



Reconciling Work and Family Life

– a challenge for Europe?



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Reconciling Work and Family Life

– a challenge for Europe?

Edited by Birgit Arve-Parès



*Proceedings from a seminar
in Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, 19–20 June 1995,
organized by the Swedish Committee on
the International Year of the Family, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs,
and the Commission of the European Communities*

Foreword

In June 1995, the Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family, in collaboration with the Commission of the European Communities, organized a seminar on the theme of Reconciling Work and Family Life.

The proceedings from the seminar were published in a first edition in October 1995. At that time we did not foresee the wide interest that this publication was to raise. In order to satisfy the new demand, we have decided to make a reprint of the proceedings and to publish it as a supplement to the official report on the Swedish activities with regard to the International Year of the Family.

Stockholm 27 February 1996

Ann-Christin Tauberman
President of the Swedish
Committee on the International
Year of the Family

Birgit Arve-Parès
Secretary of the Swedish
Committee on the International
Year of the Family

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Introduction

On 19–20 June 1995, the Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family and the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Directorate for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs of the European Commission, held a seminar on *Reconciling Work and Family Life*, in Saltsjöbaden, Sweden.

Aims of the seminar

The seminar offered an occasion for some 100 experts from the fifteen member states of the European Union to meet for an exchange of information and ideas on recent developments in the area of family policy and working life.

For the Swedish participants it was also an occasion to get acquainted with the European debate, and to explain the aims and achievements of Swedish policies with regard to the conditions for reconciling work and family life in Sweden.

At European Union level, family policy comes under the principle of subsidiarity. This means that it is formally not a matter of common concern to the Union. At the same time, the connections between family life and labour policies is becoming increasingly evident in most countries. Moreover, increased mobility of capital and human resources across national borders bring out the international dimensions of national policies in these areas. There are reasons to believe that the interactions between work and family life will increasingly become an issue of international concern.

In 1994, during the International Year of the Family, Sweden as well as the other member states of the Union had the opportunity to assess the recent developments, and to exchange experiences on family issues, on a number of occasions. There was, however, no major event focusing the specific interface of work and family life.

Considerations on the interrelationship between work and family life have long constituted a core aspect of Swedish family policy. When the Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family was approached by the Commission, in December 1994, with an invitation to arrange a seminar on the topic of *Reconciling Work and Family Life*, the president of the Committee, *Ms Ann-Christin Tauberman*, Deputy Under-Secretary of State of the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, therefore readily accepted the invitation, even though the Year of the Family was coming to an end.

The Network 'Families and Work'

For the Commission, apart from the interest of the seminar as such, it also offered an occasion to inform about the work of the recently established European Network 'Families and Work', directed by *Frédérique Déroure* (France). The aim of this network is to stimulate the debate and to promote and disseminate new ideas and incentives for development work.

The European Social Innovation Award

Finally, the seminar also turned out to be an occasion for presenting the European Social Innovation Award, instituted by the Commission in late 1994, and to celebrate the very first Award Ceremony.

The European Social Innovation Award was established in order to encourage innovative projects, and to disseminate experiences of good practice. At this first distribution of the Award, prizes were attributed to eight companies, divided into three different categories. A first prize and a special prize was attributed for each category. As the Award was instituted before the Swedish entry into the Union, Sweden did not take part in the competition on this first occasion. Two special prizes, however, were attributed to Swedish companies, for exemplary practice.

The present report

The programme of the seminar contained three core sessions, structured around three basic parameters for a common framework on developments in work and family life in the European countries:

- the provision of services
- time and leave arrangements
- delocalization of work places

These themes offered an occasion to confront experiences, assessments and criticisms from different parts of the Union, and to dwell on different scenarios for the European countries. We have refrained from the ambition to summarize the discussions following the interventions by different experts, in order to be able to publish the proceedings without delay. In order to orient the reader, we will give a short presentation of the headlines of the programme in this introductory text.

Opening session

The seminar was opened by the welcome address of *Ms Anna Hedborg*, Swedish Minister of Social Security and Family Affairs. In her opening speech, she stressed the responsibilities we all have for giving children a good start in life in our societies and the importance of bringing the fathers in. Her intervention was followed by a speech by *Mr Terence Stewart*, Director in the Directorate for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, European Commission, who introduced the overall framework at Union level, in terms of aims and achievements of the European Commission. A rapid outlook on

Swedish experiences was then given, as a background for the subsequent discussions, by *Birgit Arve-Parès*, Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family.

Session 2: Services

Families are sensitive to new developments and to policies that act on their arenas for private strategies to reconcile work and family life. They lead their lives at the interface of economic, social and political developments, and they constitute dynamic microcosms in constant interplay with these spheres. Common trends on European markets make for similar solutions and trends with regard to work organisation and social policies. It is therefore important to look into these solutions and trends and to assess their impact on peoples lives and on the functioning of society.

Whenever parents of small children go to work, someone else has to be there to look after them. They need to feel ensured that their children are safely taken care of, in conditions that are appropriate with regard to the needs of the child.

Different families however have different needs. Countries and local communities furthermore have different traditions and practical solutions at hand. The provision of child care services therefore shows great variations both with regard to access and kind of service delivered.

Children, however, have similar needs of love, confidence, stable social relations and commitments from others with whom to communicate. What lessons are there to be drawn from different experiences of child care? Are there new solutions to consider for close to home services? Are there solutions to avoid? Are there common elements to seek out for the different solutions at hand? These were the issues approached in session number two.

In this session, *Peter Moss* (UK) gave an overall picture of preschool child care in the member states. *Jean-François Lebrun* (European Commission) introduced the concept of Service Vouchers, and the principles on which it is based. These principles were subsequently examined from a critical point of view by *Dominique Decoux* (Belgium). In the last intervention of this section, *Ulla Björnberg* (Sweden) explained the logic and basic principles underlying the Swedish approach to child care service.

Session 3: Flexi-time

In monetary economies, the best insurance against poverty is paid work. In modern societies, paid work also constitutes the fundamental basis for family planning for most young people. Family budgets in Europe are increasingly being based on two incomes. Since no benefit scheme can ever afford to replace the full income from paid work, an increasing number of employees in the labour force are not only workers but also parents, having small children to care for.

When parents are working, there is however work to be done also in the family, no matter how good the child care services are. There are routine domestic tasks, but there is also the essential part of being a parent: being someone who is there to listen, with whom to communicate on everyday experiences and to install values about the way things are, to love and to invest with feelings of belonging and unlimited trust.

This takes time and accessibility, physical and psychological. Working life has other demands on time and accessibility, demands that easily enter into conflict with those of the child, especially in cases when no satisfactory child care can be ensured. The occurrence of conflicting demands on time and accessibility, reinforced by the absence of satisfactory child care services, have made way for a number of different work schedules and leave arrangements that were discussed in session three.

In this session, treating different models for time management, *Jeanne Fagnani* (France) discussed the shortcomings of existing leave arrangements in France. *Johan ten Geuzendam* (European Commission) gave an overview on the development of part-time work in the Union. His intervention was accompanied by an exposé by *Catelene Passchier* (Netherlands) on the implications of part-time work, based on the situation in the Netherlands. *Pam Walton* (UK) presented the specific model of job-sharing in Great Britain. *Elisabet Näsman* (Sweden) introduced the Scandinavian concept, presenting time budgets of paid parental leave, ascribed as parental rights in the social security system, and discussed the use and outcomes of these rights with regard to recent Swedish experiences. The final word in this session was given to *Yves Chassard* (European Commission), who discussed the issue of time management and social rights in a lifetime perspective, calling special attention to the impact of interrupting work for family reasons in different social security systems.

Session 4: Flexi-place

Technological change has always commanded the development of productive work, as well as the organisation of our everyday life. The rapid implementation of new techniques for dealing with computerised information is presently transforming the organisation of workplaces, as well as the operations of private households. The impact of these changes on the organisation of work has not yet been fully assessed. The spatial organisation of work, however, is undergoing rapid change, not only when it comes to physical equipment, but also with regard to human conditions and social environment.

These transformations challenge existing solutions and frameworks for social partnership, and need to be studied with great attention. In session four, *Kitty de Bruin* (Netherlands) gave an outline of the experiences from a teleworking project in Holland, and the efforts made to develop a work environment that is promotional for the company as well as for the employees. Her intervention was followed by an analysis presented by *Jean-Claude Kaufmann* (France) on the inherent risks of an uncritical implementation of teleworking.

Closing session

The issues raised during the seminar do not easily lend themselves to clear-cut conclusions. To arrive at conclusions was not, however, the aim of the seminar. For the closing session, we asked *Agneta Stark*, Associate Professor at the Stockholm University School of Business, what she would consider to be a major challenge in Europe, regarding the interplay between work and family life, from a Swedish point of view. We furthermore asked *Lucien Bouis*, President of the Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Communities (COFACE), to give an outlook on possible strategies for future action on behalf of the European family organisations.

And finally, the very last intervention was made by *Michèle Thozet-Teirlinck*, (European Commission), who has been at the heart of these preoccupations for many years, actively involved in promoting and coordinating the exchange of ideas and experiences in the Union, thereby creating a platform for an active and lively, informal forum on converging policies.

Appendix: Models for tomorrow

In the appendix to the proceedings from the seminar, we have included a presentation of the prize winners of the *European Social Innovation Award*. The appendix gives an account of the work carried out by the Network on Families and Work and of the European Social Innovation Award, followed by a short presentation of the prize winners and their companies.

The prize winners represent developments that have been made possible because there was a will to listen and a will to invest in human resources at management level. There was a common theme all through the accounts given at the Award Ceremony, by the prize winners, and that was that of *dialogue*. The aims and the ambitions of the managers all started out from a wish to take the problems and needs of their employees into account and to find new solutions, based on a genuine dialogue within the company.

Acknowledgements

By publishing the proceedings from the seminar, we hope to stimulate a further debate on the many issues, raised during two sunny days in the Stockholm archipelago in the week of mid-summer 1995. These are issues dealing with future strategies for managing human resources in the European member states, issues that concern us all, professionally and privately. We are therefore certain that they will not drop down shortly. They are, as Ms Anna Hedborg underlined in her opening speech, issues that we want to bring high on the European agenda, convinced about the challenges they hold for the future of Europe.

In publishing this report, we want to thank all the participants for their contributions in making this seminar a success. We particularly want to thank the experts who accepted to take an active part in the programme, and who have kindly delivered the written contributions for the report.

The report has been prepared by the secretariate of the Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family. Anne-Louise Nilsson, Nathalie Parès and Lena Wikström all went into great efforts in order to honour the many rich contributions that were presented at the seminar. They have the merit of having finalized a report that hopefully will carry the discussions on work and family life further.

Stockholm in October 1995

Birgit Arve-Parès
Secretary
Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family



Developing Policies

for managing work
and family life



Managing Work and Family Life – a Matter of Social Partnership

**Welcome address by Anna Hedborg,
Minister for Social Security and Family Affairs**

This conference is about everyday life. It is about parents, about children, and about all of us, since we all have parents among our employees or among our companions at work. It is about social partnership.

Questions of partnership

When family life is brought into discussions on working life, new questions are brought to the foreground. One of the most important issues for policies in these areas, is the question of how working life and family life combine together. In many countries, they don't. Historically, in our industrial societies, they used to be separated into two different spheres. In modern life, however, the family sphere and the work sphere increasingly interfere with each other and the interaction between them is becoming more and more manifest.

That is why we are all here. The basic question to be dealt with all through this seminar is: what impact does working life have on family life and how does family life interfere with working life? Is it in fact allowable to let family life interfere with working life and why should this be the case? Are there new models of social partnership?

The case of lone mothers

The conference is also about fathers and mothers, about social conditions for parenthood, in modern societies. Let me take the situation of single mothers as an example. One of the main trends in all our European countries today is the increasing number of lone mothers. What rights do these mothers have, together with their children, to be fully integrated into society? Clearly, they will never be fully integrated, unless single mothers are allowed to be part of working life and to be able to support themselves and their children by productive work. In some countries they have such opportunities. In others this is seldom the case.

Social welfare systems and the principles on which they are based have an important part to play in this. In those systems where social security is conceived of in terms of means-tested benefits, targetted at low-income groups, this will have a prohibitive effect on lone mothers' ability to work, refrain-



ing them from seeking work that might have enabled them to support themselves. They thus run the risk of getting caught in poverty-traps and processes of social exclusion, with heavy consequences for themselves and for their children.

The same is true in the work place. The attitudes towards lone mothers and the understanding they receive for their particular needs, make up an important part in the rights of those mothers to be at work. These are attitudes for which we are all responsible in everyday life, as employers, and as colleagues and fellow employees.

A fathers' issue

I would like to stress though, that the theme of the conference is also a fathers' issue and an issue about the rights of children. Divorces are part of modern society. They constitute a risk for children to lose their fathers, for fathers to lose their children and for grand-parents to lose their grand-children.

It may not be necessary for a family life to function, that both parents take an equal share in the care of their children. But equality and cooperation is surely a good investment for preventing divorces, as well as for upholding lasting relations with one's children, should a divorce occur. If I look at myself, I am the mother of a son. I would feel very sorry if he were not to take an active part in his childrens' life. I would surely feel that I was running a high risk of losing my grand-children.

Being able to take an active part in their childrens' everyday life is therefore an issue of concern, not only for mothers, but for fathers as well. This is why it is so important that the involvement of both fathers and mothers in family life is supported and actively taken into account in the shaping of working conditions. Here again we have a matter of attitudes: attitudes of employers, attitudes of employees, attitudes of all of us.

In search of new solutions

Attitudes are shaped by tradition and culture and they vary between countries. Each country therefore has to develop it's own models and solutions to common problems. We may not be able to copy models from one country to another. But we can learn and be inspired by each other, and the exchange of ideas may help us to find new solutions to old habits.

This is why this conference is important: as a meeting place for the exchange of experiences and new ideas. I personally take a great interest in the themes of the seminar and am looking forward to the discussions that it will engender. As newcomers to the European Union we feel very honoured to have been given the opportunity to hold this seminar, in cooperation with the Commission of the European Communities, and to host the first celebration of the European Social Innovation Award.

I particularly want to thank Mr Terence Stewart, for the initiative to arrange the Award Ceremony on the occasion of the seminar. Working life issues are, as you know, important to us, here in Sweden, not only in relation to family policy, but also in a wider perspective. As new members of the European family, we will work at bringing these issues high on the European agenda and we are looking forward to continued cooperation, in the context of the Social Innovation Award and the Network on Families and Work.

During the International Year of the Family, we had the occasion to work with a number of central experts in the field of family policy in different countries. We have particularly appreciated our good relations with your unit, thanks to Mrs Thozet-Teirlinck, and we hope that this good cooperation will continue.

Mr Stewart, Mrs Thozet-Teirlinck, Dear Participants! I am looking forward to sharing with you, two exciting days. In wishing you all very welcome, I hereby declare the seminar open.

Anna Hedborg, Minister for Social Security and Family Affairs

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Aims and Achievements of the European Commission

by Terence Stewart

Let me say how pleased I am to be in Stockholm on the occasion of this seminar. I bring greetings from Mr Allan Larsson who asked me to say how sorry he is not to be with you today, but he is unfortunately detained in Brussels.

Sweden has so recently joined the European Union. It is a country which promises many new and progressive perspectives on social policy as a whole, and on the family and on equal opportunities in particular.

I would like to thank Ms. Anna Hedborg, Minister for Social Security and for Family Policy; Ms. Gun-Britt Andersson, Under-Secretary of State, and Ms. Ann-Christin Tauberman, Deputy Under-Secretary of State and President of the Swedish Committee on the International Year of the Family, who have arranged for Sweden to host this seminar, at which we will see the awarding of the European Prize for Social Innovation.

I would also like to thank Ms. Birgit Arve-Parès for the central role that she has played in setting up this seminar. She has done so much to ensure that the arrangements here in Sweden went smoothly, working in close collaboration with the European Commission.

Europe faces many problems today which impact on the family. We face:

- an ageing population
- rising structural unemployment
- changing family structures
- major difficulties in the financing of social protection and the funding of long-term care
- the rise of Information Society

All of these impact on the family and today cause considerable uncertainty among our fellow citizens - uncertainty about the future, not only for themselves but also for their families.

The European Union has been perceived as being helpless in dealing with many of these problems and this has led to a certain "*Euro Scepticism*" throughout the Union. It is difficult to explain that, on many of these issues, the Union has little or no competence to deal with the problems.

Achievements and plans of the Commission

This Seminar takes place against a rich background of activity in the social field to meet the preoccupations of EU citizens. It comes just one year after former President Jacques Delors and Commissioner Padraig Flynn published, respectively, their White Papers on "Growth, competitiveness and employment" and "European social policy – a way forward for the Union". The Seminar comes six months after the end of the International Year of the Family and three months after the adoption by the Commission of its medium-term social action programme for the years 1996 and 1997. It is, in other words, very timely.

I would like to start with a word or two on what has been done up until now. First of all, the Delors White Paper, one of his last and most significant actions as President of the Commission, has put forward recommendations, aimed at strengthening measures for equal opportunities for women and men, notably in terms of employment. These recommendations involved offering women improved career possibilities, but also sought to ensure that tax and social security systems are adapted so as to reflect the fact that women and men operate as individuals when looking for jobs and when trying to reconcile their working and family lives.

These proposals were taken somewhat further by Commissioner Flynn in his White Paper on the future of European social policy, published in July 1994. This White Paper set out a framework for the development of European social policy, one which is designed to help us adapt to a series of challenges.

1994 was declared International Year of the Family by the United Nations. It was a year which saw innovations of all kinds: the Commission lent its support to a large number of seminars, conferences, studies and publicity campaigns, presented by the member states, which brought with them a strong European dimension. Sweden, under the auspices of its Committee of the International Year of the Family, some of whose members are here today, also generated considerable activity. But this activity, with its resonance at international and European level, must be kept going. More than this, we want to see it snowball and to bring more and more activity in its wake. This seminar is very much in the spirit of this international Year, in that it aims to build on what has gone before and to go forward.

