Solaz have shown that if unemployed men and women increase their total domestic time, they relieve their working partner of only the more daily and run-of-the-mill tasks.

When a spouse loses his or her job, there are few time transfers between parents. Even when the unemployed parent devotes more time to the couple's children, his or her partner's parental time does not significantly decrease. The only substitutable activity between men and women is transportation time. Daily care is also substitutable, but it is only substituted when the woman is unemployed. It seems that each spouse wishes to preserve his or her parental activities, even if the other partner has more time to devote to them and does spend more time on them. A partner's participation in parental activities can thus reflect his or her power of negotiation and desire to contribute to the common good, represented by the child.

II) Parents on parental leave

R. Gallou and M. O. Simon (1999) have carried out a research on parental leave-takers and on the trade-offs made before and when this period of leave is over and on the conditions under which the recipients are resuming their job. Of the working parents who take up Parental Leave, an overwhelming 98% of them are mothers.

Mothers who were in employment just before taking maternity leave are more likely to claim APE if they are entitled to a Parental leave because they have a job guarantee. Against the background of high unemployment among women, most of the working mothers who are not entitled to this leave cannot take the risk of losing their job unless their partner has secure employment. Among those who had a job just before receiving APE and who resume their job immediately afterwards, 60% were on parental leave.

There are several explanatory factors for why APE appeals more to certain groups of women: employed mothers are more prone to conform to traditional norms, and to claim parental leave and APE when they face arduous working conditions - for example when they have to cope with atypical and non-standard working hours or with 'flexible' working hours imposed by their employer. It has been hypothesised that one of the factors explaining the high take-up of APE is the deterioration of working conditions over the last ten years. From this perspective, taking parental leave with APE is one way to escape from a job with difficult working conditions which create difficulties for workers trying to combine paid and unpaid work. Some recent research suggests that this is a valuable hypothesis (Battagliola, 1998, Fagnani, 2000).

III) Fathers and work/family balance

Surveys have been carried out to try to explain why husbands and fathers don't do more at home (Algava, 2002, Barrère-Maurisson, 2003, Fagnani, Letablier, 2003). Some research shows, as suggested by relative-resource theory, that there is a more equitable division of household tasks, including child care, when wives are more educated and contribute more to the family income (Blöss, 2001, Brousse, 1999).

As demonstrated by other research (Chauffaut, 2003, Fagnani, Letablier, 2001 and 2003b), French fathers have difficulties in steering clear of most obstacles to changes at the workplace: cultural norms, professional constraints and reluctance from employers to accept the idea that men can also claim their right to devote more time to their children.

This also reflects the enduring asymmetry between the sexes in family involvement and the persistence of the normative imperative to maintain separate roles for males and females. Women are still assumed to bear the main burden of family life. Against this cultural and

social background, they are more likely to feel “guilty” toward their children and to put ahead their family obligations (Neyrand, 1999).

In a research on child care arrangements in dual-earner families, based on a survey on a sample of families receiving allowances, Fagnani and Letablier (2003a) demonstrate that when the parents’ working hours are different, it is the father who, in three-quarters of cases, looks after the children – at least for part of the time – while the mother is working, thus reducing the costs of childcare. They conclude that this organisation owes more to budgetary constraints than to a commitment to apply an egalitarian principle between the two partners.

IV) Time-use diaries of couples

D. Anxo and his colleagues (2002) also made a very interesting comparison between France and Sweden regarding time-use diaries of couples. Their research is based on relative-resource theory. Statistical modelling by using data drawn from Time use diaries in both countries was undertaken.

They provide evidence of the factors which influence the patterns of the gendered division of labour among couples. In France, they show the negative correlation between income level and the time devoted to household chores. The more committed to their job women are (assessed through the time spent at work), the more likely it is that the unpaid work is balanced. All other things being equal, men who live with a highly educated women, spent more time on household chores than other men (around two hours more per week). Wage differentials between partners also have a strong impact on the gendered division of work: when these differentials increase, it reinforces the unequal balance between the partners. It seems that the bargaining power of the woman increases with her ability to earn more and correlatively with her level of education.

