



Analysis note

Men and Gender Equality

tackling gender segregated family roles
and social care jobs







Table of Content

Executive Summary	5
Résumé	6
Kurzfassung	8
Introduction.....	11
The unequal gender division of household domestic labour.....	12
Institutional and cultural barriers to gender equity in domestic roles	15
Cultural values and social attitudes	15
Household dynamics in personal relationships - relative resource theory and gender equality within the home	16
Labour market institutions: mothers' and fathers' work schedules and the gender pay gap	17
Reconciliation policy and gender equality	18
Box 1. Longer parental leave and incentives for fathers agreed by EU ministers.....	19
Box 2. Nordic initiatives to increase men's involvement in non-traditional family roles	20
Box 3. Family policy and fathering in Finland	22
Box 4. Policies to increase fathers' involvement in parenting in Portugal.....	25
Box 5. Recent European developments in parent leave and father's take-up	27
Box 6. Men's involvement in non-traditional family roles: the case of the Netherlands....	28
Men in female-dominated 'social care' occupations	30
Barriers to men's entry into female-dominated jobs	31
Gender stereotyping and employment segregation – women's work is not for 'real' men.....	31
Discrimination against men in (some) female-dominated job areas.....	32
Low Pay and limited career ladders – women's jobs are often not worth entering.....	33
Opportunities for men in non-traditional jobs/roles.....	33
Policy interventions to encourage men into female-dominated job areas.....	34
Education, training and career advice to challenge gender stereotypes for boys and girls	34
Box 7. Austria's initiatives to dismantle gender stereotyping in education, training and career.....	34
Positive action measures to recruit men to female-dominated occupations	35
Conclusions.....	36
Acknowledgements.....	37
References	38



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Executive Summary

This analysis note analyses gender inequalities through a focus on men. An understanding from this vantage point is important for advancing effective gender equality policies. It is essential that men are involved in making the social changes needed to achieve gender equality. This involves tackling gender segregation in the home as well as the workplace.

Women's economic roles have been changing, with employment rates increasing for women across successive generations. But changes in family roles have been more modest. Men are more involved in childcare, and the gender gap in housework has also narrowed over the last forty to fifty years but domestic labour – housework and care for children and elders – is still predominantly the responsibility of women. On average in Europe employed women do more than three times the amount of domestic labour during the week than employed men. Men work longer employment hours but women have the longer 'total working week' when paid and unpaid work is summed.

A combination of cultural norms, habits and institutional arrangements perpetuate this 'stalled revolution'. And the pace of change varies between countries, driven by a combination of shifts in social attitudes concerning appropriate gender and parenting roles, and as a partial adjustment to the emergence of dual-earner arrangements in couples where this was not widespread previously. State policy is important for easing or obstructing social change through the dynamics of daily life in households. The Nordic countries were the first to develop sustained institutional effort through the design of family policy to increase men's involvement in the home, focussing on their responsibilities as fathers. It is in policy settings such as these that 'egalitarian' rather than 'male breadwinner' family arrangements are more able to emerge.

Reconciliation policies are paying more attention to the question of men's involvement in providing care. The main intervention targeting fathers is through the design of statutory parental leave schemes, as well as the shorter paternity leave arrangements which exist in some countries. An important recent development is the extension of parental leave quotas for each parent in a new EU Directive. However, unless member states supplement the Directive's requirements with financial compensation for the leave period then fathers' take-up of parental leave is likely to remain low. The schemes which stimulate the best take-up by fathers are the ones with a quota of leave reserved for the father underwritten by a high earnings replacement rate and flexibility in when and how the leave may be taken. When fathers take parental leave this seems to promote a more gender equitable sharing of domestic work after the leave period ends, but the length of leave rather than leave itself provides the conditions for nurturing these changes. The Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish leave systems perform particularly well on these conditions, also the Dutch system, and fathers' take-up rate is improving in some other countries such as Finland, Germany and Portugal following policy reform.

Parental leave is only one part of the family policy framework for promoting a more gender egalitarian division of domestic labour. Another consideration is what other working-time adjustments are available to parents. Few fathers seek part-time work in the Netherlands despite the 'right to request' and it may be that fathers are more interested in adjusting how they organise their working hours across the day and week rather than reducing them. This seems to be the lesson from the 'right to request' legislation in the UK. Family policy will not transform domestic gender roles on its own: continued efforts to advance gender equality in the labour market, including reducing the gender pay gap, are also needed if men and women are to share their earning and caring responsibilities more equally.

Gender-based employment segregation is a resilient feature of European labour markets. While women have made some advances into some jobs which were previously male-dominated, there has been less movement of men into female-dominated job areas. Social care jobs – childcare, teaching young children, nursing, eldercare – are among



those which few men enter. The barriers which deter men from entering female-dominated jobs mirror those which deter women from pursuing gender atypical employment: exposure to gender stereotyping from an early age; cultural notions about what 'proper' men do to provide for their families and discriminatory assumptions about men's nurturing and emotional skills. A major deterrent is the poor pay and quality of many female-dominated jobs. Men who enter female-dominated social care jobs typically carve out particular 'more male' niches of work which emphasise physical or technical effort. They may incur personal costs, including some marginalisation from the social aspects of female-dominated workplaces. But men also seem to gain from a 'glass escalator' effect on career ladders when they are in the minority, in contrast to the 'glass ceiling' which women often face. Policy initiatives to encourage men into non-traditional jobs are rarer than measures targeted at women. Several countries have initiatives to challenge gender stereotypes among boys and girls and some run media campaigns to attract men into traditionally female-dominated jobs. Norway has introduced quotas to recruit men into early childcare with some success.

A framework for action on men should be developed as part of an integrated gender equality strategy. In relation to employment and family roles this should include challenging gender stereotyping in early education and childcare, tackling gender segregation in education, training and employment in female-dominated jobs as well as male-dominated ones, and developing reconciliation measures which support a more gender equal sharing of domestic and caring responsibilities. It will also need to address ways of supporting men's active involvement in promoting gender equality, and other important problems such as gender-based violence.

Résumé

La présente note d'analyse étudie les inégalités entre les genres en se concentrant tout particulièrement sur les hommes. Comprendre la situation depuis cette position avantageuse est important afin de promouvoir des politiques efficaces en matière d'égalité des sexes. Il est essentiel que les hommes soient impliqués dans la réalisation des changements de société nécessaires pour parvenir à l'égalité des sexes. Ceci suppose de s'attaquer à la ségrégation entre les sexes au domicile comme sur le lieu de travail. Le rôle économique des femmes a évolué, le taux d'emploi des femmes augmentant au fil des générations successives. En revanche, les changements survenus dans les rôles familiaux ont été plus modestes. Les hommes sont plus impliqués dans les soins aux enfants, et le fossé existant entre les hommes et les femmes s'est réduit au cours des quarante à cinquante dernières années, mais les travaux domestiques - tâches ménagères et soins aux enfants et aux personnes âgées – continuent d'incomber essentiellement aux femmes. En Europe, les femmes salariées font en moyenne plus de trois fois le montant des travaux domestiques durant la semaine que les hommes salariés. Les hommes comptabilisent plus d'heures de travail salarié, mais les femmes ont la plus longue "semaine de travail totale" si l'on fait la somme du travail rémunéré et du travail non rémunéré.

Une combinaison de références culturelles, d'habitudes et de systèmes institutionnels perpétue cette "révolution en panne". Le rythme des changements varie selon les pays, poussé par une combinaison de changements dans les attitudes sociales concernant les rôles appropriés de genre et de parent, et comme un ajustement partiel à l'émergence des systèmes de double revenu dans les couples, ce qui n'était pas répandu auparavant. Les politiques nationales sont importantes pour faciliter ou faire obstacle aux évolutions de la société à travers la dynamique de la vie quotidienne des ménages. Les pays scandinaves furent les premiers à développer un effort institutionnel soutenu à travers la conception d'une politique familiale visant à accroître l'implication des hommes à la maison, insistant sur leur responsabilité en tant que père. C'est dans des cadres tels que ceux-ci que des systèmes familiaux "égalitaires" plutôt que reposant sur "l'homme, soutien



de famille" auront plus de chances d'émerger. Les mesures de conciliation de la vie professionnelle et de la vie familiale prêtent davantage attention à la question de l'implication des hommes dans la fourniture de soins. La conception de dispositifs légaux de congé parental, de même que les systèmes plus brefs de congé paternité qui existent dans certains pays, constituent la principale intervention visant les hommes. L'extension, prévue par une nouvelle directive UE, des quotas de congé parental pour chaque parent représente une évolution importante et récente. Cependant, à moins que les États membres ne complètent les exigences de la directive par une indemnisation financière au titre de la période de congé, la prise de congé parental par le père risque de demeurer peu fréquente. Les systèmes qui stimulent le mieux la prise de congé parental par les pères sont ceux qui prévoient un quota de congé réservé au père, appuyés par un taux élevé de revenus de remplacement et une flexibilité quant à la date et aux modalités de prise du congé. Lorsque des pères prennent un congé parental, cela semble favoriser un partage des travaux domestiques plus équitable entre les hommes et les femmes à l'issue de la période de congé, mais les conditions permettant de nourrir ces changements sont fournies par la longueur du congé plutôt que par le congé lui-même.

Les systèmes de congé islandais, norvégien et suédois fonctionnent particulièrement bien à ces conditions, ainsi que le système néerlandais, et le taux de prise de congé par les pères est en augmentation dans certains autres pays tels que la Finlande, l'Allemagne et le Portugal suivant une politique de réforme. Le congé parental n'est qu'une partie du cadre de la politique familiale visant à favoriser une division des travaux domestiques plus égalitaire entre l'homme et la femme. Les autres possibilités offertes aux parents d'ajuster leur temps de travail constituent un autre point à prendre en considération. Peu de pères aux Pays-Bas recherchent un emploi à temps partiel en dépit du "droit de demande" et la raison pourrait en être que les pères sont plus intéressés par un ajustement de l'organisation quotidienne et hebdomadaire de leur temps de travail que par une réduction de celui-ci. Il semble que ce soit la leçon à tirer de la législation britannique sur le "droit de demande". La politique familiale ne transformera pas les rôles attribués aux genres toute seule : il est également nécessaire d'accomplir des efforts permanents pour progresser en matière d'égalité des sexes sur le marché du travail, en ce y compris la réduction des écarts de rémunération entre les hommes et les femmes si ceux-ci doivent partager leurs revenus et leurs responsabilités de soins de manière plus égalitaire.

La ségrégation entre les sexes dans l'emploi est une caractéristique tenace des marchés du travail européens. Alors que les femmes ont enregistré certaines avancées dans des emplois à prédominance précédemment masculine, les hommes se sont moins dirigés vers les secteurs d'emplois où les femmes prédominent. Les emplois de soins à caractère social – soins aux enfants, enseignement aux jeunes enfants, personnel soignant, soins aux personnes âgées – figurent parmi ceux vers lesquels peu d'hommes se dirigent. Les barrières dissuadant les hommes de se diriger vers des emplois à prédominance féminine reflètent celles qui dissuadent les femmes de rechercher un emploi atypique au regard du genre : exposition dès l'enfance aux stéréotypes sexuels ; références culturelles à ce que les "vrais" hommes font pour nourrir leur famille et suppositions discriminatoires sur les qualités des hommes en matière d'émotion et d'éducation. La faiblesse du niveau de rémunération et de qualité de nombreux emplois à prédominance féminine a un effet fortement dissuasif. Les hommes qui se dirigent vers des emplois de soins à caractère social et à prédominance féminine occupent généralement des niches de travail particulièrement "mâles" qui mettent l'accent sur des efforts physiques ou techniques. Ils peuvent encourir des coûts personnels, en ce y compris une certaine marginalisation des aspects sociaux des lieux de travail à prédominance féminine. Toutefois, les hommes semblent également profiter d'un effet "escalator de verre" leur permettant de gravir les échelons professionnels alors qu'ils sont en minorité ; tandis que femmes font souvent face à un "plafond de verre". Les initiatives destinées à encourager les hommes à se diriger vers



des emplois non traditionnels sont plus rares que les mesures visant les femmes. Plusieurs pays ont des initiatives destinées à lutter contre les stéréotypes sexuels chez les garçons et les filles et certains font des campagnes médiatiques pour attirer les hommes vers les emplois à prédominance traditionnellement féminine. La Norvège a introduit, avec un certain succès, des quotas pour recruter des hommes dans les soins à la petite enfance.