And what of the Commission? What are we planning now? On 12 April last, the Commission adopted a medium-term social action programme for 1995–7. It seeks to put into practice the principles of the White Paper on social policy, which was itself the result of a long process of consultation, while building on the achievements of the past, notably the social action programme of 1989, which it replaces. It establishes a strategy which will enable us to deal with the sorts of challenges of social policy that I have described. There will be others; we live in a period of constant change. The programme is therefore a flexible one that is intended to be open to new ideas and to adaptation.

In the field of *equal opportunities between women and men*, we are currently drawing up a fourth action plan, due to come into force in January 1996. One of the main themes of this programme will be the reconciliation of family and working life.

We are working on the outline of a framework Directive. As you may be aware, the original proposal of the Commission for parental leave and leave for family reasons goes back over ten years to 1983. The Commission has made repeated attempts to obtain unanimous support in the Council, without success. Finally, the Commission announced in September last year that it would relaunch the initiative under the Agreement on Social Policy, attached to the Maastricht Treaty, to which 14 of the 15 member states subscribe.

We are now engaged in the formal consultation procedure with the social partners on a broader theme, that not just of parental leave but on the broader issue of reconciling working and family life.

The Agreement on Social Policy provides for a two-stage consultation. The social partners have already replied to the Commission's first paper. In all, 17 replies were received from the 39 organizations consulted, both management and labour. There was a strong current of agreement on the significance of the reconciliation issue amongst workers but opinions varied on how best to pursue the policy. Certain organizations wanted to see a binding framework measure agreed at Community level. Others preferred voluntary arrangements, negotiated nationally or locally and backed by a Commission Recommendation.

The Commission has now gone back to the social partners for the second phase of consultation and is confident of positive results at the end of the process.

On the *organization of working time*, a crucial aspect of the idea of fitting together family and working life, I would like to single out two themes, that of *atypical (i.e. non-standard) work* and that of the *adaptation of working time*.

I will deal first with non-standard work. At the meeting of the Social Affairs Council on 6 December last year, it became clear that unanimous agreement on the Commission proposal lodged in the Council on this question could be ruled out for the near future.

We in the Commission, however, remain convinced that we need to ensure in particular that part-time work is attractive and that part-time workers are properly treated. This is essential if we are to allow this type of work to make the substantial contribution to reducing unemployment for which it has the clear potential.

The Commission will therefore be seeking to initiate consultations with the social partners, once again under the Agreement on social policy. In the course

of these consultations we shall be examining what further action we might take, including a possible new directive on part-time work as a first step. This afternoon, Mr. ten Geuzendam will tell you more about this.

Regarding the adjustment of working time, discussions with the social partners will continue this year on how best to bring on board the activities and sectors excluded from the Council Directive of November 1993 regarding the adaptation of working time.

These are merely brief references to a large legislative programme. But I would be remiss if I failed to mention other initiatives, such as the Council Recommendation of 1992 on childcare and the Council Directive of 1992 on the protection of pregnant women at work.

With reference to the childcare Recommendation, the Commission will be following this up very carefully indeed. We will be wanting to see how it has been implemented by the member states; we will be studying the various ways in which we can tackle this question of gender stereotyping in society.

Network activities

On this question of reconciling family and working life, the Commission has an important role in stimulating legislation. Just as important is our role in promoting cooperation and the exchange of experience on common problems, notably through the Network system. By bringing together experts from the different member states of the Union on a given theme, by making them work together on joint action which allows for the exchange of good practice, by allowing each member state to retain its own particular features, we can make a huge contribution to the building of Europe on a day-to-day basis, and in a way that is obvious to us all.

The Commission has put in place a number of Networks which deal with the theme of family and work. The first was set up in 1986 and is about the childcare and other services which are vital if men and women are to achieve a balance between their work and family responsibilities. Its function is to advise the Commission on the preparation of policy recommendations which enable men and women to be effective in their jobs and to care for children and other family members. Its scope covers mainly the quality of childcare services, but also, secondly, it gives encouragement for men in developing their role as fathers who care for children and seeks the implementation of the 1992 Council recommendation on childcare.

The other network, set up in 1993 under the title "Coordination Group on positive action" operates, in accordance with the Council recommendation of December 1984, to further the Commission's policies in the field of positive action. The initiatives undertaken by this group cover all aspects of company and organizational procedure: recruitment, training, promotion, organization of working time, supporting measures and so on.

The third network, and the most recent, set up only last year, goes by the name of "Families and Work Network". Its main task is to analyse, stimulate and disseminate model practice from within companies and organizations regarding achieving a better balance between working life, private life and family life, in particular where this involves new types of work organization.

This third network will do a useful job over the next three years. It will bring to the fore a European and national debate on what is going on in this field, by setting up a series of meetings and different types of activity. There is already early evidence of the achievements of this network, in that this evening, we will see the first awards of the European Prize for Social Innovation, organized by the Families and Work Network in cooperation with the Commission. Organizations which have put in place the most innovative measures in the field of reconciling family and working life will receive the Award.

Aims of the Seminar

At this Seminar, I hope that we can go beyond legislation and the networks. With the cooperation of the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, we have assembled here today all the main actors: governments, research workers, social partners, family and women's organizations. What we need is a full and searching debate on the theme of combining work and family life, with all that this involves in our modern societies.

In a recent interview to a French magazine¹, Jacques Delors said of Europe, comparing it with other continents, that it was "the continent of balance. Balance between the needs of society and those of the individual, balance between certain sociability and the solitude which allows us to recharge our batteries". He said that Europe was also "the continent of doubt, inhabited by people who ask questions ...".

It is precisely an example of this European balance that we are seeking when we attempt to reconcile the three things which make up life for each and everyone of us: time with our family, time with ourselves, time at work. Our search for the right balance crosses three main interfaces established largely by government: what services are provided, how our time is organized, how we move around.

We have to ask ourselves a series of vital questions. Is this balance between family life and working life something which we can actually achieve or is it more elusive than that? Do existing practices help or hinder the achieving of that balance? Aren't there certain inherent contradictions in those practices? For example, perhaps providing maternity leave, in the form in which it is organized at present, makes it hard for women to get back to work afterwards.

¹ The Debate - No. 83 - January, February 1995



Part-time work may also be a double-edged sword – it may help women to juggle their different private and public preoccupations in life but it may also trap them in unskilled and low-paid work. Moreover, is this just about the State and women, who until now have been the only ones concerned with how family and work responsibilities are combined, or might others see that they have some part to play? Does the State do enough? Haven't women, for their part, had to carry too heavy a burden for too long? Can this burden be shared? With whom? And how?

A personal observation – as I was preparing this speech, I reflected on some of the things I see around me in society today. I have already referred to part-time work – an increasingly accepted part of the labour market but with its dangers! It certainly allows more flexibility to reconciling work, personal and family life. But then, the pressures of competition seem to be making life more difficult – people are expected to work longer and contribute more – and we use euphemisms like down-sizing, lean production. What we mean, however, is more with the same or with less. There are the financial pressures on the household which often mean that both partners must work, particularly if they wish to buy a house. There is the pressure brought about by companies, offering only short-term job contracts. All of these add to the problem facing particularly young people today.

Jacques Delors remarked in the same interview that Europe was above all a continent of diversity. In terms of family policy, there are almost as many approaches to that policy as there are countries of the Union. But what is telling, said Jacques Delors, is the extent to which differences are linked to each other and how very often they occupy the same sort of ground.

Jacques Santer, the new President of the Commission, said in his speech of 9 May to the 8th European Trade Union Congress:

“... Europe is a project on which we work together. If sometimes we work at a different pace, nevertheless our common aims remain constant. We must look to what we are trying to achieve together...”.

In Swedish family policy we are fortunate enough to have a basic model to which we can constantly refer in our debates. This model reveals how diversity and commonality can combine together, how unity is created out of respect for differences and, as a corollary, how the very preserving of this diversity and indeed its acceptance, can lead us to achieve even greater unity.

I have described the legislative and institutional resources at our disposal. You will be talking in the Seminar about what we need to do in the longer term and how we can add to these resources. Your discussions and the recommendations which will ensue will enable us to make substantial progress towards answering the questions that I have raised.



With that, I conclude my remarks. I will now hand you over to the other speakers and to the discussions which will, I am confident, be full of interest and ideas. I wish you a most successful Seminar.

Thank you.

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The Case of Sweden

by Birgit Arve-Parès

The objective of reconciling work and family life has been part of the institutional framework for family policy in Sweden for many years. My intention here today is to give a short outline of this framework, in order to present a background to the contributions that will be given later by my Swedish colleagues. I will do this by rapidly tracing the history of Swedish family policy, hoping to bring out some of the logic that creates the coherence of this policy.

Basic features of Swedish family policy

I will start, however, with a short presentation of some of the characteristics of Swedish family policy. Swedish family policy is thus

- a *policy for the child*, and not a policy aiming to promote a particular family model,
- a policy based on *equal rights*, aiming to promote *equal opportunities* for all children, as well as for women and men,
- a *pragmatic* policy, focusing not on numbers of children to be born, but on taking good care of those actually born, aiming to provide conditions for childrearing that favour the individual development and social integration of each child, irrespective of family background,
- a policy which is closely *linked to developments on the labour market*,
- a policy tending for *social prevention and integration*, primarily on the basis of universal measures,
- a policy which is part of an *integrated programme for economic and social development*, aiming to combat poverty and social exclusion by coordinated measures within social security, social protection and employment policy.

It is, to put it shortly, a policy where children represent assets for the future and where parents are considered to be the prime but not sole agents for the development of the child. It is a policy that has a long history. In tracing the steps of this history, I will try to bring out some of its consistency.

Stages of a long-term policy

The beginnings

The foundations of Swedish family policy in a modern conception dates back to the 1930's, when they were firmly established within the framework of a vast programme to combat unemployment and to stimulate the restructuring of society. Priority was given to the objective of full employment and the right



to work. General measures, intended to create better living conditions, while at the same time stimulating the economy, were proposed.

For financial reasons, most of these reforms could not be implemented until the period after the war. The limited number of reforms that were adopted before the war, however, already bore the mark of the family policy that was to follow in the post-war period.

Thus, in the 1930's, a system of *services for maternal and child health care* was established, designed to provide all mothers and pre-school children equal access to health services. These services were to be free of charge and easily accessible. This was already a universal benefit, demonstrating clearly a political will to invest in children and coming generations.

The second important reform of this period was the introduction of a *maintenance allowance*, giving every child of a single mother the guarantee of a maintenance allowance, in case the biological father was absent, or neglected his obligations with regard to the child. The importance of this reform was first of all to protect children of divorced or separated parents from extreme poverty. But it also allowed single mothers to gain a certain independence, in case of conflicts with the father of the child.

Both the principle of universal benefits and the pragmatic concern about the needs of children were thus already present in the early reforms of the 1930's, as well as a concern for the conditions of women.

The post-war period

In the 1940's and 50's, there were two important reforms which introduced new principles, constituting the basic elements of present programmes.

The first reform was the introduction of a *general child allowance*, which had the form of a universal flat rate benefit. This benefit, attributed to every child living in Sweden, replaced the existing tax allowances, which had earlier been attributed to the father, in his capacity as head of the family. Thus, instead of fiscal rights, benefiting high-income families and sanctioning paternal authority, a universal benefit was introduced, a benefit that was to be attributed to all children on equal grounds. Another novelty was that the new benefit, instead of being attributed to the father, was to be paid out to the mother, who was considered more apt to take the needs of the child into account in managing the family budget.

The second important reform of this period was the adoption of a social security system, giving all inhabitants *social security rights*. These rights were linked to work and income, and were therefore to hold incentives to work, applicable to women as well as to men.

Among the rights introduced in this period was also a right to maternity leave, accompanied by a cash benefit, which was associated to the sickness insu-

rance, and thus related to the work and salary of the mother. This leave, which at the outset, in 1955, was of three months, was, in 1962, extended to six months. The introduction of this maternity scheme within the general social security system constituted a first recognition of a collective solidarity with regard to parents, in the form of a public contribution to the general costs for child care. This scheme was subsequently to be developed into a parental insurance, attributing parental rights to both mothers and fathers.

A new generation of reforms

The second stage in the development of Swedish family policy took off in the 1960's. It was linked to an employment policy, aiming to mobilise and promote the development of all human resources in the country, in response to the demands of an economy in full expansion.

From that time, Swedish family policy has been taking the conditions of women at work actively into account, reflecting on the modalities to propose in order to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. Confronted with a situation where women were beginning to play an important part on the labour market, policy makers acknowledged that the cost of a child was no longer restricted to the expenses of consumption on behalf of a new member of the family, but that they also contained the loss of an income from a parent, most of the time the mother, who had to interrupt her professional work. Since then, Swedish family policy has been actively pursuing the goal of providing measures that help parents with young children to reconcile work and family life.

Since the beginning of the 1970's, these measures are contained in a concept that is based on the following elements:

- a *parental insurance scheme*, attributing for every child born, a paid parental leave, at present amounting to 15 months for each child, to be disposed of as full time leave, or to be used for reducing daily working hours, accessible for both parents within a period of eight years, with one month to be used as an exclusive right for each one of the parents,
- the establishment of *child care facilities* for pre-school or school children, offering good quality care and educational measures promoting social integration, universally accessible and based on the obligation for local communities to provide such services to all children in demand, from the age of 12 months,
- work regulations, ensuring *equal rights to leave arrangements* and to reductions of working hours for purposes related to the needs of children, for both mothers and fathers,
- a *fiscal policy* designed in order not to prejudice female labour and low income.

These measures are integrated in the general welfare system and make up parts of the instruments on which Swedish welfare policy is based, i.e.:

- an *employment legislation*, aiming at working conditions that take account of parental responsibilities,



- *social security rights*, protecting, within certain time limits, an achieved standard of living for parents (mothers *and* fathers) on leave for reasons of child care,
- *social services* for care and social protection, aiming at social integration and prevention, by measures of universal access.

These instruments are all based on principles of equal rights, equal opportunities between men and women, and respect for the child.

I will not go into the modalities of the measures currently in force. Present achievements have, over the last decades, been extended and readjusted a number of times. We will, no doubt, have the opportunity to come back to them later in our discussions. I will therefore restrict myself to just a few remarks on the impact of these measures with regard to the central themes of the seminar.

Impact of the current policy

What do we know today about the impact of the current policy? Let me say first of all that we do not yet have a great amount of research assessing the outcomes of Swedish family policy. What shows up quite clearly in existing studies, however, is that the Swedish system of social protection seems to give lone mothers and their children a better protection from being victims of extreme poverty. They show that single mothers are doing better in Sweden than elsewhere with regard to poverty risks. This has been shown by researchers such as Ulla Björnberg, Barbara Hobson and Irene Wennemo among others. Wennemo has also shown, in comparing OECD-countries, that the costs of Swedish family policy are not exceedingly high, compared to other countries.

We also know that Swedish birth rates are among the highest in Europe. Sweden ranks second after Ireland, with a fertility rate that was recently still above reproduction rate. We have evidence showing that, although the increase in birth rates in the 1980's to some extent seems to be due to a recovery from earlier postponements of first births, the recent increase in birth rates follows very closely a parallel increase in the investments for parental insurance and child care facilities, implemented during the last decade.

We know furthermore that present policy measures are well accepted and have a high legitimacy among the public. They are part of a policy which is inscribed in the biographies of young people, by the options and models that they propose, and the framework they display. They are therefore bound to have had an impact on the behaviour of young couples, in their planning for a good management of work and family life. The extent and shape of this impact however has not yet been fully explored.

At the same time it has to be remembered that in order to evaluate the effects of any policy, in the strict sense of the word, account must be taken to the fact that this policy is part of a larger context, made up of economic, social and cultural facts, where the overall effects of any historical event are



difficult to measure in scientific terms. We can at the most advance more or less probable hypotheses.

We must furthermore be aware of the fact that any evaluation of the impact of a complex social and economic development will be related to the points of reference, chosen by the observer. I will therefore not venture to state that Swedish family policy has had specific, measurable and transposable effects. This does not mean, however, that there is no evidence to display.

Like most European countries Sweden has had an increase in female labour during the last twenty-five years. Sweden has today the highest rate of female labour participation in Europe. The rate of women who are professionally active is in fact as high as that of men. Unlike the rest of Europe, however, Sweden has had a steep increase in the birth rates since the middle of the 1980's and still remains on rank two after Ireland, in spite of a recent drop. This increase in the birth rate has been almost parallel to the development of policy measures in the 1980's. It seems undeniable that the two phenomena are connected. Everything gives us the right to believe that the policy established since the beginning of the 1970' has helped women, as well as men, to realize their desires to have *both* work and family life.

And tomorrow ...

To conclude, I would like to raise a number of questions appearing on the Swedish horizon and which already present themselves as challenges for the future.

Sweden is at present struggling with great financial problems. In the search for possible cuts in the social security system, family policy has, for the first time, been touched upon. Cuts have been made in general replacement levels, but the basic principles, including those of universal measures have not been touched upon. Social services have been affected, indirectly by the financial difficulties of local communities. At the same time we have an unemployment of unprecedented size since the 1930's. This raises questions. What will reconciling work and family life mean for women by the year 2000? What will it mean to men? Will there be differences?

The present family policy in Sweden has been developed in a context of full employment. Today we are no longer in that situation. How will young men and women plan for reconciling work and family life in the future, facing current developments in employment? What work conditions will the future developments of the labour market hold for them?

In Sweden, women so far seem to have been less affected by unemployment than men. This situation is beginning to change. What will the consequences be for women of different generations? For their husbands? For their children? And what is the overall impact of unemployment on young couples and families with children?



And what, finally, will the new communicative means of modern technology, serving to overcome distances in space and time, speeding up information and inducing delocalization of work, signify for the management and the quality of family life, on behalf of women, on behalf of men and on behalf of children?

There are many questions to be asked, in the web of this seminar. The programme of the seminar is structured around three main parameters, referring to the kind of arrangements that are available to parents who want to combine work and family life, i.e.:

- the organisation of services
- the organisation of time
- the organisation of space.

