EMBARGO TOT VRIJDAGMIDDAG 24 SEPTEMBER 2004, 14.00 UUR

Working Fathers, Caring Men

Reconciliation of Working Life and Family Life

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The Hague/Utrecht
September 2004

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Acknowledgements

For more than twenty years the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy (DCE) has focussed on the emancipation of women by stimulating their economic independence. The net labour force participation of women has increased from 30% in 1980 to 54% in 2002. The target of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is a female net labour force participation of 65% in 2010. As a result women have less time for household tasks. Men, on the other hand, feel more and more responsible for their homes and children, but time spent on household tasks and care for children by men lags behind that of women. Policy makers can try to stimulate that men spend more time on care-giving as well. One way of doing this is by searching for new insights and possibilities for a fair division of care-giving responsibilities on the one hand and paid labour on the other.

Until now the focus of most European governments is largely on creating arrangements for reconciliation, such as leave programmes, flexible working time, part-time work and child care facilities. Although these arrangements are preconditions for men to spend more time in the household and with their children, they do not influence the sort of tasks men will perform. In this study, we have searched for good practices and their underlying mechanisms: why and when men perform care-giving tasks and take their responsibilities in the household and for children? We have also looked for new insights and pioneering social policies in some European countries. The final objective of this study is to enhance the care-giving responsibilities of men at home (for children and the household) and to enlarge the options for reconciliation of work and family life.

The project has been financed by the Community initiative ESF/Equal and co-financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The research was executed by the Verwey-Jonker Institute in Utrecht. The research team consisted of dr. M.M.J. Stavenuiter, dr. S.M.A. Nieborg, dr. R.A.L. Rijkschroeff, drs. H.R.A.M. Swinnen, drs. ing. N. Broenink, drs. M. Brugman, drs. M.H.R. Goewie, drs. D.J. Mak and drs. S.M. ter Woerds and was supervised by Prof. dr. J.W. Duyvendak (University of Amsterdam). We are deeply indepted to prof. dr. J.J. Schippers and drs. I. Koopmans of the Utrecht School of Economics, University of Utrecht, who were so generous to put their research paper ‘Female Employment and Family Formation – the Institutional Context’ at our disposal. Chapter two of this study is an adapted version of their research paper. The research team was advised by a large group of national and transnational experts. We are much indebted to Ms. prof. dr. J. Plantenga (University of Utrecht), Ms. dr. A. van Lenning (University of Tilburg), Ms. dr. M. Grünell (University of Amsterdam), Ms. drs. M. Kremer (NIZW), Ms. Dr. H. Groenendijk (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment) & drs. E. Wierda (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment). Their expertise and comments have helped us enormously with writing and revising the draft versions of this study. The transnational experts we would like to thank very much for all their useful comments are Ms. Elena Casado (University Complutense of Madrid), Ms. Soledad

Murillo (State Secretary of Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment), Ms. Rocío Rodríguez (Consultant & expert on Conciliation of Working Life and Family Life), Ms. Michèle Kergoat (University of Rennes), Ms. Jeanne Fagnani (University of Paris), Mr. Manuel Albano (President of the Regional delegation of the Commission of Equality and Women Rights), Mr. Tomas Wetterberg (Ministry of Education and Science) and Mr. Lars Plantin (University of Malmö).

Within the European Equal programme, transnational co-operation is a formal condition. For our project it turned out to be essential, it was the only way to contextualise the Dutch situation and practices and to enhance mutual learning. We are most grateful to all our partners within the European cities' and territories' network for conciliation in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain for the fruitful exchange and discussions during the meetings and study visits. The high quality of their own development projects was an important source of information and inspiration. We mention here the project co-ordinators Ms. Rosa Gomez (city of Madrid), Prof. Pierre Dommergues (AFET, Paris), Ms. Teresa Almeida Pinto (Byweb, Porto) and Ms. C. Cappelletti (Pavía City Council). There are a few persons to whom we own more in particular. For a more than perfect transnational co-ordination work: Ms. Carla Chasco of ENRED, Madrid and her fantastic team. For hosting a study visit and giving us a very warm welcome: Ms. Catherine Coutelle (adjointe au maire) and Dominique Royoux (project co-ordinator) of the Agglomeration of Poitiers (France); Ms. Jocelyne Bougeard (adjointe au maire) and Danièle Touchard (project co-ordinator) of the City of Rennes (France); Ms. Ana Catasta, Centro di iniziativa Europea, Milan (Italy). Ms. Annemarie Monomakhoff of the Département de la Gironde (France) for her active role and commitment within our Knowledge Network for Local Action on Conciliation.

The Verwey-Jonker institute organised a study visit to Sweden, with the most valuable support of Elisabet Jonsson of the Swedish Embassy. The Verwey-Jonker Institute together with the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy also hosted a study visit for our transnational partners in the province of Friesland. Without the support of Ms. Frederika Gepken we would not have been able to mobilise all the local and regional partners and projects that we visited in only a few days time. Here, we would like to thank all the people who contributed to the study visits and who made the visits a success.

We would like to thank the men and women who were so kind to help us with our project: the participants and experts of meetings about our case studies who discussed with us with an open mind on reconciliation issues; the men who participated in the feedback group (the so-called men's table) and who so generously shared their ideas on household and childcare tasks with us; and the men and their partners whom we have interviewed and who were so kind to share with us the many details of the division of tasks within their own families.

Next to the transnational partnership, we also have developed a national partnership. For more than two and a half years we have closely worked together with the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy (headed by drs. F. Licher) of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. We especially like to thank Marjan Jellema and her wonderful team for their co-operation, advice, involvement and helpfulness. We are very much looking forward to working together again in the near future.

Jan Willem Duyvendak & Monique Stavenuiter

1 *Men and the Issue of Reconciliation*

'In family history, as on sinking ships, the priority has been "women and children first". The mother-child pair holds the focus, whenever inquiry turns to key, internal themes and questions. There are many reasons for this, not least the fact that women and children do seem to occupy central positions in families – do so now, and have for at least the past century. In life as in scholarship, then, we note an absence – the missing man. Yet we should not assume that men have always been missing. Indeed, it could well be argued that men's experience of domestic life has changed more deeply than that of all the other players combined.'

(John Demos, Past, Present and Personal*, 1986)*

Working Fathers, Caring Men is the hopeful title of our study. The title emphasises the caring side of men: even if they work outside the home (in a paid capacity or not), primarily they are fathers. After all, they are 'working fathers', a term coined as an analogy to the phrase 'working mothers' (Grünell 2001, p. 264). Furthermore, the title does not just refer to working fathers, men are presented as *caring* men. The title, that much is clear, is not a description of today's reality but rather an ideal for the future. The title has an 'encouraging' character, particularly because men and care constitute a cumbersome combination.

1.1 The need for change

Traditionally, women have always taken on a more caring role than men and this still holds true today: 2/3 of care in the Netherlands is provided by women as opposed to 1/3 by men (SCP 2002, p. 93). The existing ratio for care-related responsibilities between men and women, therefore, is a problem. At the core of the problem appears to be the fact that social appreciation for care-related tasks is low, whereas appreciation for paid work is high. As a result, there is still little attention for the difficult conditions under which care is being provided, such as the poor arrangements for combining care tasks and employment. This means that not just the fact that many more women provide care than men (although for many women this is increasingly becoming less matter-of-course) remains invisible; the fact that, at most, men take on very specific – namely enjoyable – tasks, is not sufficiently highlighted either. For few men care is a real concern.

This situation needs to change, for several reasons. Policy memorandums issued by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment point out the fact that increased participation of women in paid work would have a number of positive effects with regard to social security

contribution and taxation revenue, wage restraint and a reduction in the requirement for income-related arrangements. Conversely, the contribution of men to the provision of care is desirable because of, among other things, the increasing ageing of the population.[1] And last but not least: if the appreciation for care work is to improve, and if the endless discussion about improving care arrangements is to finally have a positive outcome, it is essential that men take on an increased share of the care tasks. This is the painful reality of the depressing, reversed Sullerot's Law: whatever men participate in, the social status of that activity increases.

In this study the intended macro effects of a redistribution of care tasks do not form the focal point; rather, the focus is on the necessity to achieve a redistribution in the light of the increase in *freedom of choice* that is so desired by both Government and citizens. Redistribution, therefore, is essential because of the – currently too limited – *freedom of choice* of women. In many households there is an ongoing battle because the woman wants to work more and care less, while the man refuses to co-operate or only co-operates grudgingly or to a limited extent. To enable greater labour participation for women, care participation on the part of men is essential.

Two more arguments for the redistribution of care tasks are to be distinguished, but in this report they are viewed as derived form the first argument. The current distribution also causes problems because of the limited *freedom of choice* of men. Men who do want to take on a caring role are still facing many problems, both materially and psychologically. Facilities are limited and prejudice is still great.

The third argument is that it benefits children if both the mother and father care for them. This is not because the father has to fulfil his 'manly' tasks in the home, especially with regard to his sons.[2] This view is outdated, as it perpetuates gender stereotyping. In this view the idea of complementarity, which previously formed the basis for the distribution of work between men and women both in and outside the home, is extended to a domestic care-work situation. No, the reason it benefits children if both parents provide care is because, in a situation where men share in the care tasks, sons and daughters can see that both fathers and mothers are able to care for them.

In this chapter, we will first look at the distribution of tasks between men and women, both on the labour market and within the home and the family. We will observe that men spend more time in employment than women and carry out fewer household and childcare tasks. Next, and more extensively than above, we will deal with the question why this constitutes a problem. As, in answer to this question, the fact emerges that many women as well as many men would like to change this unequal situation, the question arises why in practice this

[1] *Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Policy Note on Emancipation policy 2002. The year 2002 of the Dutch Medium Term Emancipation Policy Plan, September 2001, p. 21.*

[2] *In an article about the American Fatherhood Responsibility Movement, Anna Cavanas quotes the former mayor of Washington, Marion Barry, who, without batting an eyelid, stated the following: 'Anybody can make a baby, pigs do that, dogs do that, but it takes a man to raise a son'. Cavanas comments: 'Such statements seem to assert that there is a consensus on gender differences, and that fathers are fundamentally different from, and complementary to, mothers and there should therefore be gender-specific roles in heterosexual families' (In Hobson 2002, p. 231).*

proves to be so hard to change. Literature provides a number of different explanations for this: from economic theory and by explanations based on male gender identity. We will see that both explanations are unsatisfactory and are unable to effect a change in the distribution of tasks. In the second part of this chapter, we will therefore take a comprehensive look at the question of how it may be possible to realise such change. To this effect, we will present a 'cautious' model of change at the end of this chapter.

1.2 Men and reconciliation: what is the problem?

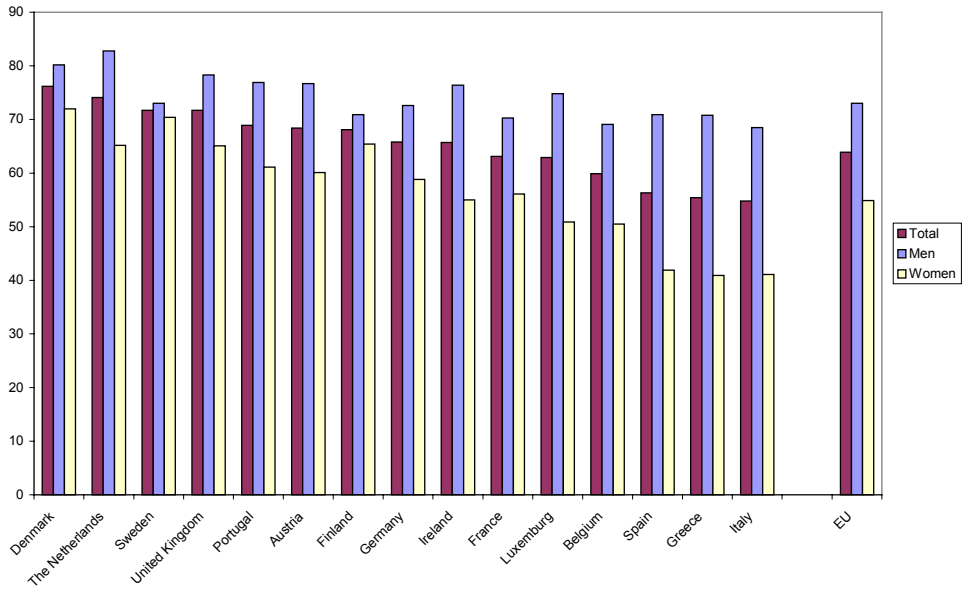
In order to tackle the issue of men and reconciliation in this section, we will focus on the labour market participation of men and women in the countries of the European Union, and on the division of tasks within households and families between men and women. After that, we will discuss the opinions and beliefs of men and women in Europe regarding family tasks and household chores. Finally, we will give a (short) overview of theories explaining the gap that exists between what men want to do and what they actually do.

Working life and family life

Figure 1.1 shows the gross labour market participation in the countries of the European Union in 2001.[3] Of these countries, Denmark (76.2%), the Netherlands (74.1%), the United Kingdom (71.7%) and Sweden (71.7%) have the highest gross labour market participation. Spain (56.3%), Greece (55.4%) and Italy (54.8%) have the lowest gross labour market participation. For the European Union as a whole, the average gross labour market participation is 63.9%. It can be concluded that there is a clear division between Southern European countries, that have a lower labour market participation, and Northern European countries, that have a higher labour market participation.

[3] *There is no uniform definition of the term labour market participation for the various countries. As a result, a direct comparison is not always possible. An important distinction is made between gross labour market participation (labour force as a percentage of the population) and the nett labour market participation (employed labour force as a percentage of the population).*

Figure 1.1 Employment rate 2001 (% of population aged 15-64)

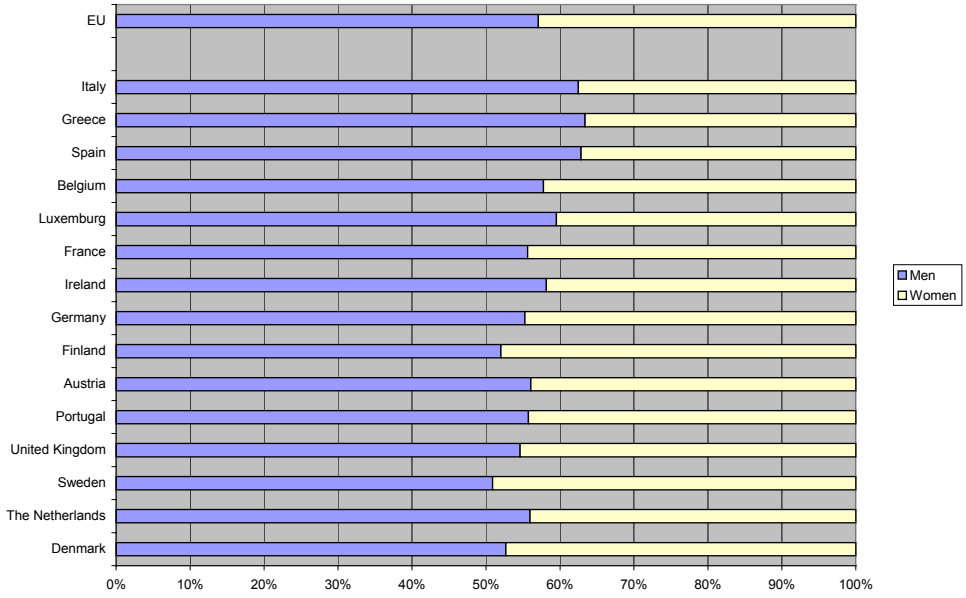


Source: European Commission (2002) *Employment* in Europe

Figure 1.1 also shows the labour market participation of men and women in the countries of the European Union. In all countries of the European Union, the gross labour market participation of women is lower than that of men. In the Netherlands, men have the highest gross labour market participation rate of the European Union (82.8%), followed by Denmark (80.2%) and the United Kingdom (78.3%). In Portugal, the gross labour market participation of men is also relatively high (76.9%). Of all countries of the European Union, Denmark has the highest gross labour market participation rate of women (72%), followed by Sweden (70.4%) and Finland (65.4%). It can be concluded that in the Nordic countries in particular the participation of women is high. The lowest labour market participation of women can be found in Greece (40.9%), Italy (41.1%) and Spain (41.9%). In the Netherlands, the gross labour market participation of women is 65.2%. This percentage is higher than the average 54.5% of all countries of the European Union. The Netherlands takes up the fourth position with regard to the labour market participation of women, just below Finland.

Figure 1.2 gives a clearer overview of the division of labour between men and women. It can be observed that countries with low labour market participation (such as Spain, Italy and Greece), have the most unequal division of labour between men and women. In these countries, men have a much higher employment rate than women. Opposed to these countries are Sweden, Denmark and Finland, where the employment rate of men and women is (al)most equal. The Netherlands is somewhere in the middle between Sweden, Finland and Denmark on the one hand, and Spain, Italy and Greece on the other.

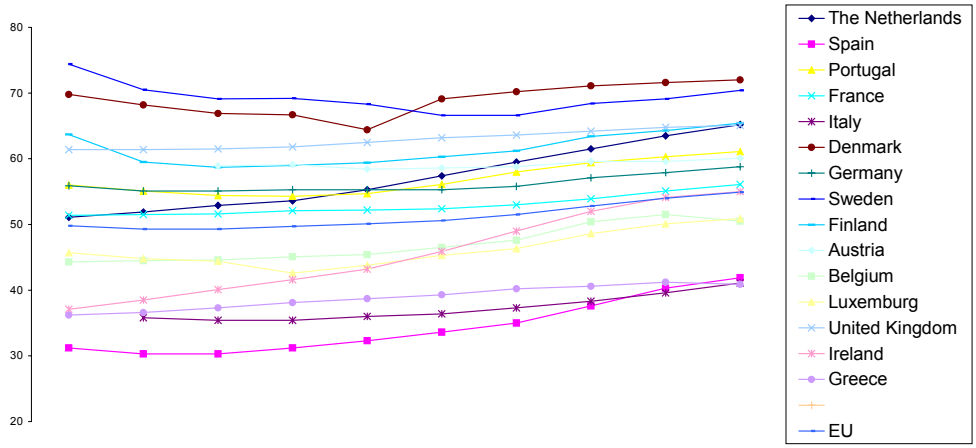
Figure 1.2 Division of labour between men and women 2001 (% of population aged 15-64)



Source: European Commission (2002) *Employment* in Europe

Research shows that in most European countries the labour market participation of women is increasing. Figure 1.3 shows that in most countries of the European Union the labour market participation of women has increased over the last ten years. Not all countries show a constant growth. The fastest increase in labour market participation of women can be seen in the Netherlands, Ireland and Spain. The Scandinavian countries show less growth, which can be explained by the fact that these countries already had a high labour market participation of women ten years ago. Countries such as Spain and the Netherlands are making up lost ground.

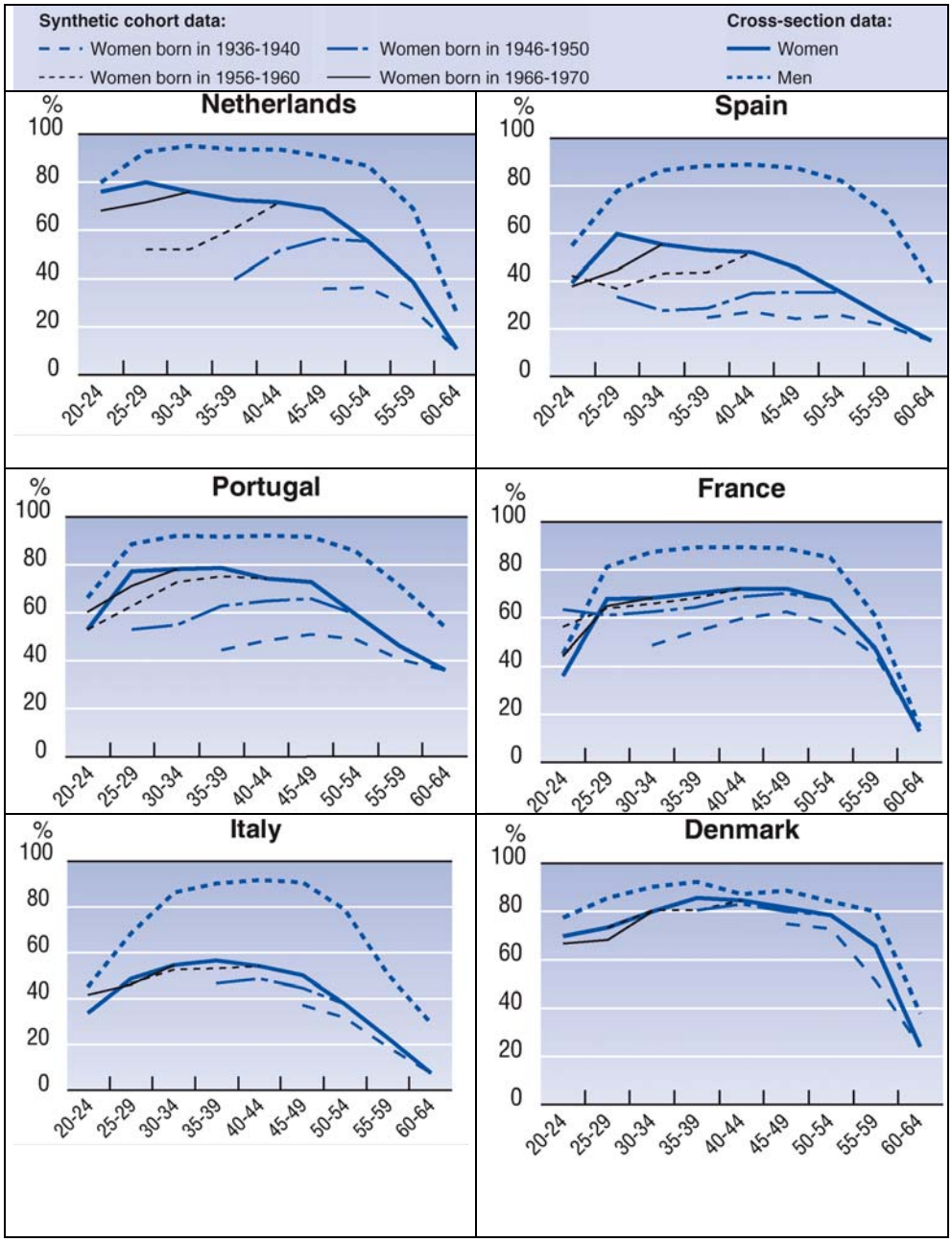
Figure 1.3 Labour market participation of women 1992-2001

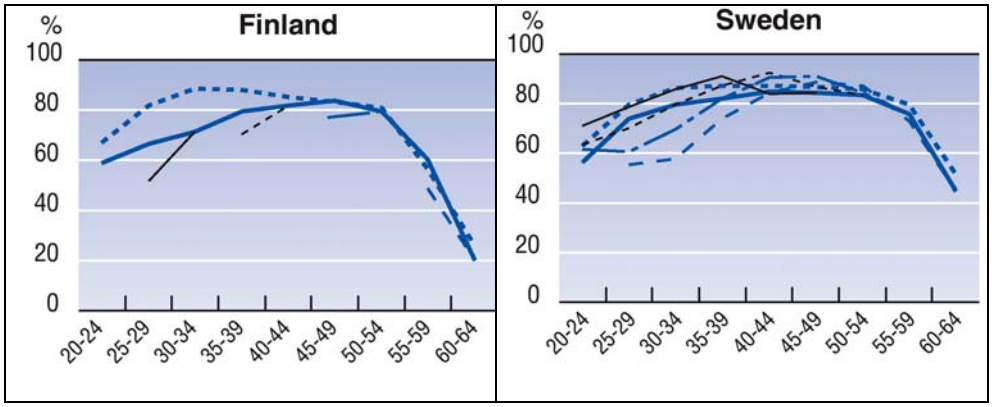


Source: European Commission (2002) *Employment* in Europe

Studying the issue of reconciling work and family life, it is also of interest to look at the difference between the labour market participation over the life course (the so-called age-employment profile) of men and women. Some significant differences can be observed between the European countries. In countries such as Sweden, Finland and Denmark, the age-employment profile of women is relatively similar to that of men. In countries such as France and Italy, the number of employed women is much lower than that of men, but the curve has a similar form (see figure 1.4). This is not the case for countries such as Spain and the Netherlands. The figures for these countries indicate that the gender gap regarding employment changes during the course of life: women stop working when they become a parent, and (some) return to work when the children are older.

Figure 1.4 Age-employment profile of men and women





Source: OECD (2002) *Employment Outlook*

Participation of men in household and family

Research into European time budgets shows that there are differences between men and women with regard to the time spent on leisure activities and on housekeeping and other family tasks. It must be noted that there are no uniform European standards for research into time budgets.[4] The figures presented in table 1.1, for example, are measured at various moments in time. Nevertheless, the table presents some striking differences between some of the European countries. In all of the ten European countries presented in the table, women spend much more time on household work and family tasks than men. The difference is less striking in the northern countries such as Denmark, Finland and Sweden, and more striking in Italy and Austria. The Netherlands takes up a position in the middle.

Table 1.1 Time spent by men (20-59 years old) on housekeeping and family tasks (index women = 100)

The Netherlands (1995)	47
Belgium (1987/88)	51
Germany (1991/92)	49
France (1998)	49
Austria (1992)	31
United Kingdom (1985)	48
Denmark (1987)	57
Finland (1987)	57
Sweden (1990/91)	60
Italy (1989)	26

Source: SCP (2000) *Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport*

[4] *The figures are based on time budget research. Such research is carried out in all European countries, be it in various ways and on various moments in time. As a result, an exact comparison between countries is not possible, since in this type of research it is a general problem to get current and comparative statistical data.*

When analysing the issue of reconciliation in various European countries, it is relevant to look at figures that make a distinction between various household tasks and family forms. It can be expected that in households where both men and women work full- time, the division of housekeeping and family tasks is more equal than in more traditional household forms. In addition to this, we want to know whether men spend relatively more time on family tasks than on household tasks, or the other way round. Table 1.2 and 1.3 respectively show OECD figures for some European countries regarding tasks relating to childcare and tasks relating to other forms of unpaid labour within the household according to family form.

Even though the figures are not from one particular moment in time, it can be concluded that the division of family tasks (defined as childcare) between men and women is more equal in households where both partners work full-time than in households where the women are housewives. The differences between women working full-time and women working part-time are small. In addition to this, the figures show that the outcomes have changed over time. In the United Kingdom, men spent 44 minutes per day on childcare in 1987. In 1999, this figure had increased to 90 minutes per day.

Table 1.2 Time spent on childcare by women and men in two-parent families with a child under 5 (average per day)

	Men (average of all men)	*Women with full-time employment*		*Women with part-time employment*		*Housewives*	
	Minutes	*Minutes*	*Time ratio women to men*	*Minutes*	*Time ratio women to men*	*Minutes*	*Time ratio women to men*
Denmark (1987)	28	55	2.0	41	1.5	87	3.1
Finland (1987)	45	125	2.8	131	2.9	181	4.0
Sweden (1991)	70	130	1.9	118	1.7	261	3.7
Italy (1989)	36	96	2.7	..	..	120	3.3
United Kingdom (1987)	44	..	..	..	..	141	3.2
United Kingdom (1995)	87	120	1.4	154	1.8	205	2.4
United Kingdom (1999)	90	..	..	193	2.1	202	2.2
Austria (1992)	28	62	2.2	66	2.4	116	4.1
Germany (1992)	59	124	2.1	142	2.4	175	3.0

Source: OECD (2001) *Employment Outlook*

Table 1.3 shows the amount of time spent by men and women on unpaid labour according to household form. The figures show that women working full-time spend more time on unpaid labour than men (working full-time).[5] This is more so the case in Italy, Austria and the United Kingdom (in 1995), and less so for the Nordic countries and Germany. As could be expected, part-time employed women and housewives spend more time on unpaid labour than full-time employed women (see table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Time spent on unpaid labour by women and men in two-parent families with a child under 5 (average per day)

	Men (average of all men)	*Women with full-time employment*		*Women with part-time employment*		*Housewives*	
	Hours	*Hours*	*Time ratio women to men*	*Hours*	*Time ratio women to men*	*Hours*	*Time ratio women to men*
Denmark (1987)	1.9	3.1	1.6	4.1	2.2	5.4	2.8
Finland (1987)	2.1	3.6	1.7	4.3	2.1	4.4	2.1
Sweden (1991)	2.5	3.9	1.6	4.9	2.0	5.1	2.0
Italy (1989)	1.2	4.8	4	..	..	7.0	5.8
United Kingdom (1987)	2.0	..	..	..	..	5.2	2.6
United Kingdom (1995)	1.7	5.4	3.2	4.2	2.5	4.7	2.8
United Kingdom (1999)	1.6	..	..	3.8	2.4	3.7	2.3
Austria (1992)	1.7	4.8	2.8	5.4	3.2	6.7	3.9
Germany (1992)	2.5	4.2	1.7	5.0	2.0	5.8	2.3

Source: OECD (2001) *Employment Outlook*

Modern fatherhood

It is of interest to our research question to look at the mutual influence of the beliefs men have concerning reconciliation on the one hand, and their actual behaviour on the other. People often think it is beliefs that change the world: modern opinions would lead to a more equal division of tasks between men and women. However, the influence can also work the other way round. It could be the case that actually taking care of children will readjust men's views on the issue of care giving. Before turning to some European figures on men's beliefs

[5] *The OECD uses figures of the average of all men working full-time and part-time. Since most men work full-time, it is not meaningful to distinguish men on the basis of working hours.*

regarding household and family tasks, we will first discuss the context in which these beliefs have been shaped, namely the rise of modern fatherhood.

The changing nature of fatherhood and the development of the so-called new father has been a central topic in much of the research and debates over the last two decades (See, among others: Hobson & Morgan 2001, Duindam 1996, 1997 & 1999, Van Loo 1996, Corneau 2000, Welzer-Lang 2000, Bonino 2003). This modern father shows an increasing active and emotional involvement in his wife and children. He is no longer a mere breadwinner; the traditional father going off to work and returning with the money, or more popularly said 'as the fellow who brings home the bacon' (Demos 1986, p. 52). Studies have shown various adaptations of modern fatherhood. Fathers are no longer seen as one-dimensional patriarchs or breadwinners, but (like mothers) as actors playing many different parts: those of friend, care giver, partner, role model, protector, moral guide and teacher (Lamb 1985, Lamb 1998, Levine 1985, Lewis & O'Brien 1987, Pleck 1987, Marsiglio 1995, Hobson & Morgan 2002, Burgess 1997). In addition to this, the studies emphasise that the expression of fatherhood differs in accordance to various social circumstances, such as family structure, occupation, ethnic group, work orientation of wives, and stages of life (Lamb 1985, Lamb 1987, Dench 1997, Pels 2000 & 2002, Dongen 1995, Bozett & Hanson 1991, Sackman 1998).

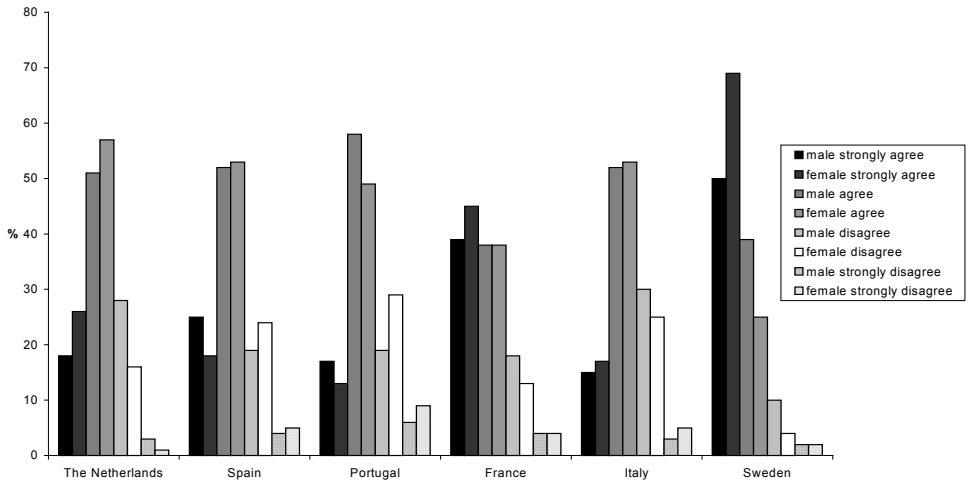
In relation to the discussion regarding the emotional involvement of fathers, it is of interest to mention some (Dutch) research that was carried out into the wish to become a father, and the changes in the motivation for parenthood over time. Increasingly, men who choose to be a father do so for emotional and affective reasons (Jacobs 1995, Jacobs 1998, Knijn 1997). (Expectant) fathers wish to see their children grow up, and want to give them love and affection (Jacobs 1998). Jacobs assumes this to be a major change in fatherhood, because traditionally these motives were seen as female motives for wanting children. Knijn (1997) comes to a similar conclusion: modern fathers no longer wish to have a distant relationship with their children. One of the pillars of modern parenthood is that parents are very much involved in the well-being of their children – a process described as the 'emotionalisation' of parenthood (Knijn 1997). In the Netherlands in particular, women are aware of the need for personal contact. They work only part-time or leave the labour market for a certain period of time. An interesting question that can be asked is how men realise their expectations as a modern father.

To what extent are ideas on the rise of modern fatherhood represented in the opinions people have regarding the role of men in household and family? In order to shed some light on this issue, we will look at some figures for a number of European countries taken from the so-called Eurobarometer.[6] The Eurobarometer is a survey held among the population of the European Union member countries. The aim of the Eurobarometer is to monitor the public opinion in the European Union. The tables below show the figures for the European countries that are included in our research project. The most recent survey was held in the years 1999-2000.

[6] *We have chosen for the six countries that are part of our research project: the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, France, Portugal and Italy.*

Figure 1.5 shows that in the participating countries a large majority of men and women agree or strongly agree with the proposition that fathers are equally suited to look after children as mothers. Nevertheless, there are some differences between countries. In Sweden, for example, 89% of men and 94% of women (strongly) agree with this statement. Compare this to Italy, where 67% of men and 70% of women (strongly) agree with the proposition. The Netherlands takes up a middle position: 69% of men and 83% of women (strongly) agree with the proposition. Only a small minority of men and women strongly disagree.

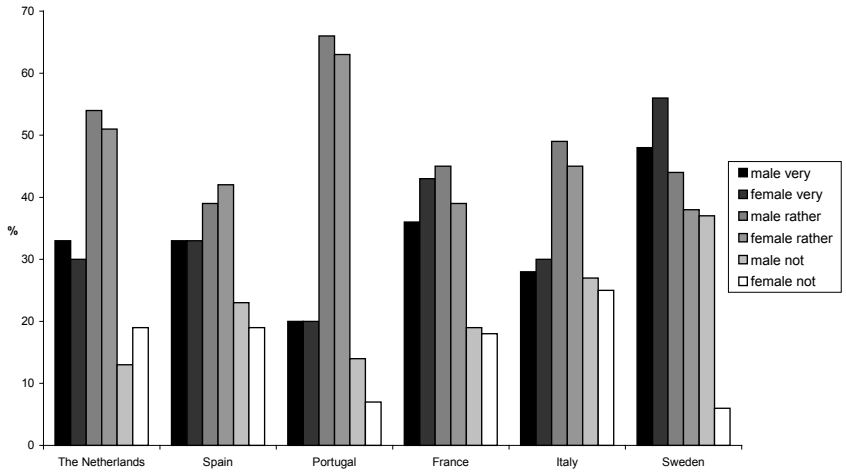
Figure 1.5 Fathers are equally suited to look after children as mothers (in %), 1999-2000



Source: Central Archive for Empirical Social Research (1999/2000), European Values Study (EVS)

The survey also posed the following statement: in a marriage it is important to divide household chores. Considering the figures presented in figure 1.6, it can be concluded that of the six surveyed countries Swedish people are most in agreement with this proposition, while the Portuguese and Italians agree the least. France, Spain and the Netherlands are in the middle. The Portuguese, however, think it rather important to share household chores in marriage. Only 8% of Swedish men are of the opinion that it is not important to share household chores at all. In general, men (except in the Netherlands) are more conservative in their answer to this proposition than women.

Figure 1.6 Important in marriage: divide household chores (in %), 1999-2000



Source: Central Archive for Empirical Social Research (1999/2000), European Values Study (EVS)

We will now turn to the Dutch situation regarding this topic, as this is the country for which we have the most sources at our disposal. Dutch research on preferences regarding working hours shows that men have a growing desire to work fewer hours. Nevertheless, a discrepancy still exists between the preferred amount of working hours and the contractual amount of working hours (Fouarge & Baaijens 2003, Fouarge et al. 2000, Fouarge et al. 1999, Spaans 1997, Grift 1999). A recent study indicates that men have shown a growing desire to work fewer hours over the last fifteen years. A large discrepancy still exists between the preferred amount of working hours and the contractual amount of working hours of men: in the period of 1986-2002, 15 to 27 per cent of the men with a desire to work fewer hours, have actually realised to do so (Fouarge & Baaijens 2003).

In Knijn's opinion, the involvement of fathers in their children is concentrated on after-work hours. Most men continue to work full-time, and the most important possibility fathers have to realise involvement in their children is by spending their leisure time together with their children. Knijn (1997) and Doornebal (1996) indicate that the mother plays the crucial role of intermediary regarding the involvement of fathers. Mothers release fathers from household tasks, supporting the fact that fathers spend leisure time with the children, and keeping fathers informed of the daily ups and downs of their offspring. This way, men can continue working full-time, whilst fulfilling the needs of modern fatherhood at the same time. All in all, it is clear that there is no fair division of household tasks, apart from some of the tasks regarding children.

Explanations: economy or identity

Men feel increasingly committed to their families and are increasingly emotionally involved in their children. At the same time, research into the division of paid and unpaid labour and research into the preferred amount of working hours indicate that it is difficult for large groups of men to realise their wishes and live up to their ideals. Two clusters of theories have served to explain this contradiction between preferences and reality. One cluster of theories consists of the new home economics or rational choice theories, the other cluster of theories can be summarised under the header of gender identity theories. Both clusters of theories try to explain the asymmetry in the division of paid and unpaid labour between men and women.[7]

The so-called rational choice theories are originally based on the new home economics of Gary Becker. In his household production model, Becker compares someone's market productivity and someone's home productivity (household work and leisure) over the life course. In the middle stage of life, the market productivity and earning capacity reach their peak, and, consequently, it is most rational to participate on the labour market as much as possible during that stage. The arrival of children poses a problem, because as a consequence time spent on housekeeping and family tasks (the home productivity) rises as well. The rational choice theories state that partners running a household together (the family unit) will always opt for the decision that yields the maximum rewards for the least total effort. The comparative efficiency of each partner will shape the division of market and household labour.

Since, on average, men still have more opportunities on the labour market and higher wages than women, it would be - from a rational point of view - financially disadvantageous for men to work less and for women to work more. In accordance, the rational choice theories seem to explain the Dutch situation in which most fathers work full-time and most mothers work part-time (the so-called one-and-a-half earner model). In addition to this, the high costs of institutionalised childcare stimulate people with lower incomes (predominantly women) to stop working, since it does not seem to be very efficient to work for low wages and pay high costs for childcare at the same time (Van der Lippe 1993, Van der Lippe 1997, Jansen & Stavenuiter 2000, De Jong & De Olde 1994, Knijn et al. 1994).

Nevertheless, rational choice theories cannot explain the asymmetric division of household labour completely. If these theories were right, the division of household labour should be symmetrical within households where men and women have the same opportunities on the labour market. It turns out that this is not the case. Even in households where men and women have the same opportunities on the labour market and regarding earning capacities, an asymmetric division of household labour exists (Knijn et. al. 1994; Doorne Huiskes 1992).

Research carried out by American sociologist Arlie Hochschild shows that ‘choices’ are made in the direction opposite from the ones household economics would justify. In *The Second Shift*, she depicts that men perform even fewer tasks within the household if their wives reach a higher income level and financial status. In Hochschild’s opinion, men with well-

[7] *As a third ‘cluster’ could be mentioned the biological perspective, but since we are only concerned with conditions that are compliant, we have left this point aside. Although, we have to mention that also ‘biological’ differences are less fixed than is often assumed (Mol 1991).*

earning wives have difficulty to maintain their masculine image, and, as a result, they want to resist changes that challenge their male gender identity (Hochschild 1989).

An important contribution to the research of men and masculinity is made by David Morgan's book *Discovering Men* (1992). In this study, Morgan addresses the important influence of work on men's lives. Work is assumed to be a major basis of masculine identity. Masculinity is challenged when men enter the home in order to take on the main responsibility for a child. The same line of reasoning can be found in Marsiglio's study (1993) that analyses the relationship between men's work identity and their father identity.

Knijn et al. (1994) investigated the interrelation of the male gender identity and the division of household tasks between men and women for the Dutch situation. Knijn et al. researched the (im)possibilities of care-giving fatherhood and the gender-specific characteristics of household tasks and care. They concluded that for men the concept of care giving is problematic, because care lacks the symbolic value of paid labour, which is associated with status, power and income (Knijn et. al. 1994). In addition to this, within organisations both employers and employees often think that working part-time and making a career do not go hand in hand, even though organisations formally tend to have a family-friendly policy (Mozes-Philips & Wester 1993, Overbeek 2002, Veenis 2000).

Other research on masculinity and fatherhood shows that gender identity can be less static, and can transform when conditions change as well. A lot of useful research on the aspect of masculinity and fatherhood has been carried out in Scandinavian countries, where traditionally much attention is paid to the role of fathers. In an article with the meaningful title 'Working fathers – caught in the Web of the symbolic order of gender', L. Højgaard of the University of Copenhagen discusses this side of the reconciliation issue. The introduction of paternal leave, particularly for fathers, introduced fatherhood into working life: working men became working fathers. Simultaneously, however, men had to live up to the male work ethic of career making and working late. Højgaard's article shows the ambiguity of the working father, who has to live up to the image of the hard working male. She concludes that being an active father challenges a very basic symbolic meaning of masculinity. This ambiguity might be the reason why men do not take full advantage of the possibilities of reconciling family life and working life (Højgaard 1997).

In their article 'Masculinity and childcare: the reconstruction of fathering' Brandth and Kvande (1998) investigate the way in which a group of Norwegian men who *did* use parental leave were somehow able to incorporate these care-giving activities into their image of masculinity. Brandth and Kvande have conceptualised the contents of male care giving as 'masculine care'. For example, the men expressed their care by taking the children out of the house, combining their former leisure activities with their care-giving activities. The fathers in this study defined fathering as doing things together with their children. By using parental leave, the fathers also redefined and redistributed the work at home, and, while doing so, reconstructed the meaning of gender. One of the most remarkable results of the Brandth and Kvande study is that it shows that the male gender identity can be transformed by including new elements such as care giving capacities.

The research on gender identity and fatherhood discussed so far concentrates on finding explanations for the division of paid labour and unpaid household and family tasks between men and women. Knijn also investigated the hierarchy of unpaid household tasks, and states

that pedagogical tasks and light household tasks such as cooking and shopping are much higher in the hierarchy of household tasks than cleaning and doing the laundry, which are very low in this hierarchy. Knijn concludes that most care-giving fathers perform tasks that are high in the household hierarchy, the so-called gender-neutral tasks. Men tend to avoid tasks associated with women's work, such as doing the laundry and cleaning, because these are regarded as a threat to their masculinity (Knijn 1997).

Knijn's findings are interesting in that her line of reasoning shows that performing certain household tasks can become gender neutral; it shows that change is possible. Taking care of (small) children, shopping and cooking were once solely female tasks. This raises the question of whether and how household tasks that are still associated with women can get *beyond gender* as well. This is a very important question, since even in countries where men perform a substantial part of the childcare tasks, like in the Scandinavian countries, by far the greater part of low hierarchy household tasks is carried out by women. We will therefore turn to the urgent question of how change takes place: in what social contexts will and can traditional gender patterns transcend gender?

1.3 Conceptualising change

A number of prior considerations

A drastic redistribution of work and care-related tasks would correspond with what many people want in theory and a considerable group in reality. At the same time, there is also a group of people who empathise with the principle of 'share and share alike', but where both the men and women appear to be happy with the fact that, in the end, the man does more paid work and the woman provides significantly more care. Insofar as the men and women in question are satisfied with the situation, the question arises to what extent policymakers can turn this distribution of care and work tasks into a problem. It certainly seems too paternalistic (and also too ambitious) to forcibly 'translate' the broad support for the principle of equal distribution of care and (paid) work into an *exact* 50/50 ratio per couple. After all, people must have the freedom of choice to make their own agreements about the distribution that they desire.

However, it is certainly legitimate to realise a targeted policy for a different distribution of care and work, especially because, the way things are at present, the freedom of choice of both women and men is being restricted. An essential criterion for the issue as to how much guidance the Government can be allowed to provide is the answer to the question how much choice the men and women in question really have. In this freedom of choice, the *conditions* play a major role: what are the practical obstacles and inadequate laws that prevent people from doing what they say they would like to do? True freedom of choice also means that the option to break with traditions exists, however hard this may be. Without a change of perspective, it is often impossible for people to imagine a different distribution, simply because things have always been the way they are now. If there were a broader range of options and examples, an increasing *diversity,* the *freedom of choice* of individual people would increase exponentially.

The (further) increase in the freedom of choice of individuals is a strong argument both for the forcible implementation of a redistribution of care and paid work and for the objective of achieving a less stereotyped proportioning with regard to care tasks in the home, especially because here in particular women 'end up' with the less enjoyable and lower-valued tasks. The argument of 'increasing freedom of choice' in itself, however, does indicate that there is a limit to what the policy can impose. Could it be the objective that updated views with regard to men and care result in a new singular model, like the previous sole breadwinner model? This would not appear to be desirable, especially because the lack of diversity would eventually, once again, limit the freedom of choice. Freedom of choice would be equally restricted if the Government would encourage (let alone impose) the view that a strictly equal distribution of care tasks would represent the ideal situation for each and every person.