Un cadre d'action visant les hommes devrait être élaboré comme faisant partie d'une stratégie intégrée d'égalité des sexes. Au regard des rôles professionnels et familiaux, elle devrait inclure la lutte contre les stéréotypes sexuels au stade de l'éducation et des soins aux enfants en bas âge, contre la ségrégation entre les sexes dans l'éducation, la formation et l'embauche dans des emplois à prédominance féminine ainsi que dans ceux à prédominance masculine, et l'élaboration de mesures de conciliation entre la vie professionnelle et la vie familiale qui soutiennent une plus grande égalité entre les hommes et les femmes dans le partage des responsabilités domestiques et de soins. Il conviendra également d'aborder les manières de soutenir l'implication active des hommes dans la promotion de l'égalité des sexes et d'autres problèmes importants tels que la violence liée au sexe.

Kurzfassung

Unterschiede zwischen den Geschlechtern werden in diesem Analysevermerk mit dem Schwerpunkt auf der männlichen Bevölkerung analysiert. Für das Voranbringen einer wirkungsvollen Gleichstellungspolitik ist ein Verständnis aus diesem Blickwinkel heraus wichtig. Es ist von grundlegender Bedeutung, dass Männer gestaltend an den sozialen Veränderungen, die zur vollständigen Gleichstellung der Geschlechter notwendig sind, beteiligt werden. Dazu gehört auch die Beseitigung der geschlechtsspezifischen Segregation in der Familie und am Arbeitsplatz.

Die Rolle der Frau im Wirtschaftsleben hat sich geändert, die Beschäftigungsrate innerhalb der weiblichen Bevölkerung ist über mehrere Generationen hinweg gestiegen. Doch im familiären Bereich sind die Entwicklungen verhaltener ausgefallen. Männer sind stärker an der Kinderbetreuung beteiligt, und auch die geschlechtsspezifische Diskrepanz bei der Verteilung der Hausarbeit hat sich im Laufe der vergangenen vierzig bis fünfzig Jahre verringert, doch die Aufgaben im Haushalt - Hausarbeiten und die Betreuung von Kindern und Älteren - liegen nach wie vor überwiegend in der Verantwortung der Frauen. Berufstätige Frauen in Europa erledigen im Wochendurchschnitt dreimal so viele Arbeiten im Haushalt wie berufstätige Männer. Zwar arbeiten Männer länger, wird jedoch bezahlte und unbezahlte Arbeit zusammengerechnet, ergibt sich für Frauen eine längere wöchentliche Gesamtarbeitszeit.

Kulturelle Normen, Gepflogenheiten und institutionelle Gefüge halten diese ‚festgefahrenen Revolution‘ aufrecht. Zudem vollziehen sich die Änderungen in verschiedenen Ländern mit unterschiedlicher Geschwindigkeit, angekurbelt von Verschiebungen der gesellschaftlichen Meinung zu angemessenen Geschlechter- und Elternrollen sowie als teilweise Anpassung an das Aufkommen von Zwei-Verdiener-Konstellationen unter Paaren, wo dies zuvor wenig verbreitet war. Die nationale Politik hat großen Einfluss auf die Erleichterung oder Blockierung der durch die Dynamik im täglichen Familienleben herbeigeführten sozialen Veränderungen. Die Länder Nordeuropas waren die ersten, in denen durch die Gestaltung einer Familienpolitik zur stärkeren Einbeziehung des Mannes in das Haushaltsleben, insbesondere im Hinblick auf deren Verantwortlichkeit als Väter, eine nachhaltige und institutionell verankerte Initiative entwickelt wurde. In einem solchen politischen Rahmen können sich eher ‚gleichberechtigte‘ als auf den ‚Mann als Ernährer‘ gestützte Familienkonstellationen entwickeln.



Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf sind klarer auf die Eingliederung des Mannes in den Betreuungsbereich ausgerichtet. Die wichtigste Intervention gegenüber Vätern besteht in der Ausgestaltung gesetzlicher Ansprüche auf Elternurlaub sowie der in einigen Ländern vorgesehenen kürzeren Vaterschaftsurlaube. Eine wichtige Entwicklung der jüngeren Zeit ist die Ausweitung der Elternurlaubsanteile beider Elternteile im Rahmen einer neuen EU-Richtlinie. Wenn jedoch die Mitgliedsstaaten die Anforderungen der Richtlinie nicht um die Leistung eines finanziellen Ausgleichs ergänzen, ist es wahrscheinlich, dass der Anteil der Väter in Elternurlaub gering bleibt. Modelle, die die Inanspruchnahme durch Väter am besten fördern, sehen ein festes Zeitmaß der Arbeitsfreistellung einschließlich einer hohen Einkommensausgleichszahlung vor sowie Flexibilität hinsichtlich des Zeitpunkts und der Art der Freistellung. Wenn Väter einen Elternurlaub nehmen, scheint sich dies nach Abschluss des Elternurlaubs positiv auf die gleichmäßige Verteilung der Hausarbeit zwischen beiden Geschlechtern auszuwirken. Es ist jedoch weniger die Tatsache an sich, sondern vielmehr die Dauer des Elternurlaubs, die diese Entwicklung begünstigt. Die Elternurlaubs-Programme in Island, Norwegen und Schweden sind in dieser Hinsicht besonders wirkungsvoll, zudem auch das niederländische System. Der Anteil der Vaterschaftszeiten verbessert sich nach politischen Reformen zunehmend auch in Finnland, Deutschland und Portugal durch.

Der Elternurlaub stellt nur einen Ausschnitt des familienpolitischen Maßnahmenrahmens zur Förderung einer ausgewogenen Geschlechterverteilung bei der Arbeit im Haushalt dar. Darüber hinaus kann untersucht werden, welche anderen Möglichkeiten Eltern zur Anpassung der Arbeitszeit zur Verfügung stehen. In den Niederlanden nehmen nur wenige Väter Teilzeitarbeit in Anspruch, obwohl ein Anrecht darauf besteht, und es ist möglich, dass Väter eher daran interessiert sind, ihre Arbeitszeiten auf täglicher und wöchentlicher Basis anzupassen, als sie generell zu kürzen. Dies zeigt sich als mögliche Lehre aus dem in Großbritannien eingeführten Anspruch auf Flexibilisierung der Arbeitszeiten. Die Familienpolitik allein vermag die Auffassungen zu den Geschlechterrollen im Haushalt nicht zu ändern: Es bedarf darüber hinaus anhaltender Bemühungen zur Förderung der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter auf dem Arbeitsmarkt einschließlich einer Verringerung des geschlechtsspezifischen Einkommensgefälles, wenn Männern und Frauen bei der Einkommenserwerbswirtschaft und den Betreuungspflichten die gleiche Verantwortung zukommen soll.

Die geschlechtsspezifische Beschäftigungssegregation hält sich hartnäckig auf den europäischen Arbeitsmärkten. Während Frauen Fortschritte beim Eintritt in vorwiegend männlich dominierte Berufe gemacht haben, fiel die Fluktuation von Männern in weiblich dominierte Bereiche geringer aus. Soziale Berufe, darunter die Kinderbetreuung, das Unterrichten kleiner Kinder und die Pflege kranker und älterer Menschen, gehören zu den Bereichen, in denen nur wenige Männer beruflich tätig sind.

Die Barrieren, die Männer von einem Eintritt in weiblich dominierte Berufe abhalten, stimmen mit denen überein, die auch Frauen davon abhalten, einen rollen untypischen Beruf zu ergreifen: die Stereotypisierung der Geschlechter schon im Kindesalter; kulturell verankerte Vorstellungen von dem, was ein ‚echter Mann‘ zur Ernährung der Familie tut und diskriminierende Auffassungen hinsichtlich des männlichen Fürsorge- und Einfühlungsvermögens. Ein Hauptfaktor sind schlechte Bezahlung und Arbeitsbedingungen in den weiblich dominierten Berufen. Männer, die in weiblich dominierte Sozialberufe eintreten, legen üblicherweise für sich ‚eher männliche‘ Nischen fest, mit stärkerer Betonung von körperlichem Einsatz oder technischem Verständnis. Möglicherweise zahlen sie einen persönlichen Preis, einschließlich einer gewissen Ausgrenzung von den sozialen Aspekten weiblich dominierter Arbeitsplätze. Doch durch den, glass escalator effect‘, die ‚gläserne Rolltreppe‘, scheint die Karriere von Männern, die sich in ihrem Berufsumfeld in der Minderheit befinden, positiv beeinflusst zu werden, wohingegen Frauen häufig vor



einer ‚gläsernen Wand‘ stehen. Politische Maßnahmen, die auf einen Eintritt von Männern in untraditionelle Berufe abzielen sind seltener als solche, die sich an Frauen richten. Eine Reihe von Ländern haben Initiativen zur Sensibilisierung gegenüber der geschlechtsspezifischen Stereotypisierung unter Jungen und Mädchen eingebracht, und in einigen werden Mediencampagnen durchgeführt, in denen Männern Anreize zum Eintritt in traditionell weiblich dominierte Berufe aufgezeigt werden. Norwegen hat mit einem Erfolg eine Quotenregelung zur Einstellung von Männern im Bereich der Kleinkinderbetreuung eingeführt.

Als Teil einer integrativen Strategie zur Gleichstellung der Geschlechter sollte ein Rahmenplan für Maßnahmen speziell für den männlichen Teil der Bevölkerung entwickelt werden. Bezogen auf die Rollenverteilung in Beruf und Familie sollte dies das Hinterfragen von geschlechtsspezifischen Stereotypen in der Phase der frühen Erziehung und der Kinderbetreuung umfassen, die Beseitigung der geschlechtsspezifischen Segregation im Bereich der Bildung, Ausbildung und Beschäftigung sowohl in weiblich als auch in männlich dominierten Berufen und darüber hinaus Maßnahmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, die eine stärkere Gleichstellung im Hinblick auf die Verantwortlichkeiten für Haushalt und Betreuung bzw. Pflege stützen. Zudem sollten Möglichkeiten zur Förderung der aktiven Einbeziehung von Männern die Verwirklichung der Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und weitere wichtige Fragestellungen wie z.B. geschlechtsspezifische Gewalterfahrungen in die Überlegungen einbezogen werden.



Introduction

This analysis note analyses gender inequalities through a focus on men. An understanding from this vantage point is important for advancing effective gender equality policies. It is essential that men are involved in making the social changes needed to achieve gender equality (Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities 2006, Council of the European Union 2006). This involves tackling gender segregation in the home as well as the workplace. Progress towards gender equality would involve redistribution of resources and power from men to women, but men would also benefit. They will be able to access a wider range of roles and opportunities, and both sexes will benefit from a new arrangement of employment and family responsibilities. Advancing gender equality contributes to the Lisbon process which will enhance the economic situation and well-being of men as well as women.

Men have become more visible in gender equality policy debates and measures, particularly in relation to the reconciliation of professional and family life. The European Commission's Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-10) notes that men's smaller contribution to domestic and family responsibilities is an obstacle to gender equality in the labour market; and that gender stereotyping impacts on the attitudes and behaviour of both sexes. Several EU Presidencies have held conferences which have addressed men's roles, particularly in relation to fatherhood and caring more broadly. These include the conference on 'Men and Gender Equality – Towards Progressive Policies' organised by Finland's EU Presidency in 2006. Men were the focus of a section in the European Commission's Annual Report on Equality between women and men 2005 (CEC 2005).

This analysis note is organised into two sections. The first addresses gender segregation in the home, and men's lower contribution to housework and care work. This domestic inequality constrains women's employment opportunities and men's opportunities for closer involvement in parenting and other aspects of family life. It discusses developments in reconciliation policy that enable men to play a more egalitarian role at home, including the new political agreement at the European level to revise the Parental Leave Directive¹.