We have invited experts from different European member states to tell about their experiences. In doing so, our wish has been, to learn from others, and to find out things about ourselves. I feel confident that when we leave tomorrow, having spent these days together, we will have in our minds a number of new questions, very few definite answers, and hopefully some good new ideas.

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Services



– close to home solutions?



Child Care

by Peter Moss

In this paper, I will draw on nearly 10 years work, undertaken by the so called Child Care Network (the EC Network on Child Care and Other Measures to Reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities). The Child Care Network is currently undertaking its third review of services for young children in the European Union (EU); this will be completed in the Autumn, and will be published in all official EU languages. The Network has also produced, or is currently preparing, reports on a range of more specific subjects concerning services for young children: needs of rural families, family day care and information needs (already published); quality targets, costs and funding, services providing care and recreation for school-age children, and men as workers in services for young children (in preparation).

In this paper, I shall concentrate on the care of children under compulsory school age, which in most EU countries is between 6 and 7 years. The care needs of older children are also important, and as a Network we cover children up to the age of 10 years. However, time precludes covering the full age range. And though there are some issues specific to older children, there are also some common issues covering the care of children under and over school age.

One necessary condition for reconciling work and family life is that arrangements can be made for the safe and secure care of children while their parents are at work. Often these arrangements are informal, for example parents sharing the care between themselves or using social networks of relatives and friends, in particular grandmothers. Using informal services often involves 'juggling' hours of work, to fit in with what care arrangements are available. Informal arrangements are most significant for children under 3, and in most countries such arrangements provide more care for these children than formal services.

Care arrangements need to be seen as part of the wider strategy by which parents manage the relationship between employment and family life. The availability of care options, and their acceptability, will influence the type of strategy adopted. However, if we look at parental employment data for the EU (excluding the new member states) we can see that these strategies depend heavily on women, rather than men, adapting their work hours. In the former 12 member states, data from the 1993 Labour Force Survey show that 90% of men with children under 10 are employed, compared to 51% of women, but women are ten times more likely to have a part-time job; put another way, less than 3% of employed fathers work part-time, compared to 40% of employ-



ed mothers. Even among full-time employed parents, fathers work longer hours than mothers (43 v. 39).

Within this larger picture, formal services (either publicly funded or privately paid for) play a varying, but increasing role, in providing safe and secure care for children while their parents are at work. But what should we call these services? I find the term 'child care services', in English, unsatisfactory. The term is frequently used to refer to residential care and other forms of social work intervention with distressed children. It encourages the important 'care' role of schools, in many countries for children from 3 years upwards, to be overlooked. It can also distract attention from a range of other functions, apart from care, that so-called 'child care services' (eg. nurseries, family day care) can provide, for example education, socialisation and recreation for children, as well as social support for parents.

The term therefore is ambiguous and narrow. It helps to perpetuate a fragmented way of conceptualising and providing services for young children. Instead of treating the needs of all children and families in a broad and holistic way, it encourages us to segregate and isolate particular needs and groups of families, in particular the care needs of families with employed parents.

For the moment, therefore, I shall use the term 'services for young children'. The Council of Ministers Recommendation on Child Care, adopted in March 1992, provides a useful framework for looking at these services. This is a critical document, representing the clearest statement of current EU policy in this area. It sets out a series of objectives and principles to which member state Governments have made a commitment. It also provides, in Article 7, for member states to report to the Commission on what measures they have taken to implement these principles and objectives. That report back process is currently underway, and should provide an important basis for reflection about current and future policies.

The Recommendation recognizes that services for young children are a necessary but not sufficient condition for an effective strategy to reconcile employment and the care and upbringing of children. They need to be part of a wider policy framework, also including leave arrangements, workplace measures and measures to support increased participation by men in the care of children. Not only are all four policy areas needed, but they will be closely inter-related in an effective overall strategy. For example, as we can see from the experience of the Nordic EU countries, paid and flexible Parental Leave arrangements affect the demand for services for very young children, and may also affect the hours of attendance for older children; workplace measures can support and complement the use of statutory leave arrangements; while a current Child Care Network project, involving nurseries in Italy and the UK, illustrates how nurseries can promote increased participation by fathers in the care of children and the more general examination by fathers and mothers of gender roles and identities.



Moving from this broad approach, to Article 3 which deals specifically with services for children, the Recommendation sets out a number of important principles to underpin their development. Services should be accessible; this includes being affordable, evenly spread geographically in both urban and rural areas, and open to children with special needs. Services should combine care and education. There should be a close relationship with local communities, and responsiveness to parents and their needs. There should be flexibility and diversity, but also coherence between different services. Last, but not least, workers in services should receive basic and continuous training appropriate to the social and educative value of their work.

I would like to review existing service provision in the EU against two of these principles: accessibility and coherence. Starting with accessibility, provision is frequently unevenly distributed, being less available for example in rural than urban areas. This is particularly true for services for children under 3 years. Publicly funded services for this age group are at a low level in most countries, covering 5% or less of children. Parents of very young children must therefore depend heavily on either informal arrangements, and here it is important to stress the critical role of grandmothers, or buying private services. The situation is compounded by the fact that Parental Leave in most countries is still at an early stage of development, both in terms of payment and flexibility.

For older children, over 3 years, the situation is rather different. There is a widespread trend to provide three years of publicly funded nursery schooling or kindergarten for children from 3 to 6. However, in most countries this is not matched by the provision of services providing care and recreation when children are not at school. Schools may not fully recognize their care role, reflected for example in inadequate provision of meals and care during mid-day breaks or in the hours that schools are open.

This general picture needs to be qualified in four ways. First, the Nordic countries combine relatively well developed Parental Leave with high levels of publicly funded services for children over 12 months; all have commitments to provide publicly funded places for all children over this age. These countries have the least difference in levels of provision for children under and over 3, and in all cases publicly funded formal provision provides far more provision than either privately funded service or informal arrangements.

Second, France and Belgium have universal nursery schooling, extensive out-of-school provision and above-average levels of provision for children under 3 (around 20–25%), partly due to admitting 2 year olds into nursery school.

Third, the UK, Netherlands and Ireland provide no full-time Parental Leave entitlement (the Netherlands has an entitlement to part-time leave, the other two countries have no entitlement of any sort), have very limited or no nursery schooling and have large numbers of 4 and 5 year olds in ordinary pri-



mary school. In short, they do not offer a substantive stage of nursery school or kindergarten, geared to children from 3 to 6 years.

Finally, it should be noted that 8 countries provide direct subsidies to parents to reduce the costs they pay for using private services. The most common system is some form of tax reduction, and in most cases subsidies are available to all families. In Germany, Spain and UK however they are targeted at lower income families.

I want to turn now to the principle of coherence. What I mean by this is best illustrated by giving the example of the Nordic countries, which have developed a coherent and integrated system of services for young children from 0 to school age at 6 or 7. While there may be some diversity in type and management of services (although this varies between countries), all services operate within a singled unifying framework. This framework encompasses the law; administrative responsibility; funding and costs to parents; opening hours; a multifunctional approach covering care, learning and social support; and common training, pay and other employment conditions for the workforce.

This coherent system of services for young children in the Nordic countries is located within the welfare system. It is also well established. More recently, Spain has opted for a coherent and integrated approach, but has decided to locate all services for children from 0 to 6 within the education system. This major reform is still being implemented, having only been introduced as the result of major education legislation in 1990. Education authorities are now responsible for all services for children from 0 to 6 years, and 0 to 6 is recognized as the first stage of the education system, although care and education are recognized to be inseparable. The 0 to 6 service is further integrated through curriculum guidelines and the development of a workforce of specialised early childhood teachers, who train to work with the 0 to 6 age group.

Elsewhere in the EU however, services for young children are split between welfare and education systems. In some countries, such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal and the UK there is considerable overlap between the systems for children over 3; elsewhere, for example in the Netherlands or Italy, there is no overlap, or, for example in France and Belgium, only a small amount of overlap for 2 year olds. This division of services between two systems creates great incoherence – unjustifiable inconsistencies and inequalities between services.

Services in the welfare system are traditionally oriented to provide care for children from families with employed parents or social problems; nursery schooling is oriented to providing education for all children, but only over 3 years. In terms of law, administrative responsibility, funding, cost to parents, opening hours, availability and staffing, there are large differences between the services in the welfare system and those in the education system. A striking example concerns the training, status, pay and conditions of workers, all of

which are invariably better in services in the education system; as a consequence, workers with children under 3, who are largely in services in the welfare system, have the poorest training, pay and conditions and the lowest status.

A country which does not fit easily into this dichotomy of coherent and segregated services is Germany. All services for children under school age come within the welfare system, and there are a number of similarities between services for children under and over 3. Yet in many ways, despite having the potential, there is not a fully integrated system. Especially in the former West Germany, there is a very low level of provision for children under 3 years, combined with a long period of Parental Leave; while for children over 3 years, there is widespread kindergarten provision, most of which however is open for relatively short hours, and is not geared to the needs of employed parents. In effect, at least in the former West Germany, there is a split within the system which divides services for children under and over 3 years.

These points of accessibility and coherence can be illustrated by briefly describing some salient features of the services for young children in three countries, which also illustrate some of the wider differences in approach to be found within the EU today.

Over a period of only 30 years, Denmark has developed the most extensive system of services for young children in the EU. Publicly funded provision is available for about 50% of children under 3 and 80% of children aged 3 to 6. A recent major reform and extension of Parental Leave has reduced the demand for services for very young children, but this has been combined with a Government guarantee of a publicly funded place for all children over 12 months by 1996. It is doubtful if this target will be fully met, not least because of a recent increase in births; indeed it has been estimated that 60,000 new places will be needed by the year 2000 to accommodate the growing child population. However, about two-thirds of all local authorities are able to guarantee places, and the national waiting list for places has fallen from 35,000 in 1992 to 12,500 in 1995.

In 1994, public expenditure on services for children under 6 was about DKK 11 billion, excluding capital costs and infrastructure costs such as staff training. This comes to about 1.2% of GDP.

Denmark combines a coherent system with considerable diversity. All services are in the welfare system, at national and local level, and all are covered by the same laws. A 1990 Government Circular makes it clear that services are multi-functional, with care, educational and social support functions. There is a common funding system, with a common approach to parent contributions across all services; on average parents pay 21% of total running costs. Finally, and particularly important, all staff across different services have a similar level of training (the basic training is a 3.5 year post-18 course), pay and employment conditions.



At the same time, the services themselves are not uniform. While most are provided by local authorities, a substantial minority are managed by private non-profit organizations. There is considerable diversity in types of service, including nurseries (for children aged 0–3), kindergartens (3–6), age-integrated centres (0–6) and organized family day care. Recently, there has been rapid growth in what are called ‘forest kindergartens’ where children and staff spend their time, throughout the year, in the countryside. The system also gives great autonomy to individual centres, with a minimum of national regulation and a strong reliance on a highly professional workforce, active involvement by parents in the management of services and a strong emphasis on listening to children.

France has a relatively high level of publicly funded provision, with places for about a quarter of children under 3 and nearly all children from 3 to 6 years. However, by contrast with Denmark, services for young children are divided between two systems. For children under 3, there are a range of services in the welfare system, including various kinds of nurseries and organized family day care. There is also a potentially long period of Parental Leave, up to 3 years, but this is paid at a low level and only where there are two or more children in the family; so far, take-up has been low.

From the age of 2 years, children can move into nursery schools: about a third of 2 year olds attend and nearly all children from 3 to 6. Nursery schools are provided through the education system. They are free of charge, whereas parents contribute to welfare system services, paying about 28% of total costs. Welfare system services are open for longer hours than nursery schools. They are also differently staffed, having higher staff ratios than nursery schools but staff who mainly have lower levels of training than nursery schools teachers. The orientation of the services in the two systems is also different. A government Circular in 1986 emphasises that services in the welfare and education systems have different functions, and that schools are not providers of care.

Two other features of French services are important. France is the only EU country where all employers contribute to the cost of services. The Family Allowance Funds, which are financed by compulsory employer contributions, contribute about a quarter of the total cost of services in the welfare system, and play a very active role in stimulating the growth of a wide range of local services, both for employed and non-employed parents.

France also combines relatively high public expenditure directly subsidising services with the most comprehensive range of direct subsidies for parents. In addition to a general tax relief, grants are provided for families using family day carers, while the family allowance funds pay parents’ social security contributions as employers if the parents employ a family day carer or a private carer in their own home. This reflects a concern that individual private carers should not be marginalised in the labour market.

My final example is the UK. As already noted, the UK has a number of distinctive features: no Parental Leave entitlement; a limited system of nursery education, available to a minority of 3 and 4 year olds and only on a part-time shift system; an early age of compulsory schooling at 5, and the admission of many children at 4 into primary school. Unlike Denmark and France, UK policy is that public responsibility to provide services is limited to children 'in need', identified and referred by social workers. Parents requiring care for their children while they are employed must rely on informal arrangements or buying private services; reconciling employment and caring for children is regarded as an essentially private matter, to be left to parents.

This has created two distinctive features. First, most employed mothers with young children work part-time, and many work very short hours. Whereas British fathers work the longest hours in the EU (an average of 47 hours a week compared, for example, to 41 in Denmark), employed mothers work the shortest hours except for the Netherlands (24 hours a week compared to 34 in Denmark). Moreover, half of all part-time employed mothers with children under 5 work evenings, nights or weekends. Care arrangements in the UK therefore depend heavily on women tailoring their hours of work to fit in with informal care arrangements, as well as a high labour market demand for women willing to work short, 'flexible' hours.

Second, there has been a rapid growth of private services in recent years, especially as employment has increased among women with young children. The number of private nurseries, for example, has quadrupled in less than 10 years. This market in private, formal services is increasingly used by more educated, higher earning parents, with mothers working longer hours, and who resolve some of their care arrangements through buying services. The net result of growing private provision and low levels of nursery education is that most young children in the UK who attend a service are dependent on the parents willingness and ability to pay for that service.

Finally, like France, services in the UK are split between two systems. The welfare system provides for a relatively small number of children defined as 'in need', as well as regulating private services. The education system offers a mix of mainly part-time nursery education and early admission to primary school. Differences between services in the two systems are similar to those in France.

The conference theme is also concerned with contradictions and partnerships. I want to conclude by raising some questions about services which must be satisfactory answered to achieve a balance or partnership of needs and interests; and which if not resolved, produce tensions and contradictions:

1. What mix of services, leave arrangements, workplace measures and fathers taking a greater share of caring will produce care arrangements that meet the needs of children's welfare and development, gender equality, family functioning and employer labour supply?



2. Can we develop services that meet the needs of employed parents as well as providing more and better employment for workers in the services? Put another way, is there a danger that we may expand the quantity of jobs in these services without improving the quality, to the detriment of children and the predominantly female workforce?
3. What is the appropriate role of employers in relation to services for small children, to ensure that their labour force needs are integrated with other needs such as children's welfare and development, gender equality and family functioning?
4. How should services for young children be funded to ensure access and coherence, and in particular what should be the division of responsibility between public authorities, employers and parents?
5. Is it possible to coordinate welfare and education systems to increase coherence between services – or can coherence only be ensured through integration of all services into one multi-functional system?

I will not attempt full answers to any of these questions, but leave them for you to consider. My main conclusion however would be that we need to move away from the narrow concept of 'child care services for working parents', to the broader concept of a multi-functional and flexible 'early childhood care and education service', that is able to meet a wide range of needs for *all* children and parents, whether or not the parents are employed – needs that include care, socialisation, learning opportunities and social support. What I am advocating is an integrated service that is comprehensive in coverage, coherent in approach and viewed as an essential part of any society's social and economic infrastructure. Features of the service, such as funding and staffing, should not only be coherent across different types of provision, but reflect the importance, universality and complexity of the needs that the early childhood service seeks to meet; that would mean, for example, that funding cannot be determined by the labour supply needs of individual employers and that the training and employment conditions of staff working with children under 3 should not be at a lower level than staff working with older children.

I believe that it is only through the development of a comprehensive, integrated and coherent early childhood service of this sort that we can combine the social and economic goals of child welfare and development, gender equality, family functioning and an effective use of the labour force.

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Close-to-home Services: New Sources of Employment?

by Jean-François Lebrun

The basic demand, or Why a service voucher?

The question of service vouchers comes first of all from an initial approach which can be divided into three phases:

- the recognition of needs;
- the recognition of the necessity to stimulate a solvent demand;
- the establishment of assistance mechanisms.

The recognition of needs, or Why call for the development of close-to-home services?

Our action must be guided primarily by the highlighting and satisfaction of new needs and those needs that are still unsatisfied. The observation is simple: many needs still remain unsatisfied today. They correspond to the development in ways of life, to the transformation of family structures, to the increase in work done by women, and to the new aspirations of an elderly population. They also correspond to the need to repair the damage caused to the environment and to rehabilitate the most disadvantaged urban areas. We therefore have to reconcile individual and collective aspirations for a better quality of life and work with the demands of competitiveness.

The objective of fighting unemployment is of course present in the debate on close-to-home services, but it is not what should be at the centre of the development of these activities. It is not a question of creating jobs for the sake of creating jobs. It is the satisfaction of new and old needs that must generate new activities and thus be a way to create jobs. It is a question of establishing a development policy, an industrial policy for services.

The recognition of the necessity to help a solvent demand emerge, or Why does a "market" for these activities have difficulties to develop?

We have to ask an essential question – are voluntary policies necessary to promote the development of these initiatives? Is it not enough simply to recognize the existing needs for a large number of activities? If such needs exist, doesn't the market automatically have to provide for them?

There are so many studies, more and more of them, which examine this problem, that observation of our daily life shows that supply and demand for these



activities encounter major obstacles. As a reminder, I will mention some of them:

- The relative insolvency of the demand, which is connected with the costs of the work. The problem of the cost of the work, and more particularly that of the non-salary costs (social security contributions and taxes on income from work) is still more present in these activities, than in others, in view of the low gains in productivity and the intensity of work found in these activities, which, moreover, is the main point in the context of combating unemployment.
- The lack of structure in the supply because of the very non-existence of a solvent demand, but also because of a rationing of public assistance for certain activities of a social or collective nature due to the budgetary difficulties (also, with the administrations being organized separately, we do not always take proper account of the positive budgetary effects generated by the active employment policies and the social policies).
- The reticence about taking part in such activities, even benefiting from such services. We are still part of an "industrial" way of thinking where we see some service jobs as degrading and where we see consumption of services as a superfluous luxury compared with consumption of durable goods.