The possibility of change

As we have demonstrated in paragraph 1.2, much material has already been collated about the differences between men and women when it comes to participation in paid work on the one hand and care tasks on the other. The question arises *why* these differences exist and continue to exist so stubbornly. In the previous paragraph, we saw that literature provides a number of different answers to explain this situation. Among other things, the differences are supposed to relate to the different earning capacities of men and women ('cash' and 'care') and to (insufficient) statutory arrangement for the provision of care. However, these reasons proved to be insufficient to explain the systematic differences between men and women in care and (paid) work, differences that also manifest themselves in the younger generations. 'The discrepancy between the desired and actual level of labour participation cannot be explained only by the lack of organisational options, but is also a question of appreciation and preferences' (Grünell 2001, p. 107). 'It is not just the "earning capacity" of the partners that is the deciding factor in the realisation of a certain work/care distribution. The way people have been brought up and ideas about traditional male/female roles appear - also among women - to be much more important, "the hardiness of tradition".'(Grünell 2001, p. 107)

Dutch researcher Grünell states that, in the end, it is a question of a person's viewpoint. Based on the available research this seems, on the face of it, to be feasible. But upon closer consideration, the question arises whether the unequal participation in care tasks is pre-eminently a question of appreciation and preferences. Or, in other words: we wonder whether this appreciation and these preferences are in fact a separate issue from the options that men and women have with respect to care and work. Grünell's explanation refers to a sum of separate components (earning capacity, statutory arrangements, actual facilities *and* individual views) which, together, explain the discrepancy in care and labour participation between men and women. We feel that at present this 'sum of different parts' explanation is unsatisfactory, not only because we wonder whether these parts are in fact so unrelated (are appreciation and preferences separate, explanatory factors?) but also because the hierarchy implied in Grünell's statements is not convincing. Her conviction that, in the end, it all comes down to preferences is a kind of 'last resort statement' that is not supported by the empirical material.

On the contrary, the question arises just how 'separate' views and preferences are from the available options if we look at the available research material, as there are many strange

puzzles in the views of men and women. On a general level, many men and women claim to support a fully equal distribution of paid work and care tasks. Grünell explains the fact that, in practice, this distribution is frequently not realised (and women systematically carry out more care tasks than men *and* different care tasks from men) by the fact that men are unable to let go of the idea of a full-time job and that women are ambivalent when it comes to childcare (Grünell 2001 & 2003). However, we feel that it remains an open question - which therefore requires further research - whether the difference between theory and practice must be contributed to such differences of opinion to the extent that it is. After all, if this were the case, how do we explain the fact that significantly larger numbers of men in the Netherlands work on a part-time basis than those in other countries (and that many more men would like to do so if the right options were available)? And how about the major role that professional and well-organised childcare plays in other countries, to which mothers (and fathers) do not have a problem taking their children?

The fact that one person may have conflicting views (both men *and* women say they would like to share equally but never get around to it) should, in itself, be a reason for researching whether 'practical laws and obstacles' obstruct the realisation of this wish. Systematic research into the situation in countries that have other arrangements for combining care and work may shed some light on the question whether gender-stereotyped ideas about the distribution of work and care tasks remain fixed or change if the working and care conditions change. Below, we will try to find these possibilities for change: in doing this we will, on the one hand, build on the aforementioned theories about gender identity as an explanation for unequal distribution of work and care, but on the other hand we will adopt the thought, espoused by the rational choice theories, that external conditions have a strong influence on preferences.

Gender identity and the distribution of tasks

Taking a look at these conditions does not mean we are blind to the 'hardiness of tradition'. For instance, it is of course no coincidence that the wish for an equal distribution of care tasks, which is shared by men and women, does, in practice, often result in gender-stereotyped 'choices'. It is typical of the power of tradition that, in the Dutch one-and-a-half breadwinner model for instance, it is nearly always the man who has the full-time job and the woman who has the part-time job.

Everyone knows and 'lives' these traditions: for many years paid work was associated nearly exclusively with men and household work with women. Now that more men take on care tasks (which appears to be a breakthrough of fixed gender ideas) we start to see the emergence of gender-specific distribution of labour within the care field. Certain tasks are deemed to be 'female' and therefore mostly resort to the women, other household tasks - 'carving the Sunday roast', putting out the garbage, cleaning the car - are associated with 'maleness', which means that, insofar as men take on any care tasks, they tend to select these particular tasks.

Sometimes, differences in care tasks result from biological differences between men and women: only women can breastfeed. However, literature on the subject makes it clear that such 'natural' differences provide very little explanation for the large differences that exist between men and women when it comes to care tasks (not to mention the fact that these

differences are being reduced, among other reasons because household work is becoming increasingly automated). Most associations between care tasks and 'femaleness' are culturally determined. This can be seen both in historic and contemporary comparisons. The meaning of care tasks can change: as an example, shopping and cooking are tasks that have changed from being exclusively female to 'gender-neutral'.

Conditions for change

The fact that ideas about the femaleness or maleness of certain care activities have a cultural character means they *are open to change*. This is materially different from simply *changeable*. Even if we acknowledge that, in this context, we are talking about 'fixed structures' this does not necessarily mean that these structures can be easily 'made different', for instance by the Government. Fixed structures, too, have a certain rigidity and are not instantly 'creatable'.[8] This does not necessarily mean that policy (or social movements) should refrain from attempting to change these cultural structures. On the contrary, this ambition needs to be nurtured, especially because this is a long-term process that requires many years of effort. The question is, however: how can fixed structures be changed? Why did shopping become a care task that men were able to take on? Do today's men not mind as much carrying out a task that is considered 'female'? And if this is the case, what does this say about their ideas regarding maleness? Or is doing the shopping no longer a female, but rather a 'neutral' task? If so, how did this happen? In other words: what are the conditions under which men are able to 'look at themselves' differently (the male *subject* changes) or under which conditions certain care tasks are no longer regarded as a purely female reserve (the female *object* changes)? What changes occur in the opportunity structure?[9]

In order to truly increase the freedom of choice of both men *and* women it appears essential that the concepts of 'caring' and 'femaleness' be disassociated. This means stepping away from the fundamental thought that women are better at caring and men are better at doing paid work; that, in the end, women are mainly mothers and men are mainly breadwinners. When we look at the figures, it appears that, at least at the level of general opinion, this change has taken place in many northern European countries.

However, we are also talking about men carrying out a range of care tasks. To achieve this, it is essential to achieve a *disassociation of concrete care tasks and their link to femaleness*. From the point of view of freedom of choice for men and women, 'neutralising'[10] care tasks appears to be a better option than continuing to list care tasks in gender categories (by

[8] *In the heyday of the women's movement especially, when the view that 'women aren't born, they are made', had widespread support, expectations were that the 'changeability' of identities could also quickly result in new practices, if supported by politics. 'When gender and sexuality are historic structures this means they can be changed: scientific constructivism went hand in hand with political voluntarism' (Krisis, 1996 (63), p. 4).*

[9] *For an introduction to the concept of a (political) options structure see Duyvendak et al. (1992), Kriesi et al. (1995), Duyvendak (1995), Koopmans (1995), Sunier et al. (1999).*

[10] *We prefer this term to the term 'androgynising', as this would suggest that care tasks retain a 'gender'; in this case for men and women who meet their gender stereotypes to a lesser extent. This would not appeal to men and women who do support a more equal distribution of tasks but are worried that they would no longer be regarded as a 'real' man or woman.*

considering a task no longer as female but as male). Any link between a care task and femaleness or maleness may result in a confirmation of gender stereotyping, which reduces the freedom of choice of 'real life' men and women. So, instead of presenting certain care tasks as now being (also) typically male, by saying that they are better carried out by real men, it would appear to be a better option to disassociate certain care tasks from 'female-ness'. In this sense, when it comes to care tasks, the objective is to get 'beyond gender'. Or to be more precise: the *object*, the care task itself, must become neutral, the way this was successfully achieved with, for instance, doing the shopping. Both men and women can carry out this care task without struggling with the idea that they are doing something that conflicts with their gender identity. In this sense a neutral object is 'beyond gender'. Needless to say, the person carrying out the task is still a man or woman: the *subject* still has a gender. But the subject feels at ease with the task: after all, the action is 'neutral'.

This strategy is based on the assumption that material objects and actions are not intrinsically 'male' or 'female', but rather became this way through a process of social interpretation. A good example of this is office work. Today regarded as being specifically female work, this was once strictly a male prerogative (see De Haan 1993) and, today, appears to be coming full circle: men who are carrying out secretarial work in this day and age are able to 'masculinise' their work. We can see this process in action by the fact that they refuse to be called 'secretary' but would rather refer to themselves as 'personal assistant' (Pringle 1989, Verhaar 1991, Williams 1989).

In this first strategy, therefore, we are looking at an 'objective' disassociation by broadening the 'subjective' aspect: because men can be equally caring and are equally able to carry out a range of care tasks, the exclusive association between certain actions and femaleness is nullified. This does not mean that men and women performing care tasks become gender-neutral carers. Their maleness and femaleness will/can play a role in the care tasks they perform in a number of ways. The policy objective of 'disassociation', therefore, does not aim for a culture of levelled equality in which there is no more room for gender differences. On the contrary, the blurring of the exclusive link between care tasks and femaleness gives both men and women the opportunity to give a number of meanings to these tasks. These meanings will sometimes be related to gender, but room for different associations is also created.

In order to achieve this situation, men will sometimes need to take the first step, even if, in the eyes of others (men), the household task is still female (Brunt & Ariëns 1990; Major 1993; Winstead & Derlega 1993). As people see women carry out male tasks and men carry out female tasks, the rigid association between an activity and its maleness or femaleness will gradually disappear. This way, brave pioneers who care little about social conventions will eventually broaden the activity repertoire for the larger group. *Exceptional practices* play a fundamental role in breaking through the rigid ideas about the male or female character of certain tasks.

Specifically male forms of care?

If, this way, tasks eventually become 'beyond gender' this does not mean that maleness and femaleness no longer play a role in work and care. What is more, maybe we can still refer to

specifically male forms of care. By this we mean a male *manner of providing care*. In this view, men do things differently from women; they have a male way of providing care. This is then referred to as 'male' because the subject providing the care is a man. The male way of doing things is then specifically linked to the *subject* carrying out the actions. This is entirely different, therefore, from the idea of male care whereby the *care task itself* is regarded as being *male* (the way many care tasks are currently regarded as being typically female): the father takes his son to the football because this activity is regarded as a male activity.

Because of the necessary disassociation between care tasks and exclusively male or female territory, we will focus this research on what we would like to refer to as a '*difference strategy'*. In this strategy, care tasks are no longer male or female; men can do everything equally. This does not yet mean that caring in its entirety becomes 'beyond gender': after all, both men and women are providing the care, which means that male and female forms of providing care may be created.[11] This 'difference strategy' is therefore explicitly not an inequality strategy, in which men may be tempted to take on more care tasks, based specifically on their masculinity. This would mean that men would have to take on male care tasks, and women would have to take on female care tasks. As we argued before, this latter strategy may result in an increased participation of men in childcare and household tasks, but this quantitative change would be accompanied by qualitative inequality. The man would only carry out the male tasks, in other words the tasks that, from a hierarchical point of view, are superior to the female tasks: the enjoyable, highly valued tasks.

Our 'difference strategy' also differs from a *total equality strategy*, in which men and women would not only carry out exactly the same tasks but where, in the realisation, it must not make any difference whether the person is a man or a woman. For reasons of pragmatism, morality and consistency, we are mainly interested in the difference strategy. The moral consideration relates to the idea that a policy cannot enforce detailed regulations on people as to how to structure their lives (argument against the total equality strategy). The strategic consideration relates to the expectation that the difference strategy will appeal more to men because it (also) addresses them as men. The consideration of consistency, finally, relates to the accord there must be between objective and method: if the objective is an increase in freedom of choice and diversity for men and women, the method can and may not represent a drastic restriction to the freedom of choice (argument against the total equality strategy), nor can it contribute to a perpetuation of gender clichés (argument against the inequality strategy).

In the difference strategy, the differences between men and women, and the differences between maleness and femaleness, are no longer as big and not very relevant. Regardless of their gender, both men and women carry out all care tasks; at most there may be some difference in the way the tasks are carried out. This difference may relate to gender: men bring up children differently than women do. But we would emphatically state this may only relate to gender, because many differences in the realisation of care tasks between men and women in a concrete relationship will have very little to do with their gender and more with, for

[11] *Needless to say, there are also major differences between men and women with regard to the way they carry out care tasks, so we should really always talk in the plural. In addition, the current text deliberately ignores the fact that some care tasks allow more room for 'personal' interpretation than others.*

instance, age, life experience, dexterity, education, tiredness and similar issues. There is, in any case, little chance that the differences in the way care tasks are realised, insofar as these differences relate to whether the task is being carried out by a man or woman, are understood in terms of inequality. The male way of doing things is not necessarily better than the female way, at the most it is different. To put it positively: differences exist, these are valuable differences, and not every difference is a form of inequality. Reasoning from the basis of positive differences, per couple there is room for sharing out the care tasks. However, if, for everyone, this systematically results in the same (unbalanced) distribution between men and women, the final conclusion will be that the difference was, after all, a form of inequality.

In the inequality strategy, there is a much greater risk that differences *will* be interpreted in a hierarchical manner. Men will want to take on all kinds of enjoyable, 'non-female' care tasks under the motto or with the excuse that they are typically male tasks. This could have the consequence of women's freedom of choice remaining at the same level or only marginally increasing. They will have to carry out all care tasks that are labelled as 'female' whereby, in this strategy, it is very much in question whether women will have the same power of definition as men do to determine which tasks are male or female.

The distinction between 'difference' and 'inequality' is a material difference as, otherwise, any kind of difference would immediately be interpreted as a form of an inequality. However, the women's movement in particular has experienced that this results in the disregarding of 'acceptable' differences. In contrast to equality feminism, a movement also developed that called itself 'difference thinkers'.[12] This movement stressed the fact that there are different kinds of differences, which, in addition, are of a very changeable nature.[13] Rather than trying to eliminate these differences – which, in practice, would amount to incorporating female 'positions' into male 'norms' – the objective would be to de-hierarchise existing differences which would – ideally – allow thousands of femalenesses and malenesses to blossom. The latter is of course in stark contrast to a policy aimed at eliminating all differences under the motto that total equality must be the final objective. A strategy like *mainstreaming* also carries with it the risk that marginal positions are trampled in the ambition to become part of the mainstream. Equality is definitely necessary, but mainly as a *condition* to be able to be different.

Conditions for an fair distribution of work and care

The difference strategy is based on breaking the association between care tasks and their supposed maleness or femaleness. This is an essential condition for achieving an increase in the freedom of choice of both men and women in carrying out care tasks (and paid work). Breaking the association implies that men and women can take on certain tasks regardless of their gender.

However, breaking this association is not the first step. To achieve a more equal distribution of all work and care tasks, the first requirement is to have good national

[12] *In this context, it is not possible to take an in-depth look at the differences between and within these movements. When we refer to 'difference thinkers' we very specifically do not refer to the group that feels there are 'essential' differences between men and women and that specific, gender-bound tasks for men and women can be defined on this basis.*

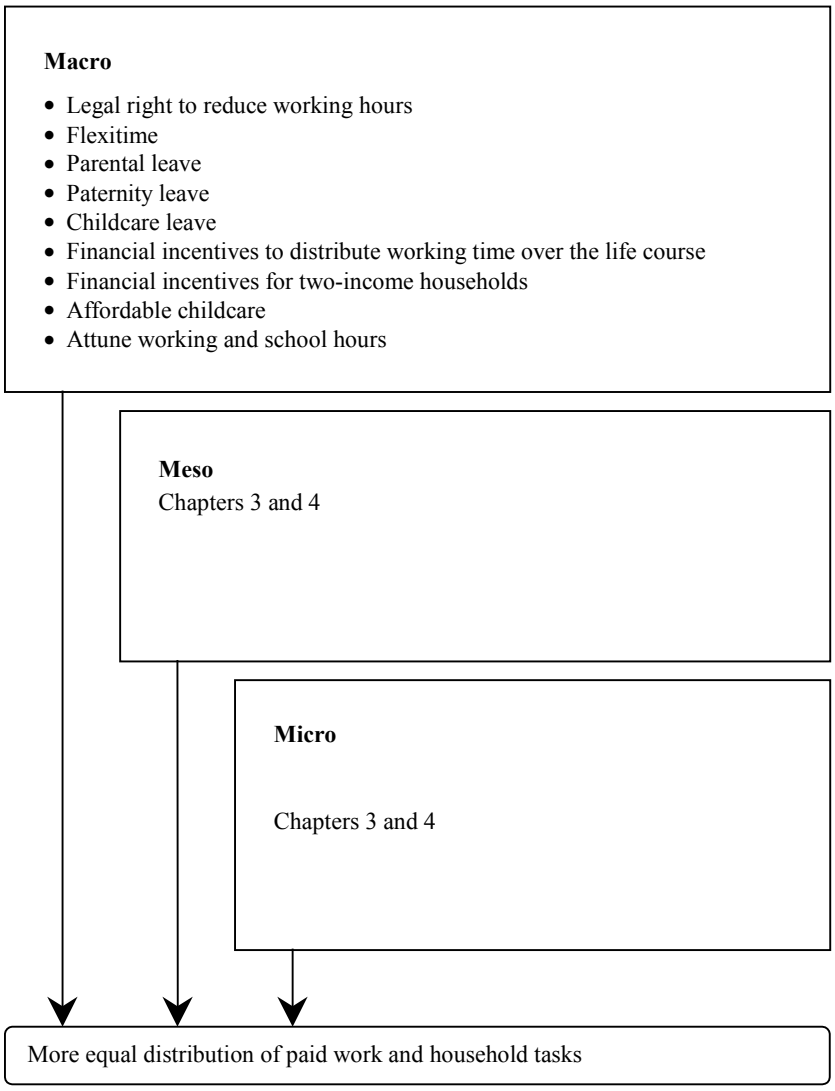
[13] *In imitation of the French differentiation philosophy formulated by, among others, Foucault, Deleuze, Irigaray and Kristeva.*

arrangements for childcare, parental leave, lifecycle arrangements, the right to part-time work etc. We will discuss these macro conditions in chapter 2. These conditions are of particular relevance in taking the first steps on the road to a more equal distribution: men will be able to take on more household tasks, allowing women to do more work outside the home.

Although these macro conditions are *essential* conditions for achieving a more equal distribution, they are not *sufficient* steps to also ensure that men and women can, in principle, take on all household tasks (and therefore achieve a truly equal distribution of all tasks within the home). To achieve this, we will have to work hard at a number of meso and micro conditions (see figure 1.7). In chapter 3 we will, based on a number of tasks, look for meso and micro conditions that may explain why and when certain tasks become 'beyond gender'.

In chapter 4, we will look at the specifics of a number of exceptional cases: the practices are exceptional insofar as they differ from the standard practice of 'a household of a father and a mother and children, in which the father works full-time and the mother part-time and both parents work outside the home on a regular basis'. Our central question here is what happens to the people, the *subjects,* if the context differs. This is relevant as in these situations there is a good, or at least increased, chance that certain tasks (objects) are no longer linked to one gender in a stereotypical fashion. This way, we will be able to trace more mechanisms for change.

Figure 1.7 Necessary conditions for a more equal distribution of paid work and household tasks



The current European policy focuses mainly on the macro conditions, allowing men to stay home more and women to work outside the home more. These are conditions aimed at *quantity*: men are able to do more in the household and family. In the next chapter, we will take a closer look at these essential conditions: which arrangements exist in the different European countries, categorised into money, time and services?

However, these *essential* conditions are not *sufficient* for a true disassociation of tasks and gender: simply making it possible for men to stay home more and for women to work more is not yet sufficient for a truly fair distribution of tasks. A lot more will need to change if the qualitative aspect of care tasks (who takes on which tasks, including the less enjoyable ones) is to be distributed more justly. Creating only conditions within the quantitative meaning

of the word will continue to result in a disadvantage for women, as this means that men will not carry out certain tasks. In chapter 3 and 4 we take a look at the conditions for disassociation based on case studies and exceptional practices and discuss what actually happens within the household on the micro level.

2 *Reconciliation of Work and Family Life in Europe*[14]

2.1 *Introduction*

In this chapter we will discuss the issue of reconciliation in the countries of the European Union.[15] We will focus on arrangements on the macro level that are aimed at enhancing a more equal division of both paid work and household & family tasks between men and women. These macro conditions try to stimulate men to reconcile working life and family life in Europe in a 'quantitative' way: they make it possible for men to spend more time with their children and/or on household tasks and for women to spend more time on the labour market. What men actually do, which household and childcare tasks they will perform and which they will not, will be discussed in the next chapter.

The arrangements supporting the combination of paid work and care can be categorised into three components: time off (such as leave schemes and flexible working time patterns), monetary benefits (including, for example, tax allowances, social security and social assistance) and services (like childcare facilities). This categorisation in time, money and services is based on studies of care regimes in Europe (Bettio & Plantenga 2004; EC 1998b). Following the distinction between time off, money and services, we will discuss *leave arrangements* and *working-time arrangements* as part of policies offering time, the *tax system* as a part of the financial benefits and *childcare facilities* as the component of services. The focus is on statutory provisions on a national level (macro level). Benefits or provisions on a meso level (employers) or a micro level (family or individual) are not taken into account.

The chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, we examine the differences and similarities between the countries of the European Union, secondly, we discuss the issue of welfare state typology and finally try to answer the question whether current welfare state regime types are sufficient to explain the variety between countries concerning conditions for reconciliation.

[14] *This chapter is an adapted version of the research paper 'Female Employment and Family Formation – the Institutional Context' written by I. Koopmans and J.J. Schippers of the Utrecht School of Economics, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands. The paper is based on research done for the European Union research project Female Employment and Family Formation in National Institutional Contexts (FENICs) and has been presented at the joint working conference 'Researching family, employment and welfare issues in Europe: the quantitative approach', Brussels, 18-20 February 2003. The paper can be downloaded: http://www.warwick.ac.uk/ier/fenics/brussels.htm. We would like to thank I. Koopmans and J.J. Schippers for putting their paper at our disposal.*

[15] *Meant are the member state countries before the enlargement of the European Union on May 1st 2004.*

2.2 *Flexible working patterns*

To start with we will describe arrangements regarding time off. First we will present figures on part-time work and forms of flexible working time arrangements and in the next section the various leave schemes are considered.

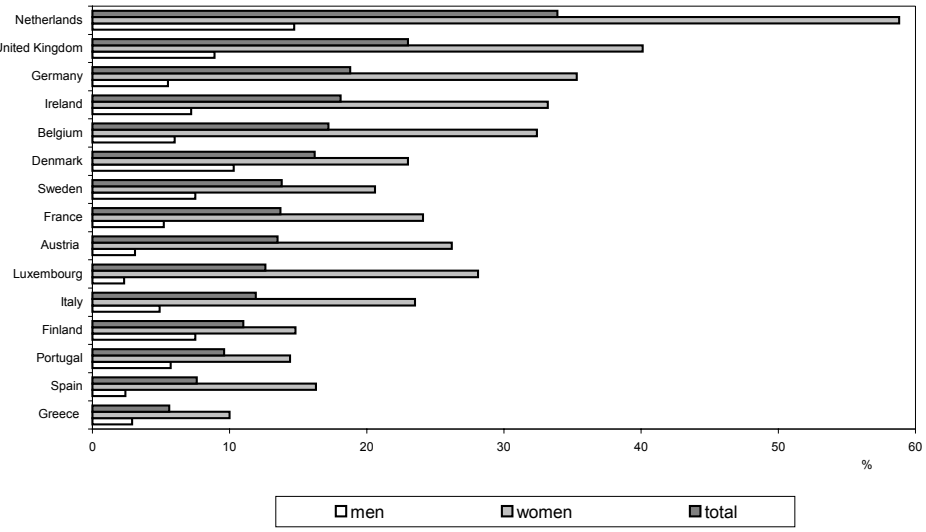
Before describing the flexible working patterns in more detail, we have to make a general remark. Although these arrangements are widely used as ways to reconcile work and family life, we have to consider that employees can have other motives for working part-time or using flexible-working arrangements as well. Also employers often have other motives for introducing flexible working arrangements: they introduce operational flexibility to reduce costs and to boost productivity and competitiveness (EIRO 2001). Furthermore, flexible-working arrangements can make reconciliation of work and family life more difficult too. In families where both parents work at different time schedules, the varying work schedules are often difficult to combine with childcare arrangements or school hours. Therefore, we also have to consider the quality of flexible working schemes in relation to reconciliation (Plantenga 1995).

Part-time work

Figure 2.1 illustrates part-time work as a proportion of employment in general, and for men and women specifically.[16] The highest proportion of part-time employment in total employment is currently seen in the Netherlands: more than 30% in 2000. This is followed by the United Kingdom, where 23% of the working population works part-time. In the southern-European countries (Greece, Portugal and Spain) the part-time rates are much lower, less than 10%. Figure 2.1 also illustrates the difference in part-time work between women and men. It shows that in all the European countries, part-time work is a predominantly female phenomenon, particularly in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom, where respectively 58.8 and 40.1% of women work under thirty hours per week (OECD, Labour market statistics).

[16] *Part-time work is defined as a reduction of the official fulltime working week. In statistical surveys the definition can differ: in the OECD statistics, part-time employment refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job; in the EU statistics it is left to individuals to classify themselves as full-time or part-time workers.*

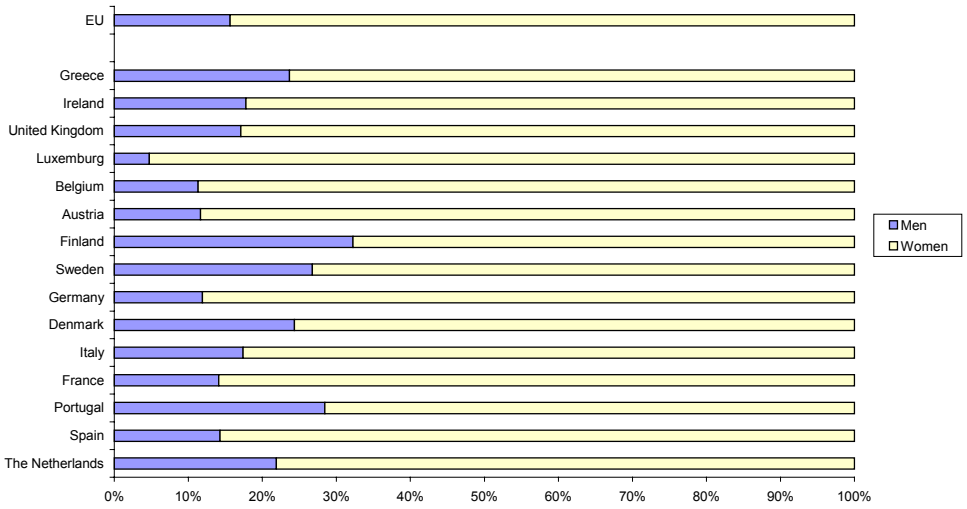
Figure 2.1 Part-time employment, total, women, men, 2002



Source: OECD, *Labour market statistics*

That part-time work is predominantly a female phenomenon can also be concluded on the basis of figure 2.2. Figure 2.2 presents the part-time rates of men and women as part of the total part-time work (= 100%). In the Netherlands of all part-time workers approximately 22% is male and 78% female. In the several countries of the European Union this ratio differs. The gender division of part-time work is most equal in Finland and Portugal and most unequal in Luxemburg. There is no clear difference between the Southern European countries and the Nordic countries, as is the case with general figures concerning the labour market participation of men and women.

Figure 2.2 Part-time employment of men and women as part of total part-time employment, 2001



Source: European Commission (2002) *Employment in Europe*

The quality of part-time work in relation to full-time work differs per member state. Governments and trade unions have traditionally adopted very different approaches to the use of part-time contracts. In the past some countries had tax systems and social security systems that penalised part-time work. For example in Germany, the right to receive insurance benefit still depends on the length of the working week. If employees work less than fifteen hours a week, no social security contributions are paid and no insurance benefits are received (MISSOC 2000).

In other countries, rights of part-time workers are equal to full-time workers, and in some countries part-time work is even promoted. In France, for example, part-time work has been encouraged by the state as a means of expanding employment. The social security contributions for part-time workers are lower, and there also is a reduction in contributions when a full-time job is converted into a part-time job (EU 1998a). The Netherlands part-time workers have the same rights as full-time workers. Also in the Netherlands there is legislation allowing all employees in over-10-workers-companies to request a reduction or an increase in working hours.

The right to reduce the working hours is in some countries specifically limited to working parents. In the Nordic countries working parents have the right to shorten working hours during the years of child rearing. In Sweden, all parents have the right to reduce a regular full-time eight-hours working day to six hours until their child is eight years old. There is no benefit to compensate lost earnings. In Finland, on the other hand, there is some compensation. Each parent is entitled to work reduced hours (either a six-hour day or a thirty-hour week) until their child goes to school (seven years old) and parents working reduced hours receive an allowance until their child is three years old, at 25% of the flat rate payments for parents taking care leave (Moss & Deven 1999). In Spain, parents with a child under six, or a disabled

child, can reduce their working hours by 33 and 50% without compensation for lost earnings. During the first nine months after birth, employed mothers or fathers have the right to reduce their working day by one hour, without loss of earnings.

Flexible working time

Flexible working time patterns consist of a compressed workday, flexitime workweek, teleworking and working from home. The compressed workday or workweek is characterised by the fact that the number of daily working hours is more than usual, while fewer days per workweek are worked than usual. An example is the four-day workweek in which one works nine hours a day. Flexitime is a system permitting flexibility of hours at the beginning or the end of the day. Generally it suggests that employees have to be present at their work at core times, but offers employees the opportunity to choose the time at which they start or stop working. Teleworking gives employees the opportunity to work from home, while staying in contact with the workplace.

International comparison is difficult, because of the lack of statistics. Also, the figures are not to be distinguished for men and women. Table 2.1, based on the second and third European Survey on Working Conditions (European Foundation 1997, 2001)[17], shows that there is not much variation in flexitime. On average, 25% of the employees have a flexitime working arrangement. The Netherlands has the most employees with flexitime arrangements (35.8%), followed by Germany (33.2%), Sweden (32.3%) and the United Kingdom (31.8%). In the European Union teleworking on a full-time basis is carried out by only 1% of the working population. Occasional teleworking is more widespread (5% of the workers). As can be seen from table 2.1 there are wide disparities between countries, with the United Kingdom having the highest number of people (10%) teleworking at least one quarter of the time (European Foundation, 2001). Working from home is still uncommon. In 1992, 4.9% of employed women and men in the European Union said they were working from their homes on a regular basis. In 1997, the figure fell to just over 4.4% (Eurostat 1993 & 1998; see also Evans 2001).

[17] *The surveys are designed to monitor working conditions; the second survey was conducted in fifteen countries of the European Union between 1995 and 1996, the third survey in 2000.*

Table 2.1 Flexible working arrangements

	Employees with flexitime working arrangement %, 1995/96	*Teleworking from home. At least one quarter of the time %, 2000*	*Teleworking from home. All the time %, 2000*
Austria	22.3	6	3
Belgium	26.2	6	2
Denmark	24.9	6	1
Finland	22.3	8	1
France	25.6	4	2
Germany	33.2	4	0
Greece	22.7	2	1
Ireland	19.4	4	1
Italy	19.2	2	0
Luxembourg	18.0	9	3
Netherlands	35.8	7	1
Portugal	19.1	2	1
Spain	20.4	4	3
Sweden	32.3	5	1
United Kingdom	31.8	10	2
EU	n.a.	5	1

Source: European Foundation (1997 & 2001); Evans (2001)

2.3 Leave schemes

Leave arrangements for working parents vary considerably between the countries of the European Union. In this section we will discuss four categories of leave: maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave and childcare leave. Maternity leave is reserved for (employed) women for the time they are due to give birth and following childbirth. Paternity leave is for fathers who wish to take leave around the birth of their child. Parental leave can be defined as an entitlement to leave, granted to fathers and mothers during a specified period after the termination of the maternity leave. Related to parental leave schemes are childcare or care leave schemes. The goal of these schemes is to subsidise parents staying at home to look after their own children. Although maternity leave is especially for women, in some countries, especially the Nordic countries, it is part of parental/childbirth related leave, designed for women as well as men. The design of the leave programme can influence the decision for men to stay home for some time and for women the moment to start working again. That is the reason why we will also pay attention to maternity leave. In the description, the focus is on the statutory provisions in the EU countries. A key issue is the duration and cash benefits of leaves. The information represents the situation in 2001. However, in those countries where since 2001 major changes in regulation have taken place we have updated the information.

We have to consider that the formal regulations do not provide information about the actual impact. The data concerning the percentage of families that actually take up parental

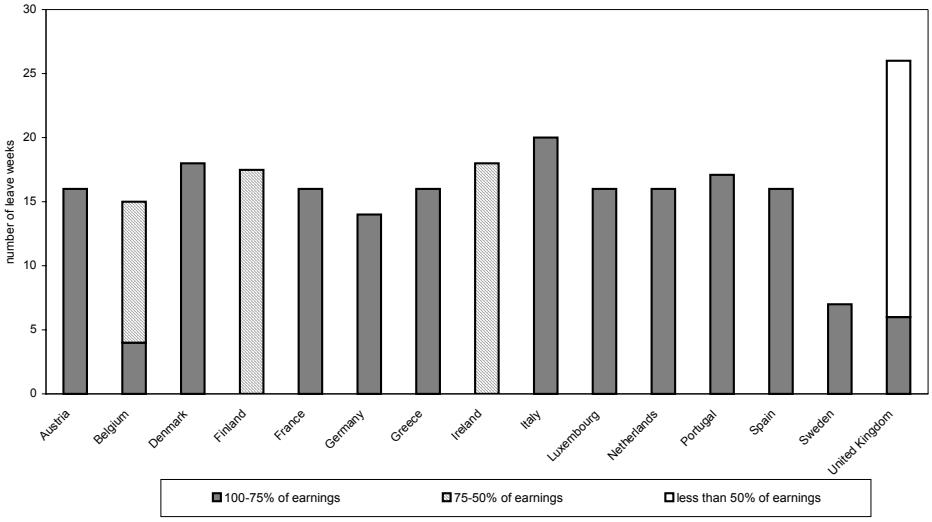
leave are very limited. Many countries are not able to provide figures on the actual take-up rates (EC 1998b). To gain a clear understanding of the actual impact of leave arrangements, statistical information on the take-up rates and the actual duration of leave taken would be needed (Bruning & Plantenga 1998; Plantenga & Koopmans 2002).

Maternity leave

Public support for families with children starts with the provision of maternity leave. In 1992, the Council of the European Community adopted a Directive on Maternity Leave (92/85/EEC) that entitles all working women to a fourteen week leave, but not with full payment of wages. Instead, employees must receive the same benefit as if they were on sick leave. Figure 2.3 provides an overview of the statutory maternity leave in all European Union countries. All member countries of the European Union now have a statutory maternity leave of at least fourteen weeks. Germany has the shortest entitlement to paid maternity leave, namely fourteen weeks, while the longest leave is granted in Italy. Here, working women have the right to five months maternity leave (two months before and three months after giving birth). In Sweden the leave's duration is relatively short (fifty days), because there exists no maternity leave as such, it is part of the parental leave period.

The cash maternity benefit differs considerably from country to country. Cash maternity benefits are granted for a specified period, before and after childbirth. Benefit payments usually start approximately eight to six weeks before the expected date of birth and end six to eight weeks after birth. In a number of countries (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) maternity benefits are set at 100% of the wages. It should be pointed out, however, that in most of those countries the benefits are limited to a maximum. These upper limits have not been taken into account. In Belgium and the United Kingdom the amount of cash benefits is lowered after a number of weeks: in Belgium maternity leave is paid at 82% of earnings for the first month, and 75% of earnings for the remaining period, in the United Kingdom payment for the first six weeks is 90%, and a flat rate payment (€ 142 per week) for the remaining twenty weeks.

Figure 2.3 Statutory maternity leave, 2001-2002
Duration and payments



Source: see appendix 1, table I

Paternity leave

In recent years many countries have introduced paternity leave for fathers (or partners) to take leave around the birth of their child. A legal right to paternity leave exists in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In Finland fathers are entitled to an eighteen days leave; in Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom they have ten days leave; in France, paternity leave allows fathers to take eleven days off; in Portugal five days and in Spain two days. Belgium has ten days in the private sector, and four days in the public sector. The Netherlands also introduced a paternity leave of two days. Table 2.2 shows that payments of the paternity leave schemes are income-related, with the exception of the United Kingdom, where payments are flat rate.

Table 2.2 Statutory Paternity Leave in the European Union, 2001-2002

	Duration	*Payment*
Austria	-	-
Belgium	10 days (workers in the private sector) and contract workers (i.e. non-civil servants) in the public sector 4 days (public sector)	In the *private* sector the employer pays the first three days of the leave at 100% of earnings. The remaining seven days will come out of the budget of the National Health and Disability Insurance Institute and will be paid at 82% of earnings up to a maximum level (this new rule came into force on 1 July 2002). In the *public* sector leave is paid at 100% of earnings
Denmark	10 days	90% of previous pay with a maximum of € 430 per week
Finland	18 workdays (including Saturdays)	The amount is determined on the basis of income earned, on average 60% of an employee's pay, and at least € 10.09 a day
France	14 days	100% of gross pay up to a ceiling
Germany	-	-
Greece	-	-
Ireland	-	-
Italy	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-
Netherlands	2 days	100% of earnings
Portugal	5 days	100% of the average daily wages
Spain	2 days	100% of earnings
Sweden	10 days	80% of the qualifying income
United Kingdom	14 days	flat rate payment £ 100 (€ 143) per week

Source and notes: appendix 1, table II

Parental leave

In June 1996, the European Union Directive on parental leave (96/34/EC) came into force. The Directive provides a set of minimum requirements all member states must meet; in particular, each employee (male or female) should be entitled to at least three months of parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child. The right to leave should 'in principle' be an individual non-transferable entitlement. Payments for workers on leave are left to member states to decide on (Moss & Deven 1999). Despite this Directive, parental leave varies considerably between member states according to rights, payment, length and flexibility (see

table III in Appendix 1). From the overview it appears that all the countries have statutory provisions on parental leave that give legal entitlement to the persons qualifying for the leave.

Parental leave can be an *individua*l right or a *family* right, or a mixture of both. If parental leave is a family right, parents can decide between themselves who will use the leave. In case of an individual right both parents can claim the individually assigned period of leave. The leave is non-transferable; in other words, the admitted period of time cannot be transferred from one parent to the other (Bruning & Plantenga 1999). In most European countries parental leave is a non-transferable individual entitlement. Only in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, and Italy it is a family right. Sweden has a mixture of individual and family rights. A parent may transfer her or his days to the other parent (family right), except for the 60 days called the mum's or dad's months (individual right). In Denmark, on the other hand, the 32 weeks of parental leave is an individual right, but the 32-week entitlement to full benefit is a family right. Parents can share this benefit entitlement or one of the parents can exhaust the benefit entitlement during the period of leave.

Whether parental leave is *paid* or *unpaid* varies also. In eight countries of the European Union parental leave is paid. Payments vary from flat rate payment systems to income-related ones. In order to make a comparison possible, flat rate payments have been converted into a percentage of gross female wages.[18] Figure 2.4 shows that payments are low in Austria, Belgium, Germany and Italy, but relatively high in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Luxembourg. In seven countries (France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Greece) the leave is unpaid. In the Netherlands, employers can supplement statutory parental leave provisions (either individually or through collective agreements). In France, parents receive an allowance only if they take care of at least two children.

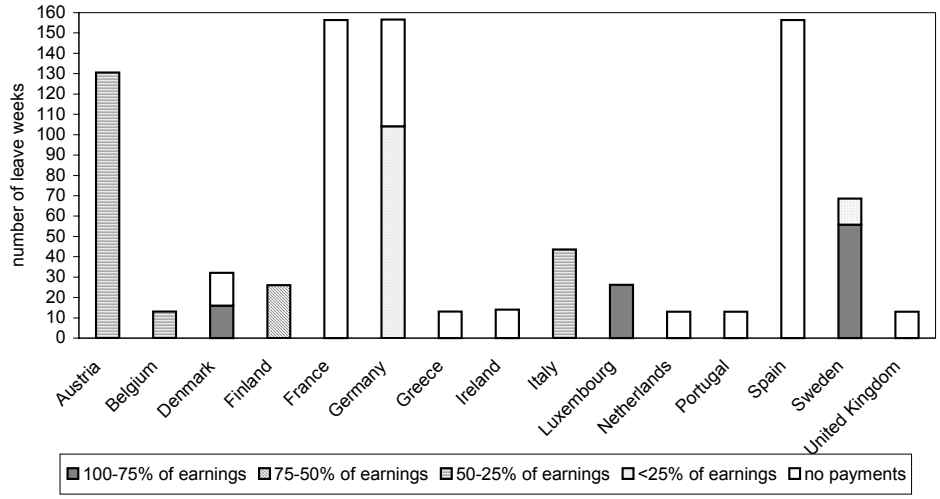
The *duration* of parental leave also varies greatly, from a minimum of three months in Belgium to a maximum of three years in France, Germany and Spain (see figure 2.4). Furthermore, parental leave in Spain is an individual right, so the family can in fact take six years of leave. Note, though, that in those countries where duration of the leave is relatively long, the payments are low. An exception to this rule is Sweden. Since 2002 this country grants 480 days of paid leave per family, and besides the parental leave, the Childcare Leave Act also entitles each parent to take leave during the first 18 months of his or her child's life. This entitlement is, however, unpaid. It implies that a parent may be on unpaid leave first and draw the cash benefit afterwards, ending up with a total of 1020 days of leave of absence at the most (Näsman 1999).

Some countries have introduced specific measures to encourage fathers to take up the parental leave. When the father takes leave, the duration of the total parental leave is extended in some countries. In Italy, for example, the period of parental leave could be extended with one month if the father takes at least three months leave, and in Austria with six months if the father is taking at least six months leave. In other countries there are quotas; the father can only take a proportion of parental leave. For example, in Sweden two months of leave are earmarked for the father; these two months cannot be transferred to the mother ('use it or lose it').

[18] *We start from the assumption that women in particular take up leave, therefore figures of gross average earnings for female employees in manufacturing in 1998 were used (Eurostat, New Cronos database).*

In some countries the parental leave system is more *flexible* than in others. In these countries it is possible to take leave part-time or to take leave in one or more 'blocks'. The part-time option is now very common, but the option of spreading the leave is still rare. Only in Denmark, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden, the period of leave may be split up in parts. In the Netherlands this is also a possibility, but if the request for splitting up the leave is in conflict with important business interests, the employer may refuse. The number of years during which entitlement to parental leave remains valid is limited by the age of the child. In most countries the leave has to be taken before the child reaches the age of five. But in Italy, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, the time span is longer; leave can be taken till the child reaches the age of eight or nine.

Figure 2.4 Statutory parental leave for the individual, 2001-2002
Duration and payments



Source: appendix 1, table III

Childcare leave

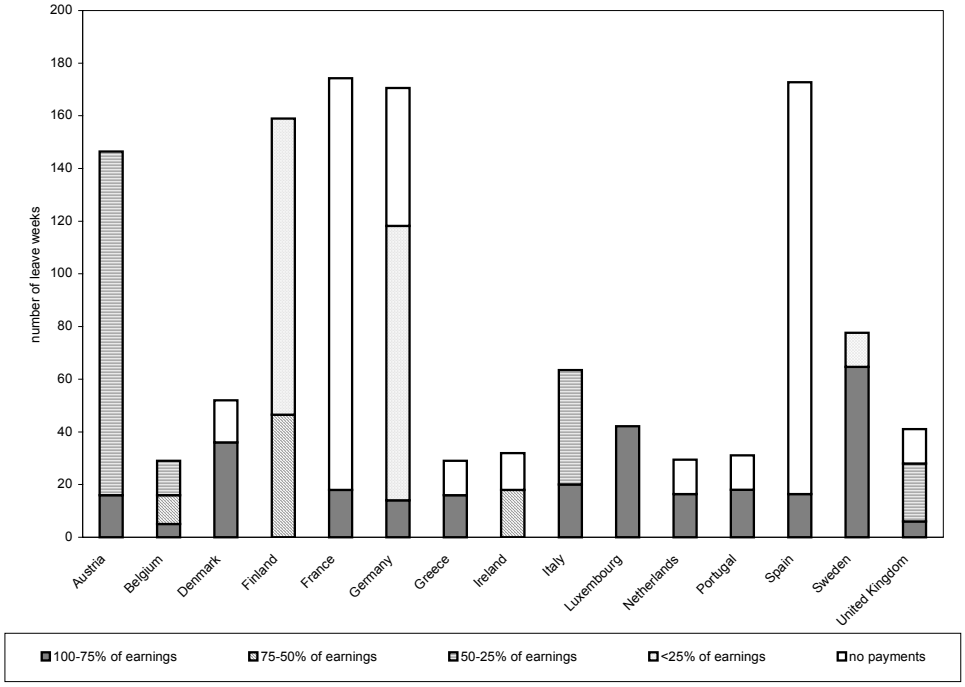
The childcare leave schemes can be taken after the parental leave period, offering parents additional time to care for their children. In Finland, the childcare leave is unpaid, but the family can receive child home care-allowances paid by the local authority for the period of the leave. The allowance is available to a family with a child under three years and consists of a basic payment of € 252 per month for the first child. The benefit is conditional on parents not using publicly funded childcare services (see appendix 1, table IV).