However, division of labour is more equitable for Swedish couples than for French couples. The contribution of French fathers to parental activities remains lower than that of Swedish fathers. Swedish women also adjust their labour supply more to that of their husbands. The presence of children of preschool age reduces the labour supply of women in both countries, but French women have more of a tendency to withdraw completely from the labour market following a birth. This difference can be explained, according to the authors, by a more flexible parental leave scheme in Sweden.

As stated by the authors, their finding calls for a more detailed study from the point of view of each country’s economic, institutional and societal contexts, especially to assess the extent to which these differences promote or hinder a more equal division of paid work and parental tasks between spouses.

V) The persistence of the unequal gender distribution of parental responsibilities

Recent research has once again confirmed that the unequal gender distribution of domestic and child-raising tasks within the family still persists (Algava, 2002, Barrère-Maurisson, 2003). Budget-time surveys made by INSEE (Brousse, 1999) show that mothers still work twice as many hours in the home as fathers. Changes over the period 1986 – 1999 have been modest. However, one noted cultural change is that fathers have become more involved in decisions

regarding the education of their children, as opposed to merely being involved later in decisions regarding their careers.

An analysis was carried out by the research team '*Division familiale du travail*' (Barrère-Maurisson and al., 2001) on the time use diaries of 1000 households (people living alone and in couples, with or without children). They investigated how they share household tasks, child rearing and how much time they devote to their job. Contrary to the INSEE survey, the authors established a distinction between the time devoted to household chores *per se* ('*temps domestique*') and the time devoted to or spent with the children named '*temps parental*': not surprisingly, mothers working full time devote twice as many hours to their children as fathers working full time (21 hours 40 minutes and 12 hours 40 minutes, respectively). Among couples where both partners work on a full-time basis, 60% of '*temps parental*' is performed by the mother. Household chores are even more unevenly distributed.

The unequal sharing of domestic tasks partly explains (but also mirrors) the fact that in the majority of dual-earner couples with children the women devotes less time to her job than her partner (Fermanian, Lagarde, 1998), as soon as they have a young child. Among highly-educated couples (Fermanian, 1999) where both partners work full-time at the management level, it has been shown that in almost all cases the mother returns home earlier than the father. As a matter of fact, even career-oriented women who can afford to hire someone for cleaning and caring at home, still assume the mental burden of the organisation of family life (Laufer, 1998).

For low paid mothers confronted with flexible and atypical working hours, a key impediment to manage their daily life can be the lack of accessible and affordable childcare of acceptable quality. If where they live, there is a scarcity of crèches or nursery schools, they are often obliged to either fit work around care or to rely on informal, family help or unofficially paid friends and neighbours as demonstrated by numerous researchers (Bué, 2002, Flipo, Régnier, 2003). It should be noticed that low-qualified women are over-represented in unstable jobs (short term contracts, interim) and the growth of informal work is associated with increased income insecurity (Silvera, 1998a, 1998b).

Windebank (1999) also made an interesting comparison between France and UK in this field. She showed that if French mothers work longer hours than their British counterparts and can rely more often on public child care provision, gender division of unpaid work in the family remains very unbalanced.

9.3.2.4 *Gaps in research*

As far as the study of Gallou and Simon is concerned, comparison with eligible mothers of APE who have not claim this benefit and have resumed their job just after the maternity leave would have shed light on differences between the two categories of mothers.

In many research using statistical methods, there is a lack of a qualitative approach that would complement their analysis. There is still a paucity of research on how and when young parents negotiate at each stage of their life cycle about their family life and their professional

aspirations and which role schemes provided by public policies play in the strategies elaborated by working parents.

9.3.3 Theme 3: Workplaces and organisational change

9.3.3.1 Main theoretical perspectives

As far as the impact of organisational changes on families' day-life is concerned, most of the authors remain descriptive and adopt empirical approach. In order to analyse changes on the labour market and the development of flexibility, they rely on different concepts elaborated by economists working in these fields (regulation theory, conventional theory or neo-marxist theory).