The establishment of assistance mechanisms, or Why a mechanism to support demand?

In order to remove obstacles to satisfying needs and thus to guarantee and offer the adequate development conditions, actions are necessary.

These actions may encompass very many forms, affecting several political spheres, and involve numerous participants. The experiments implemented in several States of the European Union themselves show the diversity of the resources and the approaches used.

In this respect, it often appears necessary to re-examine the traditional methods of intervention of employment policies, which favour targeting by category of people, such as the young or the long-term unemployed. Several member states have already started thinking about this and have initiated new instruments, geared more towards the development of new activities than towards the social handling of unemployment.

The addition of targeting on activities leads to working on several fronts. Both demand and supply have to be taken into account. Development strategies do indeed have to be discussed. To ensure its success, this strategy must be global; analysing the needs, marking out the obstacles, developing the necessary qualifications, adapting the judicial and fiscal framework, and giving structure to supply by aids to investment.

But to make demand solvent is a prerequisite, a necessary condition for the development of these activities. This reduction in the cost can take place through several channels, such as subsidies for production (or reductions in social



contributions for the service provider) and subsidies for consumption (or fiscal incentives for the beneficiary of the service).

Subsidising consumption has the advantage of not upsetting the structural conditions of supply and thus highlighting that employment in these activities is "normal". Also, subsidising consumption allows the reduction in prices to be modified depending on the beneficiary's family or financial circumstances.

The service voucher, what is it in fact?

First of all, what is it *not*? A parallel currency or the result of an exchange. In its basic concept, the service voucher constitutes a simplification of the process allowing consumption of certain activities to be subsidised. It is first of all a voucher, like a bank cheque, that is a piece of paper with which a corporate body or a person makes a payment to a third party. But, also, it entitles or will entitle them to a reduction in the cost of the activity. This reduction may come from the public authorities or other bodies such as a company, an insurance company, a mutual society etcetera. A service voucher comes from a consumption-subsidising measure, it does not precede it.

It is therefore a method of payment with three characteristics:

- an ability to target beneficiaries, accessible services and service providers;
- a possibility to reduce prices or increase purchasing power;
- a mechanism for issue by private purchase or organized distribution.

Distributing these three characteristics helps to design a family of service vouchers. In Belgium, the ALE voucher is one member, the service job voucher in France is another. In these two cases, it is the aspects of "reduction in prices" and "targeting certain activities" which are favoured, as the purchase of vouchers is voluntary. As for the restaurant voucher, it provides a reduction in the prices granted by means of benefits in kind, which helps increase the purchasing power by organized distribution intended for employees. The same applies to the formula of service vouchers used in simulations carried out in Belgium at the request of the Roi Baudouin Foundation and by the Planning Office.

The need for a development strategy, or How to obtain quality jobs?

The "market" where service vouchers can be used must not constitute a "dual" market, strictly regulated and reserved for the unemployed. For the introduction of service vouchers does not imply intervention on the service market. The only requirement is compliance with the accreditation conditions for receiving the service vouchers as payment (for example compliance with the limits on use of the service voucher, jobs with status and quality of the service). Accreditation may favour the formation of service companies, of a non-market and social market economy, where the job will be carried out on the normal conditions of the employment market. The existence of these "inter-



mediary" companies, in the sense that they constitute an interface between the consumer and the service provider, limits recourse to various forms of domesticity. Competition must stimulate creativity, quality and favourable prices for the beneficiaries. Accompanying measures, particularly in terms of communication to the public at large, help to avoid confusion with minor jobs, an adapted professional training policy and access to a development fund are necessary to ensure a supply of quality services. The development of close-to-home services cannot come from one single measure but from a coherent strategy.

To help develop the supply of services over a wide base, thus responding to the different demands and the aim of creating jobs, a mass effect, that is a significant growth in demand, could be envisaged. It would be a question of developing an issue of service vouchers both on a voluntary purchase basis and on the basis of organized distribution. In this respect, the inclusion of a service voucher distributed to employees as a benefit in kind may constitute an interesting option both for the employee and for the collective group, as it becomes part of the wider debate on the allocation of the profits of productivity in order to create employment. The same applies to organized distribution to the elderly or families as part of their social security benefits.

Since there is a large supply of "moonlighting" work in close-to-home services, the use of the service voucher may constitute an efficient method for combating informal work, and, consequently, a net benefit for employees from the point of view of social cover, for the consumer from the point of view of guarantee and quality, and for the public authorities from the point of view of taxation.

Taking account of the windfall effects, or Why favour targeting?

Offering a reduction in price, whatever the mechanism used, involves a budgetary cost that must be compared with the benefits obtained.

The studies available on the question of the service voucher help, in particular, to quantitatively confirm the relation between targeting and effectiveness of a measure of economic policy or employment policy. Bad targeting or no targeting is revealed in windfall effects which correspond to the decisions, for example on buying or employing, which would have been decided anyway.

The absence of targeting on activities which are at present developed little or not at all, not because of a lack of need but because, in particular, of a cost which is prohibitive for the consumer, generates a net loss for public finances and social security and a low gain in terms of jobs.

Thus, in the case of proper targeting and, as an illustration for Belgium, of an allocation of 2.5 billion ecus (more or less half of which to be borne by the public authorities as a subsidy for demand), the estimates of the Planning Office come to a gain of around 60,000 jobs and 500 million ecus for the public



finances. In the absence of targeting, which corresponds to an undifferentiated stimulation policy (reduction in taxes, increase in available income), the gain in employment is limited to 15,000 jobs, and public finances record a gap which has to be made up in the region of 1 billion ecus, which corresponds overall to the fiscal and parafiscal benefit granted.

Does targeting, for all that, mean the same as constraint? The answer to this question is to be found in the needs. Needs for close-to-home services, which include services for people, are large. We therefore have to make a distinction between lack of utility and lack of development.

This targeting on new activities, new in the sense that many needs still remain unsatisfied today, also brings us some answers for the critics who, quite often, accuse employment assistance policies of being expensive. It is true that such targeting can help reduce the effects of substitution and windfall. Satisfaction of these new needs creates new jobs, in the same way as any new satisfaction which increases the level of production.

Current developments, or What are our neighbours doing?

The necessity for the states of the European Union to facilitate the development of such services, in order to satisfy the needs of their populations and increase growth in employment, has been stressed in the conclusions of the Essen European Board. As a reminder, this importance given to these services stems directly from the Commission's official report, *Growth, competitiveness and employment*. In this report, the Commission presented a series of ways to help the development of new sources of employment, which include people services. Among these ways, the Commission mentioned service vouchers and tax allowance mechanisms aiming to reduce the cost of these services.

The governments of the Union who have decided to develop these services have opted for such measures, thus:

- the French government has established a system of service vouchers allowing a 50% tax allowance for expenses incurred by individuals who call on family uses;
- the Belgian government has established another system of service vouchers which allows individuals to have domestic work carried out by the long-term unemployed by benefiting from a tax allowance;
- the Danish government has introduced financial assistance for households which declare services carried out in their home.

Other governments and local administrations are examining the possibility of implementing measures to support the development of these activities through the service voucher.

It is not only governments which are interested in the development of people services. An increasing number of companies are establishing services availa-



ble to their staff. And this is not only a privilege of large companies. Thus, vouchers for child-minding are also distributed to employees of certain companies, particularly in the United Kingdom, to allow them access to external child-minding services at a reduced price. One also thinks of the companies that subscribe to contracts for looking after sick children at home. The world of associations is also present on the service voucher stage; we hear of washing vouchers, elderly people vouchers etcetera.

The service voucher constitutes an instrument of development for service activities, which helps to increase the quality of life and create a significant number of jobs. It involves a desire shared by the public authorities, the employers, the workers and by the whole of society. But, as the Commission's report emphasises, "Nothing would be more dangerous for our Europe than to maintain structures and customs which support resignation, reserve, and passivity. The awakening comes from an active society by citizens aware of their own responsibilities and moved by the spirit of solidarity towards those with whom they form local and national communities, rich in their history and their common feeling of belonging".

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The Contradictions of Service Vouchers

by Dominique Decoux

The context

Our society and the world in general seem to be at a real turning-point in history. Our post-industrial societies are said to be in a process of change, a change which today seems to pose questions, fundamental problems, for which new and different solutions need to be created:

- the increase in the number of unemployed, whether receiving benefit or not;
- the weakening of social bonds;
- social needs, not being met, particularly as regards services to people;
- the need to render democracy more dynamic democracy and truly participatory, etcetera.

Although it is obvious that the lack of jobs in a society, must be a central concern and must mobilise the forces of dynamism and intelligence – employment is so much a source of independence, of recognition and social bonds – the solutions proposed must be linked to serious thought about the type of employment to be promoted and the type of society in which it participates.

The question of employment is associated with the question of instability, solidarity, quality of life, participation, access to active citizenship and thus democracy. But the way in which the question of employment will be posed and in which the solutions will be envisaged is also based on the idea that we have of the division of tasks and work and family functions between men and women. This aspect of the question, which is at the heart of reconciliation, is today still largely determined by a vision inherited from the past, according to which it was exclusively the man's job to "keep the pot boiling" and the women's to serve "her lord and master" and to care tenderly for her offspring.

For all these reasons that make employment a burning question, we must avoid rushing into an activism that aims to create employment, any old how, with any old status (and on this subject sanctimonious wishes are not enough).

It is recognized employment, that has a value and brings social status allowing people to take their firm and stable place in life (by the pay and social protection) that has to be developed. It is this which allows workers to escape from instability, to develop relatively long-term plans in life, to open themselves up to the outside world by releasing them from worries about tomorrow and dependency on others (their partner or public assistance).



Are we merely stating the obvious here? Perhaps, but these are obvious facts that it is a good idea to remember at this time when the employment market is being deregulated (temporary work, fixed term contracts, part-time work, sub-contracting to outsiders, shorter hours etcetera) and people are questioning so-called “passive” measures devoted simply to monetary redistribution (in this case unemployment benefit) which would not be part of an “active” policy to combat unemployment (professional training, courses for young people, measures to help find a job etcetera).

So, “all the programmes for employment implemented today represent a break away from the norm of indefinite full-time employment, and bring about a transformation in the idea of work”. Access to work for a fixed period is regarded as positive in itself and made possible by a reduction in personnel expenses for the employer thanks to public financing (Jean-Louis Laville, 1993).

We are beginning to recognize that these measures are having little tangible impact on the real creation of employment, so important seem the “Windfall” and “substitution” effects (replacing an older worker with a young one).

So there is a lot of improvisation in the creation of jobs. It is a general phenomenon in Europe. And for some months now there has been a new idea – the development of so-called close-to-home services which constitute real sources of jobs.

We are therefore going to make it our duty to promote employment in these services. It already attracts our attention to the prism which is used straight away to tackle the problem of these services. The fad for close-to-home services, collective services, demonstrated by certain groups of people seems to stem only from the possibility they perceive of putting tens of thousands of unqualified unemployed back to work.

The service vouchers come into this perspective. But is it a good way of tackling the question of close-to-home services?

Service vouchers: An instrument for developing collective services?

HOW DID THIS IDEA EMERGE?

From two observations:

- the massive creation of jobs in sectors subject to international competition is highly improbable. More widely, investments in the secondary sector are rather rationalisation investments which to a large extent damage employment;
- in sectors shielded from international competition, there are many sources of employment. Needs seem to exist which are not satisfied, particularly in close-to-home services, defined as personal services which make daily life easier and allow people to deal with a range of personal or family problems.

So, according to the promoters of the service voucher, we have to ask ourselves why, in the face of these needs, a market has not developed. Three factors are mentioned:

- the problem of the cost of such services for the individual that has to pay a gross salary to the service-provider, leading to the development of "moonlighting";
- a lack of structure in the supply;
- the cultural habits and cultural connotations which slow down demand: firstly, in Europe, we prefer to "spend to get material goods" rather than to allocate part of our resources to services, confusion of such services with domesticity.

The central problem would therefore be the creation of demand. In order to get the citizens of our country out of their bad habits it is necessary to induce "forced consumption", allowing use of the services concerned to be artificially stimulated and the creation of new jobs.

The service voucher, according to its promoters, meets this objective because, by receiving part of their pay in service vouchers, workers will use services to carry out part of their non-professional work. They will share part of their overall work with other people who will thus have access to employment.

CRITICISMS

Cultural resistance to "consuming" services?

We feel as if we are dreaming when we hear about this resistance that would slow down the use of services; hearing that so many questions are posed about the existence of a demand for services and about the need to stimulate it for it to emerge. As a women's movement, we are very well aware of the lack of provision and collectively useful services (facilities for looking after children of all ages, care and assistance for people, training etcetera) which so much affects the lives of women and families.

In Belgium, as certainly in other European countries, it is no longer even a joke to say that if parents want a nursery place for their child after it is born they should find one before it is conceived!

A definition of technocratic type needs

It is the ambition of the promoters of the service voucher to create employment by developing a demand for services without additional costs for public finances and social security.

The Planning Office in Belgium has just shown that in order to be a success on these two levels (creation of employment and no additional cost for the State), fiscal assistance (that is subsidy for consumption) must not give rise to windfall effects. This implies that it must avoid giving a public subsidy to households for services that they would have consumed in any case.

In order to be efficient on a macro-economic level, the services accessible with the service vouchers should be the subject of a restrictive list, separate from families' present consumption habits. This objective of macro-economic efficiency would then very largely contradict the objective of responding to the needs in the place where they are located.

From this point of view, it is therefore not a question of organizing a response to existing needs, the importance of which would have been measured, but to impose new needs on a population on the basis of a theoretical study, founded on debatable a priori arguments.

The other strategies would not lead to such good prospects. So, the idea of subsidising or resubsidising existing or future collective services seems unsatisfactory to the defenders of the service voucher, since "this type of measure puts the main emphasis on the creation of jobs and not on the development of a market".

A lack of structure in the supply

Today we often hear that the supply structured by the existing subsidised services is inadequate to satisfy the demands which are made on them and to respond to all the needs (Jean-François Lebrun, Lysiane de Selys, 1994) As a movement and co-ordinator of services, we have for years been deploring the fact that it is insufficient, indeed even inaccessible to certain even very average family incomes. This is the reason why we do not cease to demand better subsidies for these services, in order to allow all the demands to be better met. This would seem to be perfectly coherent. In the report of the Roi Baudouin Foundation, however, the development of subsidised services – if we recognize this to be one of the possible routes – is regarded as not very efficient, as it does not involve a sufficiently secure increase in the demand (Jean-François Lebrun, Lysiane de Selys, 1994). What astonishing contradictions!

In the light of all this, we think that the idea of developing and creating subsidised or resubsidised private and public collective services has been withdrawn straight away without prior in-depth studies. This seems linked to a quasi-obsessional focus on the necessity to stimulate a hesitating demand, and on that of creating a market.

Developing close-to-home services to combat unemployment: the traps

As we said previously, the commitment to close-to-home services has developed in so far as they are perceived as sources for job creation, accessible to the unskilled unemployed.

In our opinion, it is certainly not ignominious to be an unskilled person out of work (and yet it should be pronounced that this supposed lack of skill is questioned by a certain number of researchers). What is ignominious however, is that the tone of the debates gives the impression that they will remain so for ever and that the only work accessible to them is a job that does not demand a lot of qualifications.

This mixture makes way for despair among the unemployed and for depreciation of the workers in these sectors and of the sector as a whole.

We are faced here with a confusion, generated by public policies which, faced with the urgency of dealing with social problems (including the lack of jobs), tend to regard close-to-home services as simple tools for combating unemployment. Their specific nature and their contributions are often not appreciated. The presumptuous nature of these proposals is revealed by the nice combination of activities covered by the studies on the service voucher: shopping, light repairs, light gardening, washing cars, floors, clothes, care work, tutoring and child-minding. All these are similar things which, for the promoters of the service voucher, require but few qualifications; aptitudes (often feminine ones, moreover!) rather than technical skills.

This omission to consider the sector of the collective sector “reveals that close-to-home activities are still perceived as adjacent activities, synonymous with devotion, and only arousing sporadic interest for their possible contribution to the creation of jobs. In short, many decision-makers continue to think that real jobs, producing and creating wealth, are industrial jobs, and, if noble services exist, they are the services to companies, linked with industry”.

It is to be feared that in the event of a towards a new long economic cycle, bringing new innovations generating growth, people will become uninterested in the development of these services.

We are still waiting for the “epistemological revolution” which will come when it is accepted that part of the services obey a different logic to that of work in the sphere of industrial production. While we wait for this, personal and collective services are still seen only as palliatives against unemployment at the whim of fluctuations in growth (Jean-Louis Laville, 1993), and not for their specific and primordial contributions in society.

In this perspective, restricting oneself to saying that we have do away with the coloured view of “minor jobs” and promote a more positive “image” of service jobs, is another proof of a virtuous intention. It is from reflections on its social functions of solidarity and democratisation, and a recognition of the qualifications of the workers engaged in these services, that the stigmatisation of this sector will end. So, if the development of close-to-home services leads to original answers to the problems of employment, they are not conceived solely with the aim of creating jobs (an employment market for the “unemployable”, as some people cynically say). Their first *raison d'être* is based on the desire to offer a structured response in the public sphere to needs for personal, social or collective services, a structured response which must be accessible to the whole population whatever their income. The close-to-home services refer us directly to the debate on the societal options for the future.



The service vouchers: an aid for the development of close-to-home services?

The injection of service vouchers into the market, whether in a compulsory form or not, is unimaginable without a parallel increase in subsidising the services. These subsidies will allow the services to demand only a partial contribution from the users, in proportion to their income. Without subsidies, either the services will make the user pay the full price for each hour worked, which is profoundly anti-democratic and socially unjust. Or they will demand a payment in proportion to the users' income, and they have a deficit, or simply choose to respond to the needs of a well-off clientele that can pay the advertised prices.