Section two turns to gender segregation in employment with a focus on men's absence in the female-dominated social care jobs. Gender-based employment segregation creates several labour market problems. It can exacerbate labour shortages in some jobs by creating entry barriers for the under-represented sex; it produces skills mismatch and the under-utilisation of women's qualifications and experience; and it is associated with the disproportionate concentration of women in lower-paid parts of the economy which is a key contributory factor for the gender pay gap. These problems associated with segregation also apply to men's under-representation in social care roles: gender stereotypes and prejudice are reinforced which constrain opportunities for both sexes, labour supply shortages are exacerbated if men are deterred from entering (eg growing demand for eldercare services) and service-users lack contact with men (eg male role models among childcare workers). For example, the rapid feminisation of the medical profession in Portugal has provoked public debate about whether a shortage of male doctors constrains service delivery, such as when male patients prefer to be treated by a male doctor for certain conditions. Likewise in Norway and Latvia there is a public debate about the importance of securing a significant representation of men among teachers of young children (Bettio and Varashchagina 2009). A gender equal society would mean that men and women would have the same opportunities and choices about career

¹ The Framework Agreement on parental leave, on which the Directive is based, was signed by the European social partners (BUSINESSEUROPE, ETUC, CEEP and UEAPME) on 18 June 2009. It revises an earlier agreement from 1995. The new Directive will replace Directive 96/34/EC, which put into effect the 1995 social partner agreement and established for the first time minimum standards on parental leave at EU level.



paths. Furthermore, according to Norwegian research, workplaces with a good gender balance have working environments which exhibit the least conflict or discrimination; thus contributing to higher levels of job satisfaction and well-being (Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion 2009).

The unequal gender division of household domestic labour

There are gender inequalities in the household division of domestic labour – housework plus care for children and other family members – across all industrialised countries. Over the last fifty or so years women's involvement in employment has grown but unpaid domestic work remains a predominantly female responsibility (Gershuny 2000, Crompton 2006). Table 1 shows in the average week employed women do more than three times the amount of unpaid domestic work than employed men in each age group across the EU-27 countries, Norway and Switzerland.

The amount of unpaid working hours is especially high for women aged 25-54 years, which is the peak period for the time-intensive role of child raising (Eurostat 2009). Older women are less likely to have children still living at home, but at this stage in their lives the probability of having eldercare responsibilities increases.

Table 1: Average unpaid weekly working hours of domestic work (housework plus caring for children and adults) by employed men and women by age, 2005 (EU27 + Norway and Switzerland).

Age of respondent	Men	Women
24 years or younger	3.2	10.4
25-39 years	9.2	31.8
40-54 years	8.6	26.9
55 years or older	5.2	17.9

Note: Total weekly unpaid working hours declared by male and female respondents aged 15 or over based on the fourth European Working Conditions Survey 2005.

Source: Eurostat (2009: 45)

There are national variations in the amount of time spent on domestic work by both sexes, and in the gender gap in contributions. This is apparent both for the core housework tasks of cooking, cleaning and laundry (Gershuny 2000: 188) and when childcare duties are added in. The harmonised European Time-Use Survey (HETUS) of 14 countries reveals that the amount of daily time spent on domestic work (housework plus childcare) by employed men ranges from an average of 120-150 minutes in Sweden, Belgium, Hungary, Estonia and Slovenia to less than 90 minutes in Spain, Italy, Lithuania and Latvia.

In comparison employed women spend between 180-240 minutes on domestic work in each country. The narrowest gender gap in domestic work among employed persons is found in Sweden (women do 70 minutes more per day than men); rising to more than two hours per day in Spain, Italy and Poland (Eurostat 2006, adapted from Council of European Union report, December 2008: 69). Swedish fathers are credited with being more involved in childcare and housework than fathers in any other Western welfare state; a situation which has been nurtured by state policy (Bergman and Hobson 2002).



Table 2: Daily time (hours and minutes per day) spent on employment and domestic work (includes childcare) by men and women living in dual employed couples with children aged 0-6 years, in 14 European countries.

		Men	Women	Gender Gap (W-M)
Estonia	Domestic work	2:13	4:46	+2.33
	Employment	6:03	5:28	-0.35
	Total	8.16	10.14	+1.58
Lithuania	Domestic work	1:51	4:37	+2.46
	Employment	6:59	5:24	-1.35
	Total	8.50	10.01	+1.11
Finland	Domestic work	2:20	5:06	+2.46
	Employment	5:13	3:38	-1.35
	Total	7.33	8.44	+1.11
Italy	Domestic work	2:01	6:04	+4.03
	Employment	6:12	3:16	-2.56
	Total	8.13	9.20	+1.07
Bulgaria	Domestic work	1:37	4:41	+3.04
	Employment	6:25	4:20	-2.05
	Total	8.02	9.01	+0.59
Slovenia	Domestic work	2:43	5:54	+3.11
	Employment	5:47	3:34	-2.13
	Total	8.30	9.28	+0.58
Poland	Domestic work	2:40	5:36	+2.56
	Employment	6:17	4:08	-2.09
	Total	8.57	9.44	+0.47
Latvia	Domestic work	1:19	4:08	+2.49
	Employment	7:08	5:02	-2.06
	Total	8.27	9.10	+0.43
Spain	Domestic work	2:22	3:49	+1.27
	Employment	5:52	3:49	-2.03
	Total	8.14	7.38	+0.36
Belgium	Domestic work	2:39	3:51	+1.12
	Employment	4:27	3:36	-0.51
	Total	7.06	7.27	+0.21
Sweden	Domestic work	3:26	5:07	+1.41
	Employment	5:00	3:00	-2.00
	Total	8.26	8.07	+0.19
Germany	Domestic work	2:55	5:07	+2.12
	Employment	4:52	2:25	-2.27
	Total	7.47	7.32	+0.15
United Kingdom	Domestic work	2:41	5:21	+2.40
	Employment	5:51	3:19	-2.32
	Total	8.38	8.40	+0.02
France	Domestic work	2:31	3:55	+1.24
	Employment	5:15	3:52	-1.23
	Total	7.46	7.47	+0.01

Source: Harmonised European Time-Use Survey (HETUS), <https://www.testh2.scb.se/tus/tus/>. Data based on national time use surveys conducted in the period 1998-2004. Adapted from a report (document 16595/08) of the Council of European Union , December 2008: 39



Men do less domestic work but spend more time in employment. They have a higher employment rate than women and work longer average employment hours than employed women. These gender gaps in employment levels are particularly pronounced for parents with dependent children. However, women have the longer 'total working week' when paid and unpaid work hours are summed; with full-time employed women being particularly overburdened (European Foundation by Burchell et al. 2007). These gender gaps are illustrated in table 2 for the 14 countries in the HETUS focussing on men and women in dual-employed couples with young children. For these households the narrowest gender gap in domestic work-time is found in Belgium, France, Spain and Sweden rising to over three hours per day in Slovenia and Bulgaria and four hours in Italy. The total working week is longer for women in each country, even in those countries with the largest gender gap in daily employment time for this type of household (Germany, UK, Italy). The pattern of gender imbalances in paid and unpaid working time is similar for dual-employed couples with older children (see Council of European Report 2008).

Across countries the gender gap in time allocated to domestic work has narrowed somewhat over the years as women's participation rates in employment has increased. Much of the adjustment is because women now spend less time on housework (Crompton and Lyonette 2008; Nyberg 2003). Families usually contain a smaller number of children than previous generations. Some aspects of housework have become less onerous with the invention of labour-saving domestic appliances and products which were less available for earlier generations (washing machines, frozen convenience foods...). The development of the service economy and the welfare state means households can 'outsource' the provision of some housework (eg. purchasing laundry, cleaning services, takeaway meals) and may have access to some childcare or eldercare services (Bianchi et al 2000; Crompton and Lyonette 2008; Coltrane 2000; Craig 2007; Gershuny 2000; Noonan et al 2007).

The other part of the adjustment is that men have increased their contribution to domestic work. For example, in the UK between 2000 and 2005 the proportion of men who spent some time each day on housework rose from 77% to 86% while it fell slightly for women from 96% to 92%. The average amount of time spent on housework per day rose by 27 minutes for men and fell by 35 minutes for women, so the gender gap narrowed to 52 minutes per day on average (Lader, Short and Gershuny 2006: 20). A longer time series is available for the USA, where men's relative contribution to household and domestic chores doubled between 1965 and 1985 (Robinson and Godbey 1997), and the amount of time they spent on childcare tripled between 1965 and 2003 (Sullivan, Gurion and Coltrane 2008). Hook's (2006:647) analysis of time-use surveys from 20 countries shows a clear increase in men's unpaid work over the period 1965-2003 across all the countries surveyed: overall, married employed fathers have increased the mean time they spend on unpaid work (housework, shopping and childcare) by nearly 6 hours a week. It is particularly in relation to childcare, rather than housework, that men have become more involved across successive generations, so the gender gap has narrowed more so for parenting than for housework (O'Brien 2005).

Gender inequalities are less pronounced in relation to eldercare than for childcare and housework. Women usually take primary responsibility for the care of elderly family member or neighbour on an informal basis. However, informal care for a spouse is only marginally more likely to be done by women than men across Europe (Del Bono et al 2009). Eldercare responsibilities – typically for ageing parents or spouses – tend to increase once men and women are older workers, rising further during retirement. For example, 22 per cent of women and 17 per cent of men aged 45-64 are carers in the UK and a third of all carers spend around twenty hours a week on this activity (Fagan and Anxo 2005: 135); among those aged 70 years or older more men than women are informal carers (Dahlberg et al 2007).



Institutional and cultural barriers to gender equity in domestic roles

A combination of cultural norms and institutional arrangements create the conditions for the 'stalled revolution' (Hochschild 1989) or 'lagged adaptation' (Gershuny 2000) whereby primary responsibility for doing or managing domestic work rests with women despite the generational increase in their employment. Cultural norms concerning family roles and individuals' domestic practices adapt slowly across generations; being less exposed, for example, to the economic restructuring that has contributed to changing women's labour market roles (Gershuny 2000). Attitudes concerning gender roles are changing, particularly in relation to parenting. However, domestic labour – particularly housework – has lower social prestige compared to the financial and status rewards of employment, which creates little incentive for men to change their behaviour. A lack of developed institutional arrangements to help men as well as women reconcile employment with care-giving roles reinforces such cultural norms rather than opening up social space for change to emerge.

The pace and extent of 'lagged adaptation' varies between countries. For example, by the end of the 1990s there was less sign of changes to traditional domestic roles in Central Eastern European countries compared to Western European ones, suggesting that the state socialist model of full-time employment for women supported by comprehensive childcare services had done little to challenge traditional gender role attitudes and practices within the home (Crompton and Harris 1999). Conversely, in the Nordic countries the design of family policy has included efforts to increase fathers' involvement in caring for their children (O'Brien 2009). This institutional context has yielded a situation whereby, for example, fathers in Norway and Sweden spend more time looking after their children than fathers in the UK (Sullivan et al. 2009). Hence the resilience of 'male breadwinner' rather than 'egalitarian' gender arrangements within households is heavily influenced by the institutional arrangements of public family policy and labour market conditions which shape the resources and opportunities available to the household.

Cultural values and social attitudes

Social attitude surveys report declining support for traditional gender roles. Across Europe and the USA a growing proportion of the population favour more egalitarian, shared family roles (Crompton and Lyonette 2008, Scott 2006). This shift in attitudes has accompanied the increased levels of women's employment in many countries over the last forty or so years to fifty years. Cultural expectations about fathers' involvement in childcare have also changed across the generations (O'Brien 2005; Bergman and Hobson 2002; Coltrane and Parke 1998, The Guardian, 21 February 2009). In many countries, fathers are now expected to be emotionally and directly involved with their children as well as making economic contributions to their welfare; nowadays 'earning as caring' is not enough to validate a 'good father' status (O'Brien, Brandth and Kvande 2007: 376; Tanaka and Waldfogel 2007). For example, a survey of UK fathers found that although many followed the traditional role of being the main economic provider less than a quarter believed childcare should be the primary responsibility of the mother and nearly two in three thought that fathers should spend more time caring for their children (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2009). A recent Eurobarometer survey records that more than half of Europeans think it is acceptable for men to be the primary carer of children and the home, although one third oppose this arrangement. Over 60% believe men will increase their contribution to household tasks over the next twenty years (European Commission 2010).

Housework offers fewer emotional rewards and fun than childcare. Many men do not regard housework as falling within the remit of their father/husband responsibilities (Dermott 2008; Fassinger in Lewis 2002). Men's reluctance to do housework can be



considered a symbolic enactment of their masculinity (Brandth and Kvande 1998: 293; Doucet 2006, Kitterod and Petterson 2006); or as Hearn (2001) puts it: avoiding such work is a defining feature of ‘being a man’. Furthermore, if men are unemployed or low paid and thus cannot fulfil the expected ‘manly’ responsibilities to be the economic provider then avoiding housework may be the only way to enact their masculinity (Spain and Bianchi 1996: 170, Morris 1985). Hence, in periods of economic recession men’s resistance to domestic role sharing may become more pronounced in some households.