9.3.3.2 Main methodology

In most of the studies, methods used include statistical analysis and/or in-depth interviews. Results of Fagnani and Letablier's research (2002) are drawn from an original survey conducted among a representative sample of 3216 families with at least one child under six years old. It was carried out two years after the implementation of the first law reducing working time. Mothers and fathers were invited to give their opinion on the impact of the reduction in working time on the balance between their work and family life.

9.3.3.3 Main empirical findings

I) The development of flexibility and the changing working patterns

A spate of literature has focussed on the impact of changing working organisation on family life (Dumontier et al., 2002). Along this line, researchers have underlined the long working hours culture and its impact on the time spent by young children outside the home (Fagnani, 2000, Fermanian, Lagarde, 1998, Fine-Davis and al., 2002, Ruault, Daniel, 2003).

Studies of changing labour markets suggest that, by introducing and extending flexible working practices (especially against the background of the 35-hour work law) (Estrade et al., 2001, Lurol, Péglise, 2001), employers are seeking to increase the productivity of labour, efficiency and performance, and are not paying sufficient attention to the impact of imposed flexibility on families. Research emphasises that either workers complain that work space and personal space are no more clearly separated (Méda, 2001, Silvera, 1998b) or that employers don't really try to fit hours around employees' needs and preferences.

As a result of the diversification of working schedules which often oblige dual-earner couples to elaborate a complex child-care strategy, Guillot, (2002), Ruault et al., (2003) have demonstrated that a third of working parents, living with a child aged under six, relied on several child-care arrangements which made it difficult to balance paid and unpaid work.

II) The effects of the reduction of working time on family life

Fagnani and Letablier (2002) have examined the impact of the French law implementing the 35-hour week (RTT) on the way parents with young children combine work and family life. Six out of ten respondents reported a positive impact on this balance. The degree of satisfaction is higher where the organisation of work is regular, and based on standard working hours.

Satisfaction is also highly correlated to the negotiation process in the workplace. However, the reduction of working time revealed inequalities between workers: between those employed in sheltered economic sectors and “family-friendly” companies with a tradition of social dialogue, and those facing severe constraints in the workplace, or who had had to accept unsocial or flexible hours of work in exchange for a reduction of working time, without any consideration for their family obligations. This widens the gulf between these two groups of workers irrespective of gender and professional status.

Women tend to report a more positive attitude than male parents because they are more often employed in family-friendly companies (in particular in the public sector) and because they anticipate their family needs and give priority (when they look for a job) to companies or sector where they can more easily combine a job and family. Moreover, in France, employers accept more easily the claims related to family obligations emanating from a woman than from a man.

Another research dealing with the perceptions by workers of the RTT is based on a survey which has been conducted at the end of 2000- beginning of 2001, among 1,618 salaried people (with or without children) working in companies who have implemented this law for at least one year (Estrade, Méda, Orain, 2001, Dumontier and al., 2002). The following results are quite informative:

- Three out of four female managers (with or without children) deem that their daily life (at work and out of work) has been improving. This is the case for only 40% of women with low qualified jobs.
- 40% of employees complain that work has become more intense and that they have to do the same amount of work in a shorter time span than before.
- As far as the reconciliation of family and professional life is concerned, diversity is also the rule: nearly half of the parents having children under 12 years report that they have been spending more time with their children since the reduction of their working hours.
- Around a third of employees declare that combining work and family life is easier than before the reduction of working time (32% of men, 38% of women). 57% declare that nothing has changed.
- It is illustrative that the gendered division of work has not been affected by the reduction of working time. Women still assume the main burden of household chores and devote more time than before to cleaning, tidying up, cooking and gardening. Men spend more time doing odd jobs, gardening and some shopping.

The consequences for employees vary according to the economic sector, the modalities of the agreement signed between social partners, whether the company is in dire straits or not, etc. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that small companies currently have to deal with a lot of difficulties in putting the law into practice.