The services need additional resources. Service vouchers are regarded as a contribution going in this direction. And yet this type of income is all the more hazardous because the competition between different types of services (care work, delivery of shopping, child-minding), as well as withing services of the same type (different minding or caring services) will be encouraged (the law of the market). What will be the stable financial bases on which they are to pursue and develop their activities? Will they be able to offer their workers "real" indefinite full-time "jobs".

What is also worrying is the good conscience that the existence of the service vouchers risks to generate among the public decision-makers. The service vouchers run the risk of being regarded as a major tool for developing services "because, by providing resources, they create a market". They therefore run the risk of stopping a necessary analysis in society about the role and the visible development of collective services.

Why, then, should we choose this policy of service vouchers which has so many disadvantages? An ambitious policy for developing collective services is thus needed. They should be financed by a social economy or non-market fund, receiving resources from new taxation on the financial capital and the reorientation of aids to employment, which are today so expensive and so inefficient.

We need to diminish the cost of work, by way of reductions in fiscal and parafiscal charges, for these sectors of collective utility. These reductions should be compensated for in full by alternative financing measures in the social security system.

SERVICE VOUCHERS: "LUXURY GADGET" OR MEASURE PROMOTING RECONCILIATION AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE

What should we think of a formula that would automatically allocate the equivalent of 67.5 ecus to a worker who received a net monthly income of 1050 ecus? Whether this worker feels the need to use services or not. What should be done with 67.5 ecus if one has to meet daily "needs" for child-minding, care for the handicapped or the sick, sometimes major needs for tutoring, continuous training?



If these 67.5 ecus are not accompanied by an ambitious policy of resubsidising collective services, are they going to give access for everyone, depending on their income, to quality services?

In a compulsory service voucher system, would vouchers go to those who need these services the most? Obviously, one of our plan commissioners said, distribution of these service vouchers in proportion to income will not satisfy the requirements that need to be met.

Nothing guarantees the fitness between needs, such as they appear in the population, and the access to services, to the way they are distributed among household by means of the service vouchers.

These considerations show how much the service voucher is a measure that would respond to the need for services in a very hazardous and very marginal way, needs which arise particularly from the growing demands associated with the search for optimum reconciliation of work and family life.

As a women's movement, we are mobilised for a society where women and men take an equal part in all spheres of society. For that, they must have access, not in competition, but together, to their resources, so that together they contribute to the common good, to social development. The problems of reconciling family life and working life must therefore no longer be, as is still too often the case, regarded as women's problems. That is why the development of services of a collective utility, close-to-home services, and a non-stigmatising redistribution of work are essential elements for a radical transformation of society towards more justice, solidarity, harmony and equality.

Towards a lasting development of close-to-home services

A STRICT DEFINITION

Initially, close-to-home services can be defined as services that create employment and bring social cohesion. Bringing employment, they contribute to the creation of qualified jobs (or qualifying itineraries for the unemployed), assuming a work status that is not marginal – both from the point of view of pay and the type of appointment and employment conditions – and possibilities for training and personal development. They reinforce social cohesion by giving largely to what the users say and the social bonds woven between service-providers, users and partners.

Contrary to what the model of the service vouchers tends to induce, the field where these services are set up is not inordinately extendable. It is limited, as we have emphasised, to certain social services, in this case personal social services. They hold a relational dimension which can be induced by their destination (as in the case of services to people) or come from a choice made by the promoters (in the case of collective services, like those associated with the environment, for example, which aim to establish contacts between users and



partners). Rather than carrying out their activities in an impersonal way by presenting themselves as specialised services, close-to-home services cover the services for which the relational dimension is demanded as an essential quality ingredient (Jean-Louis Laville, 1993).

AN ORIGINAL APPROACH

Whereas the basis of intervention by the social services is to fill in an individual and collective gap or deficiency, and to adapt the individual or the group to a normality defined as quasi-universal – and this, according to methods defined by the professional competence of experts, located on the outside in relation to the people concerned (social assistance in relation to the “excluded”) – close-to-home services are located in a completely different approach (Jean-Louis Laville, 1993).

They are based on the daily practices of the populations, the relationships and exchanges which weave the daily fabric of local life, the aspirations, the values, the desires of the people who use them. They engender, so doing, the joint construction of supply and demand.

The change in perspective compared with the traditional concept of social services does indeed reside in the debates, through which the services to be created are defined. Social services dealt with as close-to-home services no longer originate in the deficiencies presented by certain target publics and identified in relation to a supposed normality, but in collective questioning about the daily life of those involved. We are therefore far from a technocratic approach (Jean-Louis Laville, 1993).

A POLITICAL CHOICE

To develop close-to-home services is to opt more for the quality of jobs than for the quantity. But to give the resources to close-to-home services to develop (through a new connection between the spheres of the market, the non-market and voluntary commitment), is not only to facilitate the creation of activities or real qualified jobs or qualifying itineraries, it is also to promote the appearance of new solidarities.

Faced with the exacerbation of a certain individualism, with the weakening of the social bond, with the increasing distrust of politics, the consolidation of new concrete solidarities constitutes an interest just as important as the creation of employment (Jean-Louis Laville, 1993).

So, close-to-home services cannot be reduced to marginal or palliative innovations for a time of crisis. They pose essential questions for the future of relations between the economic sphere and the social sphere. The development of this new area of activity cannot be left in the hands of experts, otherwise we will be supporting a deficit in democracy which is already worrying.

The movements and associations tuned into the local social realities should



thus be privileged partners in this debate. Movements, associations and close-to-home services are essential to a society because they are schools for citizens, places where one has one's apprenticeship for responsibilities, taking decisions as a team, paying attention to others, without which there is no society (Claude Julien, 1992).

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Services for Social Integration – the Scandinavian Approach

by Ulla Björnberg

I will start my presentation by briefly referring to some normative and scientific ideas about social integration, on which today's social services are based.

In the 1930's, the ideal of providing *equal opportunities for all citizens to participate in society*, which creates a sense of dignity and belonging, and thereby social integration was first developed by the Myrdal couple. To them, social integration is connected to *participation within the main spheres of society* – economic production, family life and political life. Other sources of inspiration were the ideas about social welfare and social citizenship (Timuss and Marshall), later developed as the power resource approach (Korpi). According to this approach, social citizenship refers to the rights and duties of individuals, and to *the distribution of resources* within a given society. Thus, social integration is linked to the distribution of resources, as resources enable participation within the different spheres of society.

Social integration has been seen as a goal in its own right. However, there are also more specific reasons for striving for it. Social integration is *promoting economic development* (Gunnar Myrdal). This idea has recently been developed by researchers on regional economy and development, suggesting that social institutions play a substantial role for the economic development of societies, and regions within societies. Robert Putnam in Italy and Amitai Etzioni in the USA, for instance, refer to the importance of informal social ties, such as common beliefs and norms, for creativity, solidarity and courage, needed for success in business. Looked upon this way, social services should be considered as *investments*, and not primarily as costs, in the public budget.

Opposite to social integration is social exclusion, or social segregation, and gaps between the citizens are desintegrating forces in a society. Problems of social integration is the classic arena for sociological studies – it is as old as sociology itself. For instance, Durkheim identified modern societies as societies based on organic solidarity – societies with a high degree of differentiation and specialisation, where social integration has to be created, i.e. deliberately planned. Thus, in a modern society, social integration is not just happening by itself, by advocating an ideal of pluralism and free mobility. Social integration has to be promoted in an active way.



Social integration can not be ordered from above, though. Politicians can not order people to integrate themselves. People do that when they feel motivated to. My point is that there have to be links between the grass root level on one hand, and the resources and services provided for people on the other, in order to promote good circles for social integration.

One of the basic ideas of Alva Myrdal was that families that do not have enough resources of their own should have access to common resources at community level. She primarily referred to children with poor parents and intended that public child care should play a double role of giving these children a stimulating environment, toys to play with, and pedagogic guidance. At the same time, it should create possibilities for women to work, and thus be integrated into the economic sphere of society, as well as contributing to the household economy. This would also promote women's political participation.

The process of developing *child day care* services, was an important input for children with particular needs of social support and stimulation, i.e children with social problems, handicapped children, children with lone mothers, etcetera. One of the principles on which present child care facilities are based is the idea that these children should be integrated into the normal day care activities, and not be cared for separately. A general idea is furthermore that children should not be excluded from the day care groups to which they belong because of the unemployment of their parents, or when new babies are born into the families. In developing collective services for child day care, the importance of considering the individual needs of each child has been stressed. Group sizes not exceeding 15 children for three teachers are therefore recommended.

There is also a stress on the *interaction between day care institutions and families*. Day care centers are supposed to support families in the socialisation of their children, and to promote contacts between parents within the local neighbourhood. One of the reasons for not developing day care centers at the work-places, but in neighbourhoods, is to allow children to remain in their local setting, and to have *local social networks* already when starting school. The idea of linking the day care centres to the local area has been developed in many other ways, for instance by involving pensioners who visit the nursery homes and read stories. Furthermore, *parental participation* in the day care, pre-school or school activities has been made possible by the option to give parents paid leave two days per year for that purpose. This idea of parental participation has been strengthened in recent years by the development of cooperative day care centres. They build on the principle that parents take an active part in running the day care centre – cleaning, cooking, etcetera. These types of day care centres have been expanding all over the country these last years.

Another innovation is the *open pre-school*. This type of establishment was created for child minders and housewives, as a place where they could go with their children to play and have pedagogical guidance. A pre-school teacher is

working in the open pre-school, but the children have to be accompanied by a parent or a child-minder. In some local areas, open pre-schools play a significant role for immigrant mothers and refugees, as a place where they can meet. Many of them are isolated and unemployed. A similar arrangement are the so called *Müttercentra* in the south of Germany, which have been created in order to give mothers a public place where they can develop skills, interests and ideas, and bring their children. These kinds of institutions are of great importance for isolated mothers and children, and give them a network for support in case of violence and abuse, which we know, by statistics, is a problem in particular for lone mothers with small children. *Müttercentra* are not meant for just working mothers, but they indirectly promote mothers to enter the labour market, if they are inclined to do so.

A relatively new institution in Sweden is the establishment of *father centres*, where divorced fathers without custody can go with their children and learn how to cope with their situation as divorced fathers from the experiences of others. These are also prevalent in France (*lieux d'accueil pour l'exercice du droit de visite et d'hébergement*).

There are *public youth centres*, situated in local housing areas, where young people have a place to gather, and where associations run activities like music, theatre, games, hobbies and sports. Many children also gather in *public libraries* after school, to read books, listen to music, or play chess. These public institutions, both youth centres and libraries, have played a significant role for the social integration of young people and children, in particular those with parents working outside the home, and without access to after-school services.

Another important institution for public services is made up by the *Maternity Health Care Centres* and the *Child Health Care Centres*, that offer prophylactic parental education, preparing both men and women together for the delivery and for their future roles. Young parents to be are thus given the opportunity to meet other parents in the same situation, and to receive special training in different practical as well as psychological matters. The Centres for Preventive Child care have been very important also as counselling institutions for mothers when it comes to care of babies and small children. Problems can be discovered at an early stage.

When explaining the ways in which our society has dealt with services for social integration, I also find it important to mention how *city planning* was developed. It has been looked upon as an instrument to create the necessary structural conditions for the services. In city planning, the planning of housing areas, goals were set up in order to pave the way for the physical integration of social services in the housing areas of different categories of people. There have been different steering instruments to reach the goals. One was the planning process in itself, where cooperation with institutions dealing with social services took part. Steering was also built into the state loans for building dwellings and housing areas. Certain standard norms, among which some



in particular took handicapp aspects into consideration, were tied to giving state loans with favourable interest rates.

In the wake of public finance crisis, following the international and national recession, many of the services mentioned have been exposed to severe cuts and savings. Libraries, youth centres, open pre-schools and day care centres have been closed down. We can call it *a process of structural rationalisation* which, in many ways, contradicts the basic goals mentioned. On the one hand, the law on provision of child care in the municipalities states that all children of the ages of 1,0–12 years have the right to child care. On the other hand, many municipalities give but restricted access to children of unemployed parents, and for children who get siblings. In both day care centres and schools, the groups of children have been enlarged and the staff has been reduced. Many teachers are very concerned about this, since they can not apply the work methods for which they were trained, according to the above mentioned goals. Reduction of staff means greater problems in integrating children with special needs, such as handicapped children, socially disturbed children, among which we find children of refugees and immigrants, and children who have social problems in their families. The ambition is still to protect these children, but there are great problems. The tendency is now to seek special solutions for them, i.e put them into separate groups or even institutions.

I shall not prolong this long list of rationalisations, cuts and savings. We still have only sporadic knowledge about the consequences of them. Some groups suffer far more than others, in particular those with low education, and, among those, lone mothers, single persons and immigrants. It also appears that the consequences in the big cities are more severe. Reports and scattered studies also suggest that not all the changes necessarily have implied less quality in the services delivered, however. More systematic studies are needed in order to make solid evaluations of the local variations and their consequences.

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Flexi-time



- a men's issue?



Why Do Men not Make Use of their Parental Rights?

by Jeanne Fagnani

In this brief paper, I will suggest a few ideas to explain the following problem: in France, as in Germany, fathers hardly ever take advantage of the arrangements concerning parental leave or the parental benefit for raising children, the APE (*Erziehungsgeld* in Germany). In France, for example, 95% of the beneficiaries of the APE for the third child, and 99% of the beneficiaries of parental leave, are mothers.

Parental leave and the APE in France – no incentives for involving fathers

In France, contrary to other European countries, there is a contradiction between a very liberal model of a couple, which is quite egalitarian, where reversibility is accepted, and a traditionalist concept of gender roles (AIF Report, Commaille, 1993). Although parental leave and the APE can be given to fathers just as well as to mothers, the legislator has not set up the mechanisms – unlike in Sweden – to encourage fathers to take advantage of them.

The explicit and implicit objectives of parental leave and the APE are:

- “to improve reconciliation between work and family”,
- “to allow working parents to devote themselves entirely to bringing up the young child, by compensating them, at least partially, for the loss of pay”.

In the context of increasing unemployment these arrangements are, however, often perceived as an encouragement to working mothers to withdraw from the employment market.

The Parental Education Benefit (APE)

The Parental Education Benefit (APE), established in 1985, and modified in 1986, under a policy aiming at supporting a rise in birth rates, is a non-taxable benefit of the fixed sum of 2,964 Francs per month in 1995. It is paid, without reference to income, until the last child has reached the age of three, to either one of the parents, following the birth of a third child, on condition that the beneficiary is not working at all. To benefit from it, the parent (the father or the mother) must have worked at least two years (eight quarters in total) during the ten years (including maternity leave and periods of unemployment when benefit was received) preceding the birth of the third child. This benefit can be added to the family allowances. In December 1993, 156,000



people were receiving the APE, i.e. only 33% of the families with three children or more, with the last being under the age of three.

Parental leave arrangements

The introduction, in 1977, of parental leave for bringing up children, and its extension in 1984, opened the way to measures which – implicitly – aimed to encourage working people to withdraw, at least temporarily, from the labour market. This leave, which is unpaid, or offers the opportunity to work part-time (between 16 hours a week and 80% of full-time since 1991) was now granted, automatically, to any employee who could prove at least one year's service in the company, when a birth (no matter the number of previous children) or an adoption took place.

Until 1994, in companies with less than a hundred employees, the employer could, however, refuse to grant this leave, on grounds related to the operation of the business. This leave can be taken at any time during the child's first three years, until the child has reached the age of three. In theory, the employee has a guarantee that he can return to work (to the same or a similar job). But the very limited success of this measure demonstrates the reticence of women themselves, with regard to any encouragement to stop work. Only 95,000 persons (99% of them being women) took advantage of this benefit in 1992. This number is very low compared with the one million households where the man and the woman work and have at least one child under the age of three (Renaudat, 1993). In a context of increasing instability for female employment, few women can take the risk of interrupting their work or depriving the family of an income which is often essential to maintain its buying power.

Extended APE

Under the Family Law, voted on 25 July 1994, the APE was extended to parents after a second birth. Its amount and its maximum payment period are the same as for the APE at births ranking three or above, but the ways in which it is granted are more restrictive:

- The parent must have worked at least two years¹ within the five years preceding the birth of the child or the date of application for the APE; they must stop work or have a job that is reduced by at least 20%; the amount of the benefit is 1,960 Francs per month if they work for less than 20 hours per week, and 1,482 Francs if they work for between 20 and 32 hours per week. A family can put two partial-rate APE:s together (with a maximum of 2,964 Francs per month) if both parents are working part-time². For the APE at third birth ranks, the condition regarding previous work remains, but the rules concerning access to part-time work have been adjusted to those for APE class two.

1. That is work entitling them to eight quarters of old-age pension. But this work does not have to have been continuous. Also certain periods, such as those of unemployment while receiving benefit or paid professional training, will now be counted as periods of work (Liaisons sociales 1994).

2. Beneficiaries of partial-rate APE can also be included in free old-age pension, depending on their income, and the number and age of the children.

Lack of support for gender equality

The fact that parental leave is unpaid, and the low amount of the APE, make these benefits totally unattractive to men. Since fathers, in the majority of couples, have an income that is higher than that of his partner, they are even less encouraged to take advantage of them.

There are, of course, financial reasons for the limits of the APE. However, what is of greater importance in France is the lack of political will to encourage equality between the sexes, and a more egalitarian division of labour in child-raising and domestic tasks between spouses. Such matters are no concerns of the government or the social partners, involved in social or family policies. These questions are almost absent from the political debates. The slight influence of the women's movements on the political process in these areas, and the major under-representation of women in political bodies and in Parliament, are also factors that explain this situation.

In the sphere of work, for example, the Roudy Law on equality between men and women at work (1983) had a very limited effect. "Equality at work is not experienced or proclaimed as a value intended to change the sexual division of work in the company. It is experienced as one measure among others to face up to the changes in progress" (Doniol-Shaw, 1989). In this political and cultural context, it is therefore not surprising that the question of equality between the sexes has had little impact.