Childbirth-related leave

We have seen that the leave arrangements in the European countries differ in almost every aspect. In summarising the main points it makes sense to compare countries on the

maximum combined duration of maternity, paternity, parental and childcare leaves and the payment attached to the leave. Figure 2.5 shows the consecutive weeks of childbirth-related leave available to the individual.

Figure 2.5 Consecutive weeks of childbirth-related leave, 2001-2002
Duration and payments



Source: appendix 1, table I, II, III, IV

From the figure it appears that in four countries (Finland, France, Germany and Spain) the total duration of the childbirth-related leave is as much as three years. While in four countries (Austria, Denmark, Italy and Sweden) the duration is between one and two years, in seven countries (Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom) it is less than a year. The countries' rankings change significantly if the payment attached to the leave is taken into account. The most generous countries are Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Sweden. They have a relatively long period of well-paid childbirth-related leave.

2.4 Tax systems and financial support for families

Tax relief providing support for families raising children can be found in most European countries. The form and level of support varies markedly. Income tax systems can make

adjustments through child tax credits, tax deductions or tax rebates, child tax allowances or by adjusting the tax rate for the presence of children in households. All these adjustments result in families with children paying less tax than single persons or childless couples with the same earnings. However, tax relief for dependent children cannot be properly interpreted unless state support via cash payment is taken into account. If we look at tax relief as well as universal cash benefits we see that especially in Luxembourg, Austria, Germany, and Belgium the support for families with children is substantially higher than in other countries (Bradshaw et al. 1993; OECD 2002).

In addition to the child tax allowances and child benefits it is foremost to consider the way tax systems are organised and how this design may benefit certain types of households. Key factor in the design of the tax system is the unit of taxation. We could, broadly speaking, distinguish two types: joint taxation and individual taxation. In the case of *joint* taxation the income obtained by all the family members is added together so that the tax rate depends on the total household income. Under this system, taxation of the second income (generally the wife's) starts at the highest marginal tax rate faced by the first income. In a progressive system, this tax rate will be higher than if the couple were taxed as two separate individuals. Therefore it provides a disincentive for second income earners (mostly women). Joint taxation can be mandatory or optional. A variant of joint taxation is a splitting system, where men and women's income is added together and divided equally in two, the tax rate is applied to half of the income and then multiplied by two. Splitting can be based on the couple, but also on the family. With *individual* taxation each person is taxed regardless of the income level of other family members (Villota & Ferrari 2001; Rubery et al. 1998).

During the 1950s joint taxation for married couples was the rule in most countries. The principles of taxation were formulated on the basis of a social organisation in which the male partner was the breadwinner. The family provider enjoyed tax deductions to compensate for support obligations. However, in some countries over the past decades tax systems have been adjusted to deal with changing household structures. The rise of the two-earner family stimulated the shift from joint taxation to individual taxation. Individual taxation is now the rule in seven countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Sweden, The Netherlands, and The United Kingdom), it is optional in three countries (Belgium, Ireland, and Spain), and not available in five countries (Germany, France, Greece, Luxembourg, and Portugal) (Dingeldey 2001; Villota & Ferrari 2001).

Contrary to this change in the unit of taxation, most countries maintained some form of tax relief for a dependent spouse (Sainsbury 1999). In some tax systems this tax relief is given by transferring the tax allowance from a non-working person to the working partner. Transferable allowances are also considered a disincentive for women to (re) entry the labour market because of the tax increase on the husband's income.

To shed more light on the change of the tax system and to determine the extent to which the tax privileges of the married man have been eroded, Sainsbury has compared income taxation of fourteen countries for the years 1985 and 1995 (Sainsbury 1999). For this purpose she developed a family tax benefit ratio. This measure consists of the taxes paid by the male breadwinner with a dependent wife and two children as a percentage of taxes paid by a single person without children. Both have the same earnings (100% APW wage level). The family tax benefit ratio shows the encodement of family responsibilities in the tax system: the lower the percentage, the larger the family privilege. This ratio demonstrates the child tax

allowances as well as the tax relief related to marital status. Sainsbury used data from 1996 (OECD 1998). We decided to update these figures with data from 2000 (OECD 2002) and added a column in which the tax burden is corrected for the amount of universal cash benefits. Table 2.3 presents the results for several countries in 2000. Inspection of the column for all taxes shows that Germany, Ireland, Spain and Luxembourg offer relatively high tax relief for families, whereas The United Kingdom, Austria, Greece, Finland and Sweden were the least generous countries. In Sweden, and Finland there is no difference in tax for single persons and breadwinner families. In Greece families even pay 0.1% more income tax than single persons. Belgium, Portugal, France, Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands are in between these two clusters of countries.

Table 2.3 The family tax benefit ratio in the EU countries (%), 2000

Income taxes plus employee contributions		*Income tax plus employee contributions less cash benefits*	
Germany	47	Luxembourg	0
Ireland	50	Ireland	27
Spain	50	Austria	27
Luxembourg	53	Germany	47
Belgium	74	Portugal	49
Portugal	77	Spain	50
France	78	Belgium	50
Italy	84	Italy	52
Denmark	85	France	56
Netherlands	86	United Kingdom	60
United Kingdom	90	Netherlands	69
Austria	94	Denmark	70
Finland	100	Finland	72
Greece	100	Sweden	73
Sweden	100	Greece	101

Source: Sainsbury, 1999. Updated by author, calculated from OECD (2002)

If we look at the column in which the taxes have been reduced with the universal cash benefits, the picture changes considerably. In Austria, for example, the percentage goes down from 94% to 27%, in Luxembourg from 53% to -3%. The impact of the cash benefit in these countries is substantial. The negative number for Luxembourg is due to the fact that for married couples with children the cash benefits received exceed income tax and contribution. In Germany and Spain, on the other hand, the percentage remains the same. Instead of cash benefits these countries offer tax allowances or credits for children. If we once again rank the countries according to generosity in tax benefits for families - including the tax reduction due to cash benefits - Luxembourg, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Belgium appear to be the most generous countries.

2.5 *Childcare facilities*

The development of services for childcare has taken on a policy priority for the European Union. In March 1992, the council passed a recommendation on childcare (92/241/EEC) in which member states are encouraged *'to develop measures to enable men and women to reconcile their family obligations arising from the care of children and their own employment…'*. With this in mind member states should try to ensure that childcare services are affordable and available in all areas and regions of the member states. This recommendation is an example of 'soft' law; member states are not formally bound by this type of legislation (Roelofs 1995). Enforceable entitlements to childcare facilities only exist in three countries. In Denmark every child older than one has the right to use day-care facilities (Kremer 2002). In Finland, parents may receive compensation for damages if there is no day-care place available for the child, while in Sweden, all children of working parents and students are guaranteed a place in a subsidised care from the age of one (EC 1998b; Kamerman 2000b).

In all the other member states, a great diversity in types of childcare services exists in the various countries. Firstly, it is important to note that in most countries a distinction can be made between informal and formal childcare. Informal implies that someone from the family-social network usually provides childcare, while formal childcare is an institutionalised form with qualified, specialised, paid childminders. Secondly, there is a great diversity between countries in types of formal childcare services. The main types are day-care centres (for example nurseries, kindergarten, playschools) and family day-care provided by individuals (childminders) who take care of children (see table 2.4). Day-care centres can take different forms depending on child's age. There are, broadly speaking, different facilities: for children under three years old, children aged three years until compulsory school age, and school age children. In most European countries there are pre-primary school programs for children before the age of compulsory schooling. Services for school-age children consist of out-of-school centres, open before and after school hours, during free afternoons and mostly during school holidays. Thirdly, also the way in which childcare is financed varies. In some countries childcare is financed mainly out of public expenditure, while in others childcare is supported by the private sector. Mostly, however, there is some mixture of financing.

Table 2.4 shows the main provisions and data of formal childcare, based on Eurostat data, OECD figures, and national statistics.[19] The provision of childcare facilities varies widely, especially for children under the age of three. Although provisions of childcare facilities for children less than three years old are important especially for working mothers, in most countries the coverage rate is less than 20%. In Austria, Greece, Italy, and Spain, the coverage rate is even below 5%. In Germany, and Portugal approximately 10% of under three-year olds have been enrolled. In The Netherlands in recent years the capacity of childcare has rapidly increased, the enrolment rate is now 18.5%, while in the United Kingdom it is slightly higher, 20%. Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland and Sweden provide more than 20% of public nursery places for this age group. The highest rate of children under the age of three participating in childcare facilities is found in Denmark, where

[19] *The data only refer to formal childcare provision. The statistics do not distinguish between private and public day-care and no distinction is made between full-time and part-time attendance.*

more than 60% of the age group has been enrolled. In Sweden the coverage rate is almost 50%, in Ireland almost 40%, Belgium and France about 30%, and in Finland slightly lower, 24%.

Table 2.4 Formal childcare facilities, 1998-2000

	Year	Schemes & Scope of application	Enrolled children as percentage of the age group		Compulsory school age
			0-3 years	Aged 3 to compulsory school age	
Austria	1998	Krippen (crèche) 0-36 months Kindergarten (day-care centre) 3-6 years	4	68	6
Belgium (Flemish community)	2000	Crèche 0-36 months Childminders 0-3 years Pre-primary education 2 ½ or 3-6 years	30	97	6
Denmark	April 1999	Kommunal dagpleje (municipal childminder arrangement) Vuggestuer (crèche) 6 months-2 years Børnehaver (children gardens) 3-5 years Aldersintegrerede institutioner (age integrated facilities) 6 months – 6 years	64	91	7
Finland	31-1-1999	Pälväkoti (day-care centre) 0-7 years Perhepäirähoito (family day-care) 0-7 years	23.6	65.8 [a]	7
France	1998	Crèche (0-3 years) École maternelle (pre-primary school) 2-6 years	29	99	6
Germany	2000	Krippen (crèche) 0-36 months Kindergarten (day-care centre) 3-6 years	10	78	6
Greece	2000	Nursery (day-care centre) 0-30 months Kindergartens (day-care centre) 2 ½ - 4 ½ years	3	46	6
Ireland	1998	Nursery (private day-care centre) 3-60 months Playgroup 3-6 years Early primary education 4-5 years	n.a. [b]	56	6
Italy	1998	Crèche 3 months – 3 years Day-care centre (0-3 year) Scuola dell'infanzia (pre-school) 3-6 year	6	95	6

	Year	Schemes & Scope of application	Enrolled children as percentage of the age group		Compul-sory school age
			0-3 years	Aged 3 to compul-sory school age	
Luxem-bourg	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6
Nether-lands	1998	Halve- en hele-dagopvang (half and full day-care centre) 0-4 year Gastouderopvang (family day-care services) Peuterspeelzaal (pre-school playgroup) 2-3 year Kleuterschool (nursery school)	18.5 [c]	98	5
Portugal	1996/ 1997	Nannies, crèches, mini- crèches, family crèches (3 months-3 years) Jardim the infância (pre-school education): (3-6 years)	12.6	64.5	6
Spain	1998-1999	First pre-school stage (under 3 years) Second pre-school stage (3-6 years) Public and private nursery schools (guarderias)	6.9	89.4	6
Sweden	1998	Förskola (pre-school) 0-6 years Familjedaghem (family day-care) 0-6 years Öppenförskola (open pre-school) 0-6 years	48	73 [d]	7
United Kingdom	2000 [e]	Day nursery (0-4 years) Family day-care, private childminders (0-4 years)	20	60	5

Notes:

[a] Age group 3-7 years, of whom 6 years 76.4 %. Pre-school education for 6 years old, 700 hours a year.

[b] The percentage of children aged under 5 is 38%.

[c] Data on pre-school playgroup is not included. Age group 0-4 years.

[d] Age group 1-5 years. 74 % for the age of 6 years.

[e] England only. Care provision is mostly private.

Sources: OECD (2001a and 2001b); OECD (1999-2000); Eurostat (2002b); Delemarre (2001)

The percentage of children age three to the age of compulsory attendance that is enrolled in childcare arrangements is much higher. This is not surprising, because most of the care services provided are pre-school programs. Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy and the Netherlands have the highest coverage rate; almost a full coverage is achieved. Medium coverage rates are found in Austria, Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden. Although Germany has about 78% of its 3-6 year olds enrolled in kindergarten, these programs are largely part-day and supplementary services or extended day programs are usually not available (Kamerman 2000a). Provisions are relatively low in Greece, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

The coverage rates do tell something about the availability and access of childcare, but nothing about the way childcare is financed or funded. The level of government involvement, however, remains widely different across the European Union. In the United Kingdom and Ireland, the public sector's involvement in childcare is limited. Most childcare is private, with no public funding. But even more important than the issue of whether childcare is private or public is the question how much parents have to contribute to childcare, and to what extent the contribution of parents is income-related. In countries relying on private provision, private costs can be high (OECD 2001a). Unfortunately, there are no accurate figures about the affordability of childcare in the European Union countries.

2.6 Reconciliation and welfare state regimes

In summarising the foregoing we can conclude that there is a great variety between countries in conditions to reconcile working life and family life in Europe. To explain the differences and similarities we will discuss the organisation of welfare states. Institutions are embedded in welfare states; welfare states create the climate and set the conditions for the institutions. In this section we will describe some comparative studies on welfare state regime types. Next we will discuss how to cluster countries on the basis of our findings on conditions concerning reconciliation. Finally, we will pose the question if current welfare state regime types are sufficient to explain the variety between countries concerning conditions for reconciliation.

Welfare state regime types

Well-known is Gøsta Esping-Andersen's theory of welfare state regimes (1990). In his study *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, welfare state regimes are defined as a specific institutional configuration of state, market and family adopted by societies in the pursuit of work and welfare. Esping-Andersen clusters Western industrialised welfare states into a liberal, conservative/corporatistic and social democratic regime. The *liberal welfare state* regime - the United States, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and Ireland - has been characterised by a belief that the self-regulating capacity of the market brings welfare to a maximum number of citizens. Only if the market fails, the state intervenes. As a consequence social security plans are modest, welfare benefits are means-tested and entitlement rules are strict. There is a strong reliance on market solutions (employer sponsored benefits) and private insurance. In the *conservative or corporatistic welfare state* regime - found in continental European countries such as Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands

- family and church play a crucial role. In Esping-Andersen opinion, the essence of a conservative regime lies in its blend of status, segmentation and familialism. Men are seen as breadwinners and women primarily as mothers and caretakers. Compulsory social insurance schemes are common, but these social rights differentiate according to class and status. Provisions, for example, are typically organised along occupational lines, often with preferential treatment of civil servants. The social security rights are financed through contributions paid by the employer and/or the employee. In the *social democratic welfare* regime - Sweden, Denmark and Finland - the state plays an important role, while the market is of minor importance. It is characterised by a strong commitment to a full-time employment guarantee for men as well as women. Equality is seen as a fundamental value. A characteristic feature is its universal approach; entitlements to benefits and services are based on citizenship or residence. Other traits are the generous benefit levels and the funding of benefits is through taxation rather than contributions from insured persons.

Esping-Andersen`s work is appreciated and often quoted, but also highly criticised. Critics have pointed out the fact that some countries are difficult to classify. The Netherlands, for example, has been considered an ambiguous case because the Dutch welfare state has characteristics of both the social democratic as well as the conservative welfare state regime (Den Dulk 2001). Others argue that the Netherlands has been gradually infused with liberal characteristics (Veen & Trommel 1998). Critics substantiate that the Mediterranean countries, like Spain, Italy and Portugal, should be considered as a distinct regime: a family care model (Leibfried 1992; Naldini 1999). In those countries the family is the unit primarily responsible for the welfare of individuals. Informal care through the family network is important. Many feminist scholars too have criticised Esping-Andersen's typology because of his theoretical neglect of gender. The objection being the specific position of women in welfare states was not taken into account and the analysis of the family was underdeveloped (Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1996, 1999).

In his book *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (1999), Esping-Andersen attempts to integrate gender and the role of families more fully into his classification. He analyses the extent to which welfare state regimes have pursued familialisation or de-familialisation, concepts first proposed by his critics (Orloff 1993; Lister 1997). In Esping-Andersen opinion de-familialisation refers to the extent in which welfare states are lessening the familial burden, in other words it refers to 'the degree to which household's welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed- either via welfare provision, or via market provision' (1999, p. 51). A familialistic system, on the other hand, is one in which public policy assumes that households must carry the principal responsibility for their members welfare. Using measures such as the percentage of children under age three in daycare, the percentage of unemployed youth living with parents, and the average hours of women's unpaid work, he finds that welfare state variations in terms of de-familialisation are as great as for de-commodification (defined as public protection against social risks in a free market system). Active de-familialisation takes place in the social-democratic regimes. These regimes remain the only ones where social policy is explicitly designed to maximise women's economic independence. Liberal regimes tend to be open to de-familialisation, albeit in a manner that is primarily reliant on the market. Conservative countries, on the other hand, are notable for their policy of sustained familialism (leaving services to the families). Within this regime there are, however, differences; France and Belgium are much less familialistic than Italy and Spain. Further,

Esping-Andersen states that more systematic attention to the family does not really alter his tripartite typology of welfare regimes. In his view, the differences between Southern Europe and the rest of continental Europe are not large enough to distinguish a separate Mediterranean regime.

Although Esping-Andersen does not explicitly discuss the institutions that support the combination of paid work and care, some presumptions can be derived from his theory applying the underlying principles of the welfare regimes and the concept of de-familialisation. In the Scandinavian countries, for example, where strong de-familialisation is a guiding principle for public policy, institutional arrangements will consist of an elaborate universal system of public day-care provisions and extensive paid leave schemes. The costs of familyhood will be subsidised through the heavy involvement of the state in the care of children, the aged and the helpless. High familialism in the corporatistic welfare state regimes, on the other hand, implies that childcare facilities are underdeveloped. State policy in those countries aims at strengthening the position of the male breadwinner - de-commodifing the male breadwinner via income guarantees -, while concentrating the caring tasks to families (women). As a consequence cash benefits will be given priority over the provisions of services. In liberal welfare state regime, where the market holds sway: government policy towards childcare and parental leave facilities is based on a principle of individual rather than collective responsibility. A consequence of this is that there is a minimal provision of publicly funded childcare and scanty statutory provisions of leave arrangements.

Typology of states and reconcilation

Do the presumptions of Esping-Andersen correspond with the cross-national comparison undertaken in this chapter? Table 2.5 summarises the main findings and gives a first clustering of countries, based on the preceding sections. The categories are divided in low, medium and high, using percentile scores of 33.3 and 66.6. The table shows certain features that different European countries have in common. Certain patterns emerge in groups of countries. Those groups correspond only partially to the Esping-Andersen model of welfare state regime.

In line with the Esping-Andersen typology we find that the *social democratic* countries (Sweden, Denmark and Finland) have extensive statutory provisions, which help working parents to manage their dual responsibilities to family and work. Provisions for childcare and paid leave arrangements are relatively high. The financial support for families with children through cash benefits and tax allowances on the other hand is relatively low. The tax system is based on independent taxation of individuals.

In the *liberal* countries (Great Britain and Ireland) the institutional arrangements are also consistent with Esping-Andersen model. These countries are characterised by short and poorly paid leaves and limited public childcare, whereas in Great Britain the flexible working time arrangements are widespread. The financial support for families with children is moderate in Great Britain, and high in Ireland. In both countries individual taxation is the rule. However, it is important to note the fact that in Great Britain recently changes have been made in leave arrangements, whereby the duration of maternity leave has been prolonged and paternity leave has been introduced. These changes in legislation are not in line with policies of countries belonging to a welfare state regime characterised as liberal.

The institutional arrangements in the other countries are less easily placed within the *conservative regime*. This regime type could be split into two quite distinct groups; the Southern countries and the other continental countries. If we look at the Southern countries (Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal) we see that the childcare facilities for children under three years are - except for Portugal - very low. Informal care in those countries is extremely important. Leave facilities, however, are rather diverse. Spain knows a relatively long period of childbirth related leave, but payments are low. In Italy, on the contrary, the leave period is much shorter, but better paid. In all four countries part-time work and flexible work are relatively low and the tax system is joint or individual.

The continental countries reveal little commonality; differences among those countries are particularly striking. Belgium and France deviate markedly, especially with regard to childcare facilities, from the 'regime norm'. Both countries are in this respect closely behind the social democratic countries and if you look at the childcare coverage rate for three- to five-years old they even outdo the social democratic countries. Austria, Germany and Luxembourg fit better in the conservative regime. In those countries the emphasis is on time-related provisions. Parents are encouraged to take care of their children themselves. For this goal leave provisions are relatively long, while childcare provisions for children under three years are low. The financial support for families through cash benefits, and tax allowances is relatively high in Luxembourg, Austria and Germany. The Netherlands stands relatively alone in this group. On the one hand we could say that institutions correspond better with the liberal countries since the part-time strategy is widely used for combining work and family life and leave arrangements are underdeveloped. On the other hand the considerable increase in childcare facilities during the Nineties points at a social democratic course.

Concluding remarks

In summarising, the cross-national comparison shows that in some cases the welfare state regime typology breaks down and countries cannot be clustered into distinct groups corresponding to welfare state regimes. Conceivably, this is due to the fact that during the Eighties and Nineties welfare states were confronted with several important socio-economic changes, such as the continuing increase in women's labour force participation, the flexibilisation of the labour market, the decline of the male breadwinner system, and the declining fertility rate. Those changes mean that all welfare states have experienced a certain insecurity, but even more important those changes also have created pressure and a set of challenges which forced them to respond (Mayer 2001). Assuming that this social change exerts roughly similar pressure to all advanced societies, the question rises how do welfare states respond? Will these responses vary widely, across or within the boundaries of the various regime types?

Our comparison reveals that especially in the continental countries certain developments, such as the erosion of the male breadwinner system and the increasing labour market participation of women, have not induced the path dependent adjustments that regime theory would lead us to expect. On the contrary, some of the continental countries appear to deviate from the predicted path and move in a direction that crosses different regime types. For families in France and Belgium, for example, care in the early years of children's lives is provided through a combination of paid leave, publicly subsidised childcare and private care

arrangements. A response of two welfare states that combines the elements of the social democrat and the conservative world.

One could even say that because of this significant intraregime differences, dividing lines between the different regimes might fade in time. This is probably due to the fact that in the Nineties in all countries within the European Union the combination of paid work and care has received increasing attention and, moreover, public and private support for it has been raised. Leave policy, for example, has been extended in all countries and most of the countries have made some investment in childcare. This trend has brought together countries from different welfare regimes. For us it is of interest how despite the differences between the several European countries (with regard to labour market participation and social and political traditions), these countries are increasingly finding common ground in terms of solutions for reconciliation and especially the role of men. If countries are indeed getting closer to one another on this issue, than the possibilities to transfer solutions from one country to the other will also be enlarged. In chapter 5 we will discuss good practices concerning men and reconciliation in three European countries (Sweden, Spain and France) and come back to this issue.

It is an encouraging development that many of the necessary conditions for a more equal division of paid work and household and family tasks seem to develop (though a lot has to be realised yet). As argued, this is a very important first step for a quantitative balancing of tasks of men and women. Qualitatively speaking (who performs which tasks at home?), necessary conditions are not sufficient though. Let’s therefore look at meso- and micro-conditions.

Table 2.5 Comparison of institutions in fifteen countries

	Child-care for children less than 3 years	*Child-care leave*	*Part-time work*	*Flexible work*	*Financial support for families*	*Unit of taxation*
Nordic countries						
Denmark	High	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Individualised
Finland	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Low	Individualised
Sweden	High	High	Medium	High	Low	Individualised
Anglo-Saxon countries						
Great-Britain	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium	Individualised
Ireland	n.a.	Low	High	Low	High	Optional individual - splitting
Southern countries						
Greece	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Joint
Italy	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Individual
Spain	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	Optional individual - joint
Portugal	Medium	Low	Low	Low	High	Joint (splitting)
Continental countries						
Austria	Low	High	Medium	Medium	High	Individual
Germany	Low	Medium	High	High	High	Joint (splitting)
Luxembourg	n.a.	High	Medium	Medium	High	Joint (family quotient)
Belgium	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Optional individual -– splitting
France	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Joint (family quotient)
The Netherlands	Medium	Low	High	High	Low	Individual

Notes:

The scores low, medium, high were calculated using a 33.3 and 66.6 percentile. In case of childcare leave (i.e. maternity, parental, paternity and care leave) payment and duration are given even weight. Furthermore, the ranking of payment is based on a weighted average. The weigh factor of a payment category has been defined as the payment category's period divided by the total period. In case of flexible work we included flexitime and teleworking. Part-time work refers to both the women and the men. For the ranking of the financial support for families we used the family tax-benefit ratio, including the cash benefits.

3 *Tasks within Household and Family*

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed conditions that enable men to spend time on care tasks (household tasks and childcare). However, these conditions do not say anything about the type of tasks these men will potentially carry out. Flexible working hours or leave do not automatically result in men taking on *all* household and childcare tasks. Literature has already explained that there is a hierarchy of tasks. Having flexible working hours, as an example, does result in men doing the cooking or shopping, but they will rarely do the cleaning or laundry.

In this chapter, we will therefore approach the *men and care* issue from the point of view of the tasks they fulfil: which tasks or parts of tasks will or won't men take on? And which factors play a role in this selection? We will therefore not so much look at how much they do, but rather at what they do: which tasks do they carry out (so we are looking at the *quality* of tasks rather than the *quantity*). The quality requires attention because, despite an increase in the care tasks now being carried out by men, as a matter of course men do not carry out certain tasks, a situation that is not likely to change, either.

It is therefore important to investigate which tasks men will carry out and which ones they won't. We will look at the task distribution for both a number of household tasks and childcare tasks. The household tasks relate to: cooking, doing the laundry, shopping and cleaning. The childcare tasks are caring for a sick child, bathing a child, helping a child do his/her homework and attending parent-teacher evenings. After this presentation, we will further define three tasks, namely shopping, doing the laundry and visiting the baby clinic. The objective of this exercise is to find mechanisms that cause a man to take on *certain* tasks but not others. The selection of the aforementioned tasks was inspired by the following considerations. We chose one task that has already lost its position as an (exclusive) female preserve (shopping); one task that has remained female (doing the laundry) and one task that is 'in transition' (visiting the baby clinic).

The factors that have influenced (or not) a certain task in becoming *beyond gender* are found mainly at micro and meso level. Factors at meso level relate to the activities of companies or organisations involved (the supermarket, the washing machine manufacturer or the baby clinic). The micro level is the level of the household and the individuals who do or don't carry out tasks. We list the main influential factors per task.

The macro factors that influence *the extent* to which men provide care are only dealt with obliquely. After all, the macro conditions discussed in chapter 2 have made it possible for a man to take on certain tasks more frequently. This applies, for instance, to the option of

working part-time or having flexible working hours, which give more working men time to do the shopping during the day. Increased options for part-time work have not resulted in men doing more cleaning or laundry. It therefore appears that, if a task is to become *beyond gender*, it will require more than just macro adaptations in the area of working hours or leave arrangements.

This chapter is based on research into the way people spend their time, CBS (*Central Statistics Bureau*) figures, perusal of literature and group meetings (one meeting about doing the shopping, one about doing the laundry and one about visiting the baby clinic).[20] In the group meetings the participants were presented with factors that may encourage or obstruct men from carrying out the task in question. The data in this chapter relates exclusively to the distribution of tasks in the Netherlands. However, we assume that the mechanisms that help or obstruct a certain task becoming gender-neutral or not, also apply in other countries. The speed at which change mechanisms occur can of course differ per country.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The data about a number of tasks (household and childcare tasks) is presented in paragraph 3.2. The three examples (the shopping, the laundry and the baby clinic) are further described in paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5. Paragraph 3.6 compares the three tasks and takes a closer look at the underlying mechanisms and possible solutions.

3.2 Distribution of tasks within the household

Research into the way people use their time shows that in the period 1975-2000 men started to spend more time on household tasks (SCP 2000; Van den Broek et al. 1999). In 1975, 38% of men between 18 and 65 did the daily shopping and in 2000 that percentage had increased to 55%. The number of men preparing meals has also increased in this twenty-year period. While in 1975 20% of men were involved in meal preparation, by 2000 that percentage had increased to 42%. We can therefore accept the fact that men have started to do more, as a given. In the remainder of this paragraph we will look at the question, which tasks men have started to do.

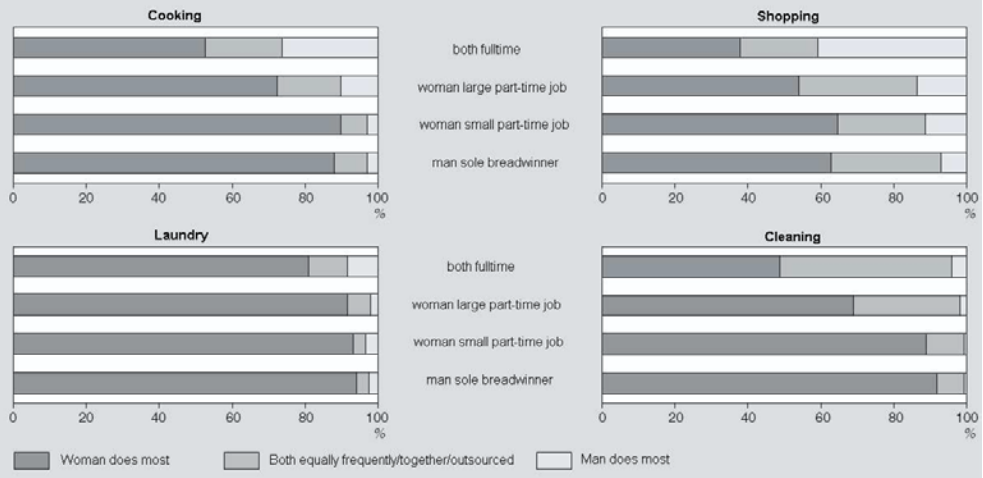
Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of tasks within the household by household type and gender for 2002. The tasks used in this figure are cooking, shopping, laundry and cleaning. The figure shows that men spend more time on such household tasks if their wife works more. This is self-explanatory: if a man is the sole breadwinner his wife has relatively more time for household tasks than if both work full-time or the woman has a large part-time job.

It is more interesting to note that there are large differences between the tasks, even if both partners work full-time or if the woman has a large part-time job. The only task that men and women take on equally frequently, if both work full-time, is the shopping. Cooking is a close second, but even then women working full-time do this task more frequently than men working full-time. Even if men are the sole breadwinner, shopping is the task they do relatively most frequently, either alone or with their partner.

[20] *The participants in the group discussions were professionals (supermarkt employees, laundry detergent producers and baby clinic staff); men/fathers who may or may not carry out the task in question; external researchers in one of the sub-areas and researchers from the Verwey-Jonker Institute.*

The picture is different if we look at cleaning the house and doing the laundry. If the woman has a large part-time job, but even if both partners work full-time, the woman takes on these tasks most frequently. At first glance it appears that these tasks are often done by both partners together, but this may be a result of the way the question was asked: the figure does not show the distinction between doing the task together and outsourcing it. However, it would seem obvious that the high percentage in this category for people who are employed full-time can be attributed largely to outsourcing.
Of the four household tasks in the figure, doing the laundry is the task which, in all cases, is the one carried out most frequently by women. Even if both partners work full-time, it is in 80% of households the woman who does the laundry most frequently. The figure shows that, if women work part-time, this percentage is in higher than 90%. Only a very small percentage of men do the laundry more frequently than their partners. The figure below does show, however, that men spend more time doing the laundry if their wives work full-time.

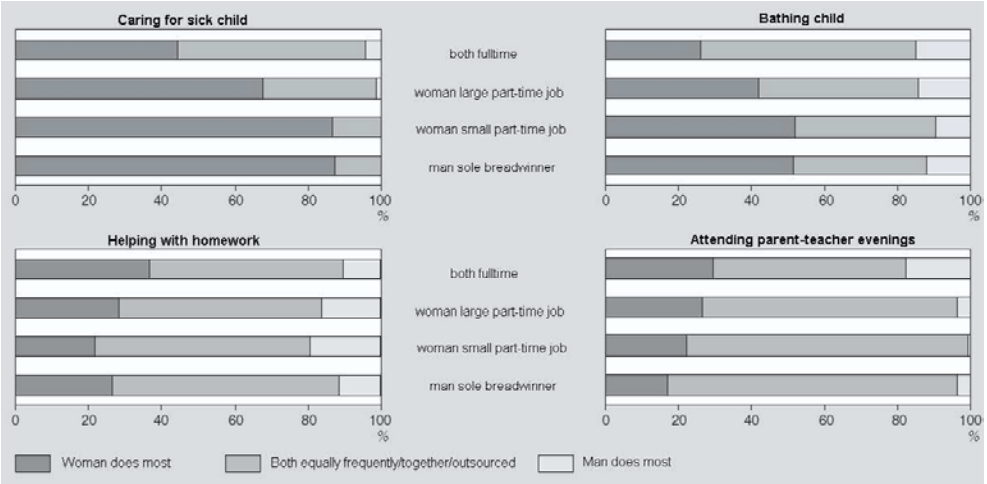
Figure 3.1 Household tasks by household type and gender, 2000



Source: CBS (2002)

We can draw two important conclusions from the figure. Firstly, there are large differences between the tasks when it comes to gender, whereby doing the shopping is relatively speaking the most neutral task but doing the laundry is undoubtedly a female task (and remains so nearly across the board). It is therefore interesting to subject both household tasks - doing the shopping and doing the laundry - to a further investigation and to look at the question which mechanisms play a role in the fact that shopping, on the one hand, has become gender-neutral and the laundry, on the other hand, remains gender-specific.
Secondly the figure shows that men also spend more time on tasks that are traditionally female, such as the laundry, if their partner works more hours. This shows that even the realisation of a task that is deemed typically female, such as the laundry, can change (slightly) if circumstances demand.

Figure 3.2 Childcare tasks by household type and gender, 2000



Source: CBS (2002)

The CBS also has data about childcare tasks by household type and gender. These relate to the tasks of caring for a sick child, bathing a child, helping the child with his/her homework and attending parent-teacher evenings. The figure shows us that, in general, childcare tasks are more gender-neutral than household tasks. Even men who are the sole breadwinner help children do their homework, attend parent-teacher evenings and bathe their child. These are of course tasks that can be carried out in addition to a full-time job. One exception is the task of caring for a sick child. In most cases this task is carried out mainly by the mother. There is a considerable difference, however, between the different types of households. In households where both partners work full-time, both parents care for the sick child. In households where the woman has a large part-time job this is also more often the case than in households where the man is the sole breadwinner or the woman has a small part-time job.

In addition to the laundry and the shopping, this chapter also looks at the task of visiting the baby clinic. There is little information as to whether men take on this task and how frequently. We therefore asked a physician at an average baby clinic in the Netherlands to keep track of how many fathers visit the clinic with their child. This information was recorded for a week and a half. In this period 97 children attended the baby clinic; 67 with the mother, 14 with the father and 15 with both father and mother. This means that in approximately 30 percent of all visits to this baby clinic the father attended with the child. The question is whether an increase in the number of men visiting the baby clinic can also be detected over a longer period of time. In research into four baby clinics in the Amsterdam/Rotterdam/Utrecht metropolitan area, carried out toward the end of the Eighties, the research population was composed as follows: of the 40 children, 36 attended the baby clinic with their mother, 2 with their father and 2 with both father and mother (Habekothé 1995). This would appear to indicate a change: there is movement in the number of baby clinic visits, albeit that in this case the task is not necessarily handed over from the woman to the man, but rather in an increasing number of

cases men and women attend together. This is an interesting fact: the tasks are not *distributed* but *shared*.

In the past 30 years men may have started to take on more tasks in the household and family, but these do appear to be specific tasks. We have seen that childcare tasks and light household tasks are high in the task hierarchy. Cleaning and doing the laundry are low in this hierarchy (Knijn 1997). The information presented in this chapter shows the painful consequences of this situation: doing the laundry is a typically female task, while doing the shopping has become the most gender-neutral task.

The difference between childcare tasks and household tasks can also be found in the information presented. With the exception of caring for a sick child, childcare tasks are generally carried out by both partners, or carried out together. This also applies to families where the man is the sole breadwinner. This is an important difference compared to household tasks, to which the rule applies that in a household where the man is the sole breadwinner, the woman carries out the most household tasks.

The data shows that certain tasks can become *beyond gender*, but that this does not apply to all tasks. In the remainder of this chapter we will therefore take a closer look at the question as to why a certain task (the shopping) did become *beyond gender* and another task (the laundry) did not. We also look at the difference between household tasks and childcare tasks, which appears to be partly the difference between *distributing* and *sharing* tasks. We will look at this difference by means of the case study into baby clinic visits.

3.3 Shopping: a gender-neutral task

Within a few decades, doing the shopping has evolved from a relatively gender-specific, namely female, task to a neutral task. Increasingly, men have started to do the shopping. Contrary to doing the laundry and cleaning the house, this task is no longer regarded as a purely female preserve. Not many household tasks change in this way and so quickly. In this paragraph we ask the following questions: under which conditions was this task able to change and lose its femaleness? Did this in effect result in complete gender-neutrality or are there still gender-specific aspects associated with doing the shopping?

A task in the process of changing

Before we take a closer look at the question why more men have started to do the shopping, below follows a historical overview of the main changes in shopping practices. First we will see how nearly all groceries used to be delivered to the home, and how this was followed by the so-called ‘mobile shop’. This mobile shop was the predecessor of today's supermarket where men made their entrance. In the 1996 Brancheverkenning (*Sector Exploration*) publication we can read the following on this subject:

> *'The entire country used to be divided into 'milk rounds', whereby the inhabitants of each round were provided with dairy products on a daily basis. Because in those days most women were 'housewives', nearly all inhabitants of the 'round' were the milkman's customers. In addition to the milk rounds, many dairy vendors had a shop in which, in most cases, their wives served the customers. As a result of the emergence of the supermarket and the replacement of bulk milk with pre-packaged milk, the relevance of the milk delivery system was gradually reduced. The supermarket attracted increasing numbers of customers. In response to the development of the supermarket, many dairy vendors started to stock different products, which created the mobile shop.' (Brancheverkenning 1996).*

In spite of this, the number of mobile shops decreased over time. One important reason for this was the fact that many 'housewives' became 'working women', which meant the operators of the mobile shops found fewer people at home. Another reason is the emergence of increasing numbers of parallel grocery stores, which also included discount stores. Increasing numbers of consumers were attracted to these types of shops because it was convenient to get all the shopping under one roof, and often at lower prices than in the mobile shop. The increasing numbers of refrigerators and freezers made it possible for many consumers to do their shopping, including fresh foods, once a week.

De Jager (1995) wrote this about the emergence of the supermarkets: 'The first supermarkets in the United States created quite a furore. In 1916, a certain Clarence Saunders in Memphis, Tennessee, had opened a grocery store with the playful name of "Piggly Wiggly", where his customers – perhaps he thought of them as piglets! – were able to help themselves to articles from the shelves. Saunders' idea was not a new one, because for around four years there had been so-called self-service shops in Southern California, but he did invent a format that did not automatically deteriorate into 'self sale': his shop was the first with a turnstile at the entrance and a check-out at the exit'.

The self-service idea now returned to California. Until then, in the United States just like everywhere else, there had been a strict separation between the sale of dry goods and fresh vegetables, fruit and meat. However, halfway through the Twenties large food markets appeared in Los Angeles, in which the complete package of food items was offered on a self-service basis and at rockbottom prices. The markets were located far away from the centre of the town, making them easily accessible for cars. They were also housed in very simple premises: old haciendas and deserted factory halls, where the products were displayed in large quantities on shelves, in crates or in large piles. Because of this method of presenting the products (*Pile it High and Sell it Cheap*), these markets were being referred to as 'supermarkets', in accordance with the Hollywood jargon of those days.

In Europe, this development had gone virtually unnoticed before the Second World War. Gerrit Heijn found the American supermarkets of 1936 less than impressive. This becomes understandable if one considers that, at that time, these supermarkets looked extremely plain to Europeans. Furthermore, at that time few people in Europe had a car they could use to go to the supermarket. It would take until the early Fifties (and according to some even until the Seventies), before shops resembling supermarkets appeared here. The minutes of a board meeting of the Heijn family tell us: 'Messrs. Heijn are seriously considering opening a self-help-shop'. The meeting as a whole responded negatively, with one person presenting an

original counter argument: in his opinion the housewife of that period needed more service rather than less, because the phenomenon of the live-in servant was rapidly diminishing after the war. And of course, they were not just dealing with the housewives but also with their husbands. Until then it had been so customary that only women visited shops, that AH consistently referred to the customer as 'she' and also conjugated the (intrinsically male) word as such (the customer and 'her' wishes). Nevertheless, increasing numbers of men started visiting the shop – although they still felt ill at ease there. Self-service, however, proved to be less threatening to them. In 1948, the first self-service shop opened up in Nijmegen: Gebroeders Van Woerkom (*Van Woerkom Bros*.), a shop that attracted many curious browsers and customers. In 1952, AH opened the first self-service shop in Schiedam (De Jager 1995).

The advantages of the supermarket rapidly became evident. Customers could make their way through the shop and get their own items. If they changed their mind halfway through, they could simply put the item back. In the traditional shop where the customer was served by the shopkeeper there was a certain embarrassment in doing this ('… sorry, I would prefer something different, is that possible?'). The freedom offered by the self-service concept was enormous. However, for a long time self-service remained relatively unknown and therefore unloved. Over one-third of Dutch housewives still had their shopping delivered in 1953. In a 1956 survey, the main disadvantage of the supermarket was quoted as being the 'fear of buying too much' (Rutte 1998).

Another factor in the growing popularity of the supermarket was the increasing use of cars. In the Sixties, the inner-cities starting to experience parking problems and traffic jams as a result of increasing car ownership. These factors encouraged customers to visit shops that were more easily accessible. In the United States 4 m2 of parking space were needed for every m2 of floor surface and the Netherlands was rapidly heading in the same direction. In the new residential areas of the Sixties, large shopping centres were built with space for a big self-service shop or supermarket and sufficient parking space. Customers visited the shopping centres in large numbers in their cars and did all their shopping for the entire week. By the end of the Sixties the fridge had become a common domestic appliance and the products that would not keep in the fridge for a week were picked up in the course of the week in a (specialist) neighbourhood shop. In 1960, nearly 27% of all adult women worked outside the home. They certainly preferred the more convenient and quick self-service shops with their larger product ranges.

Advertising agencies quickly adjusted to the changing target group. Traditionally, the advertising world had classified the public by age, educational level, profession, income and living conditions. From this classification an average family with 2.3 children and a non-working mother had emerged. However, although statistics indicated that, whereas in the Seventies 65% of the population lived like this, in the Nineties this would be at most 40%. In other words: the main target group was disappearing. In its place new household types emerged, such as the one parent family and the dual income family (Meuldijk 1996). This turned the supermarket into 'something for everyone'. An American study claims that this does not just apply to the more upmarket service supermarkets, but also to the discount supermarkets: *'Everyone comes to Kmart. Even my neighbour, who paid a million dollars for his apartment several years ago, smiles when he sees my Kmart plastic shopping bag and I*

tell him about the paper towels. "Sure'', he says, "and they're even cheaper at Costco".'
(Zukin 2004, p. 65).

Influencing factors

From the above we can deduce that the character of doing the shopping has changed considerably. This not only applies to grocery shopping, but to the whole shopping process in general (Falk 1997; Zukin 2004). An important development is the emergence of the supermarket, which has drastically changed the character of the shopping task. No longer do retailers deliver the items to the home, where someone was always there. Rather, the consumer goes to the supermarket where a range of different products is available. If this was initially still a female task, slowly but surely increasing numbers of men have found their way to the supermarket to do the shopping. In this paragraph, we will look at the question why (in recent times) more men have started to do the shopping. The variables that influence this behaviour have been classified into macro, meso and micro factors. As doing the shopping has increasingly become a neutral task, with regard to this task we will look specifically at those factors that have encouraged men to take on the shopping.

Macro aspects

Shop Opening Hours Act
The macro conditions discussed in chapter 2 have made it possible for men to take on more care tasks. Why the shopping task in particular has become beyond gender so quickly will be explained below. We must list one macro condition, which relates specifically to doing the shopping, separately. This is the Shop Opening Hours Act, which became effective on 1 June 1996. The relevance of this Act is the fact that it broke the link between shop opening times and employees' regular working hours. Because of the longer opening hours it became possible, also for men who work full-time, to do the shopping before or after work. However, in this respect we must comment that the evening and Sunday opening hours apply mainly in the larger cities. One of the participants in the study commented: 'Where we live the shops are closed after five o'clock, they only stays open late one night a week. In the country the shops close at 5 pm every day'. For this reason, this factor has only been relevant in the last few years and mainly affects men who do the shopping in larger cities.

Meso aspects

Product range in shops has expanded
Another development is the expansion of the available product range in the supermarkets. New products were introduced, such as fresh foods, non-food items, personal care products, tobacco products and stationery, but also new services, such as a photo developing service, a photocopy service and savings systems. This means customers can find nearly everything in the same shop, which saves time and effort. Furthermore, because of this expanded range there will nearly always be something in which (some) men are particularly interested. *'The man will go along to do the shopping if a newspaper advertisement advertises a cheap PC for sale in the supermarket'*, comments one of the participants. However, according to one of its

operations managers, Albert Heijn does not have a specific sales policy aimed at men. The products on offer, such as a computer or a drill, are not there to attract specifically men to the shop, but rather to expand the product range – and therefore hopefully the turnover – in general. About the purchasing behaviour of men in the shops, the manager comments: *'In our branch we have an "impulse table", which displays the more luxurious and expensive items. More men purchase these items'*.

The expansion of the product range has not happened just in individual shops but also in shopping centres as a whole. In America, but also in some European countries, we can observe the emergence of so-called shopping malls. So far the Netherlands only has a few large supermarkets with separate departments for food and non-food items. As this development continues, this will of course attract an even more varied range of customers (including more men), who will all find something to their taste. A more extensive product range also means that shopping becomes more efficient. By offering the largest possible range of products the option of one-stop-shopping is created: the customer only needs one shop for all his/her requirements.