9.3.3.4 *Gaps in research*

As far as the impact of the reduction of working time is concerned, a follow-up study would have been more relevant to really assess the impact of the 35-hour laws at any time of the year (holidays, for instance). There is a lack of theoretical research in this field.

9.3.4 Theme 4: Well-being

French academics dealing with family issues related to employment behaviour or with reconciliation of paid work and unpaid work are not familiar with this theme and don't actually use this concept. Organisational well-being is studied almost totally from a management perspective and sociologists only address the issue of "satisfaction" of people at the workplace. In 2002, however, a cross-national comparison was made on "Dilemmas of the Work-life balance" (Fine-Davis et al., 2002) and the study focussed, in particular, on the "well-being" of employed parents having at least one child aged under 6 years.

9.3.4.1 *Main theoretical perspectives*

A descriptive and systemic approach was adopted

9.3.4.2 *Main methodology*

In each country (including France) a sample of 100 men and women were selected along these criteria: employed, living in a couple with a partner who was also employed, had at least one child under six. The sample was stratified by sex, socio-economic status and employment in the public vs. the private sector. In France, people were living in the Paris metropolitan area. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. Data analysis was carried out (correlational analyses and multiple regressions). At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to record their satisfaction on five measures of well-being: their health, their work, their family life, the relationship with their partner and their life in general.

9.3.4.3 *Main empirical findings*

I) Well-being and work/life balance

54% of French men and 66% of women declared they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their life in general. Not surprisingly, the more people report that the hours they work create problems in their child care arrangements, the more difficulty they had in combining work and family life. Parents in high qualified jobs in the private sector found it the most difficult to reconcile work and family life. The easier it was to combine work and family life, the greater one's well-being. For mothers (not for fathers), ease versus difficulty in this field was very strongly related to satisfaction with family life, health, work satisfaction and to satisfaction with relationship with partner.

II) Attitudes of parents toward the work/family negotiations

Periodical public opinion surveys (based on a representative national sample of people aged more than 18 years old) conducted by CREDOC (1998, 2001, 2003) also provide some interesting information about the attitudes of working parents towards the work/family issue. Since 1990, there has been a significant decrease in the proportion of people who declare that they are facing difficulties in combining their job and their family life.

When asked whether they have difficulties in combining their job and their family life, 38% of men and 35% of women answer positively in 2002 compared respectively to 48% and 44% in 1990. When there is at least one child aged under 6 years, 43% of people reported that they are confronted with difficulties in their daily life (compared to only 31% of people who have no child of that age): however, since 1990, there has been a decline in the proportion of this

people (54% in 1990). The significant development of schemes and public services (child-care provision, in particular) aimed to supporting working parents since the nineties is likely to have contributed to this phenomenon (Commaille, Martin, 1999).

9.3.4.4 Gaps in research

Fine-Davis and al. (2002) point out that in the countries selected, samples are not representative of all working parents because the selection was based on the “snow-ball” method and in France, they were living only in the Paris metropolitan area.

Compared to other countries, the concept of “well-being” is rarely used when researchers address the issues related to work/family balance and family life. Moreover there is no investigation in the academic world of how to achieve a better “well-being” by the transferability of positive experiences from work to home and vice-versa.

9.4 Conclusions

Research devoted to the strategies utilised by dual-earner couples in order to achieve their employment aspirations while rearing young children or which trade-offs they make between their career and their family obligations are much more common than in the eighties. However, there is still a lack of research investigating the complex bundle of factors explaining the interactions and negotiations within the couples at each phase of the family building and how they decide about their professional life when critical family events take place. Social inequalities and their impact on the ways in which parents can manage and organise their personal and family life would deserve more attention. As far as the enduring asymmetry between the sexes in the family and at the workplace is concerned, it would be necessary to find out the sticking points holding back further change in these areas. Longitudinal study would also be of particular interest. Relationships between unemployment and difficulties for parents, in particular mothers, to get access to affordable child-care arrangements should also be investigated.