Norms and values

The value systems underlying the behaviour of both men and women, in the family as well as in the world of work, also play an important role for the unequal distribution of domestic and child-raising tasks and, more generally, to the problem of gender relations. In France, the unequal distribution of domestic and child-raising tasks between the sexes remains, despite the large number of women now participating in the labour force, and despite a slightly increased participation by fathers in domestic work since the 1980's (C. Roy's surveys on budget-time). It is evident that the majority of women and men have absorbed norms and values which assign child-raising functions mainly to mothers.

In a survey among young adults on the place and role of women in France (Bozon, 1995), 61% of the female answers (and 53% of the male answers) thus express the opinion that, for a couple, having a child under three years of age, the best solution is that the woman cuts down or stops her work temporarily, and that the man continues to work full-time. Another survey (CREDOC, 1994) shows that, out of the French who think that, when the children are young, one of the two parents should either give up work temporarily or reduce their working hours, 66% (and 61% of working women) think that it is rather up to the mother to do so. Other studies have shown that mothers devote much more time than fathers to keeping an eye on their children's homework (Héran, 1994, Kaufmann, 1993).



Even when the two parents have similar incomes, the arrangements and compromises, following a birth, obey these norms, which make the woman, rather than the man, give up her work – at least temporarily. Most often, by tacit agreement within the couple, men do therefore not envisage giving up or cutting down their work, an option which is perceived as a threat to their identity, and which may compromise their career or their chances of promotion. When a child is ill, for example, even if the father can take special leave, he stops much less frequently than his wife, and she often justifies this by the unequal importance of the two jobs (de Singly, 1993). Our hypothesis, however, is the following: Working women, more often than their husbands, have jobs ranking low in prestige, which are not very gratifying, and which are monotonous or without career prospects. This reinforces their propensity to opt for partial or total withdrawal from the world of work. A further reinforcement is the frequent feeling of guilt they have when they give their young child to a child-minder or to a nursery for the whole day.

Consequences of interrupting work: reasons for fathers not to take advantage of parental leave or the APE

The results of a survey among beneficiaries of the APE show that, for many women, a long interruption in their work has often been detrimental from a professional point of view, even when they had the advantage of a guaranteed return to work in accordance with the rules on parental leave (Fagnani, 1995).

On the other hand, during this leave, we observe a return to the traditional division of work within the couple. Interviews with beneficiaries, who were working just before their maternity leave, show that, during the period of the APE, there is a strong return of an unequal division of labour with regard to child-raising and domestic tasks. The reason is that when the woman stops work – work which used to give her the right to ask her husband to participate (even if occasional or limited) – the relationship within the couple automatically changes. The woman appeared to have the feeling that she had no longer the right to demand for a more equal sharing of domestic duties. As one woman says, “Now that I don’t work any more, it’s normal for me to look after the house and the children!”. Also, the loss of a salary, even partially compensated for by the APE, puts them in a position of inferiority compared with their husband; 11% of women who were working before having the APE, thus complain that they are too dependent financially on their husbands. These results indirectly explain why women (and men) have not wanted to give up work and have renounced the APE.

Conclusion: There is an interaction of numerous factors – norms and values, different characteristics of female and male work, workforce management policies, integrating gender differences in professional commitment, and pay discrimination of women – explaining why almost exclusively mothers take advantage of parental leave and the APE.



“Men experience difficulties in moulding themselves into fathers” (de Singly 1993), but we have to observe that the strongly genderised practices of parental leave can only reinforce this phenomenon. What can be the solutions to this problem? They have been widely discussed by Moss (1993). The example of Sweden shows that paying the parents that take parental leave almost their entire previous salary, is not enough in order to make fathers take parental leave as often as mothers. In French family policy, the room for manoeuvre in this field is, as a matter of fact, limited. Increasing economic competitiveness has made employers push their staff to invest in their work to an extent that is incompatible with an increased participation of fathers in the education of their children. However, we cannot ignore the potentialities (and the desires) for change among young couples; the desire and the need of an increasing number of women to remain on the labour market can only lead to an extended role for fathers in family life (assuming that mothers agree to give up some of their prerogatives in the area of bringing up children).

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Part-time Work: The Situation in the Netherlands

by Catelene Passchier

The Netherlands in a European context

It seems appropriate to start with a reference to the 1993 White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment of the European Commission. On the first page a generalized reduction of working hours is rejected as leading to economic disaster. In later chapters however, especially in chapter 8, the Commission comes back on this subject by advocating "the Dutch Way", being a deliberate labour market policy aimed at redistribution of work and a fall of average working time, especially by promoting part-time work. As a conclusion the Commission calls for specific actions by the member states, including "encouraging the national cyclical trends towards a shorter working week per employee, where appropriate". So, what is so special about the Netherlands?

Some facts about the Netherlands

Before going into the more political and strategic questions first some facts about part-time work in the Netherlands.

The participation of Dutch women on the labour market was for a long time relatively small, compared to almost all other European countries. Especially the percentage of working mothers was very low.

However, since 1980 the participation-rate of women has been growing fast: in 1980 22% of the working population was female, in 1990 36%, which means an increase of 14%. Because of that increase we have become more 'normal' between our neighbours, Belgium and Germany. But on looking closer one can see also the big difference: in the Netherlands 62% of the working women have a part-time job. On the second place in Europe is Great-Britain, with 44%, followed by Denmark and Sweden. Germany is on the fifth place, with 32%.

Also among the European men the Dutch have a special position: 16% of them work part-time, compared to for instance Germany where only 2% do so. But again, one has to look closer into the details to see what exactly is going on here. Looking into the amount of hours part-timers work, one sees that as well for men as for women the largest amount of part-timers has a job for less than 15 hours a week. But looking into the age-groups one can see that it is not the same groups of men and women that have such a small job. Among the men



it is especially the young (adolescents, growing ups) and students who work part-time, besides going to school/university for the rest of their time. Among the women especially those work part-time who are in the age when the care and education of young children is an important part of life: 76%! But in this age-group the men still do not 'care' so much: only 10%.

In which professions do we work part-time?

Most part-time jobs are found in the private and public services, education and teaching and trading. There is a positive correlation between the amount of part-time jobs and the percentage of working women in a certain sector. And where in a certain profession or sector possibilities to work part-time are lacking, one will find only few women working there. But that works also the other way round: where women start to enter a certain sector or profession almost automatically the discussion about possibilities to work part-time emerge.

An example of this last phenomenon are managerial positions and jobs in the public service. Since 1980 the percentage of part-timers working for the local or central government has grown, for instance from 5% to 18% with regard to the central government, thanks to promotive measures which were aimed at getting more women in.

But also ever more managerial positions are done part-time. According to research of the Ministry of Labour most managerial positions can be organized in a part-time job, as long as the amount of hours is not too small (32 in a four-day working week came out as ideal). The research also showed that most objections against part-time working in those jobs have to do with the culture of the organization and the traditional views in the heads of people, and not so much with real obstacles.

A central conclusion of this research was: every job can be done part-time, but not every form of part-time job is fit for every job.

Part-time work and social protection

The social protection of part-time workers in the Netherlands is quite good, compared to many other European countries. Though we do not yet have a legal obligation for equal pay and equal treatment of part-timers in general they are treated equally most of the time, thanks to provisions in collective agreements, and trade unions are working hard to improve those provisions (see below). The fact that no specific legislation for part-timers exists means furthermore that they have to be treated in the same way as full-timers, for instance with regard to protection against dismissal. Three years ago our minimum-wage-act which until then excluded small part-timers (working less than 13 hours a week), was changed so that there exists now no threshold anymore.

In addition to this, our government is preparing a draft-law on the equal tre-

atment of workers 'irrespective of the amount of hours they work' as part of a promotional strategy towards further flexibilisation and diversification of working hours.

Also in our social security-system in general there are no thresholds for part-timers: workers pay contributions according to their salary, and get benefits in the form of a percentage of their salary. A recent law forbids the exclusion of part-timers from private pension schemes.

Why do we have so much part-time work?

To be able to judge "the Dutch way" it is necessary to know certain basic data of our socio-economic history, especially with regard to the division of labour between men and women.

We come from a situation with a very strong breadwinner-concept: for a long time trade unions struggled for a situation in which "a workers wife would not have to work", and therefore for a minimum-wage high enough to feed a family.

Until the seventies the breadwinner/housewife division of labour was prevalent in the Netherlands, which made the Netherlands one of the most "backward" countries in Europe at the time, with respect to the percentage of women in the paid labourmarket.

Because of the strong social and cultural pressure on women – that a good mother should be at home for her children – and because of the lack of arrangements to combine work and family duties, the women, who entered the labour market quite massively in the seventies and eighties, (were more or less forced to) chose a compromise strategy: they started to work part-time and to accept flexible contracts (on call work etc.). One has to realize that this was in a period of economic restructuring, with diminishing employment in the industrial sector, and growth of the service sector, which both had the effect that employers were very eager to reduce costs and risks by recruiting part-time, flexible and temporary workers.

As a result of these developments we have become a special, but also dubious, case in Europe:

- Dutch women have the highest average age when getting their first child (29.5), apparently postponing the decision to start a family,
- child care facilities are still so few, that we almost fall out of the European statistics,
- we have the highest percentage of part-time employment: one on four workers has a part-time job, that means one quarter of our workforce. Of them 75% are women. In terms of family income this has meant that, coming from a situation in which there was very often only one (male) income per family, there is now a situation in which there is often 1 big (male) income and 1 small (female) income, leading to an average of 1.3 income per family.



In the meantime there has grown a strong segregation on the labour market between male (full-time) and female (part-time) jobs, leading also to a part-time-trap: part-time work has been possible, and has grown enormously, in the traditional “female” sectors and low skilled jobs, but was not allowed, and deemed impossible, in the traditional “male” sectors and higher skilled jobs.

The next question could be: why does the trade union movement in the Netherlands seem to change emphasis from a further generalized reduction of working hours to a promotion of part-time employment?

Some research has shown that in the past decades, between 1960–1990, there has been no real growth of employment: the volume of employment has stayed almost the same (even decreased a little). But in the same time the workforce has grown from 4 to 6.5 million people. This means the average working hours per employee have decreased with 30%! This has been the joint effect of extended holiday-rights, the above mentioned increase of part-time employment, but also of general reductions in working hours.

Our working time legislation, from the beginning of this century, speaks about a maximum working week of 48 hours. Since then we have succeeded, by way of collective bargaining, to bring this back to an average working week of 38 hours (differing from sector to sector in a range between 35 and 40).

This process of reduction stopped however in the eighties. Even though we had a pact on the national level in 1982 about the reduction of labour costs in exchange for further working time reduction, workers got very disappointed about the result. Because of massive industrial restructuring, the increase of productivity, accelerated by the reduction of hours, and the fact that employers rather recruited temporary and flexible workers to fill the holes, in general we only succeeded in maintaining employment. There was no visible effect of the creation of extra jobs. Therefore workers became reluctant to struggle for further reductions if these would not bring a guaranteed and visible result in terms of job creation.

Lately however, with this in mind, some of our unions have started to argue that the target of a four-day working week could bring new inspiration, and have better results than the small steps in reduction which were realized in the eighties. The general opinion within the FNV (Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions) is, that this is worth trying, but not on a national scale in one big campaign, but on a sectoral level. In the last few years we have succeeded in several sectoral collective agreements to introduce such a four-day working week.

FNV-policies on working time

For the FNV working time is an important issue. We look at it from four different points of view:

- reduction of working hours, and the organization of working time, seen from the point of view of health and safety
- reduction of working hours as a means to redistribute work and create employment
- reduction of working hours, and a different organization of working time, as a means to redistribute paid and unpaid work (care tasks) and to challenge the division of labour between men and women
- reduction of working hours as a means to increase individual well-being and possibilities to participate in society

In the limited time I have today, I will not be able to go into our policies on all these issues. I have chosen to focus today on our efforts to develop a strategy in which there can be found a compromise between the flexibilisation-demands on the employers' side, and the needs for differentiation and variation on the workers' side, especially with regard to the needs of workers to reconcile work and family responsibilities.

In our own view in recent years we have chosen an offensive instead of a defensive strategy with respect to the organization of working time. We have done some research in 1990 and 1993 on the wishes and needs that Dutch people, employed and unemployed, have with respect to working time. The results were quite amazing. They show that the wish to work shorter working hours among full-timers, and the wish among part-timers with a small contract to work longer hours, is increasing. Especially what we call big part-time jobs (or a 4-day working week) of around 32 hours, and half time jobs (of around 20 hours) are very popular. The research shows that people are even willing to go back in wages for shorter working hours. This willingness is often linked to the possibilities for their (female) partner to have a job, and therefore income, of her own. The motives given are as well the wish to spend more time with family and children, as the wish to have more free time.

Some other research by an independent research institute shows that, if all voluntary wishes to diminish or increase working hours would be met, the net result would be a job increase of 100,000 jobs (in a situation in which our registered unemployment is almost 500,000).

These research outcomes have strengthened our views on our working time policies in the following sense:

1. There is need for a renewed struggle for the reduction of working hours, but our policies should not be aimed at one generalized reduction of the working week on the national level to, say, 32 hours for everyone, but rather should take into account the various and diversified wishes and needs of workers, and the different possibilities in the various sectors.
2. There is great potential of unemployment reduction if full-time workers are allowed to reduce their working hours, temporarily or permanently, and

are able to do so without great loss of long term employment protection and social security. We will only be able to use this potential if we are able to upgrade part-time employment to a fully valued and equally treated alternative, instead of, as is now often the case, a derivative inferior kind of employment.

A dual strategy is therefore necessary:

- promotion of part-time jobs in male dominated sectors and higher jobs
- upgrading of part-time jobs, both in terms of working hours and employment protection, in female dominated sectors and jobs.

This strategy could also have several positive side-effects:

- the opening up of possibilities for women to enter male dominated sectors and jobs, thus challenging segregation
- a more equal division of labour, with respect to paid and unpaid work, between men and women.

3. It is no longer possible to talk about a standard employee, with standard (i.e. full-time) hours of work. A growing percentage of workers is a so called 'new worker' (as described by the OECD in their recent report: *Shaping structural change, the role of women*): a growing percentage of workers is confronted with several roles in life, not only being a worker, but also a mother or father, and increasingly charged with the care for sick or elderly parents. This means several changes in the need for protection: variation of working hours during a working life should not be punished, as is now often the case, in social security and pension schemes. And with regard to working time: putting stress on protection against over-time, irregular hours, disadvantageous schedules, and especially on increasing the possibilities of choice and autonomy for workers with regard to working hours and patterns, is more important than rescuing for instance the free Saturday (which for an increasing part of our workforce, i.e. a lot of part-timers and flexi-timers, has never been free anyway).

With these views in mind the 1993 congress of the FNV agreed upon the following policies with regard to working time:

- The increasing plural character of Dutch society and the working population inevitably requires more diversity in working hours and career opportunities. The FNV considers it important that employees obtain more possibilities to harmonise their paid work with other aspects of life, dependent on their current stage of life. Working a lot and for many hours in some periods, working less in other periods because of care-duties or because it is sensible to work less hours in view of one's age or health.
- The current distribution of work appears to match less and less with the preferences and wishes of people. Therefore, redistribution of work is required. Redistribution should be realized through a combination of fully-fledged part-time work, reduction of the average full-time working week, and extension of facilities for leave and (partial) retirement.



- Employees should have more possibilities to adjust the number of working hours in their individual contracts to their wishes and needs, without negative effects on rights and position. Full-timers should have the right to reduce their hours, part-timers (especially those with small contracts) should have the right to extend their working hours.
- Variation in the extent of the usual working hours per employee will replace the current division between on the one hand the standard full-time employee and on the other hand the deviating 'a-typical' part-timer.

If new and current employees – within the maximum working hours determined in collective agreements – can work the number of hours that best suits their individual wishes and needs, then a new 'average employee' will emerge in the medium term, working between 20 and 36 hours a week. The result in the long term will be an average working week of around 32 hours. This new average working week will replace the current standard full-time working week as point of reference for instance in social security schemes.

National agreement on part-time work

On the basis of these views and decisions we started also in 1993 negotiations with the employers organizations on the national level (in the so called Labour Foundation, which is the bipartite bargaining institution of trade unions and employers organizations) on the promotion of voluntary part-time employment, and more generally spoken of differentiation and diversification of working hours patterns.

The negotiations were based on the recognition on both sides of industry of a long term perspective, in which workers have a varying pattern of working hours. Dependent on the position or phase of life a worker is in (with or without children, partly invalidated, above a certain age etcetera) he or she wants to work a varying amount of hours. In the course of a life time conditions and needs will change, as seasons in life, and there will be the need to adapt working hours accordingly. This need for more variety offers opportunities to both workers and employers.

As a result last summer we came to a national agreement to make the following recommendations to collective bargaining parties (on the sectoral and company level):

1. in principle it should be possible to work part-time in every kind of job, on every level, and in every sector,
2. in collective agreements it should be regulated that "an employer is obliged to meet an employee's request to modify his or her hours of work, unless this would be unreasonable in the light of substantial company interests". The wording 'modify' provides possibilities as well for employees wishing to reduce their working hours as for small part-timers who want to extend their hours.

3. collective agreements should not treat workers differently only because of a difference in the amount of working hours or in working pattern; in other words, in collective agreements there should in principle be equal treatment of full-timers and part-timers.

In the Netherlands this national agreement is welcomed as an important step forward to the "normalisation" of a-typical (part-time) employment, or in other words: to bridging the dangerous and growing gap between standard well protected employment and a-typical non-protected employment.

Trade union campaign on part-time work

In the autumn of 1993, following this agreement, the FNV started what we called a 'part-time campaign', with a dual aim:

- awakening the potential of freely chosen part-time work and reduction of working hours especially among the full-time (predominantly male) workforce,
- calling on the existing part-time workforce (mainly women) to organize for a better position with regard to working hours and equal treatment.

This campaign has stimulated a lot of discussion on both issues.