Thus gendered meanings underpin domestic labour and childcare which help to perpetuate a traditional division of labour. Women’s gender identities are also caught up in this dynamic because doing housework and childcare is widely held to be at the heart of what it means to be a good wife/ mother but is rarely considered to be part of men’s competence as a husband/father (Bianchi et al. 2000: 195). Hence some women are hesitant to relinquish control in the private sphere and set domestic standards that men consider unacceptably high (Arrighi and Maume 2000). Furthermore, women’s perceptions of ‘fairness’ about the division of labour often rely on a combination of gender ideologies and economic dependency: many women believe it is their role to be responsible for domestic work and husbands may be excused from domestic tasks due to their ‘breadwinning’ role (Spain and Bianchi 1996).

Gender role attitudes have been shown to have a significant influence on the domestic division of labour (Benjamin and Sullivan 1997, Marx-Feree 1991, see also the review in Spain and Bianchi 1996). A comparative European study suggests that men and women’s gender-role attitudes had more of an influence on the domestic division of labour in their household than the level of the woman’s employment (Crompton and Harris 1999). The transmission of gender role attitudes across generations is an important part of the ‘lagged adaptation’ thesis: gender egalitarian attitudes and practices are more likely among men and women if their parents also held gender egalitarian attitudes (Gershuny et al. 1994).

Household dynamics in personal relationships - relative resource theory and gender equality within the home

According to relative resources theory, the gender division of roles within the couple is influenced by their resource levels (income, occupation, education level) relative to each (Noonan et al 2007: 266). Essentially, employed mothers gain more ‘bargaining power’ for negotiating adjustments to the division of unpaid work if their earnings and/or occupational status approach parity with that of their male partner.

This is supported by the research evidence. Men’s contribution to childcare and domestic work is higher in dual-employed couples than when the man is the sole earner (Gershuny et al. 2005; Hook 2006; Noon et al 2007). Among dual-employed couples the man’s contribution is higher if the woman is employed full-time rather than part-time, and the higher her job status, earnings and qualification levels (Dale and Egerton 1997, Spain and Bianchi 1996, Bianchi et al. 2000, Harkness 2008, Noonan et al 2007, Sullivan, Gurion and Coltrane 2008, Norman forthcoming). Men who have a high income only do more housework if their wives earn comparable incomes – their resources are relatively equal – otherwise they do the least amount of housework out of all married men (Spain and Bianchi 1996: 171, Crompton and Harris 1999:120, Model 1981, Spitze 1988).

Highly educated couples are more likely to have an egalitarian division of domestic labour than other couples. This is largely because highly educated women are more likely to hold well-paid full-time jobs and to have continuous employment profiles if they become mothers (Dale and Egerton 1997; also Spain and Bianchi 1996; Bianchi et al 2000; Noonan et al 2007). This greater egalitarianism may in part be because they can afford to outsource some tasks to a third party by purchasing additional childcare and domestic services. In some countries there may be an effect of education itself: for example



Crompton and Harris (1999) found that higher education levels were associated with a more egalitarian domestic division of labour in Norway and Croatia but not in the UK.

Negotiations involve emotions as well as relative resource levels. The emotional quality of couples' relationship is the context in which parents balance their family and employment roles (O'Brien 2009). Modern expectations about sharing and companionship rather than separate roles in marriage, fuelled partly by the influence of feminism, places greater normative expectations on men to contribute more to domestic labour in many societies (Coltrane and Galt 2000). And high paternal involvement in childraising has been found to be associated with harmonious couple relationships (Levine-Coley and Morris 2002). Conversely, if the couples' relationship is conflictual or breaking down the father-child relationship is more at risk of being marginalized compared to the mother-child relationship (Cummings et al cited in O'Brien 2009).

Men are perhaps more aware these days of the risk of marital breakdown and potential estrangement from their children which may have indirectly fed into the shift in cultural norms in favour of more involved forms of fathering as a means of building relationships with their children that are independent of the quality of the mother-father relationship.

Labour market institutions: mothers' and fathers' work schedules and the gender pay gap

Men's contribution to domestic work tends to be larger the longer the employment hours worked by their female partner, as already explained in the discussion of 'relative resource' theory. The level of maternal employment is the most important factor influencing men's contributions to domestic work and childcare according to Hook's (2006) cross-national analysis of twenty industrialised countries. It is also likely to have a bearing on whether men make use of institutional provisions to adjust their working time. For example, Chronholm (2002) found that in Sweden that mothers' employment was the main influence on fathers' use of parental leave, the duration of leave taken and his post-leave contribution to domestic work.

Part-time employment by mothers has a weaker impact on men's domestic contribution, but here the scheduling of hours is pertinent: if mothers work part-time during evenings or at week-ends then it is often the father who takes care of children during these periods (Fagan 1996, Fagan et al. 2008). Furthermore, as couples have become increasingly dependent on dual-earner arrangements, gender roles arguably become less distinct. It has been suggested that the 'blurring' of gender roles in the economic sphere is contributing towards the 'blurring' of the traditional division of unpaid work in the home; and hence policies which support women's employment may indirectly reduce gender inequalities in domestic roles given that men are more likely to contribute to unpaid work when their partners are employed (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 2007: 237).

However, fathers' work schedules and work hours remain a significant barrier to their involvement in unpaid work and often perpetuate their role as 'secondary caregivers' (Lammi-Taskula 2006). A body of research has found that the number of hours worked by fathers' have a negative association with their contributions to domestic work and childcare (Sayer et al 2004; Hatten et al 2002; O'Brien 2005, Dex and Ward 2007; Norman, forthcoming). This is aggravated by the job 'presentism' in workplace cultures and practices for men in particular; which is difficult to resist in a competitive climate of competition for job security or promotion (Hearn 2001: 25)

The persistent gender pay gap creates a certain type of financial logic which favours the continued practice of a 'male breadwinner' household arrangement in couples' negotiations. If household income can be maximised by the higher earning man focussing on employment, then the woman's employment and work schedule will remain



subordinate to his. And this extends to household decisions about who should take parental leave or use other reconciliation measures for adjusting employment.

Reconciliation policy and gender equality

Reconciliation measures have developed across the EU primarily with a focus on facilitating women's employment. The question of men's involvement in care responsibilities is a fairly recent development in most countries (Stier and Lewin-Epstein 2007: 236, Smith and Williams 2007, O'Brien 2009), and is still largely secondary to the emphasis on their role as economic providers in policy debates in most countries (Lewis 2002; Smith and Williams 2007).

One of the main policy interventions geared towards supporting a greater involvement of men in family life is parental leave. There are significant national differences in the origin and detail of these schemes². The first scheme was implemented in Sweden followed by the other Nordic countries in the 1970s. Hungary also started developing parental leave at around the same time (Moss and O'Brien 2006) whereas in some countries, for example Ireland and the UK, parental leave was not introduced until after the EC Parental Leave Directive (Moss and Deven 1999; Plantenga and Remery 2005, 2009; Fagan and Walthery 2007).

Research shows that parental leave has a positive impact on children's development and wellbeing, strengthens the parent-child bond, improves parental health by reducing the quality of family-time and reducing stress levels, and is conducive to higher rates of breastfeeding (Moss and O'Brien 2006, COWI 2008: 90). However, periods of leave that are lengthy may also have adverse effects on mothers' labour market position which can impact negatively on the financial and emotional wellbeing of the household.

Paternity leave, which is sometimes referred to interchangeably with parental leave, is a different statutory entitlement that enables a father to be absent from work for a period of time immediately after a child is born. It is not a statutory right in every country, but where it exists the provisions tend to be for a period ranging from a few days up to two weeks with a high earnings replacement rate. Exceptions include Poland, where paternity leave extends to four weeks, and the UK where the two week period of paternity leave is supported by a flat-rate payment which equates to 20% of earnings on average (COWI 2008, O'Brien 2009,)³. In Slovenia fathers are entitled to take up to 90 days of paternity leave: 15 days are paid at a 100% earnings replacement and must be taken at the same time as the mother is on maternity leave; there is no benefit paid for the other 75 days leave other than the state funding social security contributions.

Under the Lisbon process there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of leave arrangements and their impact upon fathers' involvement in childcare and gender inequalities in the labour market. As well as efforts to promote the implementation of the original parental leave directive, for example in the recent case of Hungary (CEC 2009b), an important recent development is the extension of parental leave entitlements in a new Directive (see Box 1). The parental leave entitlement has been extended by one month per parent which cannot be transferred from one to the other. No EU level initiative has been taken to introduce a statutory right to paternity leave.

2 By comparison there is more national convergence in the design of maternity leave: in most OECD countries the statutory maternity leave period is between 14-28 weeks with an earnings-related payment (70-100%). The only exception is Australia and the US where there is no entitlement to paid maternity leave (Moss and O'Brien 2006).

3 In the UK the government has proposed an extension of this entitlement to six months from 2011, providing the mother transfers part of her maternity leave (The Independent, September 2009). The outcome of this proposal will rest on the general election later this year.



Box 1. Longer parental leave and incentives for fathers agreed by EU ministers

Parents will have the right to longer parental leave, under new rules agreed by EU ministers agreed on December 1st 2009. The new Directive was formally adopted by the EPSCO Council on 8 March 2010 (Council Directive 2010/18/EU) and Member States will have to transpose the new rights into national law within two years. The main changes in the revised Directive on Parental Leave are:

- **Longer leave:** each working parent will have the right to take four months off per child (previously three months). This extra month cannot be transferred from one parent to the other, meaning it will be lost if not taken. This offers an incentive for fathers to take part of their leave, given that currently many working fathers transfer their right to leave to the mother.
- **No discrimination:** an employee applying for or taking parental leave will be protected from any less favourable treatment for doing so.
- **Temporary changes to work schedules:** an employee returning from parental leave will have the right to request changes to their working hours for a limited period. In considering such requests, employers will be obliged to balance the needs of the employee as well as the company.
- **Work contracts:** the new rights will apply to all workers, regardless of their type of contract (e.g. fixed-term, part-time, agency workers); however the possibility of a qualification period of maximum one year is maintained.
- **Parents of adopted children and children with a disability or long-term illness:** governments and employers/unions will be obliged to assess the specific needs of such parents.

All matters regarding the income of workers during parental leave continue to be left for Member States and/or national social partners to determine.

Source: Council of the European Union (2009) and (2010), Official Journal of the European Union (2010)

This reform increases the incentive for fathers to take parental leave, however unless member states supplement the Directive requirements with a commitment to support this leave with financial compensation the actual impact is likely to be modest. This is because fathers' take-up of parental leave is lower than that for mothers in every country. The schemes which stimulate the best take-up rate by fathers are the ones which have a quota of leave reserved for the father underwritten by a high replacement rate for earnings plus flexibility in when and how the leave may be taken (Bruning and Plantenga 1999, Moss and Deven 1999, Fagan and Walthery 2007, COWI 2008, Lohmann et al 2009:37). Such schemes provide an incentive for fathers to take parental leave in contrast to family-based allocations that can usually be shared by parents but in practice are mainly taken by mothers and thus serve to reinforce women's traditional role as the primary carer. Conversely long and poorly compensated schemes do little to reduce gender inequalities in family-based care arrangements.

The 'daddy quota' helps to promote parental leave as a 'masculine gendered right' (Brandth and Kvande 2009: 186) and is more effective in promoting gender equality in the home than gender-neutral parental leave policies. The perception of leave as a right for fathers is important as a means of making it more acceptable in workplace cultures for fathers to use reconciliation policies; and fathers make more use of parental leave schemes when they have a supportive workplace environment (Moss and Deven 1999, COWI 2008). Conversely, poor labour market conditions such as falling wage levels, job insecurity and unemployment will deter fathers' from taking leave (Anxo et al 2007: 6).



Indeed, one suggestion, perhaps controversial, is that a higher replacement rate for fathers than mothers might be a further effective stimulus towards gender equity in use of parental leave schemes (COWI 2008). In fact, effective equal replacement rates would also be a progressive step because the schemes in many countries set a ceiling on earnings-replacement or provide a flat-rate payment which produces a lower replacement rate for men than women due to men's higher average earnings.