Shops have become larger

One of the findings that emerged from the group discussion was the fact that a large product range necessitates a larger shop and therefore encourages a relatively anonymous environment. This may help some men to overcome their shopping reticence: *'The type of shop is certainly a factor: the man wants to visit a more upmarket supermarket where there is more space, fewer queues at the checkout, comfort and accessibility'*. One participant says, about the discount supermarkets: *'It is very busy in the store and I hate it - as do my friends - when I get bumped by other people's shopping trolleys'.*

Parking

Over the years the number of supermarkets has increased and there are increasing numbers of large supermarkets with spacious parking facilities. This may encourage men to use their car to do the shopping and load up the bags during the weekend or after work. Men doing the shopping started with men accompanying their wife to the shop on Saturdays so the car would be available to transport all the (heavy) items, when it was mostly men who had a driver's licence. *'For us, who does the shopping depends on the weight and what is the most practical solution'*, says one participant.

Micro aspects

Men do the cooking more often

Table 3.1 shows that men have started to do the cooking more frequently. Often, men cook during the weekend, because they have more time or because, for instance, they have guests. But now that more women are working outside the home, men's skills in the kitchen are also required more frequently during the week. Men doing the cooking also appears to encourage them to do the shopping; after all, the person doing the cooking determines what ingredients are required and is more prepared to do the shopping to get those ingredients. During the meeting one of the participants commented: *'I like to do the cooking, so I also do the shopping'*. The reverse was also heard: *'I don't do the shopping because I don't cook'.*

More men are single
The number of single households has increased in the last few decades. This is a result both of the increasing number of divorces and the fact that, prior to getting married or living with a partner, young people now spend some time living on their own. A single or divorced man is forced to look after himself and do his own cooking. *'Divorce means that a man suddenly has to do his own shopping'*, says a respondent. Another aspect that explains the increasing number of single households is the fact that more people have started to go to college and university and live independently rather than at home. People have to be able to look after themselves from age 18 onward. About this aspect the respondents comment: *'I have been doing the shopping ever since I moved out of my parents' house and I have continued to do so'* and *'If you move out to go to college, you learn early on to do your own household chores'.*

Visible activity
According to the participants in the group meeting, men are rather and more frequently active outdoors than inside the home. This may be one of the reasons that, out of all household tasks, they would rather do the shopping than perform a task in the home. In the meeting, the following comments were heard about this aspect: *'Doing the shopping is an "outside" activity and therefore more attractive than other tasks'* and *'Doing the shopping has the most status. It is a visible (to other men) activity'*. Someone else comments: *'After all, it's more fun to buy something than to clean something'.*

The woman in control
Research has shown that 'management' tasks in the household are still mostly the woman's domain. With regard to doing the shopping, the following comments were heard during the meeting about this management task: *'The men may carry out the actual task, but by means of the shopping list, the shopping can still be controlled by women'*, says one of the participants. It also emerged from the meeting that men are sometimes literally ordered to do the shopping by their partner. It is a task that is easy to hand over to someone else: *'You can't go far wrong doing the shopping'*. The Albert Heijn Operations Manager, however, has noted a change in his shop: *'Older men make their way through the shop with a shopping list in hand, younger men shop decisively without a shopping list issued by their wives'*.

Conclusions

Doing the shopping is a task that is carried out by both men and women. In this paragraph, we have looked for the factors that may have encouraged men to do the shopping more often than they did before. We have seen that both meso and micro factors play a role.

One important factor at meso level is the fact that the shops have changed. The emergence of the supermarket has resulted in a much larger and more luxurious range of products. Frequently, men purchase the more expensive items that are displayed in the more obvious places in supermarkets (it remains to be seen if men will continue to be *big spenders* if they take on more of a management role when it comes to the shopping!). At meso level the use of a car plays a role as an influencing factor. Supermarkets respond to this by providing large carparks next to or underneath the supermarket.

At micro level there are different factors that influence men doing the shopping. Firstly, there is the strong increase in single men who are forced to do their own housekeeping (and therefore their own shopping). In two-partner households, doing the shopping remains a relatively attractive task for men. There is a clear task hierarchy: a visible task like doing the shopping is more attractive than cleaning the house. For women, doing the shopping is also a task that they can relatively easily leave to men, as not much can go wrong. They can also remain in control by means of the familiar shopping list.

Doing the shopping has lost its female connotation. However, there are still differences between women and men. As an example, men may be carrying out this task more frequently than before, but the control is still in the hands of their partner. Men are sent to do the shopping, possibly with a shopping list. For younger generations, however, it is more common for men to feel fully responsible for the shopping and make the decisions on what to buy. Cooking also plays an important role in this development. As men become increasingly responsible for part of the nutritional process (decide what to eat, do the shopping, cook and clean up) it is (more) likely that they will also start to take on other parts of this process.

3.4 The laundry: a female task

Unlike the shopping, a household task like doing the laundry has remained a mostly female task. CBS data has shown that this also applies more strongly to the laundry than to other household tasks, like cooking. This is the case for all household types: even in households where both partners work full-time, the women spend the most time doing the laundry compared to men. In this paragraph we look at the question why the laundry has remained a female task and what obstacles and incentives exist for men to start doing the laundry, in other words: what possibilities exist for change. When looking at doing the shopping, there was obviously a lot of focus on the factors that have influenced men to start taking on this task. Because the laundry has remained mainly a female task, we will now be paying more attention to the obstacles. However, before we outline these obstacles we will take a look at (changes to) the task itself and, more specifically, at the effect of mechanisation.

Mechanisation

From a traditional perspective, the laundry has always been a female task. It was always the women who were scrubbing the dirty laundry at the edge of the water. Doing the laundry was a very labour-intensive process. Often, the entire week was dominated by the laundry. On Sunday night the washing was put in a tub to soak and boiled in washing soda. Monday was laundry day, when the washing was scrubbed, rinsed and if necessary bleached, blue rinsed or starched. After it was wrung out, the washing was hung up or spread out to dry. On Wednesday, the ironing would start, which ran into Thursday. Before the ironing could start the clean items were stretched into shape, moistened and pre-folded (Cieraad 1998). The next week the whole process would start all over again. It is therefore not surprising that those who could afford it would outsource the laundry to laundresses. The work of a laundress was extremely hard and was not very highly regarded.

The 1950s saw the introduction of the first washing machines. Initially, the water still had to be heated in a kettle on the stove. After the boiling or heating, the laundry was then put through the wringer by hand. Although this was a major improvement compared to scrubbing clothes on a washboard, wringing out large items still remained hard work. Items with buttons or zips had to be folded in a specific way before they could be put through the wringer. This meant the items were folded while they were soaking wet (and therefore heavy) and hot. 'Doing laundry was a pain', concludes Joy Parr in her research into the way laundry was done (Parr 1997).

Toward the end of the Sixties the fully automatic washing machine became available in the shops. Parr describes how, in Canada, the transition from the wringer washing machine to the fully automatic washing machine happened only slowly. Until the end of the Sixties women continued to wash by hand. Parr explains this by the living standard of many households and the opportunity costs of the household. The purchase of a new, fully automatic washing machine while the old one was not yet broken was not easily done. After all, this meant people would not be able to buy other, equally desirable products. Manufacturers had to try to convince people to buy a new appliance when the old one was still in perfectly good working order. Initially, the consumer was also suspicious of the new fully automatic washing machine: would it be good and reliable?

In Canada, the manufacturers tried to convince the consumer with different strategies. For instance, in advertisements the style and 'gadget status' of the appliance was emphasised (one simply had to have one). Another strategy emphasised progress: with these new appliances, the laundry would be a much easier task. In Canada, advertisements appeared in which a mother plays with her child while the new, fully automatic washing machine is working away by itself. In the background we can see a woman still doing the laundry manually. The advertisement is accompanied by a caption: 'change washday into play day' (Parr 1997, p. 165).

More recent developments are the invention of computerised washing machines, the advance of the washer/dryer and irons with contemporary styling (Oldenziel 1996). All these mechanical and technical developments have so far not resulted in men taking on substantially more of the laundry task. Probably, it has made men more involved in the purchase of the appliances, but further research into this aspect is not available.

Influencing factors

Like shopping, doing the laundry is a household task that has changed considerably. Where the laundry is concerned, this is mainly the result of the invention and increasing use of the fully automatic washing machine. As a result the laundry has become a much lighter task. In spite of all the changes the laundry has remained a typically female task. This is remarkable for two reasons. In doing the shopping, the physical act of carrying heavy bags has become an argument for a man doing the shopping. In the case of the laundry this does not appear to play any role at all. At the time doing the laundry was still hard work, men did not do it; now that the laundry is increasingly mechanised and the appliances have numerous technical gadgets, they still do not (or hardly) do it. Although technology traditionally has a male connotation, this has not resulted in men doing the laundry more frequently. It appears that other factors play a role, which mean that men will not easily do the laundry. In this paragraph

we will first focus on these obstacles, which appear to be mainly at micro level. In addition, we will take a look at a number of incentives and possible solutions.

Obstacles at micro level

Independence
Increasing numbers of men spend part of their lives living alone; as a student, when they start working or, for instance, after a divorce. These single men will often do their own laundry (although the number of male students who take their laundry home to be done by their mother or who take it to the launderette should not be underestimated), and may continue to do so even after they have started living with a partner. In a two-partner household, the (control of) the laundry still often ends up in the hands of the female partner. As an explanation for this the argument is often used that the woman 'has more to do with clothes' and is more likely to want to wash something. *'She puts my jeans in the wash when I have worn them for two weeks, I never remember to do it'.*

At home during the day
It has been shown that even in situations where the man is at home just as often as his wife, or even more, the laundry is still done by women. Men are sometimes allowed to help by hanging up the washing, but the 'critical' work – sorting and folding – is mostly done by women. The co-ordination remains in the hands of the female partner. The fact that the man may be at home during the day can encourage him to be more involved in doing the laundry, but it is not a determining factor that makes him take over the laundry task.

Things can easily go wrong with the laundry
Men do not want to do the laundry – but many women do not appear to want them to, either. A possible explanation for the fact that women do not want to hand over the laundry task to men may be the chance that (a lot of) things can go wrong. This is particularly upsetting if certain items of clothing have a particular relevance to the person and, generally speaking, this appears to be the case more often for women than for men. The participants in the group discussion stressed the fact that women 'attach more importance to clothes' and get more pleasure from clothes. This is expressed, for example, in shopping for and buying clothes. To many men a T-shirt is a T-shirt, whereas to women a T-shirt may be *the* T-shirt, which must not be ruined. In the opinion of the participants, however, this situation has been changing in recent years, with clothes becoming more important to many men as well. Men are increasingly prepared to iron their shirts because they want to look good at work. The more vain men become, the more important clothes become and, possibly, the more natural it will become for them to do their own laundry (even if it is only that particular favourite item).

Doing the laundry consists of a number of steps and requires a certain level of knowledge and experience, for instance when dealing with expensive items of clothing that must be treated in a special way. In addition, hanging and folding clothes also requires experience. Many men have not yet acquired this experience. This means something may go wrong more easily, there will be criticism and doing the laundry gets a negative connotation (the fear of ruining something with so much emotional value). A possible explanation for men not doing the

laundry could be the fact that men are put off because so much can go wrong, or because they give up after a first failed attempt. It could also be that, for this reason, women do not want to delegate this task in the first place. This is a significant difference when compared to doing the shopping or cooking a meal: a wrongly purchased item can be changed, a failed meal can be cooked again, but an item of clothing that has been ruined in the wash is ruined forever.

Children
The presence of children in a household has a significant impact on the laundry – households with children generate a lot of it. In addition, the moment children arrive is also the time when household tasks increase and are (or should be) redistributed. One would expect that, because of the increase in the number of tasks and the amount of laundry, it would become necessary for a man to share in doing the laundry. However, it is not the case that in households with children men do the laundry as often as their female partners. It is not known whether men with children do more laundry than men without children. As an analogy to the chain theory of doing-the-shopping-because-of-the-cooking, it could perhaps be expected that fathers who dress their (young) children will sooner feel responsible for the availability of clothes (and therefore start washing them). On the other hand if, as noted earlier, men have a higher tolerance for dirt than women and if this higher tolerance for dirt also applies to the children's clothes, the incentive for dressing the children is probably cancelled out.

Visibility
During the group discussion, it was suggested that doing the laundry is not a very visible task and that, for this reason, men do not get much credit for it. This is in contrast to doing the shopping, which is done in public. However, from the comments about the presence of children it becomes clear that doing (or not doing) the laundry is in fact visible indirectly. After all, children show the outside world whether or not the laundry is being done. Parents are responsible for their children’s appearance and do not want their children to be the dirtiest child in the class. This especially applies to some working mothers who feel that, through clean children's clothes, they have to (or can) prove that, as a working mother, one can still look after ones child properly.
There is not a lot of appreciation for the laundry task, which is not publicly visible. However, appreciation is high for the end result, which is particularly publicly visible. This fact could perhaps provide reasons to come to a renewed appreciation of the laundry task.

Incentives

Macro level

Advertising
Manufacturers of washing machines and detergents focus mostly on women. Recently, the occasional manufacturer has consciously changed this approach. This is an interesting development as it proves that the laundry being done by a man has become something people can imagine – possibly even a new trend. One example is the campaign for the Omo detergent: www.waaromwasiknogvoorjou.nl, which supports women in their efforts to pass on

the laundry task to the man. Another example is the light-hearted Philips advertising campaign. In 2002, Philips developed the ‘ironing for men’ training course, with the objective of focusing attention on a trendy range of irons. With the aid of cartoon characters Fokke & Sukke, a booklet invalidates prejudices about ironing and provides tips for good ironing results.

Meso level

Appearance of appliances
Another development is the fact that appliances like washing machines and irons are becoming ever more contemporary in design. Modern design and technical gadgetry could perhaps tempt men to start doing the laundry. However, the participants in the group discussion are not holding their breath. The comment was made that some men would perhaps buy technically interesting irons or vacuum cleaners, but whether they would then use them remains doubtful.

Micro level

An important finding is the fact that obstacles for doing the laundry appear to exist mainly at micro level. We should therefore not have overly high expectations of incentives at meso or macro level. What can be done at micro level?

One important obstacle that needs to be overcome is reducing the cleanliness demands on the part of women. To a certain extent, women will need to become more tolerant of creases and dirt, or at least respect the fact that it is arguable exactly what constitutes dirt. There is no fixed norm about the exact moment something must be washed; this aspect can be negotiated whereby the man’s opinion – if he takes his laundry task seriously – must weigh as heavily as the woman's opinion.

A second step is the acknowledgement that ‘doing the laundry’ consists of a number of steps. Doing the laundry involves at least the following tasks: sorting, washing, drying, hanging up, ironing, folding, and putting away. There are also different kinds of laundry: bulk laundry such as towels and sheets, and very specific, often delicate items. Doing the laundry consists of more than just putting the clothes in the machine and pushing the button. Once the distinction between bulk laundry and special items has been made, a third step – a new distribution of tasks – becomes possible. Men could do the bulk items, for instance, while the woman retains control of the delicate clothes.

As (increasingly vain) men develop a more personal ‘bond’ with their clothes, they will be more inclined to look after these clothes themselves. The fourth step could then be that the man and the woman each wash their own special items and that one of them (in turn) does the bulk laundry.

In order to achieve these steps an example that came up in the group discussion may be helpful. One particular household had an ‘in-between’ laundry basket. This basket is used for clothes about which the man is uncertain whether they could be washed with the ‘bulk’ of the laundry like towels and sheets or should be washed separately. This gives the man the opportunity to put delicate clothes, which he fears he might ruin, to the side. And for the woman it offers the security that her clumsy husband will not ruin any item to which she is

particularly attached. The remaining laundry can then simply be done by the man. Interestingly, the participant has noticed that the 'in-between' basket is gradually getting emptier. The man gains experience and the woman gains confidence in his ability. The 'in-between' basket has created a transitional situation, which allows the task to be gradually transferred from the woman to the man.

Conclusion

The laundry is a task that is done mainly by women. We have pinpointed a number of *obstacles* that explain why this household task is not easily done by men and a number of *incentives* for overcoming these obstacles.

One of the main *obstacles* discussed is the risk that clothes may be ruined. It is easy to damage expensive and precious clothes if they are not washed properly. Women are attached to certain items of clothing. According to the participants, this is why women are reluctant to hand over the task to men. But men are equally reluctant because they worry about washing the clothes wrongly. Compared to doing the shopping, the risk of something going drastically wrong is much greater in doing the laundry. When doing the shopping, at most the man may forget to buy something or buy the wrong thing, but this can easily be remedied by changing the item or buying the forgotten item. Doing the laundry requires specific expertise.

However, this vulnerability does not fully explain why, especially with regard to the laundry, a more fair distribution of tasks is so hard to achieve. This is because further and different factors play a role. Research and our group discussions have shown that many men have a different standard of 'clean' than their wives. If women want their husbands to start doing the laundry, they will have to be a little more flexible in determining what constitutes 'dirty'. This need not be an insurmountable obstacle as, in the past few decades, the intolerance towards dirt has already decreased in (nearly) all Dutch households.

In addition to the vulnerability of certain items of clothing and a fixed idea about cleanliness, there is also the fact that doing the laundry has very little status. One can speculate for a long time about the cause of this phenomenon (unfortunately, this may be a self-perpetuating situation: because women carry out this task, the task has little status – loose interpretation of Sullerot's law), but the shopping example has shown that 'visibility' may play an important role. No matter how good the linen cupboard looks with all its clean items, it is not very publicly visible. Needless to say, clean laundry does become visible when clothes are worn outside the house. However, another mechanism comes into play here: in our discussions women pointed out that they were apprehensive of the critical assessment of non-working women. This is why they want to continue doing the laundry themselves, specifically to show that 'working mothers' need not necessarily result in dirty children's clothes. This mechanism does not apply to doing the shopping because in this area the husbands of non-working women or women who work part-time will also occasionally do the shopping.

So far, the incentives at macro and meso level have had little effect. Advertisements and campaigns aimed at men may have a light-hearted character and show that the first changes are starting to happen in the laundry situation (a man doing the laundry is becoming more imaginable), but they do not offer many incentives for change. These campaigns would be

more effective if they would show that doing the laundry is not one single task. There are different types of laundry (bulk items and delicate items) and there are different steps in the process. Sorting is an important first step in doing the laundry: not putting everything into one big pile but separating the different items. The aforementioned ‘in-between’ basket can possibly play a role in overcoming women's fear that things may go wrong as early as the sorting stage. And men no longer have an excuse for not doing the laundry because any items they are afraid to wash, or are unsure how to wash, can be put in this ‘in-between’ basket. The interesting aspect of the ‘in-between’ basket is the fact that a transitional situation is created; it gives change a chance. This transition option proved equally important in the shopping task: men gradually became independent through the use of the shopping list. The same appears to be true for the laundry: the more frequently men do the laundry the less hesitant they will become and the emptier the ‘in-between’ basket will be.

3.5 Visiting the baby clinic: a task in transition

Introduction

In recent decades men have started to spend more time caring for their children. This means that childcare is starting to lose its traditionally female connotation. However, men spend relatively less time on childcare than women. This is of course associated with available time, but also with ‘quality’: men will undertake certain activities with children but not others. This raises the question, which obstructions exist for men taking on certain childcare tasks. As a case study, in this paragraph we will study the childcare task of visiting the baby clinic.

Visiting the baby clinic is a task faced by nearly every young parent, because nearly every young child is taken to the baby clinic. Baby clinics have a broad reach: 95% of babies attend the baby clinic and 90% of toddlers. Baby clinics are free and, in principle, accessible to everyone. The care the baby clinic provides for babies and toddlers is financed from public funds and no parental contribution is required. The broad reach of the baby clinic is important because this confirms that parents from a range of different backgrounds (white-collar, blue-collar, ethnic minorities et cetera) attend the clinic. In addition, baby clinics make an interesting case study because here childcare takes place in the public domain. Caring for a child at home is different from taking the care outside the home and dressing and undressing a child in a semi-public space surrounded by others.

The question we will answer in this paragraph is whether and how, as far as the role of men is concerned, a change is taking place with regard to visits to the baby clinic.

Mothers, parents, fathers?

Parents visit the baby clinic for medical care, health advice and general support in bringing up a child. In addition, the baby clinic physicians and nurses can identify social, psychological and pedagogical problems. Infant care has a long history in the Netherlands. The first baby clinic was established in The Hague in 1901. After this, the number of baby clinics in the

Netherlands increased rapidly. By 1929, the total number of baby clinics had increased to 250. In 2001, there were 1400 baby clinics (Van Lieburg 2001).

Even prior to 1901, there was a focus on infant care. The baby clinics have evolved from local associations for combating infant deaths, which were established in a number of municipalities in the 19th century. Well read was the childcare handbook written by physician Gerard Allebé entitled *The development of the child in body and mind. A guide for mothers for the early years* (De ontwikkeling van het kind naar ligchaam en geest. Eene handleiding voor moeders bij de eerste opvoeding, first published in 1845). As we can see from the title, in his handbook Allebé specifically addressed mothers. Interestingly, the book was based on notes Allebé had made as a young father after the birth of his son August (Stavenuiter 1993). Documenting the progress made by young children was an accepted practice among well-to-do fathers in the 19th century since many more such personal documents have been found (Stavenuiter 1998).

The increasing interest in infant welfare can be explained by the extremely high infant mortality rate in the 19th century. Until 1880, in a large city like Amsterdam over 20 percent of all babies would die in their first year of life (Verdoorn 1981). One of the ways to combat infant deaths was to provide better nutrition. In practice, this meant breastfeeding. Breast milk was (and still is) regarded as superior to formula. Certainly in a period when formula was not of the same quality it is today, breastfeeding was an important condition for ensuring the health of the child. The baby clinics played a major role in providing information about good nutrition and breastfeeding. This explains – in addition to traditional opinions as to who is best able to care for (young) children – why for so long the baby clinics specifically focused on mothers.

In the view of physicians, even mothers who did breastfeed needed to be provided with the necessary information. All too frequently, these mothers would give their children additional food in the form of porridge, or they would give the infant the same food the rest of the family ate (Spoorenberg 1984). In addition to traditional ideas about breastfeeding and advocating breast milk, there was a third reason for baby clinics to focus exclusively on mothers. The physicians and nurses did not just check the health of the child, but also the health of the mother.

Photographs from the early years of the baby clinics only show mothers and their babies. If there is a man in the picture at all, this would have been the paediatrician, recognisable by his white coat. In addition to their work in the hospital, the paediatricians (initially mostly men but later also women) would advise mothers in the baby clinics and assess the health of the child. The paediatricians were assisted by nurses. In the 1970s, the paediatricians disappeared from the baby clinics and were replaced by specially trained baby clinic physicians.

For the next decade, these baby clinic physicians would be guided by the *Reference book for maternity care and child hygiene* (Leerboek voor moederschapszorg en kinderhygiëne) published by child physician P.W. Koppius (first edition 1957, eighth edition 1982). The title of this book shows that, in the baby clinics, child healthcare was not the only objective, but that also maternity care played a central role.

Today's baby clinic is almost a mirror image of a baby clinic one hundred years ago. While fathers in the waiting room are becoming a common phenomenon, the staff now consists mainly of women. Today, nearly all baby clinic physicians are women. Baby clinic physician is a function that can easily be performed on a part-time basis. Female baby clinic physicians

themselves indicate that this is one of the reasons they choose this medical specialisation. If they have children of their own, it is easier to combine their own care tasks with a part-time position. In the professional world, the baby clinic has become so much a female territory that the question arises whether fathers still feel at ease there.

The reference books have also changed over the course of the past fifteen years. Since 1987, baby clinic physicians have been using the reference book with the neutral title of *Dutch reference book for child healthcare* (Nederlandse leerboek voor de jeugdgezondheidszorg). In the Nineties, we no longer talk about the role of the mother, but rather about the role of the parent and the term 'parental care' was introduced. In 1996, the Landelijk Centrum Ouder- en Kind-Zorg (*National Centre for Parental and Childcare*) was founded and since 1993 an annual Parental and Childcare conference is organised. The associated publication is published as a series entitled 'Parental and childcare between science and practice'. On paper, the mother has disappeared and has been replaced by a 'neutral' parent. In practice, – mostly female – physicians and/or nurses support this neutral parent.

This brings us to the question how gender-neutral a visit to the baby clinic really is and which incentives and obstacles exist for fathers when it comes to visiting the baby clinic. These questions also formed the background for a group meeting with fathers and experts on the subject of visiting the baby clinic.

Influencing factors

As we mentioned before, we regard visiting the baby clinic as a task that is in transition: visits to the baby clinic are now – more so than the laundry – taken on by men, but still not in such massive numbers as the shopping. As in the laundry and shopping situations we will look at factors that either enhance or obstruct the gender-neutrality of visiting the baby clinic.

Meso aspects

Experiments with opening hours

Baby clinics are open during the day on weekdays. Evening and weekend opening hours are rarely provided. There are morning and afternoon consultations; how frequently the clinic opens depends on the size of the town where the baby clinic is located. In some towns, the baby clinic may open one afternoon per week and two mornings. These opening hours are not flexible - parents have to adapt to them. Some experiments with different opening hours have been carried out, but most baby clinic physicians and nurses did not want to work in the evening. As more women with young children have started working outside the home, opening hours have become more of a problem. They have to juggle their work to be able to visit the baby clinic at the set opening hours. Because women in particular often work part-time, they are the ones who can more easily change their working times.

Density and accessibility

According to those present at the group discussion, density and accessibility do not explain the differences in visiting behaviour between women and men. In the larger cities, baby clinics are within walking distance. In smaller towns and in the country, the baby clinic will be the same distance away as, for instance, the supermarket. People in the country are used to this

and nearly everyone owns a car. The baby clinic physician present at the discussion mentions the example of two villages where the number of baby clinics was reduced from three to one. Here, people do indeed need to travel a little further to visit a baby clinic, but the physician does not think this contributes to more men visiting. Here, women are also (car) mobile.

Culture at work
The impression exists, partly based on the group meeting, that some years ago it was more difficult to juggle working hours to accommodate a visit to the baby clinic, especially in specific, more 'hard' sectors. Recently, it appears to be easier to come to agreements with employers, which illustrates that this is now regarded more commonly as an equally male task.

Women's world
The participants in the group discussion describe the baby clinics as a women's world, not only because pregnancy and birth are still often considered as a woman's affair, but also because it is mainly women who work in the baby clinic. Some of those present feel that the baby clinics are not making much effort to involve fathers. Appointments are made with the mother and no one asks whether the father will be attending. One of those present summarises the situation as follows: *'The whole environment is more tailored to women'.*

Approaching fathers directly
The question is which role the baby clinics themselves can play. Should they consciously approach fathers? At present, the baby clinics are specifically child-focused. The question is always how the child is doing, sometimes how the mother is doing and hardly ever how the father is doing – even though this is equally important to the child's psychosocial development. One of the interviewed fathers would like to be approached directly by the baby clinic. In his family, the distribution of tasks is not traditional, although it is mainly the mother who visits the baby clinic. This was a task distribution that was not pre-decided, but that simply 'happens' after the birth of a child. Whoever is approached about the subject (in practice normally the mother) will carry out the task: *'When it comes to doing the laundry or other household chores my partner will be the first to say we should share the tasks. But in this case, she hadn't realised we could do it together'.*

Micro factors

Involvement
Increased involvement in the care of the child is an important consideration for fathers to go (along) to the baby clinic. One father indicates that it is better for the children if the father comes along. For example, the child may be less scared when he or she needs an injection. The respondents stress that they want to follow their children's development and that they feel involved with their children, which they can express by coming along to the baby clinic.

Traditional views
Traditional views about childcare may result in the mother visiting the baby clinic on her own. The baby clinic physician present at the group meeting once counted the number of fathers in

a baby clinic in a village known to be very traditional. Of the 97 children who attended the baby clinic in one particular week, 93 came with just the mother and only one child with just the father.

Mothers are at home
For mothers, maternity leave is well organised. This means that the mother is at home with the child on a daily basis, which tends to establish a certain pattern within the family. It tends to be the mother who is present for the first visit from a baby clinic nurse (a number of days after the birth, to test for a number of metabolic disorders) and a follow-up appointment is made for a visit to the baby clinic. The mother also has the time for this first visit, as she is still on maternity leave. According to be baby clinic physician present at the group meeting it rarely happens that the mother does not attend the first time, unless the mother is in hospital or there is another pressing reason. This 'inevitability' of the mother always attending the first time leads to a certain pattern: the mother also makes the subsequent visits.

Conclusions

The main conclusion is perhaps the fact that visiting the baby clinic is not solely an issue of distributing the task. Unlike in the case of a more equal distribution of the laundry or the shopping, a more equal distribution of visits to the baby clinic between the father and the mother does not mean that the man (partly) takes over the task from the woman, but rather that the man and woman visit to baby clinic together. This task is not *distributed* between the partners, but *shared*. This is also related to the nature of this task. For instance, baby clinic physicians and nurses depend on the most complete possible information, preferably from both parents. Conversely, both parents can learn from the information the baby clinic physician and nurses can give them. The issue is the communication between both parents on the one hand and the baby clinic staff on the other hand. The better this communication is, the better the childcare is. It is therefore important for parents to attend together.

If we are to achieve this situation, the following aspects are important:
1. The fathers themselves must acknowledge the importance of the visits and give them priority.
2. Employers could give their employees time off for visits to the baby clinic, as it is currently common practice for doctor and dentist visits.
3. The baby clinics could involve the fathers more. At present they focus neutrally on 'the parent', but in reality it appears that the baby clinics are not so neutral: issues relating to birth and childcare are still primarily regarded as the woman's affair. In Sweden this increased involvement of fathers is already happening. We will look more closely at this in chapter 5.

3.6 Comparison of case studies

In this chapter we have looked at a number of different household and care tasks and have investigated which factors encourage or discourage men from taking on certain tasks. Based on a comparison of the tasks that we analysed, we will use this paragraph to list a number of mechanisms that appear to be 'operational' in certain tasks becoming more gender-neutral.

Chain approach

One important inducement is the fact whether the task forms part of a series of tasks that are already being partly carried out by men. For instance, we have seen that men who cook meals at home (either during the week or on the weekend) are more inclined to shop for the ingredients of the meal as well. A similar mechanism is in play with regard to the baby clinic visits. Men who will look after their children will also be more likely to start visiting the baby clinic. In this case, visiting the baby clinic is no longer an isolated task but rather part of the normal care tasks and care responsibilities of fathers. When it comes to the laundry, this situation is still different. Few men do the laundry, even if their wives work outside the home. The expectation is that fathers who become more involved in caring for their children (and, for instance, dress their children in the morning) will also become more involved in doing the laundry.

Visibility

A person doing the shopping or taking a child to the baby clinic moves in a public space. Men are traditionally used to going outside the home and, in this sense, they can relate more easily to tasks outside the home (as this relates to a more traditional task distribution!). When it comes to doing tasks inside the home, men are entering a territory that traditionally belonged to women and both men and women, therefore, need to get used to this situation. The fact that (care) tasks outside the home are better 'suited' to men has an affirmative effect. It is exactly this visibility that means other men will be more inclined to take on the same task. As men see increasing numbers of other men in the supermarket, in the school playground or in the baby clinic waiting room, it will be easier for them to overcome their reticence and take on such tasks themselves. With regard to doing the laundry, in contrast, the invisibility of the task means that men are not encouraged to take it on. Indirectly, however, visibility does play a role in doing the laundry: it is publicly visible whether clothes are clean or not. As men become more concerned with their own appearance or that of their children, this visibility will become (more) important; an incentive to start doing the laundry.

Tolerance

Men and women sometimes perform tasks differently. This is demonstrated, for instance, by the higher tolerance for dirt of men, which was mentioned in many of our discussions and interviews. This difference raises the fundamental question whether a more fair distribution of tasks necessarily implies an identical distribution. What if one person feels a task needs to be done and the other person does not think it necessary? Sometimes men will use this as a

reason or excuse when they do not want to do something, but this is not always the case. In many cases there is a genuine difference of opinion. If men are to be 'tempted' to do their share of all care tasks, both parties must learn to be tolerant: on the one hand, the person who thinks it's important that something is done, will have to do a little more him/herself. On the other hand the person with the lowest standards for cleanliness will sometimes have to do the vacuuming, even if he or she does not think that it is really necessary.

However, with regard to a large number of tasks little disagreement is possible: these tasks simply need to be done. But here, too, tolerance plays a role; we are talking about tolerance with regard to making mistakes. Doing the shopping is one task whereby there is relatively little chance of mistakes. The shopper may forget an item or buy the wrong item, but at most this is an inconvenience. With regard to doing the laundry this is quite a different situation. An item of clothing that is washed in the wrong manner is often ruined forever. This may be a reason for women to continue doing this task themselves, and for men to not even try to take it on. One solution to this dilemma may be to differentiate between the bulk laundry and special, delicate items of clothing. Men must be given the opportunity to learn new behaviour without being penalised for it.

Control task/transition

At least to start with, separating clothing items requires strict control. We have also seen that for the shopping a similar distinction can be made between the actual buying of the items and deciding what items need to be bought. However, it would appear that men of the younger generation are increasingly inclined to do the shopping completely independently. We will return to this aspect in the next chapter, in which we also asked the respondents about their control task. It is possible that a comparable development is happening with regard to the laundry. Initially, women will maintain control and sort the laundry. As men do the laundry more frequently, they probably can/will take over the control task as well. There is the possibility of a gradual transition.

Are we talking about distributing or sharing?

The shopping task can be distributed between the partners: either partner can do the shopping and buy items for the household and for the other partner. If the man is already doing the laundry this task is also distributed: the partners do the bulk laundry for each other, but items to which one of the partners is particularly attached are normally washed by that partner. This applies to both men and women.

In baby clinic visits, the emphasis is not on distributing the task but rather on sharing the task: parents prefer to go to the baby clinic together. In this case, a larger role on the part of the man does not equal a reduction in the woman's care tasks (at least not in terms of time, not in a quantitative sense); the task is being shared, not distributed.

The baby clinic case study shows us that, in the attempt to achieve a more equal distribution of tasks (equality) we are not just looking at redistribution issues, but possibly also at sharing tasks or at doing them together. This also appears to be a legitimate definition of the objective of more equality in care tasks: we are not solely trying to achieve efficiency and time benefits but, also a situation in which both parents know they are equally and, therefore,

jointly and even simultaneously, responsible. Next to the outsourcing and redistribution of care tasks, this aspect may have been given insufficient attention in the debate on reconciliation of working life and family life.

4 *Exceptional Households*

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we focus on so-called *exceptional practices*. The reason for this is the fact that – in addition to the factors we analysed in chapter 3 – aspects like non-regular working hours, unusual working patterns and different households types are factors that may affect which tasks men do or do not take on.

The research focuses on three exceptional practices. The exceptional practice differs from the 'standard practice'. The standard practice is a living unit consisting of a man, woman and child(ren), with the man working outside the home during regular working hours (generally 9-5) and the woman (mostly) responsible for household and care tasks. A practice is regarded as exceptional if, with regard to one of the above aspects, one or more differences occur (whereby in any case one adult *man* forms part of the living unit, as our research relates to increasing the contribution men make to care tasks). The following three exceptional practices have been studied in more detail:

1. Ten living units consisting of two men: homosexual fathers with young children.
2. Ten living units consisting of a man and a woman and at least one child under the age of six, in which the man does not work during regular working hours: shiftworkers.
3. Ten living units consisting of a man and a woman and at least one child under the age of six, in which the man often has (partly) differing working patterns: teleworkers.

In summary: in this chapter the exceptional practices' we refer to, consist of households of homosexual fathers, shiftworkers and teleworkers. The following definitions apply:

Homosexual fathers

Together with their child(ren), homosexual fathers form a household with two men. There is no woman around within the household. For this reason, it is obvious that household tasks are not linked – or at least linked to a lesser extent – to women and/or femininity. But what exactly does the absence of a woman in the household mean to the realisation and distribution of tasks by the men? Do all tasks now become *beyond gender*? Or do they, in contrast, become more strongly linked to maleness and/or masculinity? Or do women still play a major and even gender-specific role, either remotely (the natural mother) or on a paid basis (the cleaner)?

Shiftworkers

There are varying definitions for shiftworkers. Irregular working hours and shiftwork can be defined differently per company. Companies that operate 24 hours a day have systems with three or four shifts. Other companies or institutions may have a two-shift system, with no night shift. For the purpose of this research, we define shiftworkers as *men who work in varying shifts during non-regular hours (for instance only in the evening).* We are therefore not talking about part-time workers who work part of the day between 9 am and 5 pm.

Teleworkers

An often-used description of teleworking is: 'rendering work more flexible with regard to place and time through the use of information and communication technology' (definition by *Telewerk forum*). Our definition of a teleworking father is: *a man who works from home a minimum of one day or two half days per week, using a fixed workplace*.

The research was carried out in three stages. In the context of this research, the three groups of fathers and their partners first completed a questionnaire based on a previously formulated task list. The questionnaire asked how the respondents would classify different tasks and who carries out these tasks. Then, in a personal interview, the task list was looked at in more detail. The interview dealt with both the typology and realisation of the tasks, how the task distribution was realised, which factors affect this distribution and what the respondents would like to change. Finally, a group meeting was held for each group, in which the findings were discussed. During the group meeting, obstacles were presented and possible solutions discussed.

In paragraph 4.2, we discuss the characteristics of the households of homosexual fathers, the shiftworkers and the teleworkers. In paragraph 4.3, we compare the three exceptional practices with regard to the *typology* of the household tasks, the childcare tasks and the management of the tasks. Paragraph 4.4 takes a closer look at the realisation of the tasks by the three groups of men and their partners. In paragraph 4.5, the *realisation* and typology are compared against each other. Paragraph 4.6 looks more closely at the relation between the realisation of tasks, conditions and views.

4.2 Background information

The homosexual fathers and their partners

In the context of this research, it is a characteristic of homosexual fathers that two men jointly conduct a household and care for one or more children; no wife or mother is present in the household. At the time of the interview, one man did not have a partner, which means that 19 instead of 20 homosexual fathers were interviewed. In one important aspect the group of homosexual fathers proved to be a varied group of fathers. Not all homosexual couples have their child(ren) at home with them on a full-time basis. In only three out of the ten couples the

children live with the fathers day and night (these are foster families or children of divorced parents living with their father).

In the seven other instances, the fathers looked after the children between one day and three and a half days a week. The days on which the fathers look after the children are all weekdays, sometimes with part of the weekend as well. On the other days the children stay with their mother. *This means that the children of these homosexual couples spend, on average, more time with their mothers than with their fathers*. In most cases, the mother will also have a partner, which means that the child is often looked after by four adults. If the partner of the biological mother is a woman, the fathers refer to 'the mothers' in the interview. The third column of the table below summarises how many days the children spend with the fathers.

In the case of the three couples who have their children living with them full-time all partners work 32 hours or more (see table below). It must be noted that the children of these fathers are six years of age and older. This group generally requires less care than the very young children.

Location, age, education and number of children

All fathers live in the middle or western part of the Netherlands. Six of the ten couples live in a city and four couples live in a village. Many of the couples that share childcare with mothers live close to the mothers or moved closer for practical reasons. One of the ten couples lives next door to the mothers. The average age of the respondents is 39. Three respondents completed MBO (*Intermediate Vocational Education*) level education. Most of the fathers have a high level of education: 16 persons have attained HBO (*Higher Vocational Education*)/WO (*Scientific Education*) level. The average number of children is 1.8 children. The average age of the children is 7. Initially, we searched for homosexual couples with children of 6 and younger, but not enough of these households could be found. Three of the participating couples have children ranging in age from 10 to 19.

Number of hours of paid employment of the man

At the time of the research, two of the 19 men were without work, the other men were in paid employment. The 17 working men work an average of 34.3 hours per week. It must be noted that at least six men are unable to indicate exactly how many hours they work, with comments like 'It varies' and 'I also work evenings and weekends.' The number of hours worked by both partners is indicated in the table below. As indicated in bold in the table, six of the ten homosexual couples consist of men who both work full-time and approximately the same number of hours (>30 hours).

Table 4.1 Number of hours worked per week

Homosexual father	*His partner*	*Number of days child(ren) at home*
20 hours	38 hours	3.5 days
0 hours**	34 hours	1 day
32 hours	38 hours	7 days
60 hours*	70 hours	1 day
45 hours*	40 hours	7 days
32 hours	32 hours	3 days
0 hours**	-	1 day
38 hours	34 hours	7 days
30 hours	34 hours	3 days
50 hours	24 hours	3 days

* = rounded off, ** = looking for work

Use of leave arrangements and facilities

The homosexual fathers were asked whether they make use of a number of care arrangements such as parental leave, crèche facilities, after school facilities etc. Seven couples have school-age children. Out of these seven couples, five use lunchtime, pre-school or after school childcare facilities. One respondent uses parental leave and one of the men has used parental leave in the past. A comment that is frequently made is the fact that (in contrast to the father), the mother does take parental leave or has done so in the past. Two couples use a crèche and one couple will shortly be using a playgroup when the child turns two. This couple had so far made the conscious decision not to use a crèche because the child has 'enough parents' to look after it. Four couples indicate they sometimes use a babysitter. This may be a friend or family member or a paid babysitter.

Men in shiftwork and their partners

A characteristic of the group of shiftworking fathers is the fact that the men work during hours that are different from the standard 9 to 5 working hours, and are therefore at home during the day more often than average. We looked for ten fathers who do shiftwork and whose partners also work, with at least one child aged six or under. In the case of two couples, the latter criterion does not apply: these couples have children aged eleven and eight and ten and seven respectively.

Location, age, education and number of children

Ten shiftworking fathers and their partners were interviewed. Six of these couples live in a village and four in a city, distributed throughout the middle, eastern and northern parts of the country. The average age of the fathers surveyed is 39 (the youngest is 33 and the oldest is 45), the average age of their partners is 35. Of the partners, the youngest woman is 31 and the oldest is 43. The number of children ranges from one to three. The average age of the children is 6. Seven of the ten fathers surveyed have a low level of education: they are

educated at LBO (*Lower Vocational Education*) level or did not finish their MBO level education. The partners of these men have an intermediate level of education (MBO or HAVO (*Higher General Secondary Education*)). Three of the shiftworkers have an intermediate level of education (MBO). Two of the partners of these shiftworkers have a high level of education (University, post-HBO) and one partner has a low level of education (LBO).

Work situation and number of hours of paid employment

All fathers and their partners are in paid employment with the exception of one partner, who is a trainee. The fathers in the survey work an average of 31.5 hours per week and their partners an average of 22.8 hours per week. Based on a full-time working week of 36 hours, there is an average of 1.5 FTE's (*full-time positions*) per household.

In the industrial sector the term 'shiftwork' is used, while other sectors refer to 'variable working hours'. For the sake of convenience, we will refer to 'shiftworkers' in the case of all male respondents. Most of the men have the option to choose an early shift (from 6 am to 2 pm) or a late shift (from 4 pm to midnight). Some men also work occasional weekends (police, health sector). Two men work only evenings or nights. Four men state that they work an occasional night shift.

A number of the men indicate that they deliberately chose shiftwork. Others did not make this conscious choice but did decide to continue the shiftwork once they had started it. For instance, one respondent refused a job with daytime hours, as this meant he would be less able to look after the children and the household. Some fathers think they will eventually take a regular 9 to 5 job, once the children are older.

Use of leave arrangements and facilities

At the time of the interview, none of the shiftworkers make use of parental leave, but some did do so in the past when their children were younger; at that time they, also used a crèche or playgroup. At the time of the interview, two of the three couples with children under the age of four use a crèche and one uses a playgroup. In all cases these facilities are used a number of days per week. Host parents and family members are sometimes used as 'backup support' in the case of unforeseen events. Four of the ten couples use lunchtime childcare facilities and one couple uses pre-school and after school facilities, but only during holidays.

The teleworkers and their partners

As part of the research, we approached teleworkers who work from home a minimum of one day (or two half days) per week. Other criteria are: at least one child ≤ 6 years of age and a partner who is also in paid employment.

Location, age, education and number of children

Ten teleworking fathers and their partners participated in the research. Six of the couples live in a village and four live in cities, distributed throughout the country. The average age of the fathers surveyed is 39 and the average age of their partners is 37. Eight couples have two

children, two couples have three and four children respectively. The average age of the children is 6. Most of the respondents have a high level of education. Nine men have an HBO or University level education. One father has an MBO level education. Of the ten women, eight have an HBO or University level education and two have an intermediate level education. The men work an average of 38.9 hours per week and their partners 22.3 hours.

Use of leave arrangements and facilities

Three couples use the parental leave arrangement. The majority of the men have previously used this arrangement. Five couples use a crèche. In addition to the crèche, these parents also use other forms of formal and informal childcare. Help from family members and lunchtime facilities are mentioned most frequently. For the other five couples family members (often parents and parents-in-law) play an important role in the childcare. This is mostly combined with lunchtime facilities (a visitor, neighbour or at school).

4.3 Typology

In this section, we will describe the characterisation of various tasks carried out within households and family by the men of the three exceptional practice households and their partners. The tasks are headed under three components: household tasks, tasks concerning childcare (such as care tasks and supporting tasks) and tasks that have to do with household organisation and childcare. The respondents have been asked how they would characterise the various household and family tasks: is the task a gender-neutral one, a male or a female task.

We will start with a presentation of the typology of household tasks. Next, we will present the typology of tasks concerning childcare and of tasks that has to do with organising and managing the household and family. In this chapter, we will not present all household and family tasks submitted to the respondents, but only the most outstanding. Appendix 2 gives an overview of the typology of all the household and family tasks that were submitted to the respondents.