An evaluation of last years collective agreements showed the following results:

- in the collective bargaining round of 1993/1994 there has been a significant impulse in collective agreements towards regulating a so-called 'right to work part-time', which means a claim of the worker to change the amount of hours of his or her job. Though several of our unions report difficulties for workers to realize such a claim in practice.
- also many collective agreements contain improvements of labour conditions and social protection for part-timers. But many unions report difficulties in bargaining with employers about these improvements, and stress the need of a legislative basis for the equal treatment of part-timers and full-timers to give them support in the bargaining process.

Conclusion

In the meantime we are pressing our government and parliament to follow us on this tricky path. Because, in our view, there cannot be flexibilisation and diversification without protection. In the fields of labour law legislation and social security the 'new workers', male and female, will need new forms of protection and security.

It will be our task for the near future to convince employers and governments that they cannot get their advanced and flexible workforce 'for nothing': that there should be negotiations, for instance in the social dialogue, on the conditions; and that there will be needed legislative provisions both on the national and the European level, to prevent social dumping, and as an in-



dispensable basis for the developments in the direction of a more equal sharing of work- and family responsibilities between men and women.

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Regulating Part-time Work at European Union Level

by Johan ten Geuzendam

In my talk, there are four different parts. First a little bit of history; what the Commission has been trying to do for part-time workers. Then some facts about the recent development of part-time working in the European Union. I will also deal with the question how attractive part-time work is, and for whom. Finally, I will expose some of the current issues on which the social partners will soon be consulted by the Commission.

What the Commission has been trying to do for part-time workers

First some history. Already in the early 80's, the Commission made proposals concerning voluntary part-time work. They were presented in 1982 and amended in 1983, but were withdrawn in 1990, when the Commission submitted three new proposals, concerning so called atypical work. These proposals had a threefold objective:

- improved operation of the internal market and greater transparency of the labour market, in the framework of economic and social cohesion;
- improved living and working conditions for workers; and
- protection of the health and safety of workers at the place of work.

In the considerations at that time, there was no direct reference to employment concerns, which is understandable if you know the background of this initiative, at the end of the 80's, early 90's. Of these three proposals, one proposal was adopted rather easily. It was the one on safety and health of temporary workers and workers with fixed duration contracts. That is not so relevant today, in this discussion. The two other proposals - one concerning distortion of competition, based on article 100A, and the other on working conditions, based on article 100 - that cover also part-time workers, faced major difficulties in the council. In the years 1991-1993, there was little progress made about them. At the end, we had to establish - although the German presidency made tremendous efforts to work out some kind of compromise, that all twelve member states could agree on - that an agreement was impossible within the foreseeable future. This was a very unpleasant situation for the Commission. At the Council meeting of the 6th of December 1994, to which also Mr Stewart referred earlier this morning, the Commissioner Mr Flynn confirmed that he would initiate consultations with the social partners under the agreement on social policy, as had already been announced in the White Paper on European social policy, that was published earlier that year.

Recent development of part-time working in the European Union

I will now give you some statistical information about what is happening on the labour market, with regard to part-time work. I feel very embarrassed, being here in Sweden, to give you information referring to the old twelve member states, and I must apologize, especially to the minister. The reason for that is that the most reliable statistical material that we have is based on the Labour Force Surveys, that do not include the three new member states yet. I am quite sure that, in a foreseeable future, this omission will be corrected, but for the time being I am only talking about the old twelve member states.

Talking about *the increase of part-time work*, I will try to make some distinction between the years 1987–1990, which was a period of general employment growth in the Community, and the following years, 1990–1993, which were years of general recession. I hope that information about 1994 will soon be available to the Commission, because we intend to publish all of these figures in a much more detailed way in the forthcoming Employment in Europe Report 1995, which will be published this summer. This report promises to be very exciting with regard to the treatment of the problems of part-time workers in particular. There will also be a lot of analysis about the problems in that report.

During the entire period of 1987–1993, part-time employment was growing faster than full-time work. And thereby, it was accounting for an increasingly greater share of total employment. In 1987, 13% of all those in employment worked part-time. By 1993, this was already over 15%. Moreover, much of this increase occurred between 1990 and 1993, when the number of full-time workers was falling throughout the Community. Between 1987 and 1993, in fact, part-time working has been growing at a speed of almost 3% per year, and over the same period, full-time employment went up by just 0.5%. (If you would extrapolate these tendencies, it would mean that in some future year, there would be more part-timers than full-timers. Of course, with extrapolation, one has to be extremely careful.) By 1993, 31% of all female jobs in the Union were part-time, compared to 28% in 1987. Part-time working for men was much less significant, but nevertheless, it increased at much the same rate as for women, to reach about 4.5% of the total male employment in 1993. There was only one member state, Greece, where the number of part-time jobs, relative to full-time jobs, diminished.

In the period of general employment growth, 1987–1990, the strongest growth in part-time working occurred in Germany, where it increased by an average rate of over 9% a year. There were also significant increases in Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands. In both Germany and the Netherlands, more part-time jobs were created than full-time ones, and part-time jobs were responsible for around 2/3 of the total increase in employment. In Germany, the number of women working part-time increased from under 30% of the total in 1987 to almost 36% in 1993. Women filled 95% of the additional part-time jobs that



were created in the Union, and 1/3 of all the extrajobs for women were part-time. That is a big contrast to the situation for men, as 98% of the new jobs for men were full-time. Nevertheless, the importance of part-time working rose significantly also among men in three countries: Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark.

During the years of general recession, 1990–1993, the total number of people in employment fell by about 2%, in the Union as a whole. In every member state, with the exception of Germany, Luxemburg and the Netherlands, the number of people working full-time declined. The number of part-time jobs increased, though, adding 1.5% to total employment, and partly compensating for the decline in full-time jobs. The number of part-time workers decreased only in Denmark. The overall expansion of employment in Germany and the Netherlands was due mainly to the expansion of part-time working. The provisional figures for the Netherlands in 1994 show an increase of about 70 000 people in part-time jobs. As there is no growth in the total volume of paid work, it means that the share of part-time work continues to grow. There are, of course, substantial differences between the growth figures for men and for women, but I prefer to refer to the Employment Report, where you have that in more detail.

I would also like to mention *the changes in working time*. Over the early 1990's, there was some reduction in average hours worked per week, in the Community as a whole. There are big differences from one member state to another, though, as some member states have succeeded better than others in translating a given volume of work into jobs, both by reducing normal working hours and by increasing the number of part-time jobs.

In 1991, the average working time in the Netherlands was 33 hours a week (not including the unemployed). I am talking about an average, but it is significant, because it is already very close to one of the official targets of the trade union, which is 32 hours, and you have to compare it with the Community average of 39 hours a week. That is a big difference.

Also in Denmark, the figure was at under 35 hours a week, and I assume that in Sweden, the average would also be closer to that figure, than to the Community average. In both cases, these figures reflect the high proportion of people working part-time. Once again, looking at the Community as a whole, the reduction in working hours over the 1980's is not very substantial; it is only about 3% in most countries – apart from the Netherlands, where the reduction was 13%. That is equivalent to each person working an average of five hours less a week in 1991 than only eight years earlier. Also in other northern member states, except for the UK, this development had an effect on the labour market over this period. The volume of work undertaken went up with only around 2%, for example, in Denmark and Belgium, but because of the reduction in average hours worked, the number of people in employment increased by 8%.



This experience of the recent past is very relevant for future job creation prospects, and for the debate on the distribution of work and income. What happened in many member states in the 1980's was a slight redistribution of work, but out of the 12 member states, it was only in the Netherlands, and perhaps to some extent in Denmark, that this was a consequence of a deliberate labour market policy.

The attractiveness of part-time work

The next important issue is the attractiveness of part-time work. The first question to be raised is: *Who wants part-time work?* There again, the Labour Force Survey gives an insight into how voluntary these forms of employment, like part-time working, are. The data I am referring to have only been available since 1992, so a long term comparison is not yet possible, but they are interesting, and I would like to give you an insight in these figures.

On average, 6 out of 10 part-time workers in the Community in 1993 stated as the primary reason for them to take a part-time job, that they did not want a full-time job. There was a considerable difference between men and women, though. Over 2/3 of women working part-time did not want a full-time job at all, but among part-time working men, only 1/3 were not seeking full-time employment.

There are some differences between the member states. For example, in both the Netherlands and the UK, where part-time working is rather popular, the percentages of both women and men are substantially higher than in the Community as a whole. The voluntary nature of part-time working in those countries is more important than elsewhere.

Another question is: *To whom would part-time work be acceptable?* In the Community as a whole, over 90% of unemployed men are looking for a full-time job, but almost 60% of these would, eventually, accept a part-time job. Among unemployed women, about 75% are looking for full-time jobs, and this is very important; we talk a lot about part-time work for women, but 75% of the unemployed women are *not* looking for part-time jobs. They want full-time jobs. But – and that is almost the same figure, in fact, as for men – about 60% of these women would also accept a part-time job.

A third important question is *the treatment of part-time workers*, which leads me to the reasons for the Commission to deal with the problems of part-time working at the European level. There is considerable evidence that part-time workers quite often are treated differently from permanent full-time workers. In particular with regard to female part-time workers, who make up over 80% of all part-timers, the European Court of Justice has developed an extensive jurisprudence. There are many cases that have come before the European Court, and they deal with issues like hourly pay of part-time workers, compensation for the attendance of training courses, over-time pay, entitlement

to classification in a higher salary grade, sick pay entitlement, severance grant entitlements, old age pensions, calculation of income support, calculation of disability allowance, etc. Many of these cases date from the first half of the 1990's, and they have been very important for the development of jurisprudence at the Court of Justice, with regard to the concept of indirect discrimination of women.

In addition to what is perhaps not fully accepted and legal, there is also authorized differential treatment of part-time workers. Whereas the official policy on part-time work is often one of non-discrimination, in practice, many member states in the European Union still apply, in their social security systems, certain hourly wage limits, below which part-time workers are not entitled to social security benefits. This has a very important effect on their position on the labour market, and especially on the position of female part-time workers.

Indirect discrimination is expressly outlawed by the Equal Treatment Directive from 1976, and as there is no explicit definition of indirect discrimination in that directive, the court has clarified its concept through its jurisprudence. I would like to summarize that jurisprudence by saying that whenever a far greater proportion of women than men is affected by a certain measure, it is in principal unlawful, unless the employer can provide an objective justification for the practice, unrelated to gender. This concept of indirect discrimination is therefore of great importance, as it allows complaints concerning application of a policy or a practice that affects women as a group.

Current issues

I move on to my final part: some issues on which the social partners will soon be consulted by the Commission. Although we have this jurisprudence and the possibility to protect female part-time workers through the concept of indirect discrimination, the question remains whether the European Union needs *additional* legal instruments to ensure an equal treatment of part-time workers, irrespective of their sex or of the gender composition of the group of employees that they happen to work in.

The Commission recognizes first of all that part-time work has been much developed in recent years, and that it fullfills certain needs of both employers and employees. It considers that we need basic rules, which, while respecting the contractual autonomy of management and labour, should seek to achieve the following objectives: Firstly, these basic rules should prevent any spread of insecurity and segmentation on the labour market, and promote an improvement of workers' living and working conditions. Secondly, they should help to reduce, or eliminate, certain distortions of competition, caused by differences in social costs, which depend on differences in national rules, especially regarding social security and the costs connected with seniority and dismissals.



In September 1994, we had a very interesting meeting of the Standing Committee on Employment, in which the Ministers of Social Affairs and Employment met with the social partners at the highest European level. It was a special meeting, devoted to the problems of part-time work, where the governments and the social partners agreed that part-time working should be attractive, and should therefore be freed from its unjustified second-rate image. When that objective will be achieved, it will not only enhance the contribution of this form of employment to reducing unemployment, which is now one of the major Community objectives, but it will also be of great importance for working women and men who try to reconcile work and family life.

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Job-sharing: the British Experience

by Pam Walton

Introduction

Job-sharing is a way of working where two people voluntarily share the responsibilities of one full-time job, dividing the pay, holidays and other benefits between them according to the number of hours worked; each person holds a permanent part-time post. In the UK it has become an accepted way of introducing 'part-time' hours into jobs which have traditionally only been available on a full-time basis, particularly at a senior and managerial level. It is important to avoid confusion between the terms 'job-sharing' as described above, and 'work-sharing' used in the context of attempts to alleviate the impact of rising unemployment by spreading a reduced volume of work among an existing workforce.

The problem

In many ways job-sharing has developed because of some of the problems associated with part-time working. The number of employees working part-time in the UK has continued to grow throughout the 1980's, expanding to account for around a quarter of the workforce – a total of 5.7 million by spring 1994, according to the Government's Labour Force Survey (LFS). Around 44% of all women workers work part-time, compared with 6% of men. Currently, 86% of all part-time workers are women.

Part time workers are greatly over-represented in the ranks of the low paid. Government statistics reveal that, for each hour worked, women part-time workers earned on average only 74.3% of the average hourly earnings of female full-time employees, and an even lower proportion – just 58.5% – of the earnings of full-time male employees. Women who take part-time work often take a job which is below their level of skill or qualification. Their pay and job status may drop because part-time work is not available in the type and level of job in which they are qualified and experienced. In general employers have been unwilling to allow many more senior and professional jobs to be worked on a part-time basis. This has been the area where job-sharing has developed. Although job-sharers are fundamentally people who are working on a part-time basis, job-sharing offers a way of increasing access to professional and skilled work for those wanting to work part-time.

In Spring 1993, the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) included a new question



asking employees whether they worked flexitime, annual hours, term time working, job-sharing, a nine day fortnight or a four and a half day week. The fact that this question is now included in the collection of Government statistics indicates that in the UK arrangements such as these are beginning to be acknowledged as alternatives to traditional patterns of work, where either the job is full-time, or if it is part-time or carried out from home it is low paid, of low status and with poor benefits. The survey found that 193,000 (3.6%) of part-time employees were job-sharing. Of these 11,000 (5.7%) were men.

How job-sharing works

There are now a wide range of jobs which are shared. These include librarians, doctors, nurses, hospital consultants, teachers, lecturers, personnel officers, journalists, solicitors, secretaries, administrators and police officers.

Frances Wheat and Maggie Jones share a job as a district planning officer in a local authority. They have both a managerial and an active professional role. The managerial role is split equally between them so that whoever is in deals with whatever arises on these days. They alternate less frequent tasks such as preparing and presenting cases to monthly committees, chairing team meetings etc. They work alternate days overlapping on Wednesday mornings and do not cover Wednesday afternoons unless required. They have a 'day book' system of communicating with each other. They use Wednesday mornings or the telephone to discuss confidential or staff matters. They have been job-sharing together for ten years and have received promotion twice.

John Quail and Joe Callan share the post of Performance Audit Officer at the Housing Corporation in Leeds. The job involves the audit of all activities of local housing associations including financial and management operations and the job has divided very well because they each take particular housing associations as projects. They also work on a quarterly advance programme so that in effect they share a three monthly timetable and can plan this far ahead. Both sharers achieve high quality work and have to work efficiently because their time is more limited than a full-timer. However an advantage is that they have more time to reflect on their work in their time off. Reviewing the job-share, John speaks for them both: "I think people don't think it's a proper job if you only work part-time. This macho style of thinking is a nonsense, our employers get a good deal out of us and we are the better because of our other experience."

Growth in its use

In the early 1980's job-shares were largely negotiated on an individual basis by employees. Local authorities pioneered the development of full job-share schemes offering the option widely among employees. A number of civil service departments also developed job-sharing policies during this period. Many of the schemes drawn up by local and central government have been introduced as part of equal opportunities programmes, aiming, in particular, to as-

sist women returning to work after maternity leave. In the public sector job advertisements will often now include the phrase 'job-sharers welcome'. As the business case for such policies has become more widely accepted by private sector companies, they have become more widespread. However, the initiatives have been mainly introduced into larger organizations and more widely in the public rather than the private sector. In addition they have mainly been used by women.

A recent survey of flexible working in local government, carried out by New Ways to Work, found that 62% of the 249 local authorities surveyed now have a formal job-share scheme. Of the 92 authorities who did not have a formal policy, 57% had informal arrangements. This shows an increase from the 35% of authorities who provided some job-sharing opportunities in 1986.

In 1988 Boots Retail Division and British Telecom were the first private sector employers to announce formal schemes. The Institute of Manpower Studies (IMS) survey of 2,259 organizations (1990) found that 18% used job-sharing. Over the last four years many more companies have developed formal schemes. These include PowerGen, BP, Shell, Sainsbury's, the Rover Group and all the major banks.

At Boots the Chemist interest was first shown by store managers who were concerned at the numbers of staff with supervisory capabilities who were not able to work part-time without dropping back to a lower grade. Boots now has 30 job-shares at managerial level.

Leicester City Council agreed a job-share policy in 1983. They took very positive steps to publicise the scheme from the start, producing a guide for managers, a leaflet for employees and a poster. There are currently 229 job-sharers.

The BBC laid down guidelines for introducing and operating job-sharing in April 1986. Between 1986 and 1989 there were about 35 individually negotiated job-shares ranging from clerical jobs to television producers, production assistants and solicitors. In 1991 two women shared the job of editor of Radio 4's Woman's Hour.

Two North London postmen become the first in Britain to share their job under a new Post Office scheme in 1993. The arrangement, suggested by the sharers, involves each working alternate days on a round.

Trade union involvement

Trade union responses to the issue of job-sharing have been variable. Initially very little attention was paid to the idea and traditionally in the UK unions had little to do with organizing part-time workers. However, since the mid eighties this has changed. In 1986 NALGO (now UNISON), the union for local authority workers published very clear negotiating guidelines on job-



sharing. Since then a number of other unions, such as the bank workers union (BIFU) and the teachers union (NUT), have done likewise. In 1988 the Trades Union Congress (TUC) published *Job Sharing: A TUC guide*. These guidelines stress the importance of trade union involvement in workplace agreements; that job-sharing must be voluntary; and sharers must have individual contracts of employment.

Including men

Some men, particularly younger men, now wish to be more involved in family life. There is evidence that younger men and women have changed values and priorities regarding the relationship between life at home and at work. The shift in men's attitudes will need to be taken into account by employers, especially if the men concerned are well qualified and valuable to the enterprise. Employers will also have to recognize and take account of the increasing number of male workers who report work/family conflict and stress, because of the potential adverse effects on performance and productivity.