There has been a policy push in Nordic countries to promote men's use of parental leave as part of a wider social policy agenda to increase men's involvement in caring roles (Box 2). The recently reformed parental leave system in Iceland produces the most generous entitlement for fathers in terms of the quota (3 months) and economic compensation (80% of salary), which stimulated an increase in fathers' use of parental leave so that Iceland has the most gender equitable pattern of leave taking of all the Nordic countries. By 2004, 90% of fathers took parental leave in Iceland (up from 82% in 2001), and the proportion who took more than their minimum quota also increased – from 14.5% in 2001 to 17% in 2004 (Jónsdóttir 2008).

Box 2. Nordic initiatives to increase men's involvement in non-traditional family roles

In the Nordic countries social policies have been important in changing the gendered patterns of breadwinning and caring. Efforts have been directed at transforming men into caring fathers. The most prominent policy measure is non-transferable paid parental leave reserved for fathers. Other measures which support fathers care roles are 'daddy days' when the child is born and individual rights to paid absence when children are sick. These policies have been instrumental in making Nordic fathers more involved with their children than any generation before.

All the Nordic countries have a 'daddy quota', i.e. non-transferable parental leave reserved for fathers (except Denmark, where the two-week quota introduced in 1998 was abolished in 2002) with financial support. The quota is three months in Iceland, 2.5 months (10 weeks) in Norway as of 2009 and 2 months in Sweden. In Finland, fathers are allotted a daddy month, but with certain provisos: If the father took two weeks at the end of parental leave, he would get two weeks extra as a bonus (Lammi-Taskula, 2006). Although the main aim of the quota has been to encourage gender equality in the taking-up of leave, establishing a good father-child relationship has also been an important policy rationale.

Daddy quotas have had a clear and direct impact on fathers' take up of leave. In Iceland, Norway and Sweden about 75-90 percent of the fathers entitled to the daddy quota take some leave. In Denmark during the short period of time that the 'daddy quota' was in operation the proportion of fathers taking leave rose from 7 to 24 per cent.

Moreover, the longer the daddy quota, the higher the fathers' share of the total days of leave: in 2005 the highest proportion of leave days taken by fathers occurred in Iceland (32.7%) and Sweden (20.5%), with Norway occupying an intermediary position (9.3%) and lower engagement by fathers in Denmark (5.9%) and Finland (5.5%) where the leave arrangements are more limited (Ellingsæter 2009).

Some studies indicate that fathers taking up leave have an impact on the domestic division of labour. Norwegian qualitative studies maintain that when fathers took leave, there was a redefinition and redistribution of domestic tasks, and fathers who were home alone on leave developed their competence as carers (Brandth & Kvande 1998, 2003). Findings from a study of 356 fathers working in large private companies in Sweden showed that the amount of leave days taken had positive effects on several aspects of fathers'



participation in childcare and on their satisfaction with contact with children (Haas & Hwang 2008). Fathers who took more days of leave were more likely to take solo responsibility for children when mothers worked, spend more time with children on a workday and be engaged in specific childcare tasks. They were also more likely to report satisfaction with the amount of contact they had with their children. Hence, in itself taking leave is not enough to encourage couples to adopt a less gendered division of childcare after the end of the leave period; the amount of leave is important for transforming behavior.

There are good reasons for focusing on policies directed at the gender division in the early stages of family formation, for studies indicate that the household division of labour is established early in couples' relationships and is not easily changed (Evertsson & Nermo 2007). Parental leave programmes aim to change the domestic division of labour, however the full potential of such measures for degendering the division of childcare will not be met until social policy provides stronger incentives for fathers to take a more equal portion of parental leave (Haas & Hwang 2008).

Social policy that offers fathers the chance to take paid leave to be home with children removes one structural/institutional constraint to their becoming engaged and equal parents, but other significant ones are likely to remain (Haas and Hwang 2008). One constraint is the quality of mothers' employment opportunities which have a strong impact on fathers' engagement in childcare. Where women's jobs are less well-remunerated and less fulfilling this may reinforce gender segregated roles and lower men's domestic involvement in care roles. Thus policies supporting equal employment opportunities for women are needed alongside policies encouraging fathers to take parental leave. Another constraint suggested by is popular discourse about fatherhood, of what makes a 'good father' (Haas & Hwang 2008). Despite a longstanding policy encouragement for more equal sharing of parenting in the Nordic countries, social attitudes towards equal sharing of parenting are still mixed. Fathers with egalitarian attitudes take more leave and more often share childcare. Encouraging fathers to take longer leaves holds the most promise in terms of bringing about more change in the home and in convincing employers that fathers also have the right to reconciliation measures.

Source: Anne-Lise Ellingsæter, EGGE national expert for Norway

It is notable that fathers' take-up of parental leave in Finland is lower than in the other Nordic countries. Recent reforms introduced 'bonus days' for fathers and raised the earnings-replacement rate for parental leave benefit and produced an increase in the proportion of fathers who take parental leave; but the introduction of the option for families to share parental leave on a part-time basis has had few takers (Box 3). Fathers' increased take up of parental leave in Finland – now about 10% of entitled fathers – is still lower than in the other Nordic countries (see Box 2), but if the proposed reform of a '6+6+6 model' is introduced this can be expected to produce a further improvement in fathers' engagement with parental leave in Finland (Box 3).



Box 3. Family policy and fathering in Finland

In Finland, initiatives to promote fathering are mainly focused on family leave. While the majority of entitled fathers (about 70 per cent) take paternity leave their take-up of parental leave remains lower than in other Nordic countries. Currently, only about 6 per cent per cent of parental leave days are used by fathers.

Since 2000 there has been an increased policy focus on boosting fathers' take-up of parental leave. This has mainly occurred through information campaigns along with some legal reforms. Paternity leave was reformed to introduce more flexibility and to simplify the application procedure in 2001. In 2003 two reforms were made in the parental leave system. It became possible for parents to share parental leave on part-time basis: both parents would work part time and take care of the child in turns with the parental leave allowance reduced accordingly. So-called 'bonus days' were also introduced: if the father rather than the mother takes parental leave during the last 12 days of the leave period, he is entitled to a bonus of 12 days of leave. Initially these bonus days were to be taken immediately at the end of the parental leave period but in 2007 the timing of this 'father's month' was made more flexible. The 2007 reform also raised the earnings replacement rate for maternity leave from 70% to 90% for the first 56 days of maternity leave and from 70 to 75% for the first 30 days of parental leave. If parents share parental leave they are both entitled to this increased parental leave benefit for the first 30 days of their own leave period.

The option for couples to share parental leave on a part-time basis has not been widely used, but the 'bonus days' reform has had more impact: the number of fathers who take parental leave has roughly quadrupled to about 10 per cent of all entitled fathers. However, the majority of fathers who take advantage of the new system only use the 12 days of parental leave necessary to obtain the bonus days; they do not take longer leave periods. And while the number of fathers using parental leave has increased, the average length of the leave period taken has decreased from over 60 days in the period 1992-2002 to less than 30 days for fathers taking leave from 2003 onwards.

The reforms continue: in 2010, paternity leave will be extended by two weeks, against public spending cuts elsewhere. Moreover, a total reform of family leave system is currently under consideration. The 'bonus days' system have shown that, just like other Nordic men, Finnish fathers tend to use leave periods which are explicitly specified for them, but no more. One of the proposals that have gained support and publicity is a '6+6+6 model', where one part of the leave would be reserved for mother, one for the father, and the third part could be shared between parents as they wish. This is similar to the Icelandic model of parental leave and if adopted this model would probably have a positive effect on fathers' take-up rates and the length of their leave periods. A non-transferable quota for fathers would also solve the current problem that mothers are sometimes reluctant to share 'their' leave with the father.

Source: Hanna Sutela, EGGE national expert for Finland drawing on Haajaja (2006), Kellokumpu (2007), Salmi et al (2008).

The evaluation of parental leave schemes in the Nordic countries conclude that 'Daddy' quotas underwritten by financial compensation have a clear impact on raising fathers' take-up of leave and that the longer quotas in Iceland and Sweden are associated with men taking a higher share of the total parental leave days (Box 2). When fathers take parental leave it seems to promote a more gender equal sharing of domestic roles after the leave period, but it is the length of leave taken by fathers rather than leave itself which



provides the conditions for nurturing these changes in gender roles over the longer-term. This suggests that generous and gender-specific leave policies help promote a more gender equitable divisions of unpaid work in the home; certainly Table 2 shows that Sweden has one of the narrowest gender gaps in domestic work. This principle is underscored by the example of Danish policy reversal: fathers in Denmark take a smaller proportion of the total leave period than in the leave schemes of Iceland or Sweden (see Box 2) and this gender gap widened following the reform to the Danish leave system which removed the daddy quota and extended the total leave period (COWI 2008). Hence further policy innovation in parental leave systems remains important in the Nordic countries.

As well as the reforms underway in Finland (box 3) there is also a new 'Equality Bonus' fiscal relief in the Swedish system to encourage a more gender equitable take-up of leave days and in Denmark a 'daddy quota' of paid leave has been re-introduced for families where both parents are employed in the public sector (see Box 5 below).

Some research has shown that the shorter periods of paternity leave at the time of birth can also enhance fathers' involvement, even if this is usually in the role as care 'assistant' to the mother while she is at home. For example, a recent survey of fathers in Britain found that just over half (56 per cent) of the fathers who took paternity leave when their last child was born said it allowed them to take a greater role in their care of their children while 69 per cent said it led to improvements in family life.

The most common reason fathers gave for not taking paternity leave was being unable to afford it⁴ (Equality and Human Rights Commission 2009). Paternity leave is also playing an important role in helping to shift attitudes and behaviour in Portugal (see Box 4). Thus while paternity leave may have more limited scope for encouraging gender symmetry compared to longer periods of parental leave (Lammi-Taskula 2006) it still plays an important role for building fathers' involvement in childcare and as a compliment to feed into their subsequent use of parental leave.

In comparison to the Nordic examples discussed in Box 2 – and the Netherlands discussed at Box 6 below – fathers' take-up of parental leave is much lower in most of the other EU and OECD countries (Fagan and Walthery 2007, Moss 2009). This is illustrated in a recent comparison of eight member states: where the Danish system stands out for offering an earnings-related compensation during the leave period and achieves the highest take-up rate for fathers, as well as mothers (Table 3). However, fathers' take-up of parental leave is improving in some countries, even if still low by Nordic standards. These improvements are usually triggered by policy reforms which introduce or extend a quota for fathers and/or improve the financial support (Moss 2009).

4 Paternity leave is paid at £123.06 per week as of April 2009.



Table 3: Current provisions and use of parental leave in eight countries

	Length	Take-up rate	Compensation level
Belgium	26 weeks	women: 25% men: 5%	flat-rate per month equal to an average of 23% of salary
Denmark	32 weeks	women: 94% men: 26%	90% of salary with ceiling (average compensation level: 66%)
Estonia	until child is 3 years old	women: 80% men: 2%	100% of salary with a ceiling the first 14 months, then a low family benefit rate. (average compensation level: 100%) ¹¹
Spain	until child is 3 years old	women: 2%	Unpaid
France	until child is 3 years old	women: 30% men: 0- 0.5%	Flat-rate per month equal to an average of 22% of salary.
Hungary	until child is 3 years old	women: 89% men: 0- 0.5%	flat-rate per month equal to an average of 15-36% for salary
Poland	36 months per family	women: 50%	A parental allowance of 400 PLN (€107) per month (after tax) is paid if monthly household income per capita does not exceed 504 PLN (€128) after tax
UK	26 weeks (13 weeks per parent)	women: 11% men: 8%	Unpaid

Notes:

1) The ceiling is three times the average wage (€1.620 per month in 2008). It is assumed that no mothers are above this quite high ceiling and therefore the actual average compensation level is assumed 100%. The average compensation level in the relevant period (less than 14 month) for this analysis is then 100%.

Source: COWI (2008): 25

Germany is one such example, where the proportion of fathers taking parental leave rose steadily from 3.3% in 2002 to 13.7% by the middle of 2008 in the context of parental leave reforms which increased the earnings replacement rate and introduced a daddy quota (Moss 2009). The 2007 Elterngeld reform introduced in January 2007 raised the earnings replacement rate of parental leave benefits to 67% of prior earnings (with an upper monthly limit of 1,800€) while shortening the period of paid leave per birth from 24 months to 12 months. Parents also have the option to spread the payment period over 24 months but at a lower replacement rate of 33%. The reform also introduced a 'daddy months' period to encourage fathers' use of leave: the 12 month paid leave period is extended by two months providing the father takes a minimum of two months leave (Maier 2008, Moss 2009: 66).