Dominique Méda (2001), an essayist working at the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, recently published a book which devotes a large amount of space to disputing the view that employers should take into consideration more the private lives of their employees. In particular, she argues that trade-unions and employers are turning a blind eye to the rights and obligations of working parents and that it is detrimental to the gender equality objective. She also challenges the common view that part-time managers are ineffective. However, against the background of an increase in redundancies in the private sector, it seems unlikely that French policy-makers will further develop the legislation regarding these issues. All these issues should also be addressed if we want to improve our understanding of how young people negotiate “transitions”.

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Chapter 10 Epilogue

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In this literature review we have focused on the transition to parenthood in the context of organisational change; i.e. the way new parents negotiate their work-family boundaries and the strategies they apply. Recent European literature (since 1998) on organisational, gender and well-being issues in relation to the transition to parenthood and the negotiations of work-family boundaries are considered. The review includes the eight European countries of the TRANSITIONS project: the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Bulgaria. The review consists of eight national reviews and an introductory chapter that discusses comparative European studies. The review is structured around four themes: young adults and parenthood; parenting strategies and work-family boundaries; workplaces and organizational change; and well being. Each national review addresses the four themes, and for each theme the main theoretical perspectives, main methodology used, main empirical findings and important gaps in research are discussed.

It becomes evident from this literature review that there are still major gaps in research concerning the transition to parenthood and the way new parents negotiate their work-family boundaries and the strategies they apply. Countries do differ in the issues they address and in some countries the research field is further developed than in others. In Bulgaria, for instance, little research is done on all four themes central in this review. In all countries, parenthood and the negotiation of work/family boundaries is rarely investigated in connection to well-being issues, new labour market demands and organizational practices. However, all reviews note that there is a growing awareness that these issues need to be explored and analysed. As a result, there are some studies that investigate, for instance the impact of flexible working hours, a typical work and telework on the integration of work and family life. In the appendix an overview is given of the main research topics addressed in the eight countries as well as the main methodology used.

The postponement of parenthood and decreasing fertility rates has given rise to a large body research on the decision-making of young people regarding having children and the timing of family formation. Within existing research regarding young adults and the transition to parenthood the quantitative methodology is prevailing. Qualitative research is needed to enrich and complement existing survey data; in particular to open the black box of decision-making of couples on having children and the way they organize their work and family life. There is also a need for longitudinal designs following couples over time and to consider differences between young people, like class and ethnic background.

A lot of previous research on the combination of paid work and family life focus on women's experiences. However, there is a growing body of research focusing on the role of fathers. In addition, research more often uses a multi-actor design in which data on both partners are

collected. Contemporary research shows that despite the increasing labour market participation of women, the unequal division of domestic work and care for children remains a persistent phenomenon. In particular, after the transition to parenthood, research shows consistently that gender roles become much more traditional. Quantitative studies do show that this is not only due to differences in resources of men and women (human capital, job position and so on), norms and values matter as well as work-family provisions that support working parents.

Little research is done on the impact of labour market demands, organizational change, and new workplace practices on parenting strategies and work-family boundaries. So far, existing research tends to focus on the impact of social policies, like parental leave and childcare facilities. In general parents tend to use a mixture of formal and informal childcare arrangements. The use of leave arrangements is still mainly a women's affair as well as part-time working.

It is remarkable that research on organizational changes, on new forms of work organization, on new types of careers, on cultures of organizations is, generally speaking, carried out in gender neutral terms. This domain of organizational research turns out to be rather separated from research on gender issues, women's work, work-life issues and equal opportunity questions. These two separated research traditions need to be brought together. Or, more precisely, the gender and work-life perspective deserves a more significant integration in organizational studies. This process of gender mainstreaming is not just relevant because of the still increasing number of working women in most European countries and the diversification of the workforce. There are scientific reasons as well. Theories on organizational changes gain in relevance when they represent all important actors in modern organizations and when they include the context of a more diverse workforce explicitly in their analyses. From a societal as well as from a scientific point of view it is extremely relevant to analyse dynamic processes in modern organizations from the perspective of their consequences for women and for men, and for the chances mothers and fathers have to balance work and family responsibilities.