Typology of household tasks

Most of the respondents from the three groups classify household tasks as gender-neutral. The tables 1, 9 and 17 from Appendix 2 show that most household tasks are characterised as gender neutral, although there are some striking exceptions. Tasks, for example shopping, cooking, laying the table, doing the dishes, cleaning the mess, making the beds, are in general, described as gender-neutral. The respondents indicate that, in principle, both men and women should be able to do everything and that they do not necessarily think in terms of specific male and female roles. One of the respondents verbalises this as follows: *'That is old-fashioned thinking. You do whatever household or childcare task needs doing at that time.'* Despite the big similarities, there appears to be a number of important differences between the three groups of respondents. As an example, the homosexual fathers classify nearly all 26 household tasks as gender-neutral (see Appendix 2, table 17). The shiftworkers notify some

household tasks as gender-specific and the teleworkers most frequently allocate a traditional typology to a specific task. The following section presents some notable examples of the way the three groups of respondents classify household tasks (see also figure 4.1).

Gender-neutral tasks: doing the shopping and cooking

All homosexual fathers classify doing the daily and weekly shopping as a gender-neutral task. This also applies to most of the teleworkers and shiftworkers. Only one teleworker and one partner feel that the daily shopping is a female task. Apart from this, the gender-neutral image prevails. This corresponds with the results of the research into tasks as presented in the previous chapter. Doing the shopping has more and more become a gender-neutral task. In literature, doing the shopping is also defined as being gender-neutral (Knijn 1997).

A similar shift has taken place with regard to cooking. All homosexual fathers feel that these cooking tasks are gender-neutral. Two shiftworkers classify cooking the daily meal during the week as a female task and so do two of their partners. One shiftworker feels that cooking during the weekend is a female task whereas a partner feels this is a male task. The teleworking fathers and their partners also consider cooking to be mainly a gender-neutral task. Only one man and one woman feel that cooking, both during the week and during the weekend, is a female task. Cooking is also placed high up in the task hierarchy and is increasingly regarded as a gender-neutral task (Knijn 1997).

Female tasks: the laundry, cleaning and mending

In the previous chapter we concluded that the task of ‘doing the laundry’ consists of a number of components: washing the clothes, hanging them up, folding the clean items and putting them away. The respondents in this part of the survey were also presented with these individual components of the laundry task. Interesting differences can be seen between the exceptional practices when it comes to doing the laundry.

Two homosexual fathers classify one or more of these tasks as being female. Of the shiftworkers and their partners, six feel that the laundry is a female task, whereas a total of ten teleworking respondents share this opinion. Six of these ten respondents are the teleworking men and the remaining four concern the opinions of their partners. Only four teleworkers (men) feel that doing the laundry is a gender-neutral task. None of the interview-ees feel that the laundry is a male task. Even in these special cases (but with the notable exception of most of the homosexual fathers!), the laundry is characterised as a female task. The respondents who consider washing clothes and the associated tasks (such as folding, putting away and ironing) to be female mostly give the argument that women are better at these tasks.

Five of the ten shiftworkers classify cleaning the bathroom as a female task and two of their partners agree. Of the teleworkers and their partners a total of 5 respondents feel that cleaning the bathroom is a female task. This is in contrast to the homosexual fathers; only very few of them associate cleaning the bathroom with femaleness.

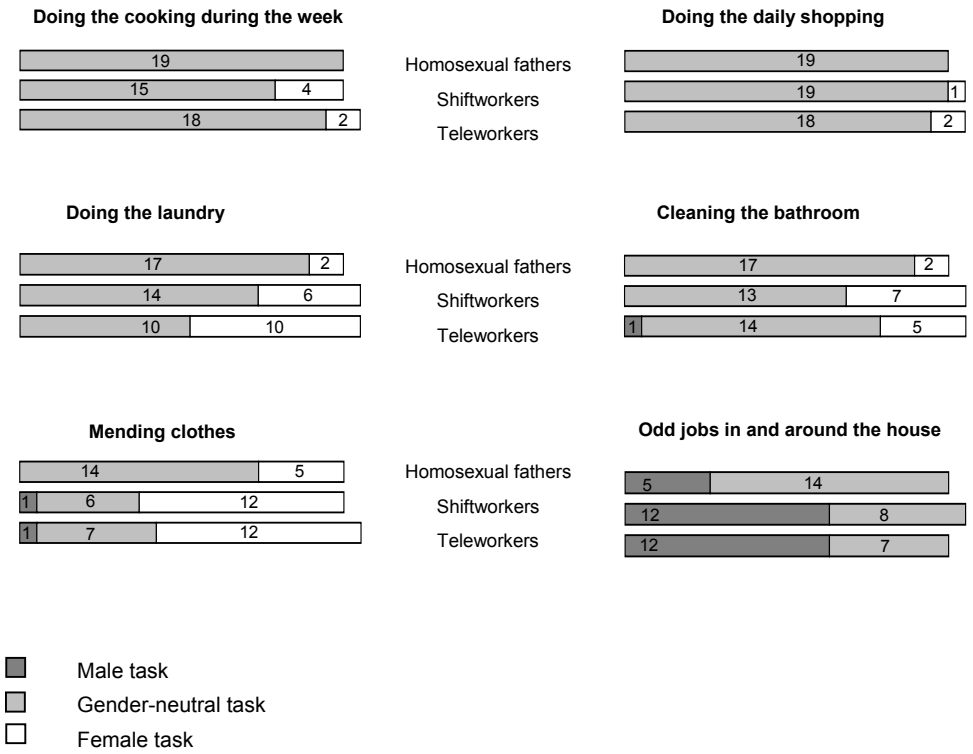
All three groups (including part of the group of homosexual fathers) relatively often regard mending clothes as a female task. Five of the 19 homosexual fathers feel this is a female task and so do the majority of the shiftworkers and teleworkers and their partners (12 respondents

per group). Classifying mending clothes as being a female task is the result of the traditional situation at home when the respondents grew up, according to one of the homosexual fathers.

A male task: odd jobs

There are also tasks that some of the respondents classify as typically male. It is notable that carrying out odd jobs in and around the house is classified as a male task by five homosexual fathers, five teleworkers and six shiftworkers. Seven partners of teleworkers and six partners of shiftworkers share this opinion. One homosexual father comments: 'When it comes to physically heavy jobs like bricklaying or plastering it is logical, from a physical point of view, that people regard this as a male task, but when it comes to household and other chores this is not so logical.' Another homosexual father comments that he sees a similar situation in his environment: female friends and the mothers of the children often ask males to do the odd jobs around the house.

Figure 4.1 Typology of household tasks[21]



[21] *Where respondents deem the typology to be not applicable no rating has been given. This means the numbers don't always add up to 10 or 20. The same applies to the tasks in figures 4.2 and 4.3.*

Typology of childcare tasks

Childcare tasks can be divided into care tasks and supporting tasks. The main difference is the fact that, with regard to care tasks, the task relates to the care for young children and, with regard to supporting tasks, the task relates to supporting older children. Literature tells us that men value childcare tasks higher than household tasks and that the care for (very) young children is more easily seen as female than the support of older children (Knijn, 1997). Here, we will discuss care tasks and supporting tasks together after which we will compare them.

Our information shows that, with regard to the care tasks, most men and women classify the care tasks as being mostly gender-neutral. Here too, the teleworkers are slightly more traditional than the shiftworkers and the homosexual fathers.

If we look at a task like washing and dressing children, we see that only one of the homosexual fathers classifies this as a female task. Three out of ten respondents from the exceptional practice of shiftworkers (two female partners and one man) and three teleworking men feel that washing and dressing children is a female task. The partners of the teleworkers do not regard these tasks as gender-specific.

All homosexual fathers classify getting up in the night to comfort a crying child as a gender-neutral task but four teleworkers (three men and one partner) classify this as female. With regard to the gender-neutrality of care tasks, one of the homosexual fathers comments: ‘It’s cool to look after a baby. I got a lot of reactions when I carried our son in a back carrier. The mother of the child told me she didn't get any particular reactions when she used the back carrier.’

Only one person per group classifies taking children to school or to the crèche as a female task, and one homosexual father feels this is an essentially male task. Most respondents agree, however, that this is a care task that may be classified as gender-neutral.

One childcare task that was discussed extensively in the previous chapter is visiting the baby clinic. No one classifies this care task (see figure 4.2) as being a male task. One homosexual father, four respondents in the group of shiftworkers and three in the group of teleworkers regard this as a female task. Of the four in the group of shiftworkers, three of the women feel that visiting the baby clinic is a female task.

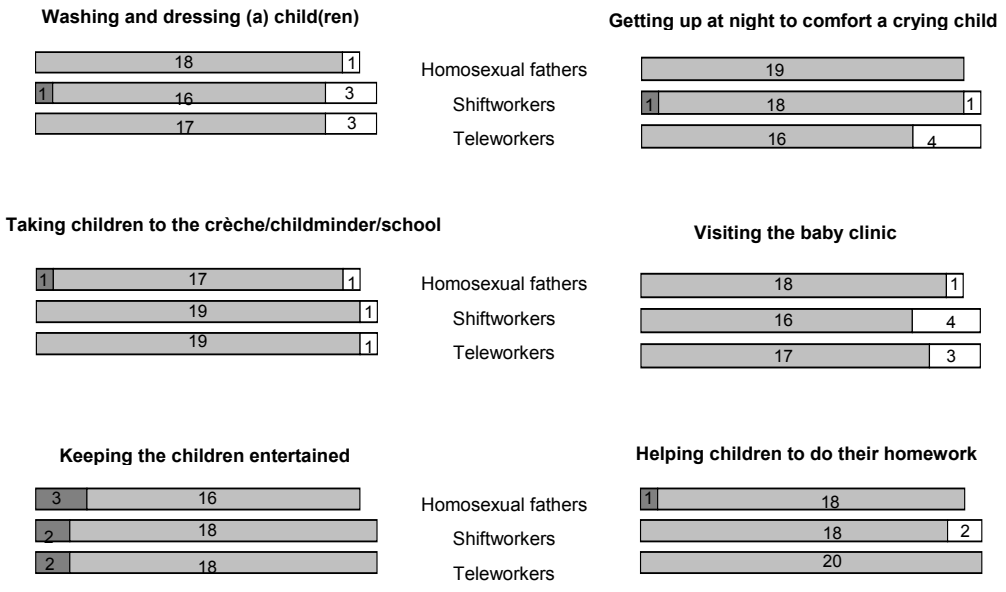
The differences between the groups are even smaller when we compare the typology of the three groups in relation to supporting tasks. Most supporting tasks are defined as gender-neutral by all groups. In the figure below, we also compared four supporting tasks. The first task is keeping children entertained. Most people classify this supporting task as gender-neutral. In all, seven men classify keeping children entertained (playfighting, playing, joking around) as a male task. With regard to playfighting or romping around with the children (part of keeping them entertained), the interviews show that it is mostly the fathers who do this. The respondents add that mothers tend to be a little bit more careful with their children, more cautious, that the mothers will sooner see the possible risks and, as a result, forbid things for fear of injury. It may be that the realisation of this task influences the male typology, in other words: because it is mostly men who romp around with the child, some men feel this is a male task. We will look at this in more detail in paragraph 4.5.

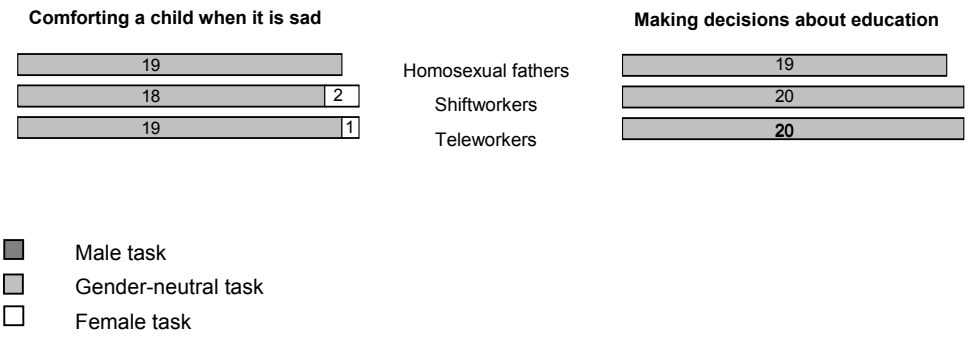
Now a few words about helping a child to do his/her homework. Two shiftworkers feel that helping children with their homework is a female task. In this respect these respondents

point out the fact that their wife is more patient. A third task that is compared, is comforting a child when it is upset. The fact that this is occasionally regarded as female can be seen in the figure below. One example of gender-neutrality is making decisions about education. All three groups unanimously agree that this is neither a male nor a female task.

The largely gender-neutral typology of supporting tasks corresponds with the trend, discussed in chapter 1, of increased involvement of fathers in bringing up their children. According to the men, the gender-neutral typology of most care tasks relates to the relevance of the tasks. By carrying out these tasks one can see one's children grow up and get to know them better. The respondents comment several times that bringing up a child is something that both partners do together. Any problems are resolved by discussing them together, solutions are found relatively easily. In most cases it is not one partner who always makes the final decision if there are differences of opinion; many respondents indicate that sometimes one partner gives in and the next time the other partner. The respondents also feel that a good relationship is important for the child's development: 'We can set an example for the child; if we have a good relationship the child will benefit from it.'
The respondents agree with the fact that there is a (small) difference between care tasks and supporting tasks. One of the homosexual fathers notes a shift to increasingly gender-neutral care tasks: *'With very young children you are primarily concerned with care tasks. For instance, the mother breastfeeds. The more distance there is between myself and these intimate care tasks, the more neutral my approach is. As the children get older, the care becomes more neutral.'*

Figure 4.2 Typology of care tasks and supporting tasks





Typology of the task of managing and organising the household

Management and organisational tasks relate to both the household and childcare. Below we indicate how the homosexual fathers, shiftworkers and teleworkers classify these management and organisational tasks. The homosexual fathers find this the most gender-neutral task list out of all four. Only one respondent feels that arranging insurance, managing rent or mortgage affairs and paying bills is a male task. The remaining homosexual fathers classify all other tasks as being gender-neutral and they do not regard any management task as female.

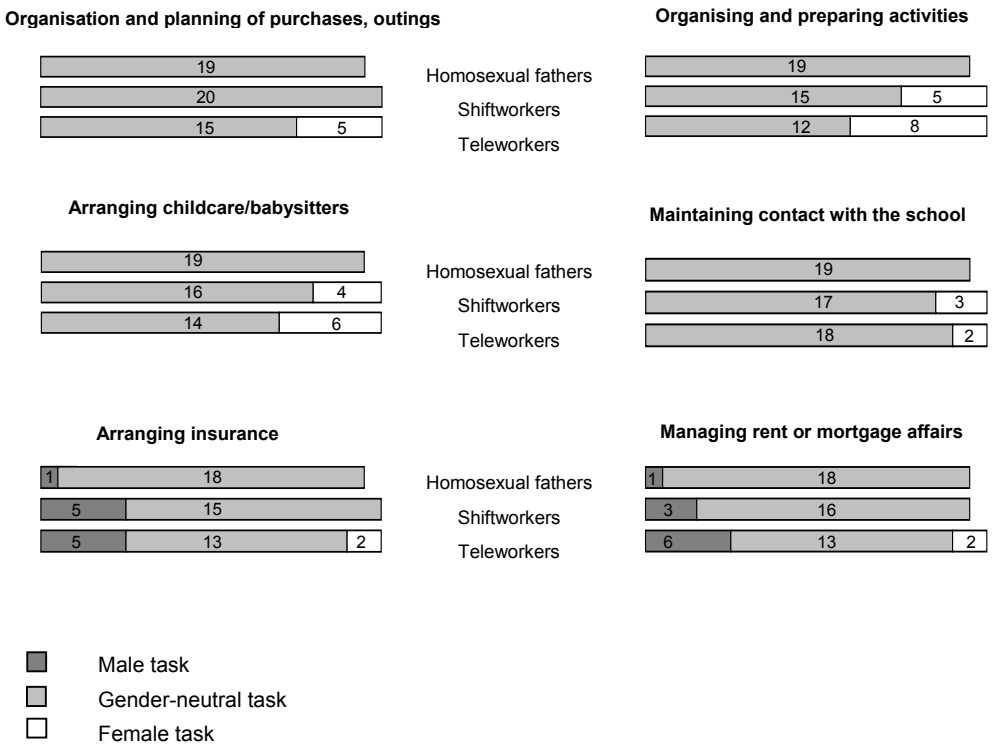
In contrast to the homosexual fathers, the shiftworkers and the teleworkers do consider some management tasks to be female tasks; relatively speaking the teleworkers are the most traditional in their views. Five of the shiftworkers and their partners classify the organisation and preparation of activities (buying a birthday present for a little friend of the child, registering for swimming lessons, school registration) as a female task (three men, two women). Out of the teleworkers, half of the interviewed men and three of their partners classify this as a female task (8 respondents in all). The shiftworkers and teleworkers list different reasons for these gender differences. For instance, women are supposed to have more organisational talent. They are home more often, which gives them a better overview of the activities. The fact that women have a better 'feel' for what children want is also mentioned.

The task of organising childcare or babysitters also provides an interesting picture: two shiftworkers and two partners (four respondents in all) and four teleworkers and two partners (six respondents in all) feel that this is a female task. Maintaining contact with the school is also occasionally mentioned as a female task.

Finally, we list two tasks that are regarded by some as specifically male tasks. These are arranging insurance and managing rent or mortgage affairs. We have seen that, of the homosexual fathers, only one of the respondents feels that arranging insurance and managing rent or mortgage affairs is a male task. The teleworkers and shiftworkers, however, feel differently. When classifying these tasks the teleworkers once again show themselves to be more traditional than the shiftworkers. In a number of cases teleworkers classify these tasks as being male. First of all arranging insurance: three teleworkers and three shiftworkers as well as two partners in each group feel that this is a male task (five respondents in all per group). With regard to managing rent or mortgage affairs, two teleworkers and three partners feel that this is a male task (five respondents in all). In the shiftworking group this applies to

one man and two partners. The respondents who indicate that this is a male task use the argument that, in their particular case, the man is better at this task.

Figure 4.3 Typology of management tasks



In conclusion

We can conclude that most men and their partners classify the care and supporting tasks mainly as gender-neutral. This relates particularly to the care of (older) children. However, the typology of the other two task groups, the household tasks and the management and organisational tasks, provides a somewhat less gender-neutral picture. In the survey at least some household tasks are remarkably often classified as female: cleaning the bathroom, washing and ironing clothes and mending clothes. Carrying out odd jobs around the house, on the other hand, is classified by many as a male task.

With regard to the typology of the tasks, there is an important difference between the homosexual fathers on the one hand and the shiftworkers and teleworkers on the other. The homosexual fathers classify nearly all household tasks as being gender-neutral. There are only two exceptions to this: like the shiftworkers and teleworkers, homosexual fathers classify mending clothes as being female and carrying out odd jobs as being male. With regard to the management tasks the homosexual fathers feel that nearly all these tasks are gender-neutral. Some of the shiftworkers and teleworkers, in contrast, classify some management tasks as

specifically female, including the organisation of preparatory activities, or specifically male, such as arranging insurance and managing rent or mortgage affairs.

4.4 Realisation

Is the typology of the tasks – neutral, male or female – determined by the frequency with which a person carries out the task? It is possible that heterosexual men who carry out the task together with their partner regard this task as gender-neutral, while men in situations where the partner in question mostly carries out the task, classify the task as female. The same applies to tasks that are carried out mainly by the man. These tasks may be classified as 'male'. High time, therefore, to look at the actual realisation of the tasks.

This paragraph looks at the question how the tasks in the various households are distributed according to the three groups of fathers and their partners (n = 59). Using the same list of tasks used for the typology, the partners were asked to indicate – separately – which tasks the 'exceptional' man in question carries out himself, which tasks are mostly done by the partner, which tasks are done equally frequently by both and, if applicable, which tasks are done by a third party. As in the previous paragraph, the tasks are classified into three categories: household tasks, care & supporting tasks and tasks relating to the management and organisation of the household and childcare.

With regard to the homosexual fathers, it must be noted that the description of the home situation (paragraph 2) shows that the children of six couples spend more time with their mothers than with their fathers. They spend 1 - 3 days with their fathers and on the remaining days the mother, possibly together with her partner, looks after the children. For six out of the ten couples, therefore, the tasks that relate to childcare will be carried out primarily by the mothers, simply because they look after the children more days in the week.

Realisation of household tasks

The tables in appendix 2 show that the realisation of household tasks is distributed reasonably equally between the homosexual fathers. The tasks that are distributed most equally between both men are: setting/clearing the table, vacuuming, making the beds and putting out the garbage. It is notable that there are also tasks that are carried out by the same person most of the time. These tasks are: the daily shopping, doing the laundry, hanging up the clean washing, folding the clean washing and ironing the clothes. Putting away the clean laundry is once again more frequently done by both partners. There are further tasks that are mostly carried out by one of the two men. Watering the plants, cleaning the bathroom and toilet and tidying up are more frequently done by one person. Vacuuming, cleaning, mopping the floor and cleaning the windows are tasks that are relatively often outsourced to a cleaner or window cleaner. Three couples employ a cleaner for around three hours once a fortnight. Some of the couples say they would like to be able to do this, but consider domestic help too expensive.

When we look at the shiftworkers, we see that the realisation of household tasks gives a different picture. It may be noted that most tasks that occur on a daily basis, such as the daily shopping, cooking during the week, setting/clearing the table, doing the dishes and

loading/unloading the dishwasher, are not explicitly gender-specific. With regard to tidying up, there is a strong difference in perception: eight men feel they do as much as their partner, four women feel they do nearly all the tidying up.
For the teleworkers, the picture is also different. With respect to the tasks that are regarded as gender-neutral, such as doing the shopping, cooking, clearing the table and loading/unloading the dishwasher, the men do in fact carry out an equal share of the work. Watering the plants and doing the gardening are classified as neutral, but in reality it is mostly the women who carry out these tasks. They become less involved with the heavier cleaning work – cleaning the bathroom, toilet and kitchen. This is because an important difference with the shiftworkers is the fact that the teleworkers more often employ a third party to do these tasks, which means these tasks are outsourced.

Below, we take a more detailed look at the realisation of a number of tasks. We focus on the tasks that were also discussed under the heading ‘typology’.

The shopping and cooking

All three groups classify doing the shopping as a gender-neutral task and relatively often it is carried out equally frequently by both partners, even if the wives of the teleworkers still often do the daily shopping. It is a different situation for cooking: the teleworkers regard cooking during the week as a neutral task, but it is still mostly done by their wife. This shows that there are tasks that are regarded as gender-neutral, but are still mostly carried out by the woman.

The laundry

In the households of the teleworkers and shiftworkers, the tasks associated with the laundry are still mostly done by the women. It is in this area that the teleworkers also show the most traditional picture. The majority of teleworkers leave these tasks to their wife, as they indicate they feel too ‘clumsy’ to carry out these tasks properly. Many of the men hate ironing and, in part, this determines how the partners deal with the laundry and the associated tasks: *‘I (the man) hang everything up or put things in the dryer, but I don't do the ironing. This situation developed as follows; I mainly do the dark washing: the socks, underpants etc., because she hates this, I mostly select these items and then my wife washes the items that require ironing (mostly light-coloured washing); this is how our task distribution originated.’* The shiftworking couples also have very definite views about ironing. Women feel that men are no good at ironing: *‘I leave him to it, except the ironing, because then I might as well do it myself.’*

Cleaning

Among the shiftworkers, cleaning is also something that is mainly done by the women. The teleworkers often outsource this task (to a female cleaner). Both groups not only (relatively often) classify cleaning and doing the laundry as female, these tasks are also done by women. In the case of the homosexual fathers, the laundry and cleaning are not distributed equally either, even though these tasks were defined as being gender-neutral. It appears that in these households there is also a certain task distribution, which, by the way, does not appear to be based on gender differences.

Teleworkers indicate that cleaning activities give them little satisfaction. The ‘aversion’ men have for these tasks results in the fact that, in practice, only very few men carry out these tasks. The women therefore take on a larger share of this work. The men contribute this discrepancy to their wife’s skills in carrying out these tasks or their superior ‘powers of observation’. *‘My wife will see the dirt, whereas I don't notice it’*, *‘My wife is better and quicker at it.’* However, enthusiasm for these tasks among the women is also minimal. In over half of the families, these tasks are carried out by the cleaner. The reasons given for outsourcing this work are: lack of time, not wanting to do it, wanting to have more time to spend with the children.

In the families of the shiftworkers a lot less work is outsourced than in the families of the teleworkers. Tasks such as cleaning the toilet and kitchen, mopping the floor, the whole laundry process and changing the bed linen are mostly carried out by the women. In the case of certain tasks the difference in perception between the man and the woman is remarkable: with regard to cleaning the kitchen, two men say their partner does this, whereas seven women say they do it themselves. With regard to the other tasks, the men largely agree with the women's statements as to who does what. The women do report that they encourage the men to take on household tasks. Sometimes they will refrain from saying something if the man has not done something properly.

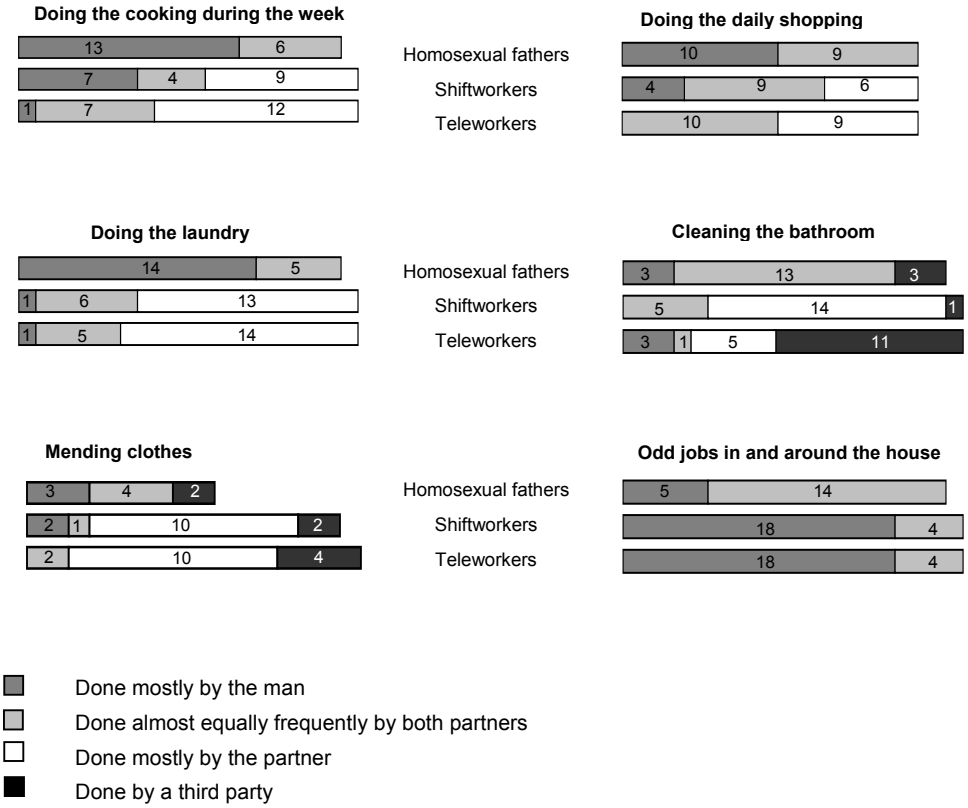
Mending

According to six men the task of mending clothes, which was classified by the vast majority of the respondents of the ‘exceptional practice’ of shiftworkers as being female, is in fact carried out by their partner; four women confirm this. In the case of teleworkers, it is also mostly the women who carry out this task. Interestingly, homosexual fathers either do not carry out this task or they outsource it. They have different answers to the question why they outsource the task of mending clothes: *‘It is an annoying job and this way we save time’, ‘Partner's mother is better at it (we don't have a sewing machine)’, ‘Occasionally a mother will do something (turn up trousers), I'm no good at this’, ‘We ask family members to do it, I don't know how.’*

Odd jobs

For the teleworkers, the rule applies that the men more often take on the odd jobs. This corresponds with the mainly male typology of this task. In this respect women feel they are too ‘clumsy’ for these kinds of jobs. *‘All I'm good at is changing light bulbs’,* comments the wife of a teleworker. Among the shiftworkers, doing odd jobs is also classified by both men and women as being a male task. In practice the vast majority of the men do in fact carry out these odd jobs. Among the homosexual fathers, these odd jobs are done by both partners; nobody outsources this task.

Figure 4.4 Realisation of household tasks



Realisation of care and supporting tasks

We have seen that most of the men and women from the three exceptional practices regard childcare tasks as being gender-neutral. This is borne out in the realisation: both men and women prefer these tasks. This is related to the fact that men like to see their children grow up and want to contribute to their development. The shiftwork fathers list their shiftwork as an important condition for being able to actively get involved in the care tasks. On the days when they are at home, the shiftworkers take their children to school: they wash the children, dress them and get them to school.

However, the largely gender-neutral picture that emerged from the typology of childcare tasks is not quite the same when it comes to the realisation. Taking children to the crèche or to school and picking them up again, getting up in the night to comfort a child and taking the child to the baby clinic are tasks that are not carried out to the same extent by men. Below, we will take a closer look at a number of these tasks.

Among the homosexual fathers, the distribution of the care tasks is more equal than among the other two exceptional practices. The homosexual fathers, furthermore, indicate relatively frequently that a task is ‘not applicable’ or done by ‘someone else’. This relates to the fact that the children of six of the homosexual couples spend the greater part of the week

with their mothers. There generally appears to be a lot of contact between the mothers and fathers who live separately. They often talk to each other about childcare issues and may, for instance, have dinner together, either with or without the children. As stated in the first paragraph, the fathers often live close to the mothers. One couple even has a firm agreement with the mothers that they are 'not allowed to move home'.

Washing and dressing the children

The wives of the shiftworkers dress their children more often because, if they don't do it themselves, they are unhappy with the result. They feel embarrassed if things look a little different: *'Sometimes I come home and I see my daughter dressed in a strange colour combination. That makes me think: did your father send you off to school like that?'*

Getting up in the night to comfort a child

Among the teleworkers and shiftworkers, it is more often the woman who gets up in the night to comfort a child. Some of the respondents also classify this as a female task. Some teleworkers indicate that they are less alert than their wife: *'I never hear the children cry, I sleep very deeply, so my wife is always the unfortunate one.'*

Taking the child to the crèche, to the childminder or to school

Among the teleworkers, it is more often the women who take children to the crèche and school and pick them up again, even though this is considered a neutral task. The teleworkers comment that it is difficult to combine this task with working hours: *'On days when I am not working from home, I have to leave early and get home relatively late.'* Many shiftworkers pick up their children as frequently as their partners. Among the homosexual fathers, taking a child to school/picking a child up from school may be done by the same partner (in three cases). This is also a result of practical reasons: the person who works closest to the school or day-care facility will drop the child off on the way. Because only three of the ten couples have their children living with them full-time, the 'N/A' category scores high when it comes to ferrying children around to after-school activities.

Baby clinic

Among the teleworkers and shiftworkers, it is more often the women who take children to the baby clinic. The women themselves feel very strongly about this task: *'I want to do this in principle, I think it is important, because I want to follow my child's development as a matter of principle. I will never hand this task over; my husband can come along, but I will always go myself.'* A number of shiftworkers indicate that, from the point of view of involvement with the child, they find visiting the baby clinic an important task. The fact that they work shifts, allows them to occasionally accompany their wife. The men enjoy the fact that they are kept informed of their child's development.
Three of the homosexual couples say that visits to the baby clinic or doctor are carried out by someone else. The interview makes it clear that this 'other person' is mostly the mother. The

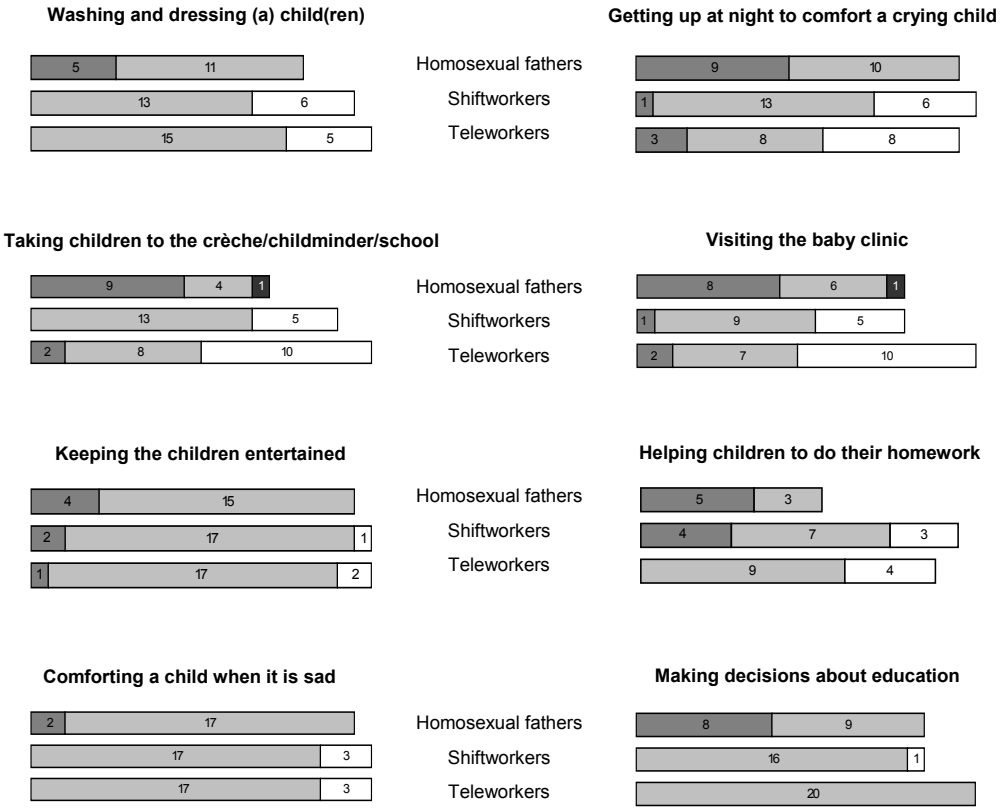
homosexual fathers sometimes visit the baby clinic together with the mother. One father comments: *'When the child was younger, we used to take turns in accompanying the mother, who would go every time, and now that the child is older it is, in practice, mostly the mother who takes the child to the doctor.'*

The supporting tasks show the least differences between the groups. With regard to this aspect the comment is most often that both partners do the task equally frequently. The teleworkers indicate that they take on an equal share of the supporting tasks. Three tasks form an exception to this rule. In 'helping the child do his/her homework', 'supervising' and 'comforting the child' the men's share is not as big as that of their partners.

Among the shiftworkers, the majority of the tasks is also distributed fairly equally. However, women feel that they read more stories, supervise more, chastise the child more often, talk more to their child about his/her problems and provide sex education. However, most of the men feel that these tasks are also distributed equally among both partners and only when it comes to sex education do they say that it is mostly their partner who deals with this. Some shiftworkers report that on their care days they prefer to take the children for a walk, take them to the market, playfight with them and do other enjoyable activities. They regard it as an advantage that they are at home during the day.

Among the homosexual fathers, nearly all supporting tasks are carried out equally by both partners. This is more often the case than for the household and care tasks. One specific issue is of importance to the homosexual fathers, namely the fact that the role of the biological parent may affect the way care tasks are carried out: *'If the child stays with the mothers, the biological mother tucks the child into bed and I think that is nonsense, that it is arranged too rigidly. The non-biological mother also finds this hard to deal with.'* One father says: *'The care task is also different for me because I am not the biological father.'* Finally, the mother who brought the child into the world plays a greater role in the realisation of the tasks: *'I also see that the father does basic tasks and the mother provides care. Childbirth and breastfeeding have a number of consequences (the rest is determined by culture).'*

Figure 4.5 Realisation of care tasks and supporting tasks



Realisation of the management and organisation of the household

The realisation of management tasks shows the most differences in the teleworker and shiftworker groups. Among the shiftworkers and teleworkers, the woman is mostly responsible for the organisation of outings and activities, arranging childcare and maintaining contact with the school. This corresponds with the typology they gave these tasks. One example of this can be seen in figure 4.6. This relates to the task of 'organising and preparing activities' (buying a birthday present for a child's little friend, registering for swimming lessons, school registration). A number of teleworkers give the explanation that the woman is at home more often and therefore has a better insight into what needs to be arranged. *'Women have the overview over the household. Men are better able to concentrate on one thing at a time.'* Or,

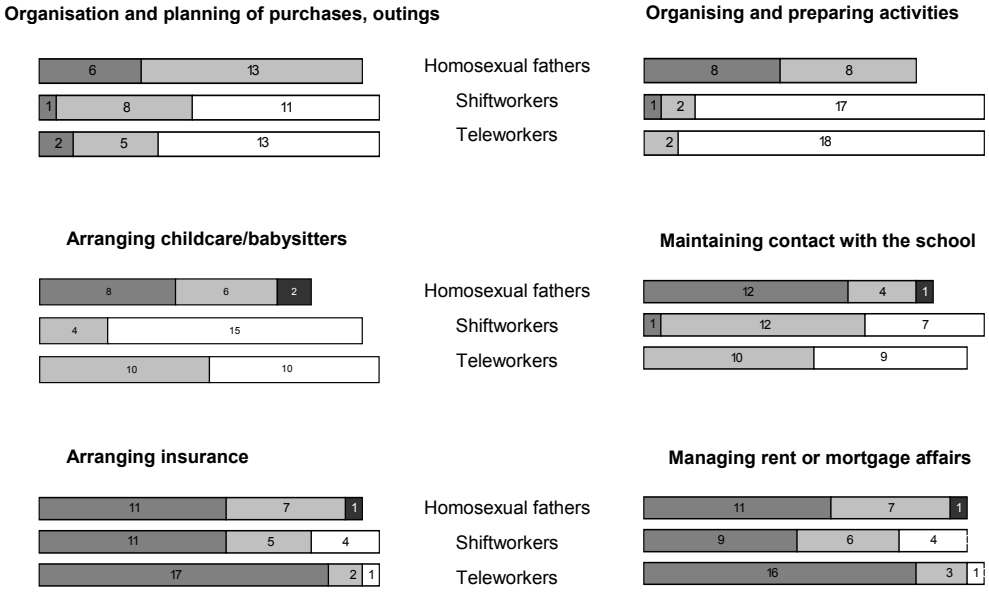
as one of the women indicates: *'I just happen to be a planner, he is more the kind of person who leaves things to the last minute. When something needs arranging, I just arrange it.'* However, this also relatively often plays a role for the shiftworkers who are at home during the day. One notable fact is that, if the woman works during the day, the ongoing business of the day is managed by the man. But in most shiftwork households, the women maintain control of the organisation of the household, and especially the organisation and preparation of the children's activities and arranging childcare or babysitters.

Among the teleworkers and shiftworkers it is more often the man who manages the insurance, rent/mortgage affairs and bills. This also corresponds with the typology. It does not mean that the women feel they are unable to do these tasks; in most cases they indicate they are not interested in doing them. *'He does the finances because I'm not interested and he enjoys doing the banking via the Internet.'* The women are aware of the financial status. Both partners jointly make decisions about household expenditure.

Among the homosexual fathers, there are also differences, but these are clearly less extreme. Two notable management tasks that are clearly distributed less equally are arranging insurance and managing rent or mortgage affairs. These tasks are often done by one of the two partners, as can be seen in the figure below. Maintaining various contacts (the school, neighbours and friends) is also frequently done by one of the two men (in four of the ten couples).

In contrast to the other two exceptional practices, no mother is present in the households of the interviewed homosexual fathers, but the mother can play a large role in the realisation. One father says, about the role of the mothers in the decision-making process: *'The mothers make decisions about, for instance, educational choices. Legally they are the parents of our child too.'* The couples who care for their children one to three days a week say that tasks like organising babysitters and maintaining contact with the school are tasks carried out by the mothers.

Figure 4.6 Realisation of management tasks



- Done mostly by the man
- Done almost equally frequently by both partners
- Done mostly by the partner
- Done by a third party

In conclusion

If we look at the realisation of the three task groups, we can see that the distribution of the tasks between men and women is the least equal in the case of household and management tasks. The care and supporting tasks show a more equal distribution. It is noticeable that the shiftworkers and the teleworkers never take the lead in certain household tasks, such as cleaning the house, the laundry and its associated tasks, and making the beds. The realisation of (parts of) the management and organisational tasks also shows a clear gender-based division in the households of the teleworkers and shiftworkers: organising the household appears to be a task for the women and the finances are a task for the men.

We can see that the teleworking and shiftworking fathers are more involved in the realisation of childcare tasks than in the other two task groups. The fathers indicate that they feel the childcare tasks to be important because caring for children ‘gives life added value’ and they feel that ‘it is important to see their children grow up’. This corresponds with findings from literature, on the basis of which the conclusion was drawn that men prefer childcare tasks.

In the realisation of the three task groups, the homosexual fathers present a mirror image compared to the shiftworkers and teleworkers. In the households with homosexual fathers it is

rather most of the management tasks that are distributed equally among both fathers, whereas among the teleworkers and shiftworkers the division of management tasks shows a clear gender-based difference. Of the household tasks, some are distributed equally, whereas others are done more exclusively by one of the partners. A number of household tasks are also outsourced. These tasks are carried out by a (paid) woman. The childcare tasks are, in principle, shared by the homosexual fathers, but because of a number of factors the homosexual fathers differ in this respect from the other two exceptional practices. For instance, in the households of the homosexual fathers, there is in nearly all cases a mother in the background playing a role in the realisation of certain tasks. It also happens that the biological father or mother has a more decisive vote than the non-biological parents.

4.5 Realisation versus typology

In this paragraph, we compare the realisation of the tasks by the three groups with the typology indicated earlier. Before we start, we must comment that a number of respondents indicated that, when classifying the tasks, they were guided by the way in which the tasks are actually distributed in their household. They are inclined to classify a certain task as being male or female if, in their household, the task is mostly carried out by either the man or the woman. If they both carry out a task approximately the same number of times, they will mostly classify it as neutral.

In spite of this, a number of notable discrepancies between typology and realisation have emerged which will be further discussed below. It must also be noted that the homosexual fathers in particular have indicated that classifying the tasks into male and female tasks does not apply to them. To them, all tasks are gender-neutral. We will also look at this in more detail, because the realisation of tasks showed us that this was not equal in all cases.

For all the task groups, the actual realisation by the teleworkers and the shiftworkers shows a stronger gender-specific tendency than the typology. This applies the most to the household and management tasks. In the above figures, we were able to see that the shiftworkers and their partners classify the care tasks as more gender-neutral than the household tasks, and carry them out in a more gender-neutral manner.

A number of tasks that the shiftworkers and teleworkers relatively often classify as female are, in practice, indeed largely realised by women. This applies to, for instance, doing the laundry and mending clothes. A task like cleaning the bathroom is relatively often classified as female by the shiftworkers and teleworkers. However, in the realisation there is a notable difference between both groups. The majority of the shiftworking men think that in their household these tasks are carried out by the woman. Among the teleworkers, this is a task that is remarkably often carried out by a third party (read: a paid cleaner).

A number of different surveys have shown that parents are unanimously and unequivocally positive about caring for their children. Childcare is considered extremely important and people generally consider it enjoyable and valuable (Van Lenning 2001, Knijn 1997). This is demonstrated in the typology of the childcare tasks, which is generally gender-neutral. The realisation of the childcare tasks by teleworkers and shiftworkers is also more gender-neutral than the household and management tasks. However, this research once again shows that there is still a traditional distribution of tasks between the parents when it comes to the

specific aspects of caring for children. Playing with children and taking them out is still done more by the fathers, whereas caring for children in the sense of feeding, washing and dressing them, is done by the mothers.

According to the homosexual fathers, the household does not so much consist of specifically male or female tasks. Comments like *'That doesn't apply to us' or 'Because I am in a man-man relationship I have no particular opinion about this and feel the question doesn't really apply to me'* are frequently heard. One respondent says: *'This is nonsense, maybe I am too emancipated.'* Someone else says: *'These are all things that need doing, so we just do them.'* It appears that homosexual fathers are less inclined to find a task female because they have to do everything themselves as a man and there is no woman around. It therefore becomes more obvious to 'neutralise' the tasks and not classify them as specifically male or female.

It is interesting to note that this effect does not occur only among homosexual fathers. The other two groups from this in-depth research also appear to be less traditional and to classify certain tasks as gender-neutral. This may be because even the men from the other two exceptional practices still carry out a lot of tasks. In this case, the actual realisation (the practice) determines the typology (the theory).

4.6 The effect circumstances have on the distribution of tasks

In this paragraph, we take a look at the question to what extent the circumstances in which the fathers find themselves (alternative household, different working pattern and different working hours) affect the nature of the tasks that they do or do not carry out. Before we take a closer look at these circumstances, it is interesting to see which reasons the fathers (and mothers) give for carrying out or not carrying out certain tasks.