In Portugal there has also been a recent series of reforms to extend fathers' rights to parental leave which have centred on introducing a 'daddy quota' and improving the financial support during parental leave (Box 4). Fathers' take-up of parental leave has increased with these reforms, but the Portuguese national expert argues that further improvements to the parental leave provisions in conjunction with other reforms to



education, family and labour market policies are needed to promote gender equality in care-giving.

Box 4. Policies to increase fathers' involvement in parenting in Portugal

Developments in Portuguese policies have extended fathers' rights in a series of reforms which have increased the length and flexibility of leave, the level of payments, and the amount of leave reserved for fathers.

In 1984 fathers obtained the right to take part of the mothers' maternity leave (or all of it) in the case of the mothers' illness or death), the right to an unpaid annual leave of 30 working days to care for sick children under ten years old and the possibility, like mothers to interrupt their employment for a period of 6 months to two years for care reasons (Law nº 4/84). Paternity leave was introduced in 1995: two working days at full pay, to be taken immediately after childbirth (Law nº 17/95). A year later fathers gained the right to share maternity leave if the mother agreed, after she has taken the initial period of 14 days mandatory leave (Decree-Law nº. 194/96). An important milestone was the extension of paternity leave to a mandatory 5 working days and the introduction of a right for fathers to 15 working days of 'optional parental leave' supported at a 100% replacement rate financed by the National Social Insurance System. This optional parental leave period for fathers can be taken immediately after the 5 days paternity leave or after the 4 month maternity/paternity leave period. In the same year, 1999, fathers also gained the right to reduce their daily working hours by two hours per day during the first year of the child's life for feeding if the mother agreed not to take this right herself (Law no 142/99).

Further reforms were introduced in 2009 following the adoption of a new Labour Code (Decree-Law Nº 91/2009). The fathers' right to three short paid absences to attend medical consultations during pregnancy and the mandatory period of leave for fathers was increased from five to ten days by shortening the 'optional parental leave' for fathers from 15 to 10 working days and increasing paternity leave by five days, to be taken within 30 days of the birth on either a consecutive or non-consecutive basis. It is now also possible to add another 30 days to the initial parental leave (180 days at 83% rate) if the parents share the leave for at least 30 consecutive days or two blocks of 15 days, after the first six weeks reserved for the mother. A payment at a 25% rate was also introduced for the "additional parental leave" of 3 months entitlement per parent, already provided by law.

The percentage of fathers taking the mandatory paternity leave or the fathers additional 'optional parental leave' is steadily increasing, but women still take more frequent and longer leave periods. Very few men share the longer parental leave or take days off to care for a sick child (Social Security Statistics on-line: <http://www1.seg-social.pt/left.asp>). Many men do not feel entitled to use these rights due to conventional social attitudes that mothers should be the main care-givers; some others are ineligible because they are self-employed or inactive. More broadly, a major problem in Portugal is non-compliance with labour law (Lopes and Ferreira, 2009).

Ferreira and Lopes' (2009) study reveals that the majority of fathers who take parental leave played a supporting role to the mother rather than being the primary care-giver for the new-born, since they are both on leave at the same time, contrary to the initial policy intention. They conclude that fathers generally only take the lead care role when they are alone with the child; but that it is important that both parents can be on leave at the same time during the first exhausting month for the mother. The interviews also revealed that all the fathers who shared the maternity leave were in a better and more secure



employment situation than the mother. These men did not put their jobs in danger, and did not suffer any economic losses, by sharing this leave, in contrast to the argument advanced by some authors such as Sels (quoted by Julémont, 2006). However, the fathers were exposed to some degree of social criticism for taking this leave. Research coordinated by Wall (2007) which focussed on changing perceptions and attitudes towards the engagement of fathers in childcare and domestic chores identified signs of the emergence of a new more domestically involved form of fatherhood. As in other countries, the changes are more pronounced among highly qualified and high income groups, particularly among young fathers who are upwardly social mobile rather than from traditional upper class backgrounds (Mendes 2007, Ferreira and Lopes 2009).

In order to advance a more gender equal sharing of domestic roles in Portugal it is important to:

1. Defeminize family childcare and child-rearing roles. A small step in this direction in Portugal would be to make the entire 20 days of parental leave for fathers mandatory while keeping some of the leave schemes' present flexibility.
2. Raise the payment level for the individual 'additional parental leave' three month entitlement, with the father obliged to take the leave before the mother, financed by the Social Security system.
3. Run widespread and permanent government information campaigns to raise fathers and mothers awareness about their parental leave rights.
4. Train health and education students and personnel to treat fathers and mothers as equally responsible and competent rather than marginalizing fathers through a focus on mothers as the primary care-giver.
5. Develop education policies that question gender stereotyping in family roles and equip boys as well as girls with the skills to take care of themselves and others in the home (household management and 'domestic science' tasks such as cooking, cleaning and hygiene, laundry and ironing, basic nursing for sickness). The acquisition of 'domestic science' technical skills and a care ethic should be viewed as two faces of the same coin.
6. Develop additional reconciliation support for some groups of fathers (and mothers), such as lone fathers or fathers in post-divorce situations, such as options for reduced working hours.
7. Act to close the gender pay gap because women would be in a better position to negotiate a more balanced division of domestic and family responsibilities, especially when it comes the decision about who must be absent from the job, in case of urgent care needs.
8. In general, better working conditions, more favourable labour relations and a more decisive state inspection activity might benefit both fatherhood and motherhood.

Source: Virgínia Ferreira, EGGE national expert for Portugal

There have been a number of other developments across the rest of the EU to promote fathers' participation in leave arrangements (Box 5). In some countries only modest steps have been taken (e.g. Poland, Slovakia) or the focus is only on women (e.g. Malta, Cyprus, Greece) while in Estonia the positive reform which was introduced to encourage greater take-up by fathers has been reversed by making leave unpaid due to the financial stringency of the economic crisis.



Box 5. Recent European developments in parent leave and father's take-up

The European Commission's expert group on gender (EGGE) conducts an annual review of the National Reform Programmes and the position of gender equality in Member State initiatives. An increase in the prominence of initiatives aimed at promoting male participation in leave arrangements can be noted in recent years (Villa and Smith 2009; 2010, see also CEC 2009c:64). Some countries have built on established provisions to enhance men's participation while others have initiated reforms targeted at men much more recently. Several have introduced reforms to reduce the trap whereby long periods of unpaid leave reinforce gender segregated family roles by encouraging women to extend their absence from employment while creating few incentives for men to take parental leave.

Reforms have been introduced in **Finland** (see Box 3) **Portugal** (Box 4) in **Germany** with the Elterngeld reform (see text above) and the **Netherlands** (see Box 6).

In **Denmark** the so-called '6+6+6 model' is an innovative development where 18 weeks of paid parental leave is available if both parents are employed in the public sector – 6 weeks for the mother, 6 weeks for the father and 6 weeks to be shared between them in a division of their choice. The policy aims to increase fathers' incentive to take up parental leave since income from periods of leave cannot be transferred between the parents (Emerek 2009).

In **Sweden** the Equality Bonus provides tax relief of up to 3,000 SEK per month to parents using parental leave from July 2008. The scheme will be evaluated but it is "hoped that the bonus will encourage fathers' to use a greater part of parental leave and mothers to return to work earlier" (Nyberg 2008:3).

In **Austria** from January 2010 parents taking leave will be able to claim a higher benefit (80% of the previous income) for a shorter period of time (now 12-14 months).

As part of the Pro Family Package in the **Czech Republic** both the paternity and maternity allowance leave and parental leave are compensated at 70% of the previous salary for mothers and fathers. Paternity leave of one week must be taken in the first six weeks of a child's life and parental leave from the 6th week till 6 months. This policy is a positive step in promoting equality of mothers and fathers in childcare, but further steps are needed to reduce the gender inequality in caring for children (Křížková 2009).

In **Slovakia** the parental leave benefit has been increased to the level of minimum wage which may help increase men's use of parental leave, although this does little to incentivise men and women in better-paid jobs to take leave because the replacement rate is low (Piscová and Bahna 2009).

Poland has introduced paid paternity leave in 2010 which is judged to be a small step in the right direction (Plomien 2009) while **Spain** and **Bulgaria** have extended provisions.

Unfortunately there are also examples of reforms which do not advance gender equity in the use of parental leave. In **Estonia** the positive reform introduced in January 2008 has unfortunately been reversed as a fall-out from the economic crisis. The reform meant fathers' right to parental benefit during parental leave was brought forward to when the child was 70 days old rather than six months old and the replacement rate. At the same time, the replacement rate paid to fathers during their 14 days was increased from a flat



rate to 100% of the average wage (capped at three times average gross wage) (Leetmaa 2008). Fathers' take-up of this entitlement increased sharply (Karu 2009) but unfortunately the EGGE Network's 2009 policy review found that parental leave had been changed from being paid to unpaid.

In **Cyprus**, in response to the low take up of parental leave by men, the government has introduced the option for parental leave entitlements to be transferred from fathers to mothers which risk "reinforcing current gender roles within the family" (Ellina 2009:24). Similarly the recent reform in **Greece** to permit leave to be transferred from the father to the mother has the positive effect of creating parental leave for mothers employed in the public sector for the first time (Karamessini 2008) but side steps the problem of low take-up by fathers. In **Malta**, the reforms have focussed on improving maternity rights without measures targeted at men, sending the message that only women face reconciliation issues (Camilleri-Cassar 2008:3).

Source: Villa and Smith, EGGE coordinators responsible for the NRP annual assessments; see Villa and Smith (2009, 2010)

The Netherlands is a particular case of interest, where there is a policy framework 'Plan of the man' for promoting a more equal gender division of paid and unpaid work (Box 6). Like the Nordic case studies, parental leave is only one part of the policy framework. Parental leave is on a part-time basis with a low level of payment, and the male take-up is much lower than for Dutch women although higher than many countries, placing it up among the Nordic countries and above Finland. Men, like women, also have the statutory right to request part-time work, but few use this measure for reconciliation purposes. This raises the question of what types of working-time adjustment might appeal most to fathers.

The Netherlands is one of several countries with the more widely spread availability of working-time options that provide employees with flexibility in how they organise their working day and week (Riedman et al, for the European Foundation 2006). Such options may be more attractive than a switch to part-time work for fathers seeking to be more involved in domestic tasks and childcare. Developments in the UK lend weight to this suggestion: here the 'right to request' legislation is weaker but does permit employees to request a range of adjustment to working hours. Fathers make fewer requests than mothers overall, but their requests are typically for flexibility or changes in their schedules and rarely for a reduction to part-time hours (Fagan et al. 2006).

Box 6. Men's involvement in non-traditional family roles: the case of the Netherlands

Men's involvement in non-traditional family roles is on the political agenda, though not very prominently. Until recently the policy target was that men should perform 40% of the unpaid care tasks in 2010 but this was explicitly abolished in the most recent policy note on emancipation, which argued that the government should not intervene in the division of care tasks between men and women. As a result, the focus is mainly on women and their struggle to combine paid and unpaid work. In response to criticism that this is a rather unbalanced approach, the government recognised that the unequal division of paid and unpaid work is an important reason why talents of women remain unused and that a more equal division is essential in this respect. Therefore, an additional policy plan has been developed, which is called '*Plan of the man*' and contains 10 parts referring to different topics such as leave facilities, the role of companies and their cultures, and male role models (OCW 2008).



Regarding leave facilities, in 2009 the period of parental leave was doubled from 13 to 26 weeks; moreover, the leave is now partly paid, though at a low level. The '*Plan of the man*' also proposes extending paternity leave, which is currently 2 days of paid leave to be taken within 4 weeks after birth. However, there is little support for this proposal (particularly among employers). The system of leave policies and working hours is currently under reconsideration. One of the possible options is that the use of parental leave becomes more flexible, which could stimulate men to take a longer period of (full-time) paternity leave (SZW 2009).

Other policy measures to increase the involvement of men in care focus mainly on cultural change. For example, companies will be stimulated to offer employees more opportunities to combine work and family life. Another example is the '*Prize for the modern man*' which was introduced in 2009. It is awarded for three categories: individual men who may be considered a role model in combining work and family tasks, an organisation that is actively involved in the debate on male and female roles and a company that enables its personnel to create a healthy combination of work and family life.