(Positive) well being and its relationship to different work-family strategies is not yet widely researched. There is, in fact, almost no research concerning the direct relationship between well being and the transition to parenthood. For some countries, like Bulgaria and Slovenia, social problems like poverty and job insecurity are more persistent. Therefore research concentrates on the quality of life in general or focus on the standard of living. In other countries the research on well-being is scattered in different academic disciplines. Although most employees who become parent will experience tension in the relationship between the two domains, work and family, most research only touch on parts of this relationship. For instance, organizational sociologists and psychologists, both already with a different perspective, are mostly focussed on well being directly related to the experiences of employees, and employers. However, research on the balance between work and life is not much addressed in organizational studies. Job insecurity, stress, and organizational health are mostly studied in the domain of work. Even studies that address well being in the balance between work and private life, are mostly regarding caring tasks in the private life as an extra

burden for the working life. A more qualitative approach to well being and parenthood of employees can shed new light on the complex relation between working life and private life.

This review shows that there still is a lack of research that studies the experiences and well being of young parents in relation to the organizational context they work in. Contemporary research does give a broad picture of the strategies parents apply to combine work and family life and the way social policies are used. However, there is a lack of studies that offer in-depth analyses of the relation between national social policy contexts, the organizational context and strategies of new parents.

Appendix

Table 1 Overview of theme 1: Young adults and parenthood

	Main topics	Main methods
UK	Transition to adulthood Fatherhood Women combining motherhood and paid work Division of paid and unpaid work Single parents	Quantitative and qualitative studies: Large scale surveys, focus groups and interviews
Netherlands	Decisions on having children Attitudes of young adults towards work-family issues Future expectations	Mainly quantitative research, growing attention for multi-actor data and open interviews
Sweden	Decisions on having children Division of household work and parental leave	Mainly quantitative surveys, some qualitative studies
Bulgaria	Young people's integration in work Attitudes towards family and parenthood	National representative surveys
Portugal	Transition to adulthood Changes in family patterns Attitudes towards parenthood	Quantitative studies, some ethnographic studies, life-course analysis and explorative studies using open interviews
Norway	Changes in family patterns and welfare state policies Changes in attitudes towards gender roles and relations Fatherhood	National quantitative studies, growing number of qualitative studies on couple and family relations
Slovenia	Decisions on having children, postponement of parenthood Value orientations of young people Division of labour Gender role attitudes	National quantitative surveys, qualitative research using interviews and focus groups
France	Decisions on having children Attitudes towards parenthood Fatherhood Family support, kinship	Survey data on cohorts, longitudinal survey data

Table II Overview of theme 2: Parenting strategies and work/family boundaries

	Main topics	Main methods
UK	<p>Work-family conflict</p> <p>Work-family strategies</p> <p>A-typical working hours, working from home and work-family integration</p> <p>Work-family boundaries</p> <p>Negotiations between employers and employees</p>	<p>Quantitative survey data and a growing interest in qualitative approaches such as individual interviews and organisational case studies.</p>
Netherlands	<p>Division of paid and unpaid work within couples</p> <p>Division of tasks after the birth of a first child</p> <p>Conflict and fairness</p> <p>Fatherhood</p> <p>Use of work/life policies</p>	<p>Large number of quantitative large-scale surveys and</p> <p>Qualitative studies using open interviews, growing number of studies using a longitudinal design</p>
Sweden	<p>Negotiating parental leave</p> <p>Strategies for combining work-family life after parental leave</p> <p>Time for children and domestic work</p> <p>Fatherhood</p>	<p>National surveys and qualitative studies based on interviews and case studies.</p>
Bulgaria	<p>Division of housework and childcare arrangements</p> <p>Policy studies: provisions for poor families and comparing work-family policies to other countries</p> <p>Parenting strategies of specific groups of parents</p> <p>Home production in households</p>	<p>Quantitative surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups, theoretical policy studies</p>
Portugal	<p>Trends in family life</p> <p>Division of housework and childcare solutions</p> <p>Family networks and family support</p> <p>Specific types of families: single parents or step families</p>	<p>Quantitative studies, some qualitative research using focus groups, interviews</p>
Norway	<p>Work-family balance</p> <p>Social policies and family practices and gender relations</p> <p>Division of housework and care arrangements</p> <p>Single parenthood</p>	<p>National surveys, time-use surveys and qualitative studies based on face-to-face interviews</p>
Slovenia	<p>Work-family strategies, use of formal and informal resources</p> <p>Childcare</p> <p>Single parents</p>	<p>Surveys, individual interviews and focus groups</p>
France	<p>Division of paid and unpaid work within the family</p> <p>Strategies to combine work and family life, use of social policies and family support</p> <p>Impact of flexible working hours</p> <p>Impact of unemployment</p> <p>Parental leave</p>	<p>National surveys, time-use data</p> <p>Cross-national research</p>