In the interviews, the fathers give a number of different reasons why they do or do not carry out certain tasks. These reasons relate to competencies, preferences and traditions. We will give you a number of examples. The majority of men leave the tasks associated with doing the laundry (washing, folding and ironing) to their wife. The shiftworkers and teleworkers feel they are too 'clumsy' to do these tasks properly. *'Sorting the laundry, colours, delicates, I can't tell them apart', 'I'm no good at ironing, the clothes end up with more creases than before.'* Conversely, some of the women feel they are no good at doing odd jobs around the house. Competencies can also play a role in caring for children: *'In the past we have visited the baby clinic together, I felt it was convenient that my wife was there as well, as she knows more about the children than I do.'* And another father comments: *'My wife is a teacher, she is much better at helping the children with their homework.'*

Not just competencies play a role, so do preferences. Some teleworkers indicate that they do not do any cleaning tasks because they dislike them: *'When you've finished cleaning something, it needs doing all over again.'* Financial matters like arranging insurance, managing rent/mortgage affairs and paying bills are done more often by the man. The women indicate they are not interested in these matters. *'He does the finances because I'm not interested and he enjoys doing the banking via the Internet.'*
The traditional role patterns the men experienced when they grew up also affect the competency argument. Some fathers may explain their gender-neutral typology from an

equality ideal: *'Both partners must be able to clean the windows'*, but still regard the task as female. *'It's a tradition you grew up with. But now that both the man and the woman work, all that changes.'* Tradition, therefore, plays a certain part in the tasks that partners are good at. The women, for instance, feel that ironing or cleaning the windows is precision work: *'Women are better at these tasks because they grew up with them.'* Several respondents point out that women are more likely to notice when something is dirty. This is once again the way they have been brought up and, people feel, why women tend to manage the household.

Among the homosexual fathers the difference in competencies and preferences appears to play less of a role between the partners. There is however an exception for the tasks that are closely associated with the biological differences. One of the homosexual fathers comments that the mother who brought a child into the world, carries out certain tasks: *'Childbirth and breastfeeding have a number of consequences, the rest is determined by culture.'* The homosexual fathers also occasionally refer to traditions. One of the fathers is of the opinion, the female aspect of sewing and cleaning is the result of the situation at home when he grew up: *'I catch myself thinking this way because I have this image of my mother. I have an aversion to this image. I don't know how to mend clothes; I can manage to sew on a button but I associate it with my mother. She was always busy cleaning the windows. That will never be my aim in life.'*

In chapter 1, we asked the question whether the unequal participation in care tasks is a question of views and preferences and whether it is separate from *the options* men and women have for caring and working. This was also the reason for investigating three exceptional practices in the research. If we look at the available research material, the question arises how 'independent' and persistent certain views and preferences are. In the typology of tasks, many men and women say these tasks are gender-neutral; more so than men who live in standard households. In the realisation, however, it is shown that even in the exceptional practices this distribution is only partly realised. If it is not realised, differences in competencies, preferences and traditions are suddenly given as a reason. If a more equal distribution is realised, the competencies, preferences and traditions suddenly seem to be less important. However, it appears that opinions are flexible when, through a change in circumstances, men start to do certain tasks they never did before. In that case even (poor) competencies no longer appear to play a role. This is put into words by one of the respondents from the shiftworkers practice. A woman comments: *'He can even manage to braid hair when he dresses the children if she [the mother] has to leave at half past seven.'* When the men eventually start doing the tasks, they say they learn a lot about the household, either from their wife or simply by doing it themselves. These findings are backed by the work of Brandth & Kvande (2003) who in their research on Norwegian fathers, concluded that fathers who are 'home alone' with their children during parental leave develop a different – more need-oriented – care practice than the men whose wife was also present during the leave period.

A number of the explanations listed by the respondents therefore no longer apply when, in practice, certain tasks simply have to be done. This is something the homosexual fathers in particular teach us. This brings us to the question how fixed preferences are on the one hand and actual practice on the other and to what extent these aspects are determined by

(differing) circumstances and environmental factors. Below, we once again run through the three exceptional practices in order to get an answer to this question.

The interviewed homosexual fathers do not have a woman in their households and we can see this both in the typology and the realisation of the tasks. It is notable among the homosexual fathers that preferences and actual practice do not differ greatly. They are highly consistent: both practically and theoretically progressive. According to the homosexual fathers, a household does not really consist of male or female tasks. They respond with comments like: *'This doesn't apply to us' or 'Because I am in a man-man relationship I have no particular opinion about this and feel the question doesn't really apply to me.'* With regard to the realisation of the tasks, one comment was: *'These are all things that need doing and therefore they just get done.'* There are some tasks the homosexual fathers don't do or hardly ever do, but these are exceptions like mending clothes. Some couples also outsource cleaning work to a cleaner. With regard to childcare, a part of the tasks are done by the mother. The management tasks are carried out by both partners.

The shiftworking fathers work outside regular working hours and are therefore able to be at home with their children during the day on certain days, while their partner works outside the home. This fact has an effect on the realisation of tasks and, to a certain extent, breaks with the traditional division of roles. However, from the results it may be noted that this break with tradition is more theoretical than practical. To a certain extent the shiftworkers are inconsistent: theoretically progressive, but practically a little more traditional. Their exceptional work situation, therefore, does have a certain effect but (for now) this is more in theory than in day-to-day life. Compared to fathers in standard households, however, the shiftworking fathers do significantly more in practice. They take on tasks that are necessary in the daily rhythm of the household. It may be noted, however, that the shiftworkers more specifically take on the daily repetitive tasks, and the tasks that can be put off (such as ironing) are indeed left until the woman comes home. It is therefore mainly the work schedules of the partners that determine that the daily repetitive tasks are carried out fairly equally.

The teleworkers are the most traditional of the three exceptional practices. This applies both to the typology they allocate to the tasks and to their realisation: they are consistently traditional (compared to the other two groups; they differ relatively little from men and women in a standard family). This is interesting because this group, as a result of its differing work pattern (working partly from home), is able to distribute the tasks more equally with their working partners. In practice, it appears that a different work pattern (working from home) has less effect on a more equal distribution of tasks than working non-regular hours. One important difference between the teleworker group and the shiftworker group is the fact that the shiftworking fathers are at home during the day to care rather than to work. Furthermore, the shiftworkers are at home during the day without their partner being there. They will simply have to do certain tasks. The teleworkers may be at home, but their purpose is work. It appears that they feel less pressed to take on certain tasks.

In the difference in the way shiftworking and teleworking men realise tasks, classify distinctions may also play a role: in paragraph 4.2, we saw that the shiftworkers mostly have a lower level of education than the teleworkers. On this aspect, Grünell comments that, in practice, caring fathers are found more in the lower than in the middle and higher classifies: *'In the lower classifies the differing working conditions – restrictions of working hours,*

shiftwork – mean that fathers can spend more hours at home and can take on more tasks, also because their wife tends to work outside the home.' (Grünell p. 259).

Finally, one more issue remains. Does an increased level of care provided by men result in the fact that they will start caring in the same way as women or are there specifically male ways to carry out certain tasks? Some men report that they have to defend their own way of carrying out certain tasks: *'For instance, folding the clean laundry; I do this in a different way and sometimes that is too slow for my wife. I think my way is more practical than hers.'* The homosexual fathers also feel that fathers do certain tasks differently. With regard to childcare tasks, for instance, they comment: *'Men find it easier to let children discover things for themselves, mothers are more cautious.'* The fact that men do certain tasks differently means that women have to learn to 'let go'. This does not only apply to childcare but also (specifically) to household tasks: *'Well … if you want your husband to help you, you can't say too much. They have to do it in their own way, even if that means your linen cupboard looks a little different. Over the years you learn to let it go.'*

These results from the research into the exceptional practices correspond with what we referred to in chapter 1 as the 'difference strategy'. According to this strategy both men and women take on all care tasks, regardless of their gender, and there is (sometimes) only a difference in the way the tasks are carried out. This is not a question of inequality: the male way of doing things may be different, but is not necessarily better or worse than the female way.

5 *Good Practices in Sweden, Spain and France*

5.1 Introduction

In the European countries discussed in chapter one, men spend less time taking care of children and doing housework than women. We saw that women in Europe with a full-time job spend between one and a half and two times as much time caring for children than men. However, we also found that these figures are subject to change over time and per place. Different factors can be distinguished that interfere with the traditional division of caring and working between men and women.

The most important macro conditions that policymakers can influence are the ones giving parents time, the ones giving parents financial benefits (money) and the ones providing parents with services. Based on the availability of these arrangements we can classify the European countries into four different types: Nordic countries, Anglo-Saxon countries, Southern countries and Continental countries.

In chapter two we have concluded that measures involving time, money and services make it easier for men to take care of children, but that such arrangements alone are not enough to influence *which* care-giving tasks men will perform within the household and the family. Arrangements on macro level are a first step, but more than these arrangements on macro level is needed to make change possible.

The next chapter will discuss how policymakers can stimulate these kinds of changes towards new measures and arrangements. In this chapter we will describe which innovating policies and practices already exist in some of the European countries. We will focus on good practices concerning men and care in three European countries: Sweden, Spain and France. Let us first discuss why we have chosen these countries.

We have selected good practices from Sweden, a Nordic country, because in Sweden macro conditions to stimulate men to take up caring tasks are well-developed. It is a country with a high level of facilities that promote equality between men and women. This can be seen when we look at, for example, flexible work arrangements, leave schemes and childcare facilities. In the Nordic countries arrangements for childcare leave are well provided for and Sweden is no exception. Policy in the Nordic countries is oriented towards the independence of women. As an example, individual taxation is the rule and financial support for families is relatively low, thus encouraging two-income families.

Together with a long tradition of policy in this field, Sweden stands out from the Spanish and French case studies in two ways, firstly because of the strong interventionist policies used by the central government and secondly because of the strong ideology concerning the

role of men. There is a high level of awareness when it comes to involving men in care and household tasks and a lot of experience in dealing with men and care, as we will see in the selected good practices.

As a southern European country Spain is very much family-oriented. The focus of policy and arrangements on macro level is on the family as a unit, thus stimulating the sole breadwinner system. Characteristics of the southern countries are the low level of provisions for part-time and flexible work. The level of childcare facilities for children under the age of three is also very low. Spain is no exception to this characterisation. Also, informal care arrangements play an important role within Spanish society. Families often take care of dependent elderly relatives and/or children of relatives. The country has one of the lowest figures of labour force participation of women in Europe.

Spain is of interest to our research question, because the country is making up its lost ground at a relatively high speed. The country is catching up, both with regard to the macro conditions and with regard to developing practices concerning the question what men do and don't do within the household. Spain is also a country in transition: macro conditions to stimulate care by men have been underdeveloped for many years, but individual taxation is now an option and a law on reconciliation was introduced in 1999. Although a relatively recent development, awareness of the need to improve the situation of women and the need for reconciliation for men and women alike is now high, and men are becoming actively involved and are more aware of these issues. Action is mainly initiated by local government and local social authorities, as we will see in the case studies described in this chapter.

France differs substantially from both the Spanish and the Swedish cases. In France the macro conditions are relatively well-developed, although to a lesser degree than they are in Sweden. Individual taxation is not available, but the country is less family-oriented than Spain. With regard to childcare facilities France finds itself closely behind the Nordic countries and with regard to provisions it finds itself in the intermediate segment (being neither high nor low). The exception to this pattern is flexible work arrangements which are relatively uncommon.

The number of women in France who work full-time is relatively high, but at home caring for children is largely the task of women. Discussing the tasks that men perform within the household is difficult in France, as people see this issue as a private matter. In the French case described below we will see that it is necessary to bring about a discussion about what men do and don't do. This will require a discussion on the political and cultural problem of intervening in people's private lives. In addition to encouraging a political and cultural discussion we will describe the importance of innovative initiatives on a local level, as the discussion about men and care starts with a scientific analysis of everyday practice.

In this chapter we start each case study with a short summary of macro conditions stimulating the extent to which men take up care tasks and we ask ourselves the question which initiatives the country in question has taken to stimulate the qualitative side of care tasks. After that we will describe, for each case, two innovative practices on a local level that focus on the question: 'who does what within the household or family?'[22]

[22] *The information concerning the good practices was gathered during several study visits to Sweden, Spain and France in 2003 and 2004.*

5.2 Sweden: an ideology of fatherhood

In many European countries the debate on reconciliation now includes fathers. Fathers are expected to become more involved in their children's care and this shift of focus is translated into ways to get fathers to perform more care-giving tasks. In Sweden this was also the case by promoting a period of leave exclusively for fathers after the birth or adoption of a child (the so-called daddy month). However, contemporary parental leave programmes in Sweden encompass more than just leave from work: they focus on promoting father-child relations and on the children's welfare. Bergman & Hobson (2002) make the case that the Swedish welfare state has one of the most regulatory and highly interventionist policies toward men as fathers.

Sweden is unique in two ways. Firstly, the strong interventionist policies implemented by the central government have resulted in well-developed conditions on macro level. Secondly, there is a strong ideology concerning the role of men within the family. In this section we will first give a historical overview of government intervention and discuss the ideology of fatherhood in Sweden. After this we will describe two projects that are examples of interventions aimed at the role of men in care-giving activities. The first example is the fathers' education project (Föraldra projektet) in the county of Värmland. The second project is a gender-pedagogic project at a pre-school in the county of Gävle.

Fatherhood and government intervention

Government intervention aimed at care-giving activities by men in Sweden is closely linked to the development of the parental leave programme. The roots of Sweden's parental leave programme go back as far as the 1930s when a number of changes were made regarding the employment status of women. Granting mothers rights to take voluntary leave from employment was intended to ease the combination of work at home and paid employment and to encourage people to have more children. The unpaid leave introduced in 1930 was replaced by paid leave in 1938. The length of this maternity leave has been extended over the years from one month in 1938 to three months in 1955. In 1974 the maternity leave programme was transformed into the gender-neutral parental leave programme (Bergman & Hobson 2002, Haas 1992, Haas & Hwang 2000, Seward et al. 1999, Seward et al. 2000). The abolishment of family subsidies for male breadwinners also reflected this new policy. Bergman & Hobson (2002) conclude that the citizen worker of the 1930s was changed into the citizen parent. Seward et al. (1999) mention several factors to explain this change: a dedication to gender equality, a growing demand for women in the labour force, a desire for men's liberation and supportive political factors, like long term one party rule.

Since 1980 thirty days of the parental leave are restricted exclusively to men (increased in 2002 to sixty days). This led to an increase in the number of men who used their rights as a parent. When the parental leave programme was first established in 1974 only 3% of eligible fathers participated. In the early 1980s, after the introduction of the daddy month, this figure started to increase, from 21% in 1980 to 40% in 2001. The pattern of leave taken by fathers

differs from that of mothers. Fathers are more likely to take leave when the child is older than six months (a factor that has to do with the breast feeding patterns of Swedish mothers) and in many cases the leave of fathers is confined to the paid and earmarked daddy month. From several studies on parental leave it may be concluded that fathers tend to take leave if it is possible to minimise income loss and with the fewest challenges to the traditional gender-based division of labour (Bergman & Hobson 2002, Haas & Hwang 2000; Seward et al. 1999 and 2000; Sundström & Duvander 2002).

It is of interest to us here that the effects of the parental leave taken by fathers extend beyond the leave period itself. Compared to fathers who do not take parental leave, leave-taking fathers are more likely to perform tasks such as shopping for food, feeding, cooking, changing nappies, bathing, and bedside reading. Taking leave, therefore, is accompanied by a range of care-giving tasks and altogether results in a greater involvement in childcare tasks on the part of the father, even after the leave period has ended. In the long run the relatively short leave period (when compared to the leave taken by mothers) reduces the inequality in care-giving responsibilities (Seward et al. 1999).

Despite the relatively good leave arrangements in Sweden, equal sharing between fathers and mothers is limited. Most fathers restrict the leave they take to the daddy month and mothers take the rest of the paternal leave. Research also shows that the longer the leave period of fathers, the greater their involvement with their children when they grow up (Seward et al. 1999; Haas 1992). As a consequence, the discussion in Sweden currently concentrates on extending the leave for fathers. The government would like to copy the parental leave model of Iceland: nine months leave for the mother, nine months for the father and nine months to be used by either parent.

The debate on the involvement of fathers is not confined to parental leave schemes. There is also a strong ideology in favour of care-giving fathers and in this debate the quality of men's care-giving activities is closely connected to the well-being of children. Haas and Hwang (2000) have shown that in doing so Sweden is unique: gender equality and children's well-being are in harmony and not seen as being in conflict with each other. In other societies the promotion of the two-income family has long been regarded as being harmful to children's well-being.

The well-being of children as an objective of Swedish social policy also dates back to the 1930s. Children's rights are protected by a government ombudsman and by non-government organisations. For the children's cognitive and social development an extensive network of day-care centres and after-school care services were created. Children's emotional security includes children's rights to have a relationship with both parents. This justifies government initiatives promoting that men do their share in taking care of children and in using parental leave (Haas & Hwang 2000).

The government initiatives promoting active and participatory fatherhood have taken many forms. One way to achieve this objective is by sponsoring courses on gender equality produced by the Swedish radio and television. Experts on family policy in the 1960s and 1970s focused on masculinity and men's roles, which was reflected in radio programme titles such as 'It's about you: the second role of men'. The programmes encouraged men to de-emphasise their commitment to full-time work and devote more time to active parenting (Bergman & Hobson 2002). In other countries in the 1960s and 1970s macho images and

styles of masculinity were also questioned, but Sweden was at the forefront because the movement was orchestrated by government campaigns. One campaign featuring images of the nurturing father in the 1970s produced a series of posters of men with children. In one of the posters a Swedish weightlifter (wearing a pullover in the colours of the Swedish flag) is portrayed with a small child in his arms (Bergman & Hobson 2002).[23]

In 1980 Sweden appointed a Minister of Equality, and a Division for Gender Equality (Jämställdhetsenheten) was established by the central government. The division supports and initiates efforts to promote equality at national and regional levels, developing methods for integration and gender mainstreaming. Of great importance is the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman (JämO), an independent government authority that was set up when the first Equal Opportunities Act came into force in 1980. Its primary task is to ensure compliance with the Equal Opportunities Act and portions of the Equal Treatment of Students in University Act by providing advice and information and by negotiating with individual employers or Universities by representing employees or students.

At a regional level Sweden's 21 county administrative boards are responsible for co-ordinating national and local policies. Since 1995 there has been a regional expert on gender issues in each of the counties. The main tasks of these experts are mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policy fields and supporting efforts to achieve equal opportunities for men and women in the regions. Also on a regional level, social insurance offices remind people of the importance of the use of parental leave and inform citizens of how many days people have left to use.

Since the 1990s men themselves have also participated in the discussion on gender issues through the movement of men's networks. The origin of these networks can be found in the Save the Children charity organisation, active in Sweden and the United Kingdom. Modern fatherhood was one of the central issues of the political programme of the network. Since 1999 men have been organising themselves as NGOs in local groups all over Sweden. These men's groups can be viewed as a political movement whose main issue is practising and enhancing good parenthood. Where in the beginning funding was provided by Save the Children and the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, nowadays most groups are financed by the healthcare system.

Father Education

Father education was started in 1994 as a national pilot project initiated by the Swedish Ministry of Social Affairs (Equal Opportunities Unit) and the County Council Alliance and is meant for men who are going to be a father or who are the father of a young child or baby. The goal of the father education is to encourage the use of parental leave by men and to make men more conscious of their role as a father. It is assumed that active fatherhood creates a better psycho-social environment that enhances the quality of life for both the newborn child and for the parents. However, most classes are traditional parent groups with a major focus on the mother and the physical development of the child. The so-called father

[23] *A couple of years ago it was revealed that the Swedish weightlifter never took any parental leave himself. Now he is regarded as the perfect symbol of the Swedish 'in principle man', the man who says he wants to share tasks equally, but refuses to change in practice.*

groups are less common and many of them no longer exist as a result of tight budgets and lack of funding.
During the courses fathers are prepared for the coming birth of their child and made aware of the importance of a father for a child. Generally the father education starts in the eighth month of pregnancy and ends when the child is six or seven months old. Father education is often linked to the parent groups in which expecting Swedish couples participate six times before the birth of the baby and six times afterwards. Most parent groups have ten to twelve participants and meet once every six weeks. The group leaders put forward different issues related to work and children, sex and conflicts and, within the framework of father education, special attention is given to the role of fathers. The underlying motive is the premise that the child has a right to emotional bonding with both the father and the mother.

Local initiatives

In Värmland the choice was made to integrate father education in the existing parent groups instead of creating separate father groups. There was a requirement for a greater involvement of men in the parent groups. Expecting fathers attended the parent groups before the birth, but after the birth they often ceased their attendance. The aim was to realise a greater involvement of fathers after the birth of their child.

In Karlstad, a bottom up initiative has been undertaken by the medical centre 'Gripen' to give fathers a leading role in parent groups, also after the child's birth. In 2000 the project started with fundraising and eventually three partners were found: the regional government of Värmland (responsible for healthcare, education and culture), the social insurance agency (involved when parents take parental leave) and the local administration for equality. These parties came together in the project, each with their different objectives: prevention of illness, increasing the men's share of family insurance and equality goals. Funding was found for the years 2001-2003.

The training course for professionals and 'daddy leaders'

Until the start of the project, parent groups were led by two kinds of professionals: midwives before the baby's birth and paediatric nurses after the baby was born. The first step of the project in Karlstad was to test a model of education for these two types of professionals, midwives and paediatric nurses, with the objective of developing a better co-operation between the two. It was hoped this would eventually result in the fact that fathers would also attend the meetings after their child had been born and that the parent group would have the same composition throughout the twelve meetings.
The second step was to recruit so-called daddy leaders, who would function as peer educators together with the professionals. Criteria for the daddy leaders were that they had to be fathers, with a three- to four-year period of time for reflection after the birth of their child. Furthermore they could not be working with children in a professional capacity. Recruitment was done by means of a regional meeting of about 160 midwives and paediatric nurses. They were asked to recruit fathers: 100-120 fathers with different social and employment backgrounds were found in this way.

As a third step a three-day training course was set up, which started with men's 'kick-off' of one day. In these kick-off groups, men started to talk about their memories of how their own fathers responded to them when they were children and what they experienced during their own fatherhood. For most of the fathers it was the first time they talked to other men about their role during pregnancy and birth. In this way, Värmland educated 50 teams during the period from Autumn 2001 through to 2003.

First results

As a result of the presence of daddy leaders in the parent groups, young men are much more aware of how they behave with their child and how their behaviour will be five years from now. They display a more active attitude towards their family and they let go of the idea that it is enough for a father to spend some quality time with his child. Nowadays, for example, it is much more common for young fathers to be present at the birth of their children.

The aim of the parent groups in Värmland is not only to discuss fatherhood, but also to train men in talking about having and raising a child, because in general men are not used to doing this. In discussion rounds men can bring up their experiences and insights. A positive result is the fact that men become aware of fatherhood issues and that they can talk and think about these issues. They gain more insight into the deeper values of what is seen as good fatherhood and good motherhood.[24]

The experiences with these groups have convinced the initiators to broaden the work further: they are considering initiating mother support groups to contribute to a greater awareness of mothers on how they can transfer implicit norms and gender roles to their children and their partner.

A less successful aspect of the father and parent groups is the lack of an umbrella organisation that can co-ordinate the local groups. There is only an umbrella organisation of healthcare centres, of which the birth attendance forms a part. The professionals consider it a negative aspect that there is too little opportunity to share local experiences. Initiatives are left to individuals, which makes the local groups vulnerable.

Gender pedagogy in a Swedish pre-school

In the Fall of 1996 the county administration of Gävleborg came up with an idea for a project regarding gender roles in pre-schools. In the district of Gävle it was the pre-school Björntomten/Tittmyran, located in the village of Trödje approximately 13 miles north of Gävle, that joined the project. Six other pre-schools in different municipalities and a group of childminders also joined the project. The purpose of the project was to find out whether it was possible to broaden the scope of gender roles of boys and girls in order to give them more alternatives later on in life. The project was developed between 1996 and 1999 and has evolved into a new pedagogy, the so-called gender pedagogy, which resulted in a new view on children and a new attitude among pedagogues.

[24] *A positive side effect is the fact that the behaviour of professionals changes too: day-care centres used to call the mother at her work when the child was ill; now day-care centres in Värmland telephone the father if a child is ill and needs to be picked up from the day-care centre.*

At the start of the project the staff of the pre-schools were convinced that, in principle, they treated boys and girls in the same way: on an individual basis, with no difference regarding gender. After a period of discussion and observation, the staff realised that the pre-school was anything but equal in its approach to boys and girls. The pedagogues gradually became aware how they influenced the roles that boys and girls develop in pre-school.

At the Björntomten/Tittmyran pre-school the staff believed that gender roles are assimilated through learning and can therefore be changed. The child perceives the adults' expectations, demands, values, norms and attitudes through their words, body language, eyes, physical contact etc. Therefore, it is essential for the pedagogues to become aware of their own actions, to dare to admit their different behaviour towards boys and girls and try to understand the effect of this behaviour.

Working with the children

Through the use of video recordings and other observations it was made visible how differently the pedagogues interacted with boys and girls respectively. There were clear behavioural differences between boys and girls and the pedagogues responded to them accordingly by having different demands and expectations, and making physical as well as verbal contact depending on the gender of the child they were dealing with.

At the start of the project the staff were convinced of the value of working with mixed groups. They were of the opinion that children can live and play together regardless of gender, age, level of maturity etc. During the project, however, they changed their approach. They learned that boys and girls must be able to be themselves, to become secure in their own gender identity and develop skills that go beyond gender.

During meals the pedagogues discovered that it was hard for both the girls and the boys to develop themselves in a positive way. The girls acted as support teachers and waited on the younger children and handed the boys whatever they wanted even if they just said as much as 'Oi!'[25] The girls tended to their own needs last of all. Concern for others was seen as a good quality and therefore the staff encouraged it in the girls, with the effect that the boys kept an even further distance from this kind of behaviour. The boys got all the attention and asked a lot of questions, which is also positive and something the staff wanted to improve among the girls, but when they encouraged them the boys helped themselves to an even larger portion of their time and the girls remained silent.

During the pilot the group was split, so that boys and girls could eat at separate tables. The girls benefited from the loss of their role of handmaidens that had been imposed on them by the adults. Instead, they could develop their self-image, dare to help themselves and tend to their own needs. The boys, in turn, benefited from having to develop their language as the girls who understood their 'Ois' were now seated at a different table. The boys developed their empathic abilities from having the opportunity to see the needs of others.

The purpose of working with separate groups was to help boys and girls get along better and be able to respect and appreciate each other's qualities. It is the task of the pre-school to strengthen children in their weak areas by teaching them competencies and qualities that, for a long time, have been associated with the opposite sex. From a gender perspective this

[25] *They only produced an inarticulate sound, while pointing at something they wanted.*

means working on competencies and qualities that are poorly developed in the gender patterns of boys and girls respectively.

First results

A first meeting with the parents of the children in the pilot was held in the Autumn of 1996. During this meeting the pre-school staff presented their views on gender and explained that they would give the children a broader experience and new skills. In the Spring of 1997 a second parent-teacher meeting was held. During this meeting the staff explained to the parents how the school was currently working. They explained that, previously, the boys had had little opportunity for conversation and intimacy, and that the boys received a lot of negative attention as a result of their behaviour. With the new gender pedagogy, a change of focus had taken place and the boys' (and girls') positive sides were stimulated and developed.

The pre-school project is a long-term project that will give both boys and girls positive values and many ways to express themselves. This is seen as important, not only for the benefit of the children, but also for their functioning in a future society - especially in a future labour market that no longer will have focus on physical strength in the industrial sectors, but more on service-oriented competencies in the services sector.

The pre-school is now operating in line with this so-called gender pedagogy and the staff has noticed a large interest among the pre-schools of the municipality of Gävle, the Gävle-Sandviken University College and many other pre-schools and schools in Sweden and other countries.

The central question, of course, is what the results of the gender pedagogy will be and how the children will act when they have grown older. Will the girls indeed be more assertive and the boys more service-oriented and empathic to the needs of others? Unfortunately no such results from the project will be known yet, as the children from the first year of the pilot are still young.

Conclusions on reconciliation and caring men in Sweden

We can conclude that in Sweden macro conditions (time, money and services) are relatively well-developed. What is more, in Sweden the awareness has grown that these macro conditions are not sufficient to change gender roles. The government is convinced of the need to intervene in men's lives when it comes to the role of men within the family and the tasks they perform as fathers. There is a strong ideology with regard to fatherhood, and the view that children have a right to be cared for by their fathers. Besides, people are of the opinion that gender patterns are formed and maintained both at a personal level and at society level. This is why the Swedish government feels justified in intervening in all levels of society (macro, micro, meso) when it comes to developing a greater involvement of fathers with their children.

Two things are remarkable when we look at the two projects discussed in the Swedish case study. Firstly, the Swedish authorities do not seem to be afraid of active intervention in people's lives. Secondly, the authorities focus on a change in men's attitudes in the area of fatherhood. The two projects discussed have shown that the Swedish think it is important to

intervene in men's lives at crucial times: during pre-school when children are still very young and at a time when men expect to become fathers themselves. At pre-school they learn to develop skills, qualities and competencies with a broad gender scope. Healthcare centres have set up training courses for expectant and young fathers with the objective of helping them to learn practical skills in caring for children and also to develop a greater sense of responsibility for their children.

Government intervention and local practices in Sweden are, however, largely confined to the role of men as fathers. In Sweden, too, women are responsible for the household and men only perform some of the household tasks (Fürst 1999, Plantin et al. 2003). Government intervention to make household tasks less gender-biased does not seem to be a central issue in Swedish policy towards men. Gunilla Fürst (1999) states that, although there is a general acceptance of the ideals of gender equality when it comes to unpaid household work, in Sweden, as in other countries, the division of household tasks is traditional. Women do the laundry, iron clothes and buy the children's clothes, while the men look after the car and home maintenance. In Sweden men also have difficulty viewing household work as a joined responsibility when it comes to doing the washing and cleaning.

5.3 Spain: making up lost ground

Spain is a traditionally organised country when it comes to family relations. Within the Spanish welfare state the family has historically played a central role and the family is still important in providing welfare for citizens while social expenditure rates are low compared to other European countries. Salido (2002) mentions the lack of comprehensive politics and policies in favour of reconciliation. These policies on macro level have been developed only more recently, since the late Nineties. Since 1999, there has been a law on reconciliation in which matters like, for instance, leave arrangements are organised.

We will illustrate the Spanish process of 'making up lost ground' with regard to reconciliation and, more specifically, the role of men, by presenting two innovative initiatives that opt for a big change in reconciliation matters. First we will present the project entitled 'Madrid, a city for reconciliation'. This project stresses the need for enhancing the opportunities for women to enter the labour market and the need for a change of mentality towards reconciliation issues for the citizens (both men and women) of Madrid. Next, we will describe projects that have specifically been set up to address men and their (lack of) participation in the household and the family, stressing the need for a higher level of awareness of Spanish men when it comes to care-giving tasks.

Reconciliation in Spain: working men and working women?

For many decades the labour participation of women in Spain was very low. Only recently, especially since 1996, has an increase in women's participation taken place and the number of unemployed women dropped. Still, there are fewer women actively engaged in the labour market than men, while the level of unemployed women is higher than that of unemployed men. In 2000 approximately 38% of the total working population were women. In 2000 around 58% of all unemployed were women (Instituto de la mujer 2001).

In general, combining working life and family life in Spain is left up to the women. In Webster's studies on the Spanish NAP's (National Action Plans), it was concluded that leave arrangements are put forward as an instrument to promote equal opportunities between men and women, but, in fact, women in Spain are lagging behind when it comes to equal opportunities. In Webster's view working time arrangements specifically adjusted to the needs of women are needed (Webster 2001). Verweij states that Spanish law is based on the concept of equal obligations for men and for women, but that in practice, there is no equal division of domestic tasks and care-giving tasks between the sexes at all. Besides, there is a lack of policy to encourage men to take up caring tasks (Verweij 1999). Valiente (1997/1998) states that the majority of measures are aimed at the family as the central financial unit in society and the preservation of the financial level of families as such.

The unequal distribution of time between men and women in their daily lives and the gender-based division of domestic tasks in Spain become clear when we look at the figures for the year 2001. Women in that year spent more time on domestic work and less time on paid work, free time and studying than men in Spain. Women, on average, spent four hours and twelve minutes more on domestic tasks than men on a daily basis (in fact twice as much: seven hours & twenty two minutes, as opposed to three hours & ten minutes by men).

There is not only an inequality in time spent on household tasks, but there is also a difference between the sexes in the kind of tasks men and women perform within the household. The main differences between men and women in the tasks they perform are found in cleaning, washing, cooking, ironing, and in taking care of the family. In Spain shopping and caring for one's family is still a woman's job, men perform tasks such as maintaining the house, repairing and cleaning the car, taking care of pets and taking responsibility for administrative tasks.

Spain is a country where some sectors are very modern (for example fashion and ICT), while the division of tasks at home is still predominantly traditional and based on men as breadwinners and women as mothers and housewives. However, all kinds of activities are taking place across the country to promote equality between men and women. In fact, we see that Spain is quickly catching up and even getting the lead on other countries when it comes to innovative reconciliation practices. Many feel the need for change, men and women alike, because of the relative deprivation they experience in daily life, both in their family and in their professional life. Sometimes, this results in extensively talked-about initiatives. For example, in the city of Torredonjimeno a local Act was passed in 2003 which stipulated that men were expected to stay at home on Thursday nights to dedicate themselves to domestic tasks. During this period the street would be the domain of women.[26]

The need for change is put into innovative practice in two ways. Firstly, a change in the situation of women is aimed for by improving their position in the labour market and by policy and actions directed towards compatibility of working life and family life. Secondly, a change in the role of men is aimed for by getting them more actively involved in domestic and caring tasks, for example through campaigns and actions.

[26] *The experiment was not prolonged, however. Although a fine was instituted for men who would go out on the streets on the 'women's nights', citizens did not comply with the local Act.*

Mr. Luis Bonino, Director of the Centre for Studies of the Male Condition in Madrid[27] illustrates how changes come about and how it seems to be much more difficult to achieve changes on micro and meso level than on macro level. In his opinion the household is dominated by 'informal' laws, which are mostly traditional and based on inequality between men and women. Public laws and measures concerning reconciliation are usually and mostly directed towards women and the combination of their private life and family life. For example: maternity leave, nurseries, part-time work and flexible shifts.

Policies and practices directed towards a change of the role of men within the household and family are rare in Spain. Women have started entering the labour market but men, on the other hand, have not entered the domestic 'market'. Men generally do not aspire to a role in the household beyond the responsibility of 'assistant' to their wife. The figures speak for themselves: in 2002 in Spain 50% of men living with a working wife or partner did not participate at all in domestic tasks. This figure does not differ a lot when we look at other men, those living with their mother or sisters or those who share a house with fellow (female) students. The men that do commit themselves to domestic tasks, usually the younger men, opt for the easier and more visible tasks (Bonino 2003).

On a national level, the Spanish government is taking some action to commit men to domestic tasks. In March and April 2003 the Women's Institute launched a national campaign, portraying a man cleaning his car in leaflets and television commercials, under the motto: 'Of course you can clean, so why don't you do it in your home?'[28]. However, the impact of these efforts on a national level should not be overestimated, since the campaign has only a temporary and noncommittal effect on citizens. We will see that the actual change in the domestic area is taking place at a local level with municipalities, social organisations and groups of citizens as protagonists.

Madrid, a city for reconciliation

The Spanish law on reconciliation clarifies the concept of reconciliation and has established general issues, but it also leaves a lot of issues open. On a local level this creates opportunities to activate people. Along with the opportunities offered by the Equal programme, the Madrid Municipality launched the project entitled 'Madrid, a city for reconciliation'.[29] The objectives of the project are to make working life more compatible with family life for the residents of Madrid, enhancing their quality of life and fostering the integration of women into the labour market. Furthermore, the project aims to involve local organisations in raising awareness on equal opportunities, job creation, improvement of working conditions, and the search for innovative solutions in making working life and family life more compatible.

The project has been organised along three lines or axes that are closely interrelated. The first axis focuses on a change of mentality towards shared responsibility between men and women among the citizens of Madrid. This is done by organising campaigns and using different means of communication in spreading the idea of joint responsibility and improve-

[27] *Translated from: Centro de Estudios de la Condición Masculina, Madrid.*

[28] *Translated from: Está claro. Sabes limpiar. Porque no lo haces en casa?*

[29] *The project is one of the Spanish EQUAL projects approved by the Administrating Unit of the European Social Found in Spain (UAFSE) in November 2001.*

ment of reconciliation between working life and family life. Axis 2 works towards solutions for reconciliation problems that women in Madrid encounter in the area of employment. It entails the creation of businesses to provide local reconciliation support services, while at the same time creating employment for women. The third axis develops tools for putting new ideas regarding reconciliation on the political agenda and implementing them in collective bargaining. Its goal is a structural change of the structuring of work to enhance reconciliation. Thus, practice, policy developments and a change in mentality are integrated in the project in the shared effort towards improvement of reconciliation in Madrid.

From this project we will take three topics to be discussed in this section:

- The actions undertaken towards a *change of mentality* of the Madrid population with regard to reconciliation issues between men and women linked to domestic tasks and working life.
- The situation of *women in Madrid in the local labour market.* Unemployment levels among women are higher than those of men and, furthermore, a lot of women encounter problems in combining their work and family life.
- Throughout the project an *integrated approach* played an important role, involving several local participants.

Towards a change of mentality

In order to draw attention to the issue of reconciliation the Madrid Municipality generated several publicity campaigns and organised awareness-raising activities throughout the city. All of these had the objective of raising awareness among the citizens of Madrid and the local society concerning joint responsibility and inequality between men and women in working life and family life. Specific target groups were distinguished and special campaigns and activities were organised for young people, the education system, students and Universities, women and companies (human resource departments). Working groups were (and are) functioning that each develop their own line of campaigning towards their target group and/or in their sector of society. Together this created a wide spectrum of methods being applied. Project partners made use of leaflets and posters, defined reconciliation formulas for companies, organised theatre performances, participated in conferences and meetings and organised workshops.

For example, the Red Cross in Madrid established an intervention programme for young people focusing on how boys and girls do, or do not, participate in housekeeping tasks. The goal they set themselves was to change the traditionally gender-based division of tasks. They worked with children from single-parent families, immigrants and other vulnerable groups. Conferences were organised for these young people (10-17 years) and they used role-playing and discussion to address the issue of reconciliation.

A second example is the 'Complutense University' of Madrid that organised a campaign for the six Universities in Madrid and their professors and students. In every University they organised a conference, starting with a theatre performance. The theatre was a way to open up the debate for the male participants in particular. Addressed themes were: finding work, pregnancy, differences between male and female roles, gender, discrimination etc. The effect of the activities and campaigns depends on the faculty and the people involved in each

University. For example, the social faculty – not unexpectedly – was most receptive to the idea of reconciliation and a changing role for men.

Local social partners all promoted the issue of reconciliation within their own organisation. Special material was prepared by and for entrepreneurs, students, the general public and for workers' unions. The reconciliation issue was put on the agenda and now has a place in social dialogue and within big and small companies.

Change in the local labour market

Increasing the labour participation of women in the local labour market forms an integral part of the project in Madrid. It will be clear that in the Spanish context a change of mentality of men and women will take place if it is rooted in a broader cultural and socio-economic change. Therefore activating women in the local labour market is seen as a first step in the whole process towards a more equal division of tasks.

The data on employment in the region of Madrid (based on the rates of the fourth term of 2002 provided by Official Statistics from the Municipality of Madrid) confirm that:

- 82% of domestic work is done by women versus 18% of these tasks are done by men.
- For every woman working in a productive job there are 1.3 men working in productive jobs in the Madrid region.
- More than 200,000 women in the Madrid region are taking care of children, elderly and/or disabled people.

It is one of the objectives of the Madrid project to change these figures by creating services on a neighbourhood level that will help women to combine domestic tasks with their working life, for example by setting up nurseries and cleaning services as a support for working mothers. In the process of training the participants it turned out that the problem of unemployment for women in Madrid is more persistent than was estimated. A lot of unemployed women start with little education, little experience and with social problems. This makes it very hard for them to set up their own small company.

Several Workers Unions, the Red Cross, the Chamber of Commerce and the Association of Young Entrepreneurs all created training groups consisting of unemployed women from their own ranks. The 'new' entrepreneurs will go through a period of training, a period of tutoring and, if their business plan is viable, a period of guidance. It is expected that in the end there will be approximately 10 to 12 small enterprises up and running out of the total number of women (around 250 are expected) who were trained. Financing the businesses can be a problem for some of the new entrepreneurs. Although the project does not cover business subsidies, there is a municipal project on micro credit that could be a source of financing for the future businesses.

The idea is to work on a small scale but, in the light of future development, with high quality standards. The training is supervised and there is a system of certification attached to the training, tutoring and guidance phase in setting up businesses. Although the business ideas that are presented are not always in line with creating proximity services, the project addresses the problem of unemployment of women in Madrid - a problem that has been proven to need attention before the issue of reconciliation can be fully addressed.

Integrated approach

The project 'Madrid, a city for reconciliation' wanted to perform a 'reconciliation attack'. In this way the issue of reconciliation is put in the minds of people, it is incorporated in company regulations, it constitutes an integral part (however big or small) of collective bargaining, it is put on the agenda of Unions and included in the list of topics of discussion groups in University. The integral approach was developed along the following lines:

- By involving all kinds of participants: young people, students, women, men, entrepreneurs and the citizens of Madrid.
- By operating on different levels: municipality, society, education, University, work and family.
- By stimulating different methods: campaigning, discussion, research, incorporation in company regulations, leaflets, seminars and workshops etc.

The Unions, for example, are important partners in the project. Their main task is to conduct research on reconciliation issues in collective bargaining. They will address flexibility, new work patterns, working time and equal opportunities between men and women. By also taking part in the publicity campaign and the training of women as entrepreneurs, the Unions collected a lot of material which can serve as input for their work and bring reconciliation into practice at the workplace.

The project is not meant as just an injection of ideas, but rather aims to establish a long-term effect and lay the groundwork for future actions towards a better reconciliation within Madrid families. As to the proximity services to be set up, an infrastructure has been prepared to be implemented at a later stage. A system of certification for future small enterprises run by women was designed. This will be of importance once the businesses become operative. It will give the entrepreneurs certification if a certain level of quality is achieved. In addition, a resource bank for reconciliation services was designed to be part of the website of the Municipality of Madrid.

Changing men: initiatives aimed at men in Spain

Spanish men, in general, are raised with traditional values according to which men are expected to be strong and competitive. At the same time they are, generally speaking, very much dependent on the women in their family or relationship for daily necessities such as food, cleaning and washing. Very little is known about the actual status of men in the household and family. Hardly any statistics are available on this issue and there are very few policies that start from the perspective of men. Nonetheless, a lot of Spanish men (and women alike) feel it is time for change. Men should engage more in care-giving and domestic tasks.

L. Bonino, the Director of the Centre for Studies of the Male Condition in Madrid, is of the opinion that there are big obstacles when it comes to changing the pattern of doing household tasks. Role patterns are quite fixed and men look down on certain tasks. In Bonino's view Spanish men need to learn to do something for others. Mostly they see domestic tasks as a waste of time and men use a lot of excuses to refrain themselves from doing domestic tasks. The strategy of 'excuses' boils down to two lines; firstly, male 'ignorance' when it comes to domestic work and, secondly, the ability of females to give birth to children and thus have a

'natural capability' for caring. Excuses commonly heard are: ‘I don't know how to do that’ and ‘you can do it better’. Women often follow this line of justification, and that is part of the problem, states Bonino. But a solution could also be found here: in a mutual process between men and women of re-negotiating on 'who does what and how'. Men are more responsive to action and for women it would be a good idea to simply stop doing certain tasks. Related to that is the concept of responsibility and standards in quality of running a household. The person feeling responsible will take up tasks more readily and women generally have a different concept of 'clean' than men.

There are initiatives that address men directly and aim for a change of the (non) behaviour described above. We will discuss two such initiatives in this section: male groups and awareness-raising activities at a municipal level. Across the country, groups of men started to come together from the 1980s onwards to discuss the issue of masculinity, men and household, and men within the family, among other topics. These men felt a need for change and they opt for a change of mentality among men. They do this by organising events, such as example courses for men (and women) to break down traditional gender roles. In addition to these groups, and from a more feminist origin and perspective, the House of Women (Casa de la mujer) in the municipality of Alcobendas organises publicity campaigns and courses for men and women. By doing so, they want to draw attention to the role of men in doing (or not doing) domestic tasks, their responsibility towards their family and care-giving tasks and the gender-based division of tasks in the domestic area.

Alcobendas

The Municipality of Alcobendas is a neighbouring town of Madrid. The left-wing government of this municipality places a lot of importance on social issues and gender issues. In 1988 the Council for women was installed, which in turn did a lot for the establishment of the House of Women, which is a formal part of the local government. Equality between men and women, including shared responsibility in the house, and mainstreaming are important issues within local politics.

The House of Women organises activities like workshops and publicity campaigns for the citizens of Alcobendas. They would like to engage not only women in their activities but also men. They came up with the idea of a cooking course for men and a course in doing odd jobs around the house for women. The cooking courses turned out to be very successful. They are now entering the 10th year and a lot of men are interested in attending. The practical part of the course deals with cooking, but also addresses tasks like ironing, cleaning and shopping. The theoretical part covers issues like gender, traditional role patterns between men and women, theory surrounding reconciliation and shared responsibilities. In addition to the courses for men, there are courses for women in doing jobs around the house like carpentry and plumbing. By working with groups of women and men separately, and bringing them together to have dinner at the end of the course, the organisers hope that participants will reach a better understanding of each other's perspectives. At the dinner table issues like role models and socialisation are discussed and it is hoped that the traditional pattern of communication at home will change. ‘Men will be able to talk about cooking and the women can talk about hammers and nails’, states one of the teachers.

A large percentage of the men attending the courses is single: around 10% of men attending are divorced, 20% are youngsters planning to get married or live with their girlfriend and there are some widows and/or pensioners. But the majority of men attending are married men.

The publicity campaigns that the House of Women develops address gender roles, reconciliation and joint responsibility between men and women. Each year, new material is developed by the House of Women. Posters and leaflets and advertisements are created and distributed among the citizens of Alcobendas. For example, recently they developed a campaign inspired by sports. They drew a parallel between domestic tasks (traditionally a female domain) and sporting activities (traditionally a male domain) by making comparisons between washing and basketball, ironing and running and football and washing. Another campaign focuses on the ideas of female versus male 'items' in comparing a comfortable chair against a kitchen tool.