Impact

Take up of parental leave is twice as high among women than among men (37 versus 19%). Compared to other European countries, however, the take-up rate of men seems fairly high. There are slight differences in the average length of the leave taken up by men or women. Men on average take up 8 hours of leave per week and spread their leave hours over 13 months. Women take up more hours of leave per week (11) as a result of which the duration of the leave period is, on average, somewhat shorter (10 months) (Statistics Netherlands statline).

Part-time work has become a well-accepted working condition in the Netherlands, partly because of the introduction of the Working Hours (Adjustment) Act (WAA) in July 2000. This Act entitles every employee who has worked at the same company for at least a year to adjust working hours; a part-timer may increase working hours and a full-timer may reduce them. Non-compliance by the employer is only allowed for reasons of severe business interest. Small businesses (less than ten employees) are exempted from the WAA but are required to make their own arrangements regarding the adjustment of working hours. A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of the Working Hours (Adjustment) Act shows that requests to adjust the number of working hours are fairly common (almost 9 out of 10 employers have received requests in the previous two years). Only a minority of requests make an appeal to the Act, though, mainly because there is little familiarity among employees with the exact regulation of the Act. As such the impact of the Act is more indirect, providing a support structure (Bureau Bartels 2008).

The share of men working part-time in the Netherlands is the highest in Europe. However, most men with young children do not work part-time and work on average 41 hours per week (Merens & Hermans 2009). This suggests that the impact of the Working Hours (Adjustment) Act on men's involvement in care responsibilities is rather limited.

The impact of the other measures to promote cultural changes is more difficult to assess, not least because the 2009 prize has only just been distributed for the first time. Winners include the organisation 'Daddy plus' (Papa Plus) which is a lobby group affiliated with FNV Jong (part of the trade union FNV, for young people) that aims to create more opportunities for young parents, particularly fathers, to care for their children. For one year the winners will be the prize ambassadors and will promote more involvement of men in care tasks and a more equal division of tasks.



Assessment: towards a more equal gender division

Increasing men's involvement in non-traditional family roles is complicated as it concerns peoples' private lives. A well-developed infrastructure in terms of leave facilities and flexible working time arrangements is, however, essential. While the basic infrastructure has been developed in the Netherlands, specific parts still need attention. Paternity leave is in its infancy; a more extended period may stimulate men to become more involved in care, also in the longer run. Similarly, a higher payment of parental leave might increase the take-up rates of men. In addition, measures focusing on cultural change seem meaningful, even though less visible in terms of direct results. Role-models are important to show alternatives to individual men, as are efforts to increase employers' acceptance and support of men's care responsibilities.

Source: Janneke Plantenga & Chantal Remery, EGGE Dutch national experts

In this section we have seen that family leave schemes targeted at fathers – particular quotas of paid parental leave but also shorter periods of paternity leave at the time of birth – provide an important institutional support for increasing fathers' involvement in family-based childcare and promoting more gender equity in the division of household tasks more broadly. The policy push to promote change in household gender roles has been most concerted in the Nordic countries, joined more recently by the Netherlands. There are also some positive policy directions being taken in the reform of parental and paternity leave schemes in a number of other member states.

However, even within the more progressive Nordic policy framework we see that women still take the primary responsibility for housework and childrearing, even if the gender gap is somewhat narrower than most other countries. For example a survey in Iceland some years after the parental leave reform revealed that while fathers who had taken leave increased their participation in the home following the leave period less than one third felt that their leave period had resulted in a more 'equal standing' in the division of home-based responsibilities in their household (Jónsdóttir 2008:17). Hence while measures to promote fathers' use of parental leave is a vital step it will not transform gender roles on its own: continued efforts to advance gender equality in the labour market, including reducing the gender pay gap, are also needed.

Men in female-dominated 'social care' occupations

Gender-based employment segregation is a prevalent and resilient feature of European labour markets (Bettio and Varashchagina 2009). Where change has occurred it has mainly been through women making inroads into some male-dominated parts of the economy: certain professions and the lower/intermediate managerial grades. In some cases the scale of women's entry has been so large that the occupation shows signs of becoming female-dominated in the future, at least on a head count basis. For example women now account for the majority of entrants to medical degrees in some countries.

In contrast to women entering 'male' labour market territory, there has generally been little, if any, movement of men into female-dominated job areas. Where men have entered female-dominated job areas it has been because of dramatic economic 'push' factors when unemployment has risen dramatically in male-dominated job areas, or rapid change in organizational structures which have made the job more attractive relative to working conditions in other more traditionally 'male' areas of work (Rubery and Fagan 1993; 1995). For example at German unification there was some displacement of women from the financial sector. More generally across countries men have also made some inroads into clerical and administrative work associated with technological change and declining job opportunities in 'heavy industry' elsewhere.



Male unemployment rates have risen faster than women's – albeit from a lower starting point – in the current economic recession in both Europe and the USA (Smith 2009, The Regional Economist 2009). This may compel men to seek employment in some female-dominated job areas (Bruegal 2000:83), however many female-dominated employment areas may become more exposed as cuts start to hit the public sector in some countries (Smith 2009:7). Projections for the UK, for example, suggest that existing labour market disadvantages by gender, age and disability will persist through the recession (Berthoud 2009). Either way, relying on the economic fall-out of the recession would be a pernicious strategy for reducing gender segregation of the labour market.

Barriers to men's entry into female-dominated jobs

The barriers which deter men from entering female-dominated jobs mirror those which deter women from pursuing gender atypical employment.

Gender stereotyping and employment segregation – women's work is not for 'real' men

Boys and girls are exposed to gender stereotyping from an early age which helps perpetuate gender segregated education and training paths. Even pre-school children have gender stereotyped notions of what jobs men and women do, identify certain jobs as virtually synonymous with one gender, and express a preference for entering jobs associated with their own gender (Gottfredson 1981, Spain and Bianchi 1996, Williamson 1993; 1995). Thus, stereotyping narrows the range of careers considered by children from an early age, with Gottfredson claiming that sex-type boundaries are set by the age of nine years (1981 cited in Dodson and Borders 2006:284). Furthermore, it appears that boys hold more pronounced gender stereotypes of occupations than do girls (Spain and Bianchi 1996:93, Employment Research Institute 2004 cited by Rolfe 2006).

This early exposure to gender stereotyping continues into adulthood. Sexist stereotyping in employment, the media and public life is widespread, and men and women are particularly aware of the prevalence of this in relation to their workplaces (European Commission 2010). Employment, or more generally the 'economic provider' role, is fundamental to the construction of most versions of masculinity and 'what it is to be a man', much more so than the role of employment in women's identities (Morgan 1992 cited in Simpson 2004). Jobs which contribute positively to the construction of the 'masculine mystique' generate respect, power and authority; whether through physical strength and skill in manual jobs or specialist skills and hierarchical authority in white collar jobs (Cockburn 1981). Furthermore, heterosexual masculine identity is constructed in opposition to notions of what constitutes homosexuality as well as femininity, which deters some men from considering certain 'female' occupations since this might call their sexuality into question (Segal 1990).

Hence cultural norms and stereotypes is one of the barriers which deter men from taking jobs which they consider to be atypical for their sex (Williams 1993, Nixon 2000). If they enter employment which is considered to be women's work this transgression can incur personal psychological and social costs by undermining their sense of their masculinity as well as triggering conflicts with peers (Cockburn 1981, O'Neill 1982 cited in Dodson and Borders 2006:285). Given the centrality of work to most variants of masculinity men may feel more normative pressure than women to follow traditional employment roles in order to avoid ending up with a 'damaged masculinity' while women's perception of their femininity may be less fragile and less reliant upon the jobs they do (Bradley 1993: 14).

Job search often relies on social networks which are often gendered: women notify other women of vacancies and vice versa (Spain and Bianchi 1996). Williams' (1995) case study of a male elementary teacher illustrates this point. His motivation to enter this profession came from a male friend at college who suggested he take a class from the education



department; subsequently he realised that teaching was an attractive career prospect for him. However the man also emphasised that he only felt comfortable pursuing elementary teacher training because other men were taking that path and he stressed that he rejected the labelling of him as a 'non-traditional' male (Williams 1995: 56).

Discrimination against men in (some) female-dominated job areas

Gender stereotyping not only steers men away from applying to enter female-dominated job areas; it can also fuel discrimination against men who do enter non-traditional areas.

Simpson (2004) argues that certain feminised care jobs are commonly deemed to entail tacit nurturing skills and 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983) which women are better at than men because women are the primary carers in gender segregated family roles. Hence men's suitability is often in question in the minds of employers and clients for many social care jobs connected with childcare, teaching young children, nursing and eldercare. In addition to a discriminatory barrier of stereotyped competence there may be an additional barrier of stigma if they enter certain professions. For example, men working in childcare professions have been viewed with suspicion following high profile cases of child abuse and paedophilia; including being directly challenged about their motives (Rolle 2006, Penn and McQuail 1997).

Across Europe while half of the population are of the opinion that there should be more men in childcare, 42% disagree; support is highest in the Nordic countries where there has been more public debate and initiatives in this area (European Commission 2010). Or men's sexuality is called into question, in a social context where homosexuality is stigmatised. Examples of where this can occur include social care jobs such as nursing, and in the retail and hospitality sectors some sales and service jobs are built around a particular 'feminine' aesthetic of personal appearance and grooming, often with a sexualised component (Adkins 1995; Warhurst et al 2000; Nixon 2000).

Men employed in non-traditional jobs face the challenge of achieving an appropriate balance of masculinity – similar to the identity dilemmas faced by women employed in male-dominated areas (Wacjman 1998, McDowell 1997). If they are 'too masculine' then their sexual intentions may be called into question or they may be accused of being exploitative. If their masculinity is deemed to be 'too passive' then the common assumption is that they are homosexual, usually conferred with negative homophobic connotations. Men must be neither the 'sissy' nor the 'macho' but strike a balance in between the two to be most successful in their non-traditional roles (Williams 1992:107).

Men working in 'feminised' occupations often have concerns about how their career choice is perceived and deploy a number of tactics to try and overcome this problem. Men's non-traditional employment choices often elicit gender stereotyped responses from family and friends and can incur personal costs in the form of lack of support from kin and friendship networks. More than half of the men in a study of men employed in non-traditional jobs confessed to feeling embarrassed about admitting their job title, and several stated they had lied to avoid the ridicule they anticipated (Cross and Bagilhole 2002). A study of male childcare workers found that their career choice was often not taken seriously by family and friends, with the male childcare workers being told to get 'a proper job' or concealing their occupation to avoid ridicule from family and friends (Cameron et al 1999).

Another approach is for men to re-label their job in an attempt to remove the feminised association and affirm their masculinity, for example male secretaries being called 'administrative assistants' (Pringle 1993 cited in Lupton 2000). Heikes (1992) found that male nurses reported how they highlighted the scientific skill involved in their jobs to disassociate themselves from the traditional female notions of nursing, including choosing specialities such as psychiatry and anaesthetics purposely as a niche removed from the feminised



connotations of general nursing. The re-construction of the nurse identity enabled the men to retain their masculinity whilst remaining in a dominant female profession (Heikes 1992). Likewise, men who work in primary school teaching are viewed positioned as a positive role models for boys, leading in sport and technology-related activities but with less emphasis on the care and nurturing aspects associated with female teaching roles; and in practice they may be somewhat isolated from their female colleagues (Williams 1993).

Low Pay and limited career ladders – women's jobs are often not worth entering

Alongside the normative and cultural pressures which deter men from entering gender atypical jobs there are the economic disincentives. Many female-dominated occupations are low paid, have limited job security, benefits or training opportunities and offer restricted career ladder progression. Furthermore, in countries where part-time employment is widespread some female-dominated job areas offer few opportunities for full-time hours (Plantenga, Remery and Rubery 2007, Bettio and Verashchagina 2009). The skill requirements in many service and care jobs are often under-valued in part because they are linked to tasks and 'tacit skills' undertaken by women unpaid in the domestic sphere. For example, childcare is low paid in many countries and this creates recruitment and retention problems (Owen 2003). While this is a problem for recruiting women it becomes a particularly acute barrier deterring men from entering the profession (Rolfe 2006; Hatten et al 2002).