Table III Overview of theme 3: Workplace and organizational change

	Main topics	Main methods
UK	Work-family policies and practices; Flexibility: policies and practices; Changes in the nature of work; Intensification, job insecurity; Long hours culture; Career perspectives of new parents; Psychological contract and organizational commitment	Surveys of nationally representative samples; Qualitative research; Organizational case studies
Netherlands	Attitudes of employers towards work-family arrangements; Psychological contract in labour relations; Part-time work; Flexible employee benefits; International-comparative research on employers in relation to work-family practices;	Large samples of firms; Qualitative research; Focus groups; Organizational case studies
Sweden	Gender equity in working life; Organizational structures and the traditional gender contract; Organizational changes and family supportive initiatives	National surveys in organizations on attitudes and policies of employers towards parenthood and gender equality; Qualitative case studies
Bulgaria	Self-employment; Privatisation in Bulgarian economy; Determinants of organizational commitment; Flexibilisation of employment; Communication problems in organizations	Theoretical studies; Surveys; Use of business statistics; Face to face interviews in qualitative studies
Portugal	Organizational changes; patterns of innovation; attitudes towards changes; New kinds of labour organization: outplacement, precarious work, part-time work; New technologies and their impact on organizational structures and cultures; Work-family issues; Feminisation of the labour market	Surveys; Qualitative research (interviews, focus groups)
Norway	Gender segregation in the labour market; Studies on working time arrangements; Gender wage gaps; Protection of biological motherhood; Father's use of different parental benefits; Gendered aspects of the new labour market; Blurring boundaries between work and private life in moderns organizations	National surveys; Qualitative projects based on in-depth interviews in sectors and organizations
Slovenia	Worsening of working conditions due to market economy; Low quality of working life; Gender discrimination in selection processes, in promotion, in salaries; Glass ceiling; Lack of communication in organizations, lack of management skills, absence of career planning	Surveys in/of firms; Content analysis of written documents
France	Development of flexible working; changing working patterns; Effect of 35-hour law; effects of reduction of working time on family life	Quantitative research; statistical analyses; Qualitative research based on in-depth interviews

Table IV Overview of theme 4: Well-being

	Main topics	Main methods
UK	Happiness Emotions at work Job satisfaction Job insecurity Work life integration Flow Gender differences Family and children Healthy organizations Organizational well being	Mainly quantitative surveys Some qualitative interviews
Netherlands	Parenthood Work Workplace Work family conflict Work home interference	Mainly quantitative surveys Some qualitative interviews
Sweden	Health Sick leave Coping strategies	Mainly quantitative surveys
Bulgaria	Survival Stress Self-destructing behaviour Standard of living Unemployment and poverty	Mainly quantitative surveys Structured face to face interview Official statistics
Portugal	Social exclusion Inequality Working conditions Values and quality of life Organizational culture Work satisfaction	Mainly quantitative surveys, sometimes additional qualitative interviews
Norway	Living conditions Good life Quality of life	Mainly quantitative surveys Telephone interviews Official statistics
Slovenia	Health Self-realisation Life satisfaction Quality of life	Mainly quantitative surveys Cohort study Event history
France	Workplace satisfaction Employed parents Work/life balance	Quantitative survey and face to face interview