It is hard to measure the effect of these publicity campaigns, but the House of Women believes in the power of discussion and raising awareness, step by step if necessary. These campaigns form an integral part of their programme in which one of the three objectives is: to make citizens aware of the social benefits of changing the traditional role model and changing the stereotypes that exist between men and women.

Male groups raise self-awareness for men

The first male groups started in the 1970s in Scandinavia and in the United States. They convened in order to discuss the 'male condition'. Pretty soon these male groups also emerged in Latin America, Canada, Australia and European countries. In Spain the first male groups emerged in the Eighties of the last century but the movement consolidated throughout the Nineties. These groups have different objectives and range from a 'pro-feminist' character to champions of equality between the sexes and defenders of traditional values and the rights of men as fathers. Within this range, the group covers multiple subjects from different perspectives: male identity, sexology, equality, violence, education, self-awareness, science.

'Ahige' stands for Association of Men for Gender Equality[30] and wants to bring these different groups of men together in a network. They started in the mid-Nineties of the last century as a group of around seven men who wanted to develop their views and ideas concerning masculinity by having a monthly meeting. They considered themselves to be 'male feminists'. Pretty soon this group discovered that there were other groups of men in Spain working on exactly the same issues. They decided to get together and the result was the creation of Ahige in October 2001, an association of groups of men working for gender equality. In more places in Spain male groups have been established, although in the long run it remains to be seen if they can sustain their position and continue to influence the debate on reconciliation and masculinity.

Ahige defines as its core objective the promotion of a society with equality between men and women and without discrimination. Its members would like to bring about a change within men towards a more favourable position towards equality, to actively help men on this issue for the benefit of men as well as women. Their website is an important communication channel in which they exchange information, news, and have discussions and through which

[30] *Translated from: Asociación de hombres por la igualdad de género.*

they bring men together, stimulate the creation of networks and exchange ideas. In workshops Ahige pays attention to self-education and self-development. They educate men on the issues of masculinity, inter-gender relationships and emotions. As their leaflet states: ‘We want to change the traditional model of masculinity that we were all raised with…. We want to construct a new model that is not based on the obligatory male strength, aggression and competitiveness, but rather on equality, justice, and respect and solidarity’.

On a more practical level, and working towards joint responsibility in domestic tasks, Ahige provides cooking courses in which men receive basic training in shopping, cooking and cleaning the kitchen. Participants tend to be men in their thirties with children. Local governments and other institutions ask Ahige to organise these workshops, which indicates a broad interest in the theme of men and reconciliation at local levels. The themes of masculinity and changing roles are woven into the programme and usually automatically come to the fore: who does these tasks in your house? Why do we do things the way we do them? In the courses they therefore try to get a better understanding of roles and arrangements for the participants. Spanish men usually feel they are 'the king' in the house. But in the meantime they are very much dependent on their wife for practicalities like cleaning and cooking. As the Director of Ahige explains: ‘Some men think the house cleans itself. They do not see it as work. During the course they talk about this. Men think they know everything and know it better. During the course they are taught that it is OK to have doubts and not know everything. The idea is also to show men what they can gain in the house: personal autonomy, fatherhood, a better relationship with their partner…. Fatherhood is the key to get to men. That is the first thing they want to fight for at home. Fatherhood means: involvement with your children. Every single day’.

Conclusion: Reconciliation and 'Caring Men' in Spain

In Spain, both men and women are disadvantaged, but in different areas. Women are lagging behind in the labour market, and men in the domestic area. Women have something to gain in the labour market and men have something to gain in the household and in caring for loved ones. However, it is not only an issue of gaining something. Some lowly valued household tasks still have to be done and this problem becomes more urgent when women enter the labour market in larger numbers. Changing the role of men within the household will be a slow process, but efforts are made and fast change for some is possible.

From the described practices we see examples of change from the side of women (entering the labour market) and from the side of men (within the domestic area). It seems that men and women alike feel the need for a change in the male attitude in and around the house in order to improve the situation for both. Innovative initiatives aimed at men are being undertaken through campaigns, courses and other awareness raising activities. Spain is a country where the local level is very active in bringing about social change and this level is also mainly accountable for the greater part of action on reconciliation issues. Activity at a local level is effective in making direct contact and interaction possible. It involves people directly, face to face and in their own local context. Consequences are felt in daily life and a trickle down effect is anticipated in the long run.

The 'reconciliation attack' seems to be an important concept in bringing about change at a local level. Reconciliation does not only take place in the house or in the workplace. It also

needs to be embedded in all kinds of sectors of society: the legal system, local and national politics, social services, social dialogue, companies, schools etc. This concept acknowledges the complexity of social change and takes into account that it is a process that needs to be implemented by many and in many places.

5.4 France: public arrangements and a private issue

Like in many European countries, the two-income model has become the common denominator in France during the last few decades. Two-thirds of all French households (in which the partners are in the active age bracket) have two working partners (Fagnani and Letablier 2003). Most men and women in two-income households work full-time. National policy in France focuses on equal opportunities in the labour market and reconciliation policy for women. Local authorities organise and facilitate reconciliation services.

In France it seems to be difficult to tackle the issue of 'de-gendering', meaning: to stimulate tasks becoming 'beyond gender' and losing their specific male or female connotation. However, researchers who study the role of fathers within the family confirm the development of the 'new father' in France. It seems that by developing policies relating to time and space, France has found a way to create practices to combine working life and family life for both men and women. It is at a local level that most initiatives are found. In the next section, we will first discuss the characteristics of French national policy regarding combining working life and family life. After this we will discuss two examples of local initiatives, in Poitiers and Rennes respectively, and see how local initiatives can help eliminate the gender-based distribution of household tasks.

National policy on combining work and family life

The interest in the role of fathers in the care for children in France is growing (Barrère-Maurisson, Rivier & Marchand, 2000; Fagnani and Letablier, 2003). Fagnani and Letablier (2003) underline that, since the end of the 1990s, the political debate concerning families has changed. During the 1980s family policy focused on the working mother but is now concentrating on parental issues. Below we will see that French policy initially focused mainly on creating arrangements for working mothers and on creating full-time jobs for women. The interest in the role of men within the household and family is a relatively new issue in France.

From the Second World War until the 1960s the main focus of policy regarding family and children was on protection and health. For this reason families received an increased child allowance when having a second child (Allocation de Salaire Unique or ASU). After 1968, policy was oriented towards the combination of professional life and family life. The breadwinner's model moved to the background as women entered the labour market.

In 1977, the so-called parental educational leave (*congé parental d'éducation*) was introduced which consisted of two years unpaid leave for mothers. France had to wait until 1984 before fathers got access to this parental leave as well. During the second half of the Seventies a change was made when a law was introduced that awarded rights and a salary to the childminder or *assistante maternelle* (women taking care of children in their own home), and thus changed it into an official profession. In the Seventies day nurseries expanded and

professionalised and the number of children in day-care centres increased significantly after this. In 1976 26% of all two-year old children attended school and by 1998 this percentage had increased to 35%. The quality of childcare, the expert opinions about the advantages to the children and the pedagogical investments all contributed to reducing the feelings of guilt experienced by working mothers towards their children. Moreover, since the 1950s there has been no cost attached to children attending schools in France and the presence of canteens and childcare facilities meant both parents could be available full-time for the labour market.

Since the 1980s, French policy was oriented towards diminishing the parental costs for childcare, and to develop individual childcare solutions in the fight against unemployment. In 1983 the National Family Allowances Fund (*Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales* or CNAF) started the 'childcare facilities contracts'. These were set up to encourage local authorities to create new facilities for which the CNAF would pay part of the operating costs. This helped to create new childcare places, for example some 20,000 in 1988, although the number still is below the promises made by the government.

Two specific allowances were created early in the 1990s in order to reduce the parental costs for childcare. First of all the 'allowance to ask for a statutory childcare person' (*Aide à la Famille pour l'Emploi d'une Assistante Maternelle Agréée* or AFEAMA) that provides both an allowance and a limited tax reduction. This measure was intended to reduce the black market in childcare, and was accompanied by an increased professionalisation of childminders. The number of families using this service increased from 110,000 in 1991 to 580,000 in 2002. The second initiative consisted of giving an allowance to parents wanting to employ a childcarer at home: the 'allowance for childcare at home' (*L'Allocation de Garde d'Enfant à Domicile* or AGED). It covers part of the social contributions linked to the salary of the employed childminder. Around 60,000 families made use of this allowance in 2002.

Important inequalities persist between men and women in the labour market in France (Méda, 2002). The unemployment rate remains higher for women than for men (10.7% compared to 7.1% in 2001) and more women than men are working part-time (27.1% of women compared to 4.7% of men). Méda concludes that the deepening of the inequalities is largely due to this relatively large proportion of women who work part-time. Also, among the women working part-time there is a large proportion of women who would like to work more but find themselves unable to, for whatever reason. Another reason for the unequal position of women in the labour market is the orientation of women towards socially less valued professions, or professions with few career possibilities. In the service sector and the civil service, for example, women are overrepresented. In addition, there is the well-known 'glass ceiling', the invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching the highest positions in professional organisations. In the five thousand most important French businesses, women only represent 7% of the leading managers.

In the opinion of Méda (2002), French society has not clearly decided to radically adapt its functioning to female professional activity and to working couples. Certainly, France has a high level of childcare services and care services within the school system (early school attendance, canteens, pre-school and after-school activities etc.). But still, the availability of services remains insufficient. On top of that, the initiatives taken to promote the 'free choice' to work or to stay at home are, in practice, keeping women away from the labour market. These instruments are mainly directed towards women and make the option of staying at home to

take care of one's child attractive, causing many women to decide not to enter the labour market (Méda 2002).

Regarding the 'de-gendering' of roles between men and women, it would be important to accept that activities other than paid employment – caring for children, leisure and social activities, household work – have an important value in society. Men and women should be able to articulate and reconcile these different activities equally. Many parties in France find it difficult to translate this idea into policy or even into policy discussion, because it would mean intervening in the private sphere of French citizens, which is seen as a very precarious point.

New time and space policy can, especially at a local level, be used as a way to link labour market policy and family policy and, indirectly, to put reconciliation issues on the agenda. The proliferation of so-called time agencies in French cities is an example of how local policy tries to make reconciliation into an issue for broad societal dialogue. These agencies have their origin in Italy, where women realised that they are the organisers of daily life, including the combination of different spheres of life. In Italy they came to the conclusion that a comprehensive policy approach of time and space issues was needed.

In France equal opportunities for men and women in combining work and family life are not automatically the result of time and space discussions and negotiations. To achieve this objective, a gender-based reflection about the access and uses of public services by men and women (transports, culture, care) has to be developed, which is not always the case. We will illustrate this when we discuss two cases where time and space policy was implemented in the local community: the city of Poitiers and the city of Rennes.

Poitiers: the Time Agency

Poitiers is the capital of the Poitou-Charentes region and the agglomeration of Poitiers has 125,000 inhabitants. The combination of working life and family life is a theme that is very much alive in Poitiers. The idea that fathers should take more care of their children, however, is not seen as a public issue as such. Politicians find it necessary for women to work but they generally believe that women should solve their reconciliation problems themselves because it is considered to be a private matter. The developments in Poitiers followed the same lines as they did at a national level, from provisions for working mothers, via parental support towards space and time policy.

Several surveys concerning the combination of work and family life have been conducted among the women in Poitiers in the last few years. They were intended to find out the women's needs with regard to combining work and family life and how they evaluated their situation with regard to flexible working hours, opening hours and accessibility of public services, quality and availability of childcare provisions, school and school-related activities, and availability and accessibility of public transport. Furthermore, political action consisted of organising meetings and forums regarding time and space arrangements and making sure that equal opportunities and reconciliation remained on the political agenda.

Time Agency

In Poitiers the creation of a so-called Time Agency is an example of the increased focus on reconciliation. This agency is a small unit of the Research & Development division and works

along three lines. The first line concerns consultancy and Research & Development on spatial planning. The second line draws attention to everything that deals with efficient use of time to the public. The third line is concerned with taking initiatives such as improved organisation of childcare during evenings and weekends, a change of opening hours of public services, enabling older people to take care of school children during school holidays and the fine-tuning of bus connections from different areas for late-night shopping. Another initiative the Time Agency instigated is the one-stop-shop at the start of the school year in Poitiers, which is discussed below.

The one-stop-shop at the start of the school year

The one-stop-shop at the start of the school year is essentially a kind of market for parents with school-age children. Parents can find stands offering all the kinds of services they need for their children's school life, from public transport to subscription for school canteens and from pre-school and after-school activities to cultural and sporting activities. Neighbourhood associations also use the one-stop-shop to present themselves to the public. The idea behind this is to enable parents to find, in one place and at one time, all the services their children need for the school year, so taking away the need for them to take a day off to arrange everything. The one-stop-shop is organised in six neighbourhood centres throughout the city.

The one-stop-shop at the start of the school year is partly financed by Equal and partly by the Agglomeration of Poitiers (Communauté d'Agglomération Poitevine). The Equal finance is allocated through a national network of localities, co-ordinated by a non-government agency (AFET) in Paris, with strong links to the Ministerial Spatial Planning Office (DATAR - Délégation de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Aménagement Régional).

Reconciliation and fatherhood in Poitiers

The idea of a thematic annual event at the beginning of the school year, related to the combination of working life and family life is innovative in itself. But the concept of the one-stop-shop in Poitiers cannot simply be exported or copied to other countries, as it is strongly influenced by the local, and French, context. The Time Agency has placed the one-stop-shop under the general topic of 'time and space' policy and therefore does not specifically address the issue of reconciliation. Furthermore, in the case of the one-stop-shop fathers are not explicitly addressed when it comes to combining working life and family life. The employees of the Time Agency think it is unrealistic, in the short term, to try to get fathers involved in childcare issues to such an extent. They consider the involvement of the father 'a bridge too far' for now. They consider it more effective, at the moment, to help women to influence their husbands in taking up household and childcare tasks.

Rennes: changing working hours

Rennes is the tenth-largest city in France and has around 206,000 inhabitants. The overall employment rate in the city of Rennes was 51.5% in 1999 (women: 46.2% / men: 57.9%). The unemployment rate is 13.3%. The number of unemployed people with a higher level of education is relatively high in Rennes: 33.5% has at least two years of post secondary

education. Between 1990 and 1999, 20,000 jobs were created in the city of Rennes. Around 65% of all jobs can be found in the service sector.

The city of Rennes is currently paying a lot of attention to equal opportunities between men and women. Recently, the administrators have taken initiatives regarding the workplace and work situation of parents among their own employees. Next, we will discuss two such examples and we will illustrate how changing working times and working conditions can help to improve the combination of working life and family life.

Equality of times

The Equal project 'Rennes, Equality of times' is initiated by the Time Agency of Rennes. Partners in the project are Audiar (an agency for urban planning), Codespar[31] (a regional social and economic development agency), the Centre for Information on Women's Rights and the University of Rennes. The objective of the project is to equalise times of men and women, firstly by promoting equality in people's professional life, and secondly, by giving men and women the same opportunities in other areas of life, such as family, leisure, politics, associations and trade unions.

As part of the project the needs of the executive and maintenance staff in Rennes have been studied, because these groups of employees represent all the different problems of combining working life and family life: long working hours, atypical work schedules and daily work on different sites. The research was conducted by a consultancy agency (TMO). About eighty employees were interviewed, among them 80% women. Three main results can be mentioned.

Firstly, working hours for women change dramatically with the birth of their first child. A reorganisation of the daily time is necessary and, in some cases, the professional activities of the woman are reduced for one or two years. The high incomes of the executive staff allow them to outsource household tasks; for the maintenance staff, the help of the family is often a solution. Secondly, an important change concerning the stereotyping of household tasks has taken place. In general, the men participate in household tasks. Even if participation is not 50/50, all the men in the survey consider it normal to participate when their wife also has a full-time job. Finally, TMO concluded in their study that the respondents lead very busy lives, sometimes with psychological or physical tiredness, and a feeling of 'never having enough time'. All the people in this survey would like to spend more time with their children.

The Time Agency also has suggestions for possible solutions. A first proposal is to lighten the household tasks of people by means of a larger supply of services. A second proposal consists of starting a dialogue with employers to sensitise them to the difficulties of combining working time and family time. A third proposal is to sensitise all relevant parties (in the field of politics, trade unions, associations, leisure etc.) to the issue of reconciliation. Specific action on redistribution tasks inside the household is not programmed, because the public parties do not feel they can intervene directly in the private sphere. Neither are working fathers addressed as a target group, because in France more and more people are living on their own, with or without children, and therefore policymakers regard measures aimed at working fathers alone as inappropriate.

[31] *Comité de Développement Economique et Social de Pays de Rennes.*

Maintenance personnel in municipal services

In order to set a good example for its private partners, the Rennes City Council decided to start a project that adapts the working hours of its own maintenance staff. In France, this category of employees very often works atypical hours, either part-time or with a few hours in the morning and a few hours in the evening. Combining these working hours with family life is particularly difficult because these hours usually overlap with the time that children have to go to school or come home from school.

The city of Rennes has about fifty persons in their maintenance and cleaning staff. Most of them work part-time, cleaning offices in 47 different locations across town. To increase their working hours, some of these workers have complementary contracts at school canteens to work during lunchtime. In most cases this function of 'maintenance agent' is the first job within the municipality and these employees have low, or no, qualifications. After some time, if people develop their competencies, they can change to other functions within the municipality, for example to work in schools. Furthermore, this service counts with people for whom the Labour Health Service has developed a re-integration plan. For these reasons, the service is confronted with a high level of employee turnover, the employees themselves are generally poorly integrated in the workplace and the absence rate is high.

The traditional working schedule of the maintenance staff (07:00 – 09:00 a.m. and 04:30 – 07:10 p.m.) constitutes very atypical working hours and includes a long break during the day. The Rennes City Council decided to move toward a new way of organising the work by introducing a continuity in daily working hours for the cleaning staff (using full-time contracts where possible), so taking into account the combination of working life and family life on the part of its employees. The City Council aimed to install a work structure that could function as a good example for other public and private employers.

The improvement in working conditions and working hours should result in a better motivation of the staff, so lowering absence rates and increasing productivity. The first results show that absenteeism has indeed decreased by 40%. Furthermore, there is a better integration of the cleaning workers in the working staff of the town, although at first, there was some reticence from the other employees towards the cleaning workers who intervene during their working hours. This reticence has vanished quickly and because of better relations, the quality of service has improved.

Reconciliation and fatherhood in Rennes

With the experiment of changing working hours for cleaning personnel, the city stresses the importance of reconciliation issues and sets a good example for other public and private employers. But there is more. Firstly, the way in which the cleaning work is done is professionalised and upgraded; this creates the opportunity to make the work more gender-neutral. Secondly, the change in working hours for the cleaning staff was made first of all in response to their needs (reconciliation) and their ambitions (full-time permanent contracts, career opportunities). As a side effect, problems of staff turnover and absence were dealt with. And thirdly, the change went into the direction of less atypical working hours and thus created the possibility of awareness building on the issue of reconciliation among all staff.

Conclusions on reconciliation and caring men in France

If one would try and characterise the French situation in relation to the combination of work and family life in a gender perspective, the following conclusions can be drawn. In general, France has a two-income model with full-time work patterns for both partners. Most people prefer full-time jobs, since part-time work is often synonymous with job insecurity. Also, France has made great efforts both in terms of equal opportunities in the labour market and in family policy, more specifically to facilitate reconciliation for women.

Furthermore, we can conclude that local authorities have an important role in organising and facilitating reconciliation services. With the recent development of time and space policies at a local level, there are new opportunities for developing comprehensive reconciliation policies. However, in general it seems difficult within the framework of French political culture to tackle the issue of 'de-gendering' of tasks and promoting a change in the division of roles between men and women. Nonetheless, researchers are studying the role of fathers in relation to the reconciliation issue and they confirm the development of the 'new father' in France as well. The new generation of fathers are (slowly) adapting their professional career to a new division of roles.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed good practices from three European countries pertaining to three types of countries according to our typology as outlined in chapter two: Sweden, Spain and France, respectively of the Nordic, Southern and Continental type. Sweden has a long-standing tradition in the area of men and care and a high level of awareness when it comes to men and reconciliation, whereas in France this awareness is not high or not very much acknowledged as a separate area of public policy attention. Women and men are considered (implicitly) as having the same rights and, in the policy, are treated as such. In Spain the awareness regarding men and their role in the family and the household is also high but of a much more recent date than in Sweden. Action mainly stems from the local level and local protagonists take the lead in opting for change.

On a macro level European policies regarding reconciliation act as a stimulating force for the national level. These policies, for example regarding parental leave, individualised tax schemes and flexible working patterns, were described in chapter two as essential conditions for achieving a more equal distribution of household and family tasks between men and women. In the Nineties the combination of paid work and care has increasingly received attention in all European countries and public and private support has been raised. We have also concluded in chapter two that, when it comes to macro conditions, the Nordic, Continental and Southern countries are growing towards each other, although of course there are differences in the stage of change in which a country finds itself.

If we look at the debate concerning the role of men within the household and family and looking at the good practices we discussed, we can confirm a converging tendency between the different types of countries. We have concluded that where macro conditions are concerned, Sweden has a very well-developed policy at national level, followed by France and Spain. Concerning the issue what men do within the household and family, a classifica-

tion is not as easy to make. Also because policy and practices in this part of the reconciliation issue are still in the making and are therefore constantly subject to change. Below, we go through the main points once again.

Sweden has a long tradition of government intervention and a strong ideology of fatherhood. At a local level, individual fathers and institutions working with families have developed innovative initiatives to involve fathers in the upbringing of their children. A close involvement of men in the family also implies that men take up tasks that have to do with childcare. However, in Sweden neither the ideological debate nor the actions at a local level are focused on the role of men within the household as a matter of course. In a country like Sweden, with a strong gender debate, the practices concerning the role of men within the domestic sphere concentrate mainly on the practices focusing on childcare. An interventionist approach towards who does what within the household does not appear strongly developed in Sweden.

In Spain there has traditionally been an emphasis on the family as the core unit, but when we compare Spain to the other case studies (France and Sweden), we can note that Spain is catching up. It is remarkable that in Spain the discussion is focusing both on the role of men within the household and within the family. Compared to Sweden, in Spain, both in policy and practices, people are focusing strongly on household tasks. In the practices described, we have seen many examples of this. For many years, Spain was lagging behind in gender and reconciliation issues and this situation is probably the reason that Spain is catching up with other countries in Europe at a high speed at the moment. This acceleration in the process of change is probably the reason the Spanish can, more easily than continental and even Nordic countries, expose the role of men within the household. Also interesting in the Spanish case study is the fact that initiatives spring up at local level all over the country. These local practices show the need for change in other levels of society (societal dialogue, legal, national, and maybe even European) as well.

In France macro conditions are rather well-developed, although their ranking is low where flexible working patterns are concerned (see chapter 2). Policy and practices towards changing the gender bias of both childcare and household tasks are difficult to develop in France. This has to do with cultural and political values in France: people are very much convinced of the fact that the government should not intervene in people's private lives. It is easier to change macro conditions, because traditionally France focuses on equality between men and women in the labour market. Arrangements that are in line with labour market policy are therefore more easily created and implemented. In France the role of men within the household is seen as basically a private affair. Besides, in France it is not possible to address working fathers as a target group, since other people (without children or living alone) will feel excluded. At a local level, however, some initiatives are undertaken. But since it is difficult to address the issue of reconciliation and the role of men within the household directly, these initiatives are hidden beneath the activities of the time agencies. All the same, the framework of time and space policy offers the opportunity to start the public debate on fatherhood and the 'de-gendering' of tasks.

6 *A New Policy Agenda*

6.1 Introduction

In this report we have looked at the unequal distribution of household and childcare tasks between women and men in the countries of the European Union. In this closing chapter we will first explain why this unfair distribution is a problem: what objectives do we achieve when men take a larger share in household and childcare tasks? We will then look at the question how such ambitious objectives can best be realised: what macro, meso and micro conditions will need to be met? In this context we will also look at the question who – which actors – can play a role in realising these conditions. In this connection the role of the (European) government deserves particular attention.

6.2 Objectives

The policy of the European Union is aimed at substantially increasing the participation of women in paid employment (in order to strengthen the competitive power of European economies, to limit claims on income support schemes, to increase general support for taxes and social security and to reduce wage claims). Although in some member states the level of participation of women is already high, in all European countries more men than women take part in paid employment. Women, in contrast, carry out more household and childcare tasks in all European countries, even if they are in full-time paid employment. In general men do more at home if their partner has a larger job. The objective of the European Union – increasing employment participation of women – is only realistic if it is accompanied by a substantial increase in men's share in household and childcare tasks (in addition, of course, to options as partly outsourcing household and childcare tasks). In this study we have asked ourselves in what circumstances men make a fair contribution. In some countries (for instance Sweden) and with regard to some tasks (childcare tasks) we can see that men have started to do more in the home. Why did this happen? Why does it happen in one country and not, or less, in other countries?

This focus on men is a logical consequence of the EU objectives, which are aimed at increasing participation: if men do not change, women's employment participation will remain less than men's, *or* women will carry a much heavier load than men if they do bring their employment participation to the level of men, without men taking a fairer share in household and childcare tasks. Ultimately it is mainly a question of *fair sharing* that men make a comparable contribution to household and childcare tasks now that women (are being encouraged to) participate in the employment market.

There can be no truly fair distribution until men also take on the less attractive tasks within a household (cleaning and doing the laundry) as well as the enjoyable jobs (playing with children). When we look at fairness, therefore, the goal is not a balance in *quantity* (how much time) but also *quality* (are the less enjoyable tasks not left for women and who will carry out the tasks that you cannot put off, such as the care for a sick child?).

Does this mean that policies must be aimed at ensuring that both men and women are able and ready to do everything in all areas? We expect some people to respond negatively to this question. Firstly, because they feel it would be an extremely paternalistic (or maybe: maternalistic) attitude on the part of the government, and secondly because some women are already happy if men take on at least *part* of the work that is at present their responsibility; they do not want to ask too much (and some women don't dare/want to leave certain tasks to men, consider the 'management task' in the household). Many men will claim that a strictly equal distribution of tasks is asking too much and will argue that certain tasks are more obviously male tasks (physically heavy tasks) and some tasks are more obviously female (for instance looking after very young children).

As researchers we would like to point out the inherent risks if policies were to refrain from attempting to achieve a fairer (re)distribution of tasks. Indeed, sometimes it seems that women have to be 'glad' that men are at least doing something, which means in practice that men get the opportunity to do the enjoyable things (often things with the children), while certain household tasks (especially tasks such as the laundry) automatically resort to women. The management tasks also remain largely in the hands of women. Although in practice an equal distribution of tasks between men and women may never happen, even for a *fairer* distribution it is essential that policy makers continue to make efforts to ensure that no single task is any longer regarded as specifically male or female. That is the main outcome of this study: to start up a process of a more fair distribution of tasks between men and women, it is important that all tasks become 'beyond gender'.

The argument that some tasks are inevitably carried out by men because of the physical strength required is not borne out by practice. For instance, if this were the case, how have women been able to do heavy laundry by hand for centuries? Moreover, differences in physical strength hardly play a role anymore now that household work is largely mechanised and automated. Apart from breast-feeding, other biological arguments for a gender based division of household tasks turn out to be culturally determined traditions as we can learn from exceptional cases like male homosexual couples with children that show that men are just as suited to bring up very young children as women are.

Sometimes it is not clear whether men do not want to carry out care-giving tasks because they consider them to be 'unmanly' or because they feel these tasks are not, or less, important. In the first instance, focusing on the 'de-gendering' of household and childcare tasks is a suitable route (see below). However, in some cases it is not so much the man's unwillingness to carry out a certain task, but rather the fact that he could not see why certain tasks had to be carried out. It would be unfair to say this was just an excuse (although we did hear quite some excuses). It has been shown that the tolerance for dirt of men is often higher than that of women; for instance, women feel that clothes need to be washed much sooner than men do. As men start to participate more in these kinds of tasks, it may be expected that these differences will partly disappear. Insofar as the differences are not fading away, women can be expected to be a little more accommodating regarding certain tasks: a fair distribution

of tasks also means that men and women can negotiate about which frequency of certain tasks is acceptable to both.

The endeavour to achieve a fair(er) (re)distribution of care tasks does not necessarily imply that the tasks are carried out in an identical manner by men and women. Men and women will have to carry out these tasks in their own way (whereby there can just as well be differences between the way different women do the same job or different men do the same job) Even if the ultimate objective is for everyone, in principle, to be able to do everything (so tasks become gender-neutral, that still will not mean there are not different ways to carry out the tasks (within a fair task distribution there will be even more room for individual differences).

The question is no longer *whether* men will take on certain tasks – because the policy objective is that, in principle, everyone can carry out every task – but what is a desirable distribution for men *and* women. Arguments currently occurring at the kitchen table because women are in a position where they have to ask, will be replaced by more equal kitchen table conversation in which the starting point is the fact that each partner can take on a fair share, as all tasks have become divisible.

In this new situation women will have the option to refuse to be the only person who carries out certain tasks any longer: her freedom of choice increases. However, this is insufficient reason to primarily argue for a fairer distribution of such tasks in terms of increased 'freedom of choice' and 'diversity''. Based on the perspective we use here – in which the EU objective of increasing labour participation of women is the focal point – for men it is mostly a question of *taking responsibility and sharing tasks more fairly*.

6.3 Methods

How can governments contribute to this fair distribution of tasks, in other words: how can EU governments respond to the important mechanisms we have outlined in the chapters above?

Macro

In the first place by providing good facilities at the macro level, as outlined in chapter 2, so that men can take on more care tasks and women can take on more paid work. These facilities may relate to leave entitlements on an individual basis (as an incentive for men to take on their fair share), life course policy, flexible working practices, tax advantages and other financial arrangements for dual-income families sharing care responsibilities, extended shopping hours (as the shopping example showed), and accessible childcare.

Some of these measures (such as childcare facilities) are aimed mainly at giving women the opportunity to do more paid work outside the home, whereas others (such as parental leave) are aimed more at 'getting men more at home'. This last category of measures, which result in men being at home more while women are absent, have, in practice, shown to make an important contribution to a fairer distribution of tasks. The simple fact of being at home makes men take on tasks they would normally not tackle if their wife is around. Research has shown that even men with relatively traditional gender opinions will, in practice, carry out household tasks if their wife is not at home (this research also showed that men with

progressive ideas will actually do less in practice). It is not the fact that women are doing paid work that makes men take on a fair share of the tasks; this only occurs if the fact that women work outside the home is combined with men being at home.

As indicated in chapter 2, in some cases it may be worth considering to give men certain specific rights that have a stimulating effect on their taking on care responsibility, such as giving men more 'paid child days' than women. This goes beyond the essential step of individualising leave arrangements (in other words, no longer allocating leave to 'a household' as, in practice, this nearly always means that women take this leave, also because they are most often the person with the lower income). Such measures must preferably be taken in a EU context. They are expensive to implement, especially if leave arrangements are (partly) paid and wage-related; characteristics of leave arrangements that, in our view, are essential to push men across the line. However, the ultimate economic 'return on investment' of these measures will be considerable: it makes it possible for women to participate in the employment market on a permanent basis.

Why should the (European) government get involved in the distribution of household and childcare tasks – for instance by giving men financial encouragement to take on their responsibilities? In the first place because the European Union and many national governments have an explicit policy of stimulating labour participation of women: this policy will not ultimately be fair if men do not contribute more to household and childcare tasks at home. In the second place because the government is already 'involved' in care arrangements: after all, allocating leave entitlement to a family is also a policy with far-reaching consequences. The debate is not *whether* the government should get involved in a fair distribution of paid and unpaid work, but how it gets involved: by focusing on men taking responsibility or by maintaining, if not increasing, the double load on women? Let's look at France as an example, a country where many women work full-time but where men only take a very modest share in childcare tasks, let alone household tasks. In France, perhaps more than in other European countries, there is an aversion to government involvement in 'private affairs': is it right for the government to get involved in the distribution of care tasks? A good argument in favour of this involvement is the double load carried by French women who spend many hours in paid employment and also take on the lion's share of the childcare and household tasks (or manage the organisation and outsourcing of these tasks). As, in nearly all French households, the outcome of private kitchen table discussions is that women have to do much more, than it turns out that this is a *social* phenomenon that has little to do with private circumstances and requires social and/or political action.

At the same time the French tradition indicates the boundaries of an (overly) interventionist government: it appears more important to strengthen the negotiating position of women at the kitchen table than to intervene directly in the exact distribution of tasks between men and women. In the French context, too, it is therefore extremely relevant that all household and childcare tasks become 'beyond gender'. This makes private negotiations at the kitchen table more fair from the start.

One last matter in relation to macro measures is the legitimacy of working with target groups, in this case measures that are aimed specifically at men. Single mothers, for instance, benefit little from measures that encourage men to be at home more often. However, the fact that not all women benefit from measures that encourage men to do their fair share of care tasks does not seem a decisive argument, as the vast majority of women do

benefit. Furthermore, some of the aforementioned measures benefit all parents bringing up children: affordable and high-quality childcare facilities also benefit single mothers and can even focus on this group in particular. Moreover, specific measures for men will have a temporary (stimulating) character.

Meso and micro

This 'de-gendering' cannot be initiated only by measures at the macro level. As our detailed analyses of the tasks of doing the laundry, doing the shopping and visiting the baby clinic made clear, measures at the micro and meso level are also required. Many obstructions for doing household tasks can especially be found at the micro level. Although it is difficult to influence behaviour at this level, government campaigns and communication strategies can nonetheless do a number of things:

- The research shows that men will take on tasks that form part of a chain. If the man is doing the cooking, it becomes normal for him to compile the shopping list and do the shopping. Childcare is also increasingly becoming a responsibility for fathers and this makes it more likely that they will get involved in the availability of clean children's clothes, i.e. doing the laundry (*chain approach*);
- Encouraging tolerance by showing best practices in which men are allowed to make *mistakes.*

In baby clinic visits the issue is mainly the quality of child raising, the value people attach to being involved with their child(ren). The baby clinic can respond to this by trying to stimulate men and women attending together. This means that influencing behaviour is not just a task for governments – *public and professional organisations*, too, play an important role. The authority of a baby clinic physician will often be greater than encouragement on the part of the government via a publicity campaign.

The example of the baby clinic was also instructive because it indicated a possible restriction to our strategy aimed at 'fair sharing'. In a number of cases the *joint* execution of tasks will also be experienced by women as a lightening of her (previously exclusive) responsibilities, especially in tasks where consultation and 'understanding' are important (such as receiving good tips on child raising). The issue, therefore, is not always the most efficient distribution of tasks – in the context of a fair share on the part of men it may also be *sharing* tasks that is important.

6.4 Back to the future

Sharing tasks also touches on another point we would like to raise in this last chapter: the phasing of the necessary steps to come to a more fair share of men in household and childcare tasks. In view of the major structural and cultural changes required to achieve a fair share on the part of men (and women), it is clear that this is a long-term endeavour, which involves many parties (in the first place all men and women who run a household together, but also non-government organisations, public and professional organisations and govern-

ments and other authorities). It is wise to think about phasing the objectives that need to be achieved: maybe men would and could initially take on child-related care tasks, before starting to participate in the less enjoyable household tasks? Would it be a good interim step (see above) to first carry out a number of tasks *jointly*, before arriving at a fair *distribution* (for many tasks)? We cannot give definite answers to these questions on the basis of this study. It is notable, however, that in most countries the choice was made to address men mainly as 'fathers', so emphasising their involvement in childcare tasks over household tasks. This *may* be a good strategy, but we cannot be certain. In the first place: if men are 'tempted' in this manner with the argument that their existence is 'enriched' by doing tasks at home, they will be quick to point out to their wives that this does not apply to the less enjoyable work ('I didn't take parental leave for this'). More important, however, is that by addressing men as 'fathers' and suggesting that they are invaluable to the upbringing of their children because of their special, 'male' qualities, a traditional image of masculinity and femininity is in fact being reproduced. Although in some situations and with regard to specific groups (for instance some migrants) this can be an important step, we tend to conclude that gender-confirming strategies can be used only as a temporary strategy. In the end, it is the most productive to combine the strategy of 'de-gendering' household and childcare tasks with a broad debate about masculinity and femininity (also on the 'subject side'). After all, if people themselves have less rigid ideas about femininity and masculinity this would contribute to a more equal distribution of childcare and household tasks. In reverse, 'de-gendering' of tasks may contribute to a more relaxed view about what 'men' and 'women' are and what they are 'supposed' to do. In this report we have referred to this strategy as the 'difference strategy'. In this strategy, care tasks are no longer male or female; men (and women) can do everything equally. But this does not yet mean that caring in its entirety becomes 'beyond gender': after all, both men and women are providing the care, which means that male and female forms of providing care will continue to exist.

In a number of European countries – northern *and* southern, eastern *and* western – this discussion is already in progress: in addition to the necessary conditions for achieving a disassociation between certain tasks and gender, there is also a lively debate about masculinity and femininity. In Sweden, for instance, there are programmes for gender education, while in Spain the traditional male ideology is being 'questioned' in a number of ways. In the Netherlands a large-scale multimedia campaign addresses men about their responsibilities – the campaign claims that there is no single valid argument (cultural, economic or biological) why men should not take a fair share in all care tasks. Needless to say, these awareness campaigns and communication strategies must pay attention to the differences between men as well: poor or wealthy, poorly educated or highly educated and, where relevant, ethnic or autochthonous. Not all men are in the same situation – but all men can be addressed about their responsibilities.

For the European Union the aforementioned results are interesting and inspiring – if only because of the encouraging results. A lot has been set in motion in this area. Even in an area with as many deep-rooted convictions as the relationships between men and women, masculinity and femininity, it has been shown that many things are changeable. The tremendous cultural wealth of Europe shows us, on the one hand, that there are differences, and, on the other hand, that there is a parallel trend toward a more equal distribution of both work and care tasks between men and women in all countries of the European Union.

6.5 A recipe for change

In bringing about change the following is recommended:

1 *Introduce paid and individualised parental leave*
Our research has shown that when men are at home ‘alone' with their children, they are most inclined to carry out childcare and household tasks. Parental leave has a stimulating effect on men taking up care responsibilities. Research has made clear that men are most tempted to use parental leave if it is a paid arrangement and if the right to parental leave is a non-transferable individual entitlement.

2 *Introduce high quality paternity leave*
In order to tempt fathers to carry out care-giving activities, it is important to involve fathers right after the birth of their child. To this end many countries of the European Union have introduced paid paternity leave. The duration of the leave, however, differs: in Finland fathers are entitled to an eighteen days leave; in Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom they have ten workdays leave; in France, paternity leave allows fathers to take eleven days off; in Portugal five days; Belgium has ten days in the private sector, and four days in the public sector; Spain and the Netherlands have two days.

3 *Activate professionals*
In Sweden health care centres have set up training courses for young fathers with the objective to teach them practical skills in caring for a child and in developing a greater sense of responsibility for their child(ren). The professional advice of a physician has proven to be a great encouragement for fathers to take part in care-giving activities. The same applies to professionals working in day-care centres, schools and maternity care.

4 *Raise awareness by school programmes and education*
In the 1990s the Swedish government has started a project in order to broaden the scope of gender roles of boys and girls. Girls need to be better prepared for entering the labour market and a change of mentality for girls and boys is needed. For boys especially, since a future labour market will no longer have its focus on physical power in the industrial sector, but rather on more service-oriented competencies in the services sector. Since the Swedish example can not directly be imported to other countries of the European Union, it is recommended to research the possibilities of how to change the traditional gender roles of (certain) school children and their parents.

5 *Start a societal dialogue*
To encourage change for working fathers and caring men a broad public support is essential. Therefore, it is important to detect stakeholders and to stimulate their co-operation at different levels. Organise a societal dialogue with employers, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) et cetera in order to sensitise them to the difficulties of combining working time and family time for men and fathers, and start a communication campaign directed at these actors.

6 Keep 'men and the issue of reconciliation' on the agenda

In many countries of the European Union the debate on men and their balance of working life & family life has only just begun. In some countries policy makers has started the discussion on the care-giving potential of men by addressing men as fathers and by emphasising their valuable role in the education of their children. This, however, can not be the end of the discussion. If we expect men to take their share in all household activities, in a second phase, the focus of the discussion will have to shift to enlarging the household participation of men. Therefore, a broad societal debate on masculinity and femininity will have to take place.

7 More knowledge on men and the work-life balance is needed

Research on working fathers and caring men has only recently started in the countries of the European Union. Not much is known yet about the differences between men and about specific target groups, such us certain migrants. To bring about change for these groups as well, future research into their traditional gender roles is needed.

Appendix 1 Leave Schemes in the European Union

Table I Statutory Maternity Leave in the European Union, 2001-2002 (first child)

	Duration	*Prior to expected date of birth*	*After the expected date of birth*	*Cash benefits*
Austria	16 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	To the amount of the average net income of the last 13 weeks or 3 months
Belgium *	15 weeks	1 week [a]	8 weeks	82% of wages (without ceiling) in the first 30 days, and 75% of wages (up to ceiling) for remaining period. Maximum € 95,37 per day (01-09-2000)
Denmark	18 weeks	4 weeks	14 weeks	90% of previous pay with a maximum of € 394 per week
Finland **	105 days [b]	30-50 days		The amount is determined on the basis of income earned, being at least € 269 per month (01-05-2000). Being on average 60% of an employees pay
France	16 weeks	6 weeks	10 weeks	Net salary with ceiling. Maximum: € 61 per day. Minimum: € 7.53 per day
Germany	14 weeks	6 weeks	8 weeks	Average net wage of insured person with maximum of € 13 per day [c]
Greece	112 days	56 days	56 days	Net salary with ceiling. Maximum € 36 per day
Ireland	18 weeks[d]	at least 4 weeks	at least 4 weeks	70% of average weekly earnings. Minimum € 141.60 maximum € 232.40 per week (01-01-2004)
Italy	5 months	1 or 2 months	3 or 4 months	80% of last earnings
Luxembourg	16 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	100% of the salary
Netherlands	16 weeks	6-4 weeks	10-12 weeks	100% of the daily wage. Maximum daily wage € 153
Portugal	120 days		At least 90 days	100% of the average daily wages
Spain	16 weeks		At least 6 weeks	100% of earnings
Sweden***	50 days [e]	50 days		80% of the qualifying income
United Kingdom	26 weeks [f]			90% of earnings (with no upper limit) for the first six weeks. For the remaining 20 weeks

(2002)****				flat-rate payment: € 142 per week

Notes:
[a] The week immediately preceding delivery is compulsory, the remaining 6 weeks can be taken before the birth or after the birth or divided before and after the birth.
[b] The duration of maternity leave is 88 workdays (105 days including Saturdays, except Sundays), which amounts to slightly more than 17 weeks.
[c] Difference covered by supplement paid by employer (in case of suppression of this supplement complement paid by the state). Women employees who are not insured receive a maximum of € 205.
[d] Women are also entitled to take up to a further 8 weeks maternity leave, but this period is not covered by maternity benefit.
[e] This is called the pregnancy benefit. In Sweden there exists no maternity leave as such. With the introduction of the parental leave in 1974, the maternity leave ceased to exists. Leave after the birth of a child is part of the parental leave period. It is possible to take 60 days leave before birth, 50 days are covered by the pregnancy benefit, while payments for the other 10 days must come from the parental leave allowance.
[f] Employees who have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks by the beginning of the 14th week before the expected week of child birth are entitled to a further 26 weeks of (unpaid) additional maternity leave.

Main source:
MISSOC, Mutual information system on social protection, *Social Protection in the EU Member States and the European Economic Area. Situation on 1st January 2001*

Additional sources:
* Beknopt overzicht van de sociale zekerheid in België 2001.
Online: http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/overzicht/index.htm
** Kansaneläkelaitos (KELA – The social Insurance Institution of Finland) A Guide to benefits 2001
*** Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (April 2002) *Swedish family policy*.
Online: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/famchild/index.htm
**** Department of Trade and Industry Employment Relations.
Online: http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/individual/legislation.htm

Table II Statutory Paternity Leave in the European Union, 2001-2002

	Duration	*Payment*
Austria [a]	-	-
Belgium *	10 days (workers in the private sector and contract workers (i.e. non-civil servants) in the public sector 4 days (public sector)	In the private sector the employer pays the first three days of the leave at 100% of earnings. The remaining seven days will come out of the budget of the National Health and Disability Insurance Institute and will be paid at 82% of earnings up to a maximum level (this new rule came into force on 1 July 2002). In the public sector leave is paid at 100% of earnings
Denmark (2002)	10 days	90% of previous pay with a maximum of € 430 per week
Finland **	18 workdays (including Saturdays)[b]	The amount is determined on the basis of income earned, on average 60% of an employee's pay, and at least € 10.09 a day (2002)
France ***	14 days [c]	100% of gross pay up to a ceiling
Germany	-	-
Greece	-	-
Ireland	-	-
Italy	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-
Netherlands ****	2 days	100% of earnings [d]
Portugal	5 days	100% of the average daily wages
Spain *****	2 days [e]	100% of earnings
Sweden	10 days [f]	80% of the qualifying income
United Kingdom ******	14 days	flat rate payment £ 100 (€ 143) per week

Notes:
[a] There is no legal entitlement, although collective agreements generally ensure that fathers are eligible to 10 days off work at the time of their child's birth and receive full earnings replacement.
[b] The paternity allowance is divided between two periods: 6-12 days while the maternity allowance is paid to the mother and 6 days during the maternity or parental allowance period. Starting form 1-10-2001, the paternity allowance rules will become more flexible, as fathers can take their 18 allowance days in as many as four periods at any time during the maternity or parental allowance period. The paternity leave can be extended by 1-12 weekdays if the father takes the last 12 weekdays of parental leave. The extension must be taken in a single period immediately following the parental leave.
[c] 11 days to be taken during 4 months after birth and 3 days to be taken immediately after the birth.
[d] However, paternity leave, in terms of right, payment and duration is of a so called three-quarter mandatory legal nature, i.e. deviation from the standard legal provision is allowed by way of collective agreement or a decision of the employees council.
[e] The father can take the last four weeks (or less) of the maternity leave if the mother transfers this right to him.
[f] This can be covered through the temporary leave programme.