The EGGE gender segregation reports)) present evidence that men are more likely to enter female-dominated occupations if the pay and career prospects are improved (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009, Rubery and Fagan 1993; 1995). This has informed some recent policy initiatives. For example in Austria and the UK there are moves to 'professionalise' the social care workforce by improving training, pay and career ladders in order to redress recruitment problems and to make these jobs more attractive to men as well as women. This includes the creation of a new 'assistant nurse position' in the long-term care sector in Austria. In Iceland there has been a move to integrate pre-primary teaching into the school system in an attempt to move it away from 'care work', as a result it is expected to lower the underevaluation of the highly feminised occupation and attract men, (Jonsdottir 2005).

Opportunities for men in non-traditional jobs/roles

While there are cultural, institutional and economic barriers which deter men from entering many female-dominated jobs, such employment can also provide men with promotion advantages. Men may be under-represented in the occupation but they are frequently over-represented in the senior and managerial grades so that pronounced gender-based vertical segregation is observed even in female-dominated parts of the economy. This is found for example, in nursing (Evans 1997, MacDougall 1997, Cross and Bagilhole 2002) and for teachers in elementary and secondary-level schools (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009, Rubery and Fagan 1993). Thus the negative connotations associated with being the 'token' minority (Kanter 1997) seems to be reversed and become a privileged status for men when they are the under-represented sex in some occupations. Case studies reveal that men can gain 'situational dominance' (Evans 1997) and are often encouraged by their female colleagues to apply for promotion, are better positioned to build networks with other men in more powerful positions, and are treated preferentially by their superiors; which effectively reduces the promotion opportunities for women (Floge and Merrill 1989; Heikes 1992, Simpson 2004, Williams 1992). Williams' (1992) study of four female-dominated professions found that men were expected to move up into authority positions, and refers to this process as the 'glass escalator' in contrast to the 'glass ceiling' which women often face. It is for this reason that moves to desegregate female-dominated job areas also brings the risk of negative effects on career progression for women employed in these areas.



Policy interventions to encourage men into female-dominated job areas

Measures to reduce gender-based segregation have tended to focus on encouraging women into non-traditional jobs, for example see the suite of initiatives introduced in Austria (Box 7). Measures targeted at men are much rarer; some examples are provided below, most of which are taken from the recent EGGE gender segregation report (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009).

Education, training and career advice to challenge gender stereotypes for boys and girls

Many of the initiatives which have addressed men's segregation have concerned the career paths of young people (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009). In Germany there are motivational events with different ones employed at girls and boys, for example 'New pathways for boys' was introduced in April 2008 to provide career and life planning in a 'gender sensitive' way (Advisory Committee 2006).

Goals included widening boys' awareness of the range of career opportunities open to them, particularly in the social care and education professions; providing opportunities for boys to develop interpersonal communication and team working skills that are increasingly in demand in many modern workplace settings; networking existing projects for boys and non-traditional career routes; and to contribute to the development of new conceptual tools and research for understanding boys' lifeplans and aspirations.

Liechtenstein and Switzerland have a similar approach; under the initiative 'Women's occupations -Men's occupations' boys and girls 'swap' roles for the day with boys visiting kindergartens and girls visiting technical professions. In Finland the *National Thematic Network for De-Segregation in the Labour Market* (2003-07) prioritised motivating children and young people to make atypical choices and train teachers/councillors to advance gender equality through education. In Iceland the Equal Opportunities Office plans to employ individuals to visit primary schools with the sole purpose of making children and young people aware of gender influences.

Box 7. Austria's initiatives to dismantle gender stereotyping in education, training and career

In Austria a lot of initiatives to dismantle gender stereotyping in education, training and career have been set up in recent years, but they are mostly directed at girls and women. Girls and young women are encouraged to leave traditional educational and occupational paths behind and enter male-dominated areas – such as trades and crafts as well as (new) technological fields. Special job orientation and career guidance schemes are given priority in this respect: brochures and information events, such as 'Girls' Days' or special career orientation fairs and websites targeted at girls and young women.

Specific education and training as well as financial support for young women have been made available. The 'Women in Trade and Technology' or FIT programme (2006-2010) established by the Austrian Public Employment Service (PES) covers a wide range of active labour market activities – job orientation and preparation, education/training and tutoring/mentoring. In 2008 a total of € 23 million was spent on the FIT programme, around 2,300 women took place in information events, 2,100 women in basic craft-oriented or technical training and more than 570 female participants successfully completed specialist training in non-traditional occupations (PES, *Geschäftsbericht* 2008, Vienna). Programmes for young women in 'research and technology' are on offer, which target women at higher educational levels as well as young researchers. One of the most important initiatives, fFORTE, is aimed at promoting women in science and technology,



initiated by the ‘Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development’ in 2002 (www.fforte.at, download 15.12.2009).

Some demand-oriented measures have been implemented as well. A special premium for employers in male-dominated occupations who take on female apprentices was introduced in the 2008 reform of the ‘Blum-Bonus’ for enterprises training apprenticeships. The Austrian PES also supports enterprises who train girls in non-traditional occupations with a special grant of up to €302 a month.

All these initiatives and programmes will contribute to breaking down horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the long run, but given the unrelenting gender stereotypes and pronounced gender segregation of the educational system, a profound political commitment and comprehensive policy strategy are needed. The National Action Plan for Gender Equality, which is currently being compiled by the Minister of Women’s Affairs, includes a focus on the ‘diversification of educational paths and occupational choice’ and may be a further important step into the right direction. However, current policy measures mostly start at the individual level, tackling women’s educational pathways and occupational choices. Initiatives to attract boys and men into ‘female’ areas are still missing and policies to change the gendered division of paid employment and unpaid care work are absent.

Source: Ingrid Mairhuber, EGGE national expert for Austria.

Positive action measures to recruit men to female-dominated occupations

Some Governments have invested in advertising in an attempt to attract men to traditionally female sectors (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009). For example the Federation of Nurses in Iceland ran a media campaign to attract men to the nursing profession, which highlighted the potential opportunity for work within war zones. Since 1998 the UK government has employed a National Childcare Strategy which co-ordinate interventions to advertise and promote the childcare and early year's sector to male employees (Rolle 2006).

There are some initiatives to improve training opportunities and career ladders. Norway and Denmark have introduced trained ‘pedagogues’ to work with a broad range of ages of children and across varied settings as a means of attracting more men into the variety of roles available working with children (Cameron et al 2003). In France one aspect of the ALICE project funded under the EQUAL Community programme focussed on how to make care work more attractive for men as well as women, alongside other activities that focused on the place of the father in society and tackling stereotypes and other obstacles to men’s more active engagement in parenting (Advisory Committee 2006).

The use of quotas to bring men into female-dominated areas is rare, but one exception is Norway where since 1998 there has been a system of quotas for men to enter pre-primary teacher colleges, along with campaigns aimed at getting men more involved in working with children in pre-school and school settings (Men in ECEC www.wibnett.co and Men in Schools www.menniskolen.no). The quota system combined with other measures to recruit and retain men has succeeded in raising men’s presence in these occupations: between 2003 and 2007 the number of men employed by preschools has risen by half, in contrast to a standstill or decline in the other Nordic countries. However, the goal of at least 20% of men among the ECEC workforce, which was established in 1996 has still not been reached. The preschools/day care centres that have reached this target have done so through a combination of affirmative action and targeted recruitment and marketing strategies. One study, has, however, suggested that the men training on these courses are less motivated than the women, and have selected this training route due to a lack of



attractive alternatives (Sølberg 2004 cited in Bettio and Verashchagina 2009). According to the Norwegian government research is needed to develop better and more systematic knowledge on men's aspirations and experiences as a basis for strengthening the recruitment of men into areas where they are under-represented. This includes new initiatives, without quotas, to develop the recruitment of men to the health care professions; partly motivated by the predicted worsening of labour shortages in this area (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality 2009).

Conclusions

Gender segregation remains pronounced in the home as well as in the workplace. Across successive generations women's involvement in employment has increased but the increase in men's participation in childcare and housework has been modest. Domestic labour – housework and care for children and elders – is still predominantly the responsibility of women. A combination of cultural norms, habits and institutional arrangements perpetuate this 'stalled revolution'.

State policy is important for easing or obstructing social change through the dynamics of daily life in households. Reconciliation policies which are designed to increase men's involvement in providing care and doing associated housework tasks provide the policy settings in which 'egalitarian' rather than 'male breadwinner' family arrangements are more able to emerge. The main developments to date focus on men as fathers through entitlements to parental leave, as well as the shorter paternity leave arrangements which exist in some countries. The parental leave schemes which stimulate the best take-up by fathers are the ones with a quota of leave reserved for the father underwritten by a high earnings replacement rate and flexibility in when and how the leave may be taken. When fathers take parental leave this seems to promote a more gender equitable sharing of domestic work after the leave period ends, but the length of leave rather than leave itself provides the conditions for nurturing these changes. The Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish leave systems perform particularly well on these conditions, also the Dutch system, and fathers' take-up is improving in some other countries such as Finland, Germany and Portugal following policy reform.

An important recent development is the extension of parental leave quotas for each parent in the new EU Directive. However, unless member states supplement the Directive's requirements with financial compensation for the leave period then fathers' take-up of parental leave is likely to remain low. An important complement to parental leave is provision for paternity leave at the time of birth. In several countries fathers have limited or no statutory paternity leave rights; and an EU level initiative would provide a useful stimulus to reform of this element of reconciliation policy.

Parental leave is only one part of the family policy framework for promoting a more gender egalitarian division of domestic labour. Measures which facilitate other working-time adjustments are also pertinent. The example of the Netherlands suggests that few fathers seek part-time work despite the 'right to request'. Working-time policies that enable men to adjust how they organise their working hours across the day and week may be more useful. This seems to be the lesson from the 'right to request' legislation in the UK where requests by fathers are usually for more flexibility, different schedules or small reductions in hours rather than a switch to part-time working.

Family policy will not transform domestic gender roles on its own: continued efforts to advance gender equality in the labour market, including reducing the gender pay gap, are also needed if men and women are to share their earning and caring responsibilities more equally.

Gender-based employment segregation is a resilient feature of European labour markets. While women have made some advances into some jobs which were previously male-



dominated, there has been less movement of men into female-dominated job areas. Social care jobs – childcare, teaching young children, nursing, eldercare – are among those which few men enter. The barriers which deter men from entering female-dominated jobs mirror those which deter women from pursuing gender atypical employment: exposure to gender stereotyping from an early age; cultural notions about what ‘proper’ men do to provide for their families and discriminatory assumptions about men’s nurturing and emotional skills. A major deterrent is the poor pay and quality of many female-dominated jobs.

Men who enter female-dominated social care jobs typically carve out particular ‘more male’ niches of work which emphasise physical or technical effort. They may incur personal costs, including some marginalisation from the social aspects of female-dominated workplaces. But men also seem to gain from a ‘glass escalator’ effect on career ladders when they are in the minority, in contrast to the ‘glass ceiling’ which women often face. Policy initiatives to encourage men into non-traditional jobs are rarer than measures targeted at women. Several countries have initiatives to challenge gender stereotypes among boys and girls and some run media campaigns to attract men into traditionally female-dominated jobs. Norway has introduced quotas to recruit men into early childcare with some success.

A framework for action on men should be developed as part of an integrated gender equality strategy (Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between women and men 2006). In relation to employment and family roles this requires measures to challenge gender stereotyping in early education and childcare which includes action to improve boy’s and men’s activities to care for themselves and others; tackling gender segregation in education, training and employment in female-dominated jobs as well as male-dominated ones; redressing the male-dominance of decision-making positions and the gender pay gap; and developing reconciliation measures which support a more gender equal sharing of domestic and caring responsibilities. In relation to reconciliation measures action by social partners is required in addition to statutory provisions so that initiatives are developed which promote take-up by fathers, including particular efforts in male-dominated areas of employment. The framework of action will also need to address ways of supporting men’s active involvement in promoting gender equality, and other important problems such as gender-based violence.

It is important that a framework on men in gender equality is developed in a way which is integrated and coherent with the wide gender equality infrastructure. Otherwise there is a risk that a focus on men may detract resources from measures focussed on women or even empower men in a way that maintains the status quo (Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between women and men, 2006, Council of the European Union 2006). This might take the form of a sub-unit or sub-committee which brings a gender equality focus to bring on men’s situations, behaviours and attitudes, such as exists in the Finnish Council for Equality. At the EU level, a framework on men could be developed as part of the Gender Equality roadmap and might be integrated within a revised set of gender mainstreaming guidelines for the Open Method of Coordination of employment and social inclusion policies and the Structural Funds.

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