Main sources:
MISSOC, Mutual information system on social protection, *Social Protection in the EU Member States and the European Economic Area. Situation on 1st January 2001*
Moss, P. and F. Deven (eds) (1999) *Parental leave: Progress or Pitfall*

Additional Sources:
[*] Rijksinstituut voor Ziekte- en Invaliditeitsverzekering (RIZV). Vaderschapsverlof en adoptieverlof. Wet van 10 augustus 2001 betreffende de verzoening van werkgelegenheid en kwaliteit van het leven. Online: http://riziv.fgov.be/news/nl/news020814.htm
[**] Kansaneläkelaitos (KELA – The social Insurance Institution of Finland) *A Guide to benefits 2001*
[***] Eironline. Online: http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/index.html
[****] Work and Care Act. Online: http://wetten.sdu.nl/cgi-bin/login/anonymous/
[*****] Escobedo, A., Work family arrangements in Spain: family adjustments to labour market imbalances. In: L. den Dulk (1999) *Work-family arrangements in Europe*
[******] Department of Trade and Industry Employment Relations. Online: http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/individual/legislation.htm

Table III Statutory Parental Leave in the European Union, 2001-2002						
	Right	*Payment*	*Maximum duration*	*Part-time*	*Spread*	*Age of child*
Austria (2002)	family	flat-rate benefit payment of € 14.53 per day [a]	30-36 months	Yes	no	0-2 year
Belgium*	individual	€ 536,65 per month (2002)	3 months	Yes	no	0-4 year
Denmark (2002)	Individual (duration) family (payment) [b]	Calculated upon the basis of the hourly wage of the worker with a maximum of € 430 per week	32 weeks	Yes	yes	0-9 years
Finland**	family	The amount is determined on the basis of income earned, being at least € 269 per month (01-05-2000). Being on average 60 % of an employees pay.	26 weeks (158 working days including Saturdays)	No	no	0-2 year
France	family	none [c]	3 years	Yes	yes	0-3 year
Germany***	family	€ 307 per month [d]	36 months [e]	Yes	yes	0-3 year
Greece	individual	none	3 months	No	no	0-3 ½ year
Ireland	individual	none	14 weeks	Yes	yes	0-5 year
Italy****	family	30% of last earnings	10 months [f]	No	no	0-8 year
Luxembourg****	individual	flat-rate benefit payment of € 1611 per month [g]	6 months	Yes	no	0-5 year
Netherlands*****	individual	none	13 weeks [h]	Yes	yes [i]	0-8 year
Portugal	individual	none	3 months	No	no	0-3 year
Spain	individual	none	3 years	No	no	0-3 year
Sweden******	mixed [j]	390 days 80% of the qualifying income with a maximum of 7,5 x base amount (base amount in 2002 € 3981,40) During the final 90 days a fixed amount of € 6,30 per day	480 days [k]	Yes	yes	0-9 year
United Kingdom*******	individual	None	13 weeks [l]	Yes	yes	0-5 year

Notes:

[a] For children born on or after 1 January 2002 this child care allowance replaces the previous system of parental leave allowances. The new child care benefit has introduced a number of changes: the group of persons eligible for the benefit was substantially enlarged (now also including students and housewives/housemen) and the maximum period of entitlement was prolonged by one year (from 24 months to a maximum of 36 months). However, the basic difference between the two benefits is that the childcare allowance is based on the child and his/her needs, whereas the parental leave benefit depended on such parental criteria as employment. Child care allowances are payable until the child reaches the age of 36 months, or until the child reaches the age of 30 months if the father is not taking 6 months leave.

[b] In march 2002 the government amendment of the existing legislation concerning maternity and parental leave was accepted. Under the new law several changes has been made: the childcare leave scheme was abolished, instead a period of 32 weeks of parental leave can be used by both parents. In fact this parental leave is part of the maternity/childbirth leave, but with this difference that the leave of 32 weeks may be taken by either the father or the mother (individual right). The benefit, however, is frozen to the amount paid for 32 weeks (family right).

[c] Parental leave is unpaid. However, it is possible to be on parental leave and also receive a child rearing benefit, if the parent is eligible. Parents can also receive a flat-rate benefit payment only if they have two or more children. In 2000 the amount was € 469 a month. This benefit is provided until the youngest child reaches the age of three years.

[d] Families can claim child raising allowances during the child's first six months only if there annual family income does not exceed the upper income limit. For married couples who are not permanently separated and who have one child the limit is € 51,129 a year, for single parents the limit is € 38,347. The income limits are roughly comparable with a net income of the same amount after tax and deductions. From the seventh month of child's life onwards, the upper income limit is reduced in the case of married couples and whose income exceeds € 16,464 a year and in the case single parents whose income exceeds € 13,498. These income limits are increased with € 2,454 for each further child of the eligible person.

[e] There is a disparity between the duration of the parental leave ('Elternzeit') and the duration of the child raising allowance ('Erziehungsgeld'). De duration of the leave is three years, but the benefit is only paid for two years. Since 1 January 2001 parents have the opportunity to choose a shorter period of only one year of childcare payments, whereby the monthly payments increases from € 307 to € 460.

[f] This could be extended to 11 months if the father takes at least 3 months leave.

[g] Parental leave is thus paid for one parent, with a guarantee of re-employment. Without this guarantee one parent can opt to receive a flat-rate benefit payment over 22 months at € 412 per month.

[h] The leave entitlement is calculated in hours and equals thirteen times the average weekly working time. In principle, the standard regulation provides a 6-month entitlement to part-time leave, which corresponds to a full-time leave of 13 weeks. From 1 July 1997 the leave can be taken full time or the leave can be spread over a period of more than 6 months.

[i] Since the introduction of the Work and Care Act in 2001 it is possible to split up the period of parental leave, with a maximum of three times. However, the employer can refuse the request for spreading or splitting up the leave if this were in conflict with important business interests.

[j] A parent may transfer her or his days to the other parent (family right), except for the 60 days called the mum's or dad's months (individual right).

[k] From the 1st of January 2002 the parental benefit in connection with childbirth consist of 480 days. An extra month was added. Since then two months (and no longer one month) are reserved for the father as well as the mother. These changes apply to all children born from the 1st of January 2002.

[l] A person is entitled to unpaid parental leave if they have acquired parental responsibility for a child born or adopted after 15 December 1999 provided that they have one year of continuous service with their employer.

Main sources:

Moss, P. and F. Deven (eds) (1999) *Parental leave: Progress or Pitfall*

Bruning, G. and J. Plantenga, Parental leave and equal Opportunities: experiences in Eight European countries, *Journal of Social Policy*, 1999, p. 195-209

MISSOC, Mutual information system on social protection, *Social Protection in the EU Member States and the European Economic Area. Situation on 1st January 2001*

Additional sources:

* Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening. Online: http://www.rva.fgov.be/MenuNL.htm

** Kansaneläkelaitos (KELA – The social Insurance Institution of Finland) *A Guide to benefits 2001*

*** Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugund (2001) *Erziehungsgeld, Elternzeit*

**** Eironline. Online: http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/index.html

***** Work and Care Act. Online: http://wetten.sdu.nl/cgi-bin/login/anonymous

****** Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (January 2001*) Swedish family policy*

******* Department of Trade and Industry Employment Relations. Online: http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/individual/legislation.htm

Table IV Other forms of leave, 2001-2002					
	Kind of leave	*Right*	*Payment*	*Duration*	*Age of child*
Belgium	Career leave (public sector)	Individual	€ 323,78 per month (1-01-2002)	Min. 3 months, Max. 12 months Max. 6 times	
	Time credit (private sector)	Individual	€ 368,86 € 515,82 (5 years of employment history)	Min. 3 months Max. 12 months [a]	
Finland	Child home care allowances	Family	child home care allowances monthly [b] 1 child < 3 years € 252,28 each additional child < 3 years € 84, 09 child > 3 years < 7 years € 50,46 (1-01-2002)	2 years	1-3 year
The Nether-lands	Career Interruption Financing Scheme	Individual	€ 490 per month (2004)	Min. 2 months, max. 6 months Max. 3 times	

Notes:
[a] This time credit may be extended to a maximum of five years by agreement at the sectoral or company level.
[b] The allowance is only available if the family does not opt for municipal day care or private child-care allowance to arranges child care. In addition to the basic allowances, family may also receive a supplement, depending on income and family size. It is only paid for one child and the maximum amount is € 168,19 per month. Child home care allowance is taxable income and is funded by local authorities. Partial home care allowance is payable to a gainfully employed parent of a child under the age of three, if the parent's average working week does not exceed 30 hours due to child care. The amount of partial home care allowances is € 63 per month.

Sources:
Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening. Online: http://www.rva.fgov.be/MenuNL.htm
Eironline. Online: http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/index.html
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Appendix 2 Typology and Realisation of Tasks

In this appendix the tables show for the three groups of exceptional practices how household and family tasks can be characterised (as male, female, or gender neutral) and by who a certain task is performed (man, partner or a third person). The respondents have filled in a list of questions on the basis of a list of detailed tasks. The respondents were asked to characterise the tasks on the list and they were asked to answer the question who does what in their own household. In all, 61 household and family tasks were put on the list. In the tables in this appendix we present the results according to each exceptional practice: teleworkers, shiftworkers and homosexual fathers. The tasks are divided into four groups of tasks: household tasks, care tasks, supporting tasks and tasks that have to do with managing and organising the household and family.

Teleworkers

Typology of tasks

Table 1 Typology of household tasks

		M	M/F	F
1. Daily shopping	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1
2. Weekly shopping	M	1	8	1
	W	-	9	1
3. Cooking on weekdays	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1
4. Cooking in the weekend	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1
5. Laying/clearing the table	M	1	9	-
	W	-	10	-
6. Doing the dishes	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
7. Clearing out the dishwasher	M	1	8	-
	W	-	9	-
8. Cleaning the mess	M	-	10	1
	W	-	9	-
9. Vacuum the house	M	1	9	-
	W	-	9	1
10. Cleaning the bathroom	M	1	6	3
	W	-	8	2
14. Doing the laundry	M	-	4	6
	W	-	6	4
15. Hangout the washing	M	-	8	2
	W	-	8	2
16. Folding up the wash	M	-	5	5
	W	-	7	3
17. Putting the wash away	M	-	4	6
	W	-	6	4
18. Ironing	M	2	4	4
	W	-	5	5
19. Making the beds	M	1	8	1
	W	-	9	1
20. Changing sheets	M	1	8	1
	W	-	8	-
21. Watering plants	M	1	5	4
	W	1	6	3
22. Gardening	M	1	7	2
	W	2	6	2
23. Mending clothes	M	1	4	5
	W	-	3	7

		M	M/F	F
11. Cleaning the toilet	M	1	5	4
	W	-	8	2
12. Cleaning the kitchen	M	-	6	4
	W	-	8	2
13. Mopping floors	M	1	7	2
	W	-	8	2
24. Putting outside the dustbin	M	3	7	-
	W	-	9	1
25. Doing odd jobs about the house	M	5	4	-
	W	7	3	-
26. Doing the windows	M	2	6	2
	W	-	6	4

There is a non response for the tasks 7, 20 en 25

Table 2 Typology of care tasks

		M	M/F	F
1. Changing diapers	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
2. Bottle feed the baby	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
3. Washing & dressing the child(ren)	M	-	7	3
	W	-	10	-
4. Walking with the buggy	M	-	9	1
	W	-	10	-
5. Taking child(ren) to childcare/school	M	-	9	1
	W	-	10	-
6. Picking up child(ren) from childcare/school	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
7. Bathing child(ren)	M	1	9	-
	W	-	10	-
8. Bringing child(ren) to bed	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
9. Comfort a crying child during the night	M	-	7	3
	W	-	9	1
10. Taking child(ren) to a club	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
11. Visiting the baby clinic	M	-	8	2
	W	-	9	1
12. Attending child(ren) to doctor or specialist	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	1

Table 3 Typology supporting tasks

		M	M/F	F
1. Reading or story telling	M	1	9	-
	W	-	10	-
2. Keeping children entertained (play-fighting, playing, joking around)	M	1	9	-
	W	1	9	-
3. Going on outings with the child(ren)	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
4. Helping child(ren) with their homework	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
5. Keeping an eye on the child(ren)	M	1	8	1
	W	-	10	-
6. Reprimand of punish a child	M	1	9	-
	W	-	10	-
7. Comfort the child(ren)	M	-	9	1
	W	-	10	-
8. Talking with the child about his/her problems	M	-	8	2
	W	-	10	-
9. Attending parents' evenings	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
10. Giving philosophical education	M	-	-	-
	W	1	-	-
11. Giving sex education	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	-
12. Making decisions about choice of school	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
13. Deciding what the child(ren) may of may not do	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-

Table 4 Typology of management tasks

			M	M/F	F
1.	Organisation and planning of purchases, outings	M	-	8	2
		W	-	7	3
2.	Organising and preparing activities (such as buying presents, registering for swimming lessons, school registration)	M	-	5	5
		W	-	7	3
3.	Arranging childcare/babysitters	M	-	6	4
		W	-	8	2
4.	Maintaining contact with the school	M	-	8	2
		W	-	10	-
5.	Maintaining contact with the neighbours	M	-	10	-
		W	-	10	-
6.	Maintaining contact with family and friends	M	-	9	1
		W	-	10	-
7.	Deciding about household expenditures	M	-	10	-
		W	-	9	1
8.	Arranging insurance	M	3	6	1
		W	2	7	1
9.	Managing rent of mortgage affairs	M	2	7	1
		W	3	6	1
10.	Paying the bills	M	2	7	1
		W	1	8	1

Realisation of tasks

Table 5 Realisation of household tasks

			M	M/W	W	3e*
1.	Daily shopping	M	-	5	5	-
		V	-	5	4	-
2.	Weekly shopping	M	2	4	4	-
		W	2	3	4	-
3.	Cooking on weekdays	M	-	5	5	-
		W	1	2	7	-
4.	Cooking in the weekend	M	3	3	4	-
		W	3	4	3	-
5.	Laying/clearing the table	M	1	7	1	1
		W	-	8	-	2
6.	Doing the dishes	M	-	5	-	-
		W	1	4	1	-
7.	Clearing out the dishwasher	M	-	8	1	-
		W	-	8	-	-
8.	Cleaning the mess	M	1	5	4	-
		W	1	7	2	-
9.	Vacuum the house	M	-	5	2	3
		W	-	4	3	3
10.	Cleaning the bathroom	M	1	1	3	5
		W	2	-	2	6
14.	Doing the laundry	M	-	3	7	-
		W	1	2	7	-
15.	Hangout the washing	M	-	4	6	-
		W	1	4	5	-
16.	Folding up the wash	M	-	2	7	1
		W	-	3	6	1
17.	Putting the wash away	M	-	2	8	-
		W	-	2	8	-
18.	Ironing	M	3	2	4	1
		W	1	3	3	3
19.	Making the beds	M	-	6	2	1
		W	-	5	1	3
20.	Changing sheets	M	-	5	3	2
		W	-	5	3	2
21.	Watering plants	M	2	2	6	-
		W	3	1	5	-
22.	Gardening	M	1	3	6	-
		W	2	2	6	-
23.	Mending clothes	M	-	2	5	2
		W	-	-	5	2

		M	M/W	W	3e*
11. Cleaning the toilet	M	1	2	2	5
	W	2	1	1	6
12. Cleaning the kitchen	M	-	3	2	4
	W	1	1	2	6
13. Mopping floors	M	1	1	3	5
	W	2	-	2	6
24. Putting outside the dustbin	M	1	7	2	-
	W	4	6	-	-
25. Doing odd jobs about the house	M	9	1	-	-
	W	7	3	-	-
26. Doing the windows	M	2	1	3	3
	W	1	1	2	6

* This third person is the cleaner

Table 6 Realisation of care tasks

		M	M/W	W
1. Changing diapers	M	-	7	2
	W	-	8	1
2. Bottle feed the baby	M	-	6	1
	W	-	6	1
3. Washing & dressing the child(ren)	M	-	6	4
	W	-	9	1
4. Walking with the buggy	M	-	6	4
	W	-	6	2
5. Taking child(ren) to childcare/school	M	1	4	5
	W	1	4	5
6. Picking up child(ren) from childcare/school	M	-	5	5
	W	-	5	5
7. Bathing child(ren)	M	1	7	2
	W	-	9	-
8. Bringing child(ren) to bed	M	1	9	-
	W	1	9	-
9. Comfort a crying child during the night	M	1	5	4
	W	2	3	4
10. Taking child(ren) to a club	M	-	5	2
	W	1	4	2
11. Visiting the baby clinic	M	1	3	6
	W	1	4	4
12. Attending child(ren) to doctor or specialist	M	-	5	5
	W	-	7	3

Table 7 Realisation of supporting tasks

		M	M/W	W
1. Reading or story telling	M	-	9	1
	W	1	8	1
2. Keeping children entertained (play-fighting, playing, joking around)	M	1	8	1
	W	-	9	1
3. Going on outings with the child(ren)	M	-	9	1
	W	-	10	-
4. Helping child(ren) with their homework	M	-	4	3
	W	-	5	1
5. Keeping an eye on the child(ren)	M	-	6	4
	W	-	8	1
8. Talking with the child about his/her problems	M	-	10	-
	W	-	8	2
9. Attending parents' evenings	M	1	7	-
	W	1	6	1
10. Giving philosophical education	M	-	8	-
	W	1	4	1
11. Giving sex education	M	-	7	1
	W	-	5	2
12. Making decisions about choice of school	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-

			M	M/W	W
6.	Reprimand or punish a child	M	-	10	-
		W	1	8	1
7.	Comfort the child(ren)	M	-	7	3
		W	-	10	-
13.	Deciding what the child(ren) may of may not do	M	-	10	-
		W	-	9	1

Table 8 Realisation of management tasks

			M	M/W	W
1.	Organisation and planning of purchases, outings	M	1	2	7
		W	1	3	6
2.	Organising and preparing activities (such as buying presents, registering for swimming lessons, school registration)	M	-	-	10
		W	-	2	8
3.	Arranging childcare/babysitters	M	-	3	7
		W	-	7	3
4.	Maintaining contact with the school	M	-	4	5
		W	-	6	4
5.	Maintaining contact with the neighbours	M	-	8	2
		W	-	9	1
6.	Maintaining contact with family and friends	M	-	9	1
		W	-	9	1
7.	Deciding about household expenditures	M	-	10	-
		W	-	10	-
8.	Arranging insurance	M	9	-	1
		W	8	2	-
9.	Managing rent of mortgage affairs	M	7	2	1
		W	9	1	-
10.	Paying the bills	M	7	1	2
		W	8	1	1

Shiftworkers

Typology of tasks

Table 9 Typology of household tasks

			M	M/F	F
1.	Daily shopping	M	-	10	-
		W	-	9	1
2.	Weekly shopping	M	1	9	-
		W	1	8	1
3.	Cooking on weekdays	M	-	8	2
		W	-	7	2
4.	Cooking in the weekend	M	-	9	1
		W	1	8	-
5.	Laying/clearing the table	M	-	10	-
		W	1	9	-
14.	Doing the laundry	M	-	8	2
		W	-	6	4
15.	Hangout the washing	M	-	9	1
		W	-	8	2
16.	Folding up the wash	M	-	7	3
		W	-	7	3
17.	Putting the wash away	M	-	5	2
		W	1	4	2
18.	Ironing	M	-	5	5
		W	1	5	3

		M	M/F	F			M	M/F	F
6. Doing the dishes	M	1	8	1	19. Making the beds	M	-	9	1
	W	-	10	-		W	-	10	-
7. Clearing out the dishwasher	M	-	10	-	20. Changing sheets	M	-	8	2
	W	1	9	-		W	1	8	1
8. Cleaning the mess	M	-	8	2	21. Watering plants	M	1	8	-
	W	1	9	-		W	1	8	1
9. Vacuum the house	M	-	8	2	22. Gardening	M	2	8	-
	W	-	10	-		W	2	8	-
10. Cleaning the bathroom	M	-	5	5	23. Mending clothes	M	1	2	6
	W	-	8	2		W	-	4	6
11. Cleaning the toilet	M	-	8	2	24. Putting outside the dustbin	M	5	5	-
	W	1	8	1		W	2	8	-
12. Cleaning the kitchen	M	-	7	3	25. Doing odd jobs about the house	M	6	4	-
	W	-	8	2		W	6	4	-
13. Mopping floors	M	-	9	1	26. Doing the windows	M	3	1	3
	W	-	9	1		W	1	3	3

Table 10 Typology care tasks

		M	M/F	F			M	M/F	F
1. Changing diapers	M	-	9	1	7. Bathing child(ren)	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	-		W	-	8	2
2. Bottle feed the baby	M	-	9	1	8. Bringing child(ren) to bed	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	1		W	-	9	-
3. Washing & dressing the child(ren)	M	-	9	1	9. Comfort a crying child during the night	M	-	10	-
	W	1	7	2		W	1	8	1
4. Walking with the buggy	M	-	9	1	10. Taking child(ren) to a club	M	-	10	-
	W	1	8	1		W	1	9	-
5. Taking child(ren) to childcare/school	M	-	10	-	11. Visiting the baby clinic	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1		W	-	7	3
6. Picking up child(ren) from childcare/school	M	-	10	-	12. Attending child(ren) to doctor or specialist	M	-	9	1
	W	1	9	-		W	1	8	1

Table 11 Typology supporting tasks

		M	M/F	F
1. Reading or story telling	M	-	9	1
	W	1	7	1
2. Keeping children entertained (play-fighting, playing, joking around)	M	1	9	-
	W	1	9	-
3. Going on outings with the child(ren)	M	-	9	-
	W	-	10	-
4. Helping child(ren) with their homework	M	-	8	2
	W	-	10	-
5. Keeping an eye on the child(ren)	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1
6. Reprimand or punish a child	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	1
7. Comfort the child(ren)	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1
8. Talking with the child about his/her problems	M	-	9	1
	W	-	9	1
9. Attending parents' evenings	M	-	9	1
	W	1	9	-
10. Giving philosophical education	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	-
11. Giving sex education	M	-	9	1
	W	-	8	-
12. Making decisions about choice of school	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
13. Deciding what the child(ren) may of may not do	M	-	10	-
	W	-	9	1

Table 12 Typology of management tasks

		M	M/F	F
1. Organisation and planning of purchases, outings	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
2. Organising and preparing activities (such as buying presents, registering for swimming lessons, school registration)	M	-	7	3
	W	-	8	2
3. Arranging childcare/babysitters	M	-	8	2
	W	-	8	2
4. Maintaining contact with the school	M	-	8	2
	W	-	9	1
5. Maintaining contact with the neighbours	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
6. Maintaining contact with family and friends	M	-	9	-
	W	-	9	1
7. Deciding about household expenditures	M	-	10	-
	W	-	10	-
8. Arranging insurance	M	3	7	-
	W	2	8	-
9. Managing rent of mortgage affairs	M	1	8	-
	W	2	8	-
10. Paying the bills	M	2	8	-
	W	2	8	-

Table 13 Realisation of household tasks

			M	M/W	W	3e*
1.	Daily shopping	M	2	5	3	-
		W	2	4	3	-
2.	Weekly shopping	M	4	5	1	-
		W	3	4	3	-
3.	Cooking on weekdays	M	3	3	4	-
		W	4	1	5	-
4.	Cooking in the weekend	M	4	4	2	-
		W	2	3	5	-
5.	Laying/clearing the table	M	2	8	-	-
		W	2	7	1	-
6.	Doing the dishes	M	3	4	1	-
		W	4	2	-	-
7.	Clearing out the dishwasher	M	2	6	1	-
		W	1	8	-	-
8.	Cleaning the mess	M	1	8	1	-
		W	1	4	4	-
9.	Vacuum the house	M	3	6	1	-
		W	2	6	2	-
10.	Cleaning the bathroom	M	-	3	6	1
		W	-	2	8	-
11.	Cleaning the toilet	M	-	5	5	-
		W	-	3	6	-
12.	Cleaning the kitchen	M	-	7	2	1
		W	-	3	7	-
13.	Mopping floors	M	3	2	5	
		W	-	5	5	
14.	Doing the laundry	M	-	4	6	-
		W	1	2	7	-
15.	Hangout the washing	M	-	3	6	-
		W	-	4	6	-
16.	Folding up the wash	M	-	2	8	-
		W	-	2	8	-
17.	Putting the wash away	M	-	1	6	-
		W	1	-	6	-
18.	Ironing	M	-	-	9	-
		W	-	-	9	-
19.	Making the beds	M	-	5	5	-
		W	-	6	4	-
20.	Changing sheets	M	-	4	6	-
		W	1	1	8	-
21.	Watering plants	M	3	4	2	-
		W	3	4	3	-
22.	Gardening	M	3	6	1	-
		W	4	5	-	-
23.	Mending clothes	M	1	1	6	2
		W	1	-	4	-
24.	Putting outside the dustbin	M	9	1	-	-
		W	7	2	-	-
25.	Doing odd jobs about the house	M	9	1	-	-
		W	7	3	-	-
26.	Doing the windows	M	2	1	4	
		W	3	1	3	

* This third person is the cleaner

Table 14 Realisation of care tasks

			M	M/W	W
1.	Changing diapers	M	-	7	2
		W	-	4	2
2.	Bottle feed the baby	M	-	9	-
		W	-	4	1
3.	Washing & dressing the child(ren)	M	-	8	2
		W	-	5	4
4.	Walking with the buggy	M	1	4	3
		W	-	3	1
5.	Taking child(ren) to childcare/school	M	-	8	1
		W	-	5	4
6.	Picking up child(ren) from childcare/school	M	1	8	-
		W	1	6	2
7.	Bathing child(ren)	M	-	6	4
		W	-	5	4
8.	Bringing child(ren) to bed	M	-	7	3
		W	1	5	4
9.	Comfort a crying child during the night	M	-	7	3
		W	1	6	3
10.	Taking child(ren) to a club	M	1	8	-
		W	1	5	2
11.	Visiting the baby clinic	M	1	6	2
		W	-	3	3
12.	Attending child(ren) to doctor or specialist	M	1	8	1
		W	1	5	4

Table 15 Realisation of supporting tasks

			M	M/W	W
1.	Reading or story telling	M	1	7	2
		W	-	6	4
2.	Keeping children entertained (play-fighting, playing, joking around)	M	1	9	-
		W	1	8	1
3.	Going on outings with the child(ren)	M	1	9	-
		W	2	7	1
4.	Helping child(ren) with their homework	M	2	5	1
		W	2	2	2
5.	Keeping an eye on the child(ren)	M	-	8	2
		W	-	7	3
6.	Reprimand or punish a child	M	2	8	-
		W	-	7	3
7.	Comfort the child(ren)	M	-	9	1
		W	-	8	2
8.	Talking with the child about his/her problems	M	1	7	1
		W	-	5	3
9.	Attending parents' evenings	M	2	5	2
		W	-	7	1
10.	Giving philosophical education	M	1	8	1
		W	-	4	3
11.	Giving sex education	M	1	3	4
		W	-	4	3
12.	Making decisions about choice of school	M	-	8	1
		W	-	8	-
13.	Deciding what the child(ren) may of may not do	M	-	10	-
		W	-	8	2

Table 16 Realisation of management tasks

			M	M/W	W
1.	Organisation and planning of purchases, outings	M	1	4	5
		W	-	4	6
2.	Organising and preparing activities (such as buying presents, registering for swimming lessons, school registration)	M	1	1	8
		W	-	1	9
3.	Arranging childcare/babysitters	M	-	2	8
		W	-	2	7
4.	Maintaining contact with the school	M	1	6	3
		W	-	6	4
5.	Maintaining contact with the neighbours	M	-	9	1
		W	-	8	1
6.	Maintaining contact with family and friends	M	-	9	1
		W	-	9	1
7.	Deciding about household expenditures	M	-	8	2
		W	-	8	2
8.	Arranging insurance	M	5	3	2
		W	6	2	2
9.	Managing rent of mortgage affairs	M	3	4	2
		W	6	2	2
10.	Paying the bills	M	5	3	2
		W	6	-	4

Homosexual fathers

Typology of tasks

Table 17 Typology of household tasks

		M	M/F	F
1.	Daily shopping	-	19	-
2.	Weekly shopping	-	19	-
3.	Cooking on weekdays	-	19	-
4.	Cooking in the weekend	-	19	-
5.	Laying/clearing the table	-	19	-
6.	Doing the dishes	-	19	-
7.	Clearing out the dishwasher	-	19	-
8.	Cleaning the mess	-	18	1
9.	Vacuum the house	-	18	1
10.	Cleaning the bathroom	-	17	2
11.	Cleaning the toilet	-	17	2
12.	Cleaning the kitchen	-	17	2
13.	Mopping floors	-	17	2
14.	Doing the laundry	-	17	2
15.	Hangout the washing	-	17	2
16.	Folding up the wash	-	17	2
17.	Putting the wash away *	-	12	1
18.	Ironing	-	17	2
19.	Making the beds	-	19	-
20.	Changing sheets	-	18	1
21.	Watering plants	-	19	-
22.	Gardening	-	19	-
23.	Mending clothes	-	14	5
24.	Putting outside the dustbin	1	18	-
25.	Doing odd jobs about the house	5	14	-
26.	Doing the windows *	-	10	2

* = By a correction of the questionnaire, six men did not answer this question

Table 18 Typology of care tasks

	M	M/F	F		M	M/F	F
1. Changing diapers	-	18	1	7. Bathing child(ren)	-	18	1
2. Bottle feed the baby	-	18	1	8. Bringing child(ren) to bed	-	19	-
3. Washing & dressing the child(ren)	-	18	1	9. Comfort a crying child during the night	-	19	-
4. Walking with the buggy	-	17	2	10. Taking child(ren) to a club	1	18	-
5. Taking child(ren) to childcare/school	1	17	1	11. Visiting the baby clinic	-	18	1
6. Picking up child(ren) from childcare/school	1	17	1	12. Attending child(ren) to doctor or specialist	-	19	-

Table 19 Typology of supporting tasks

	M	M/F	F		M	M/F	F
1. Reading or story telling	1	18	-	8. Talking with the child about his/her problems	1	18	-
2. Keeping children entertained (playfighting, playing, joking around)	3	16	-	9. Attending parents' evenings	1	18	-
3. Going on outings with the child(ren)	-	19	-	10. Giving philosophical education	-	19	-
4. Helping child(ren) with their homework	1	18	-	11. Giving sex education	1	18	-
5. Keeping an eye on the child(ren)	1	18	-	12. Making decisions about choice of school	-	19	-
6. Reprimand or punish a child	-	19	-	13. Deciding what the child(ren) may of may not do	1	18	-
7. Comfort the child(ren)	-	19	-				

Table 20 Typology of management tasks

	M	M/F	F		M	M/F	F
1. Organisation and planning of purchases, outings	-	19	-	6. Maintaining contact with family and friends	-	19	-
2. Organising and preparing activities (such as buying presents, registering for swimming lessons, school registration)	-	19	-	7. Deciding about household expenditures	-	19	-
3. Arranging childcare/babysitters	-	19	-	8. Arranging insurance	1	18	-
4. Maintaining contact with the school	-	19	-	9. Managing rent of mortgage affairs	1	18	-
5. Maintaining contact with the neighbours	-	19	-	10. Paying the bills	1	18	-

Realisation of tasks

Table 21 Realisation of household tasks

	=/=	M	3e		=/=	M	3e
1. Daily shopping	9	10	-	14. Doing the laundry	5	14	-
2. Weekly shopping	9	8	-	15. Hangout the washing	4	15	-
3. Cooking on weekdays	6	13	-	16. Folding up the wash	2	17	-
4. Cooking in the weekend	8	11	-	17. Putting the wash away *	-	14	-
5. Laying/clearing the table	15	4	-	18. Ironing	1	13	-
6. Doing the dishes	8	6	-	19. Making the beds	12	7	-
7. Clearing out the dishwasher	5	9	1	20. Changing sheets	9	10	-
8. Cleaning the mess	6	13	-	21. Watering plants	4	15	-
9. Vacuum the house	11	6	1	22. Gardening	3	14	-
10. Cleaning the bathroom	3	13	3	23. Mending clothes	3	4	2
11. Cleaning the toilet	2	13	4	24. Putting outside the dustbin	15	4	-
12. Cleaning the kitchen	7	7	4	25. Doing odd jobs about the house	5	14	-
13. Mopping floors	4	11	4	26. Doing the windows *	2	7	3

=/= Both, M = One of the fathers, 3e = someone else, in this case the cleaner

* By a correction of the questionnaire, six men did not answer this question

Table 22 Realisation of care tasks

	=/=	M	3e		=/=	M	3e
1. Changing diapers	7	1	-	7. Bathing child(ren)	12	5	-
2. Bottle feed the baby	7	1	-	8. Bringing child(ren) to bed	12	5	-
3. Washing & dressing the child(ren)	11	5	-	9. Comfort a crying child during the night	10	9	-
4. Walking with the buggy	8	2	-	10. Taking child(ren) to a club	6	7	-
5. Taking child(ren) to childcare/school	4	9	1	11. Visiting the baby clinic	6	8	1
6. Picking up child(ren) from childcare/school	3	10	1	12. Attending child(ren) to doctor or specialist	6	9	2

3e = someone else, in this case the mother

Table 23 Realisation of supporting tasks

	=/=	M	3e		=/=	M	3e
1. Reading or story telling	14	4	-	8. Talking with the child about his/her problems	13	1	-
2. Keeping children entertained (playfighting, playing, joking around)	15	4	-	9. Attending parents' evenings	7	6	-
3. Going on outings with the child(ren)	16	3	-	10. Giving philosophical education	11	1	-
4. Helping child(ren) with their homework	3	5	-	11. Giving sex education	8	4	-
5. Keeping an eye on the child(ren)	15	4	-	12. Making decisions about choice of school	9	8	-
6. Reprimand or punish a child	14	5	-	13. Deciding what the child(ren) may of may not do	16	3	-
7. Comfort the child(ren)	17	2	-				

Table 24 Realisation of management tasks

	=/=	M	3e		=/=	M	3e
1. Organisation and planning of purchases, outings	13	6	-	6. Maintaining contact with family and friends	10	9	-
2. Organising and preparing activities (such as buying presents, registering for swimming lessons, school registration)	8	8	-	7. Deciding about household expenditures	17	2	-
3. Arranging child-care/babysitters	6	8	2	8. Arranging insurance	7	11	1
4. Maintaining contact with the school	4	12	1	9. Managing rent of mortgage affairs	7	11	1
5. Maintaining contact with the neighbours	8	11	-	10. Paying the bills	8	11	-

3e = someone else, in case of tasks 3 and 4 the mother

Samenvatting

De afgelopen decennia zijn in Europa vrouwen meer gaan werken, maar mannen zijn niet evenredig meer gaan zorgen. De verdeling van zorgtaken in huishouden en gezin tussen de seksen is ongelijk. Beschouwt de politiek dit als een probleem en een kwestie waar het sociaal beleid in de Europese landen iets aan moet doen? Of is de taakverdeling thuis vooral een privé-zaak die ook maar beter thuis aan de keukentafel kan worden opgelost? Uit ons onderzoek blijkt dat de huidige taakverdeling tussen de seksen een probleem is voor zover deze verdeling de keuzevrijheid van mensen belemmert en er dus weinig te kiezen is. Met name voor vrouwen is binnen de bestaande verdeling de keuzevrijheid te beperkt als ze meer willen werken.

Uit dit rapport blijkt dat verandering van de bestaande situatie mogelijk is. Het doel van deze verandering is niet een precies gelijke verdeling in taken tussen man en vrouw, maar wel dat beide seksen in principe alle taken in huishouden en gezin kunnen gaan uitvoeren, dus mannen ook de zogenoemde 'vrouwelijke' zorgtaken en vrouwen de 'mannelijke'. De bestaande taakverdeling wordt beïnvloed door drie typen condities, op respectievelijk het macro-, het meso- en het microniveau. De condities zijn zowel van invloed op de mate waarin mannen zorgen (de kwantiteit) als op het soort taken die ze verrichten in huishouden en gezin (de kwaliteit).

Als eerste stap zijn in het onderzoek voor verschillende Europese landen de macrocondities in kaart gebracht. Deze macrocondities hebben betrekking op tijd (flexibele werktijden en verlofregelingen), geld (belastingsystemen) en voorzieningen (voorzieningen voor kinderopvang). Voor een eerlijker verdeling van alle arbeid- en zorgtaken blijkt het nodig dat er goede nationale regelingen bestaan voor kinderopvang, ouderschapsverlof, levensloopregelingen, het recht op parttime werk et cetera. Deze regelingen zijn vooral van belang bij het zetten van de eerste stappen op weg naar een rechtvaardiger verdeling: mannen zullen binnenshuis meer taken op zich kunnen nemen, vrouwen zullen hierdoor meer buitenshuis kunnen gaan werken.

Maar ook al zijn er gunstige macrocondities waaronder mannen zouden kunnen gaan zorgen (bijvoorbeeld ruime mogelijkheden om flexibel te werken, ruime verlofregelingen en een belastingsysteem dat de tweeverdiener bevoordeelt boven de traditionele kostwinner), dan blijkt het vervolgens nog zeer de vraag of mannen ook alle zorgtaken (in huishouden en gezin) op zich nemen. Uit het onderzoek blijkt dat mannen een duidelijke voorkeur hebben voor bepaalde huishoudelijke taken (zoals boodschappen doen en koken) en dat ze andere huishoudelijke taken (schoonmaken en wassen) niet of minder doen. Ook hebben mannen een voorkeur voor kindzorgtaken boven huishoudelijke taken. Er is, althans wat de mannen betreft, een duidelijke hiërarchie in het uitvoeren van taken.

Vervolgens hebben we onderzocht wat maakt dat mannen bepaalde taken wel en andere niet of nauwelijks verrichten. Dit wordt uitgewerkt aan de hand van drie taken, te weten: de boodschappen, de was en het bezoek aan het consultatiebureau. De beschrijving van deze

taken laat zien dat het mogelijk is dat een bepaalde huishoudelijke taak (bijvoorbeeld de boodschappen) zijn vrouwelijke connotatie verliest, waardoor er vervolgens voor mannen geen belemmering meer is om deze taak uit te voeren. Een stimulerende factor is bijvoorbeeld dat een taak onderdeel is van een 'keten'. Mannen die koken vinden het normaal om ook de boodschappen te doen en mannen die 's ochtends hun kinderen aankleden zullen zich druk gaan maken over de beschikbaarheid van schone kinderkleren. Het onderzoek laat ook zien dat zichtbaarheid van een taak en een grotere tolerantie ten aanzien van het mogen maken van fouten, belangrijke factoren zijn die maken dat mannen huishoudelijke taken gaan uitvoeren.

Niet alleen de taken transformeren, ook het gedrag van mannen zelf kan – afhankelijk van de context waarin ze zich bevinden – veranderen. In dit onderzoek is dit onderzocht aan de hand van drie – wat wij genoemd hebben - exceptional practices. De 'standaardpraktijk' is een leefeenheid bestaande uit een man, vrouw en kind(eren), de man werkt buitenshuis en op reguliere tijden (globaal van 9-17 uur) en de vrouw is (grotendeels) verantwoordelijk voor huishoudelijke en zorgtaken. We spreken van een exceptional practice wanneer de man of op niet-reguliere werktijden werkt, of een ongewoon werkpatroon heeft, of deel uitmaakt van een bijzonder type huishouden. In totaal zijn aldus dertig huishoudens bij het onderzoek betrokken, bestaande uit de huishoudens van homovaders, ploegendienstmannen en telewerkers.

De belangrijkste conclusie van het onderzoek naar de exceptional practices is dat opvattingen en preferenties van mannen ten aanzien van de taakverdeling tussen mannen en vrouwen sterk verbonden zijn met de mogelijkheden die mannen hebben om te zorgen en te werken. In huishoudens waar al een gelijkere taakverdeling tot stand is gekomen, blijken de competenties van mannen, hun preferenties en de traditie waarin ze zijn opgegroeid, er niet of nauwelijks meer toe te doen. De opinies van mannen blijken rekbaar te zijn als mannen door veranderde omstandigheden (andere werktijden, werkpatronen of een alternatieve huishoudvorm) bepaalde taken wel moeten doen. Ook (vermeende?) gebrekkige competenties blijken dan opeens nog maar een kleine of zelfs geen rol meer te spelen. Het 'alleen' thuis zijn met de kinderen blijkt een belangrijke stimulans voor mannen om zorgtaken ook werkelijk te verrichten. Een vergelijkbare conclusie werd eerder ook in Noors onderzoek naar mannen met ouderschapsverlof getrokken.

In de meeste Europese landen blijkt de kwestie van een eerlijker verdeling van arbeid en zorg tussen mannen en vrouwen urgent te zijn. In dit onderzoek werden ook enkele good practices bestudeerd, namelijk in een Noord-Europees land (Zweden), een Midden-Europees land (Frankrijk) en een Zuid-Europees land (Spanje). Binnen de context van het land (de macrocondities) zijn we op zoek gegaan naar goede voorbeelden die betrekking hebben op het stimuleren van mannen om kindzorg- en huishoudelijke taken op zich te gaan nemen. We hebben daarbij vooral gekeken naar vernieuwende initiatieven op het lokale niveau.

Zweden heeft van oudsher een traditie van overheidsbemoeienis met de rol van vaders. In dit verband zijn door lokale overheden verschillende initiatieven ontwikkeld die direct van invloed zijn op de kindzorgtaken die mannen binnen het huishouden verrichten. Overigens bleken deze initiatieven zich te beperken tot kindzorgtaken. Het aan de orde stellen van de bestaande taakverdeling van mannen en vrouwen met betrekking tot huishoudelijke taken, blijkt ook in Zweden moeilijker bespreekbaar te zijn. In dit verband is het opvallend dat dit in Spanje nadrukkelijk wel gebeurt. Zowel op het lokale niveau als in landelijke overheidscam-

pagnes stimuleert de Spaanse overheid mannen om meer zorgtaken te gaan verrichten (het gaat daarbij zowel om huishoudelijke als om kindzorgtaken). De ‘voorlijkheid’ van Spanje heeft waarschijnlijk te maken met het feit dat Spanje op dit moment binnen Europa bezig is met een inhaalslag. In Frankrijk, ten slotte, blijkt het moeilijk het onderwerp mannen en zorg op de beleidsagenda te krijgen. Dit heeft vooral te maken met de Franse angst voor overheidsbemoeienis met ‘privé-zaken’. Langzaam maar zeker begint echter ook in Frankrijk een klimaat te ontstaan waarin dit wel mogelijk wordt, omdat beleidsmakers onderkennen dat het afzijdig blijven van ‘privé-zaken’ ertoe leidt dat vrouwen systematisch veel zwaarder worden belast dan mannen, wat uiteindelijk grote nadelige gevolgen heeft voor de mogelijkheid van vrouwen om te participeren in het openbare leven.

De vraag of de overheid zich moet bemoeien met de taakverdeling van mannen en vrouwen achter de voordeur wordt door welhaast alle betrokkenen in dit onderzoek dan ook met ‘ja’ beantwoord. Immers, als vrouwen (volgens Europees en nationaal beleid) geacht worden meer te werken, zal daar een verlichting van zorgtaken tegenover moeten staan. Vervolgens is het wel de vraag hoever de overheid daarin kan gaan en wat beleidsmakers kunnen doen om de zorgtaken van mannen te vergroten. Het blijft van groot belang kwalitatief goede macroarrangementen (zoals ouderschapsverlof, mogelijkheden voor deeltijdarbeid en kinderopvang) te ontwikkelen. Maar van hoe groot belang ook, dit blijkt niet afdoende. Daarom zal de politiek ook voorwaarden moeten scheppen op het micro- en mesoniveau. Dit kan op verschillende manieren: door communicatiecampagnes, door het ontwikkelen van lokale initiatieven en/of door het inzetten van professionals die met ouders en kinderen werken. Het zal duidelijk zijn dat dit een kwestie is van lange adem, maar de trend naar een rechtvaardiger verdeling van arbeid en zorgtaken tussen vrouwen en mannen is in de landen van de Europese Unie onmiskenbaar ingezet.

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Colofon

financer	Community initiative ESF/EQUAL & the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
editors	Prof. dr. J.W. Duyvendak & dr. M.M.J. Stavenuiter
with the co-operation of	Prof. dr. J.J. Schippers, drs. I. Koopmans, dr. S.M.A. Nieborg, dr. R.A.L. Rijkschroeff, drs. H.R.A.M. Swinnen, drs. ing. N. Broenink, drs. M. Brugman, drs. M.H.R. Goewie, drs. D.J. Mak & drs. S.M. ter Woerds
design & production	FBGP 756459
layout	Verwey-Jonker Institute
translation	Attached BV; Michelle Reijtenbagh
photo	Hollandse Hoogte
published by	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment - Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy & Verwey-Jonker Institute The Hague/Utrecht, 2004

The publication

The publication can be downloaded from the website: http://www.verwey-jonker.nl
The publication can be ordered at: http://www.verwey-jonker.nl, or by fax or e-mail: Verwey-Jonker Institute, Kromme Nieuwegracht 6, 3512 HG Utrecht, telefax +31(0)30-2300683, e-mail: secr@verwey-jonker.nl, Reference 'Working Fathers, Caring Men', your name, invoice address and delivery address.

ISBN 90-5830-158-3