Positive role models can play an important role in supporting change. In the UK, National Westminster Bank recognize the importance of role models in encouraging more men to take up the opportunities provided by its flexible work policies. They have sponsored *New Ways to Work* to undertake a project on Men and Flexibility at Work. This work has included questionnaires returned from over 100 men working part-time/job-sharing/working partly from home; 43% of whom were working flexibly for child care reasons. Twenty eight of these men were job-sharing, three with their wives.

One of them, Tim Powell, has for the last four years shared a job as assistant solicitor, with his wife, Deidre Foster. When one is at work, the other is looking after their two children. They share a desk and a full-time secretary. A senior partner of the firm commented that it works very well – we certainly benefit from having two minds instead of one.

National Westminster Bank now have a number of men working flexibly and a couple of male/female job-shares. Clare Simmonds, their Equal Opportunities Manager added: Male staff are beginning to change their attitudes and many are now keen advocates of flexible working. We were inundated by enquiries following the appearance of an article in our Bank magazine about our male/female job-share in Preston, demonstrating that men can job-share successfully.

Employment rights and benefits

Job-sharers are treated as individuals in terms of employment rights and benefits. Each sharer has a permanent contract of employment with proportional pay and benefits, according to the number of hours worked. Legislation in the UK is very complex and too detailed to set out here.

Nevertheless, there has recently been one very significant change. From February 1995 changes in the law mean that people working less than 16 hours per week are no longer treated less favourably in the UK regarding building up a qualification for continuous service, affecting claims for redundancy, maternity rights and unfair dismissal. This very positive change was long fought for and the result of a case which the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) took to the House of Lords, the highest court of appeal in the UK.

Over recent years there have been some significant improvements in the terms and conditions offered to some part-time workers (including job-sharers) in the UK. An Industrial Relations Services (IRS) Survey of 68 organizations in 1993 confirmed that employers are increasingly treating part-time workers on an equal/pro rata basis for a wide range of terms and conditions. Just over seven out of ten employers treat part-time workers in the same way. Nevertheless they comment that, it remains the case that part-time workers in a significant number of organizations continue to lose out on benefits compared with their full-time counterparts. In particular, they found that one of the most important benefits from which part-time workers are still excluded, or are treated less favourably than full-time workers, is pensions. As a result of decisions in the European Court this is now improving.

On the issue of over-time pay some employers pay enhanced rates for any hours worked in excess of contracted hours, so that a job-sharer is paid at higher rates for hours worked over, say 18 hours per week. In others, employers only pay enhanced rates to job-sharers and other part-time staff when they worked more than the full-time hours. The European Court of Justice has however, recently ruled that there is no obligation under European Community equal pay law to pay over-time rates to part-time workers once they have worked longer than normal hours.

Although there is no statutory right to job-share in the UK, under existing sex discrimination legislation a refusal to allow part-time working after maternity leave can lead to claims of 'indirect' sex discrimination. As a result of this a number of women have been successful in taking cases to industrial tribunals where they have been refused a job-share.

Benefits and problems of job-sharing

The Industrial Society study *Does Job Sharing Work?* concluded not only that job-sharing does work, but that it has proved a positive success both from the organization's and the job-sharer's point of view.

Many of the benefits to an employer of job-sharing are similar to those of part-time work. However there are a number which are specific to job-sharing. Those most frequently mentioned by employers are:

- that two people bring two sets of skills and experience to a job;



- they can also bring increased flexibility, for instance by working peak periods together;
- continuity – if one person is off sick or on holiday at least part of the job gets done.

Employers new to the idea often acknowledge the benefits, but are worried about the costs. Most employers have found that the extra administrative costs are minimal; in fact as far as National Insurance is concerned there can be savings when employing job-sharers. Extra costs can however be incurred:

- in the area of training;
- in providing extra accommodation – if two desks are needed (not generally the case);
- by giving each sharer the lump sum car allowance.

An Industrial Relations Services survey (1989) of 37 organizations found that most agreed with Boots the Chemist that any increases in costs were marginal and outweighed by the benefits. Employers generally express the view that any extra costs are more than compensated for by higher productivity, lower absenteeism, and reduction in staff turnover.

Some employers see problems which are viewed as advantages by others. In one study, some employers thought that having two doing a complex job made it 'disjointed', for others it provided variety and flexibility.

From the point of view of the individual, the specific advantages of job-sharing, over and above part-time work generally mentioned by job-sharers are:

- it opens up the possibility of doing professional and skilled work on a less than full-time basis, which may not be otherwise possible,
- it can improve the quality of working life, by allowing problems to be shared with someone else and encouraging creativity from two sets of ideas.

Problems mentioned by individuals are:

- managers may be reluctant to agree to certain types of job being shared,
- there may be some loss of job satisfaction if sharing 'your' job with someone else,
- sharers frequently say they put in extra (unpaid) work, as do many full-time employees.

Summary

There have been several positive features of the job-sharing model:

- It has enabled senior, professional jobs to be carried out by two individuals working on a part-time basis.
- For some individuals it has also opened up a very supportive, co-operative way of working, sharing responsibilities, ideas and problems with another person,
- It has also contributed to the general breaking down of the full-time work model.



However, on its own it is a limited option. In the longer term other more flexible reduced time options, such as voluntary reduced work time and flexible working years will prove to offer more choices to more people. Nevertheless, in the UK, the job-share model continues to offer some people an opportunity to work part-time, which they otherwise would not have at this point in time.

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Time, Work and Family Life

by **Elisabet Näsman**

Time management in family life

Time management in modern families is a matter of reconciling work and parenting. It involves public policies, workplace policies, and family strategies for negotiating and organizing everyday life. In the latter, the children also are parties since, in some countries, especially in Scandinavia, parents very often negotiate time usage with their children.

I will refer mainly to Sweden. Other European countries share several of the demographic trends of Sweden, but the changes in Sweden have often come about earlier and gone further than similar trends in other countries. The problems of reconciling work and family are, furthermore, in Sweden, to a large extent, treated as public rather than private issues (Moen 1989).

Swedish public policies have the explicit aim to enable women to combine work and motherhood, to increase equality between men and women in everyday life, and to support children's development. A focus on Sweden, in dealing with these issues, may thus be motivated. I will, however, also refer to the other Nordic countries, since I will make use of results from my own research in a Nordic comparative project¹, comparing the scope for parenting in male and female dominated workplaces and occupations. I will also draw on other studies and on public statistics.²

Having children

The basic time management in families concerns timing family phases. Young people get a household of their own earlier today than they used to in the 1960's. Living together does not necessarily mean having children. Mostly, finishing education and finding employment comes first, for both men and women (Hörnqvist 1994). To a large extent, Swedish women and men control their childbearing, through easily available modern techniques of contraception. The total fertility rate declined in Sweden until the late 1970's, rose again during the mid-1980's, reaching replacement level in 1990, and has since dropped. This fertility pattern is part of a picture of postponement of the

1 The study includes case studies of five workplaces – a police station, a metal plant, a hospital, a daily newspaper and a textile plant, where data were gathered by interviews, observations and from documents and files, and a mail questionnaire to a nation-wide sample of 3,050 parents, men and women in corresponding occupations.

2 One study includes case studies in 1989 of the employed parents in five workplaces, questionnaires to trade unions and employers' associations, and nationwide samples of employers and of parents to children born in 1986. Another study from the mid-1980's, was qualitative analyses of 49 families representing four kinds of workplaces: public administration, a hospital, a process factory and small metal factories.



first birth to a higher age, on average to about 27 years of age. There is no sign in Sweden of an increase in the choice of childlessness.

The fertility is high among women in their thirties. Most women who have one child also have a second one (more than 80%) and many of these (about 40%), especially among the highly educated, even have a third child (Martinelle 1992). The drop in fertility in the 1970's had little effect on this. There has been a strong two-child norm in Sweden, and some say it has even been strengthened since the late 1970's (Hoem 1993). Families who have only one child are not becoming more common.

The span of time between the births is usually only a few years (Martinelle 1992). There has even been a tendency of speeding up the childbearing. This is, according to Hoem (1993), closely linked to the development of a "*speed premium*" in the parental insurance scheme. A parent may retain the level of income compensation, paid after one birth, during parental leave, for the next birth, if the interval between the two births does not exceed thirty months.

Since women in Sweden often reduce their working hours after a birth they face an economic motive to have the second child within these two and a half years, in order to qualify for a parental benefit, based on the former full-time wage. This pattern of *spacing of births* fits rather well with the step-wise development of the speed premium (Hoem 1993). A consequence of this is that the period when women take leave of absence from their work to care for their children is concentrated. Close spacing of births may even mean that the woman uninterruptedly stays away for several years. In this way, they may temporarily be full-time housewives, but at the same time keep their employment.

Swedish women also participate in the labour market when they have young children. Today, women make up almost half the labour force, and in 1994, 74.4% of the women, and 83.9% of the men, aged 20-64 years old, were employed (Statistics Sweden 1995). In order to reconcile work and parenting, women make use of the public support system. There are two main governmental options that are crucial here: public child care, which is heavily subsidized by the state and the municipalities, and the parental insurance scheme, which is totally financed through taxes.

Though child care also is, to some extent, a matter of time management in families, I will not develop that issue any more here, but rather concentrate on the parental leave system, since that involves the workplace to a larger extent.

Parental leave

The parental leave in Sweden is more developed, and has higher benefit levels, than in most other countries. It is however a support system that is highly related to employment, in terms of benefit levels, and thus produces incentives for employment, long working hours and career before childbearing. The

system includes a number of various options, usable in flexible ways for several kinds of parenting reasons.

When looking at how parents make use of the parental insurance, and how their strategies have changed since the introduction of the system in 1974, it is important to bear in mind that the legislation itself has changed, mainly involving increases in the number of benefit days, and changes up and down in the benefit levels. The main steps in this development are the following: Cash benefit for both men and women when a child is born was introduced in 1974, covering 90% of the wage for 180 days before the child was 8 years old.³ The same year, temporary cash benefits were introduced, also covering 90% of the wage for 10 days per child per year for children under 12 years old.

In 1980, a 10-day benefit for the father in connection with childbirth was introduced, the so called *daddy days*. 90% of the lost income was compensated for. The cash benefit at childbirth increased in stages to 450 days in 1989, 360 days with compensation for 90% of the loss of income, and a minimum daily benefit of 60 SEK for 90 days.

The temporary cash benefit was increased to 120 days per child per year in 1990. After a six-month period of other changes in the system, the present system was established, starting this year. Fathers are entitled to compensation at 90% for 10 days after the birth of a child. This benefit may be drawn at the same time, as the mother is on parental leave, but has to be drawn within the first 60 days of the child's life. The parents are entitled to one month each, out of the 450 days of parental leave, that is not transferable to the other parent, taken at 90% of salary. The benefit for the remaining 390 days that can be shared as the parents please, is reduced to 80% of the lost income, until the last 90 days, which carry a minimum benefit of 60 SEK. Cash benefit can, furthermore, no longer be drawn during holidays. We have not yet seen the impact of these changes on the division of parental leave between men and women.

The *daddy days* is the option, within the parental leave scheme, that is the most often used amongst fathers. Out of the fathers of children born in 1991, 85% drew an average of 9.7 of these benefit days (RFV 1992). The proportion of the long parental leave used by men has steadily increased from the first year of this option in 1974, and was in 1994 11.4%. If we look at the proportion of fathers who make any use of these options, the figures become more impressive. Of all those who, in 1994, drew this kind of cash benefit, 28.3% were men, which is a small but steady increase over the years. To see how couples share, we have to follow them over a longer period of time than a year. Out of the couples with a child born in 1991, 50% shared the leave; the mother drew all the days in 49% of the cases, and the father all days in only 1% of the coup-

³ The loss of income is compensated for only up to a ceiling that is not very high. This means that quite a number of well paid parents, which are fathers more often than mothers, get a lower proportion of compensation than the generally stated.

les. In the cases where the father was the only parent to draw cash benefit days, he drew 198 days of leave on average. The sharing fathers drew two months of cash benefit days on average during the child's first 30 months. (RFV 1994, RFV 1995)

The timing of these leave days is also of interest. The fathers who take leave-days early in the child's life tend to take more days off. Fathers more often take the first leave days before the child is six months old. In 1990, almost one quarter of the fathers did so, and as much as 13.8% took leave before the child was three months old (RFV 1994).

Another timing issue is when, during the year, to take the leave. Fathers more often draw benefit days during the summer and in December (1995). Fathers furthermore, more often than mothers draw cash benefit days part-time (Röcklinger 1987).

Part-time means making a jig-saw puzzle of hours in the family. While men draw part-time cash benefits, women more often make use of the option to take part-time leave of absence, reducing the working hours to 75% of normal hours, without compensation for loss of income. This can be done until the child is 8 years old, or any later date, after the second year at school. In a survey, made in 1989, concerning parents with children born in 1986, only 8% of the fathers had made use of this option for some period, and all of them had also been on parental leave full-time (Näsman 1992).

Another option for the two-income family is temporary cash benefit to care for a sick or infectious child. In 1993, the proportion of fathers among those who used this option was 41%, and they drew 33% of all days used that year. These proportions have not changed to any greater extent over the years (RFV 1990, Statistics Sweden 1994).

I will conclude that, over the years, since the option for fathers to take parental leave was introduced in 1974, fathers' usage of some options in the system are very stable, but looking at the long leave when a child is born there has been a steady increase in the proportion of days taken by fathers and in the proportion of fathers that take at least some of these benefit days. The recession and increased unemployment in Sweden has so far not changed this pattern. Fathers take some of this leave even during economic hard times, though the proportion of fathers who made use of their *daddy days* dropped to 78% in 1994, still a comparatively high proportion.

The fathers thus take the *daddy days*, quite a large proportion of fathers share the long parental leave when the child is born, and they take quite a large number of days, more than two months, on average. They also, to a large extent, make use of the option to take temporary leave to care for a sick child, and use the opportunity to take leave to be with their child in the day care centre or school.

In spite of this, the male and female patterns of parental leave are very different. Most women take parental leave on a full-time basis for a long period, followed by unpaid part-time leave and, occasionally, temporary leave when the child is sick. Men rather take a short period of leave when the child is very young, and then turn back to work full-time. Men tend to share the long full-time leave for short periods, forming a peak during holiday time and Christmas (the family holiday) and take part-time leave at the end of term of the day care or the school, and finally share the responsibility to stay at home when the child becomes ill. While women's parental leave becomes an everyday life pattern for long periods, fathers' leave, to many children, is exceptional, related to peak periods in life and to temporary needs.

The complex motives behind these patterns have been debated at length, but I will not go further into that here. I will just mention one issue related to time usage. Do fathers really take care of their children when they draw cash benefits? This is never asked concerning women, but in fact it is of course hard to answer this question in both cases. In interviews, others inform about fathers who, for economic reasons, draw the cash benefit at the same time as the mother is at home, or fathers who draw cash benefit during the mothers' holiday (Näsman forthcoming 1996). Some fathers are said to plan to paint the house, go on a holiday or go hunting during the parental leave.

These kind of stories are not supported by the studies on leave-taking fathers themselves, who rather describe their leave as a positive experience of child care. It is hard to know to what extent fathers actually do not take care of their children during their days of leave. The suspicion is of course based on the presumption that men would not want to take care of their infants. The fact that half of the fathers do not share the parental leave may be used to support that idea, but may just as well be explained by a number of other factors, some of the most obvious being the mothers' lacking interest in sharing, economic loss, and obstacles in the workplace (Näsman 1990). The variation in the leave of fathers during the year does not necessarily indicate abuse of the law, but is more a question of what kind of fathering activities the policy is aimed to support by parental leave.

The parental insurance is not the whole story about parental leave however. The Child Care Leave Act entitles parents to take leave of absence during the first one and a half year of their child's life, and the right to cash benefit days as a separate right. A parent may thus be on unpaid leave at first, and draw the cash benefit days afterwards, ending up with a total period of at most 990 days leave of absence. The unpaid leave is not registered on a national level, so we do not know the extent to which the unpaid leave option is used. Case studies demonstrate however the intricate calculations parents make, counting income, taxes, paid and unpaid leave days, holidays etcetera, in order to find the best combination of the various options (Näsman forthcoming 1996).

In the workplace, parents may face obstacles as well as new options for parental leave. Over and above the legislated rights, some employers offer more



leave days, entitlements when the children are older, and more flexibility in scheduling leave days on a full- and part-time basis (Näsman 1992, Näsman forthcoming 1996). This is the positive side of workplaces. But they may also cause difficulties when parents try to make use of parental leave options. In one study (Näsman 1992), 25% of the fathers faced obstacles when they asked for parental leave. There was also discrimination against some of the men and women who took parental leave, although we did not find any case of illegal dismissal due to parental leave. Losses in terms of earnings, promotion or on site education were mentioned as a consequence of their parental leave by 20% of the fathers and 29% of the mothers, who had been on full-time parental leave for a period of at least one month. All of these parents had also used the option to reduce their working hours. For a majority of the men and women, who used these rights, it seemed to work all right.

So it is not the majority's problem to face discrimination, due to the usage of these rights. Most employers see the Child Care Leave Act as a law they will abide. Compared to other leaves, the parental leave is a minor problem in most workplaces. Explicitly negative and discriminative employers are few, but so also are employers who actively support and encourage parental leave.

Working mothers and fathers

The two-income family model is well-established in Sweden, compared to the old complementary family model with a male breadwinner and a housewife. The public policies have contributed to the financial incentives for women to take on paid labour (Sundström 1987). Many women, however, give other than economic reasons for their working life (Nordenstam 1984).

When both parents have returned to work after the leave, family strategies have to reconcile the temporal patterns of the various institutions: work, child care, school and family. The number of hours at work is one crucial issue. The most common combination of working hours is that the father works full-time, and the mother part-time. Next in frequency comes that both work full-time. But the expressed ideal amongst a majority of men as well as of women is for both parents to work part-time.

Part-time was to many women the way to enter the labour market during the 1960's and 1970's. In the 1980's, the increase in part-time work stopped, and full-time work became more common. Short part-time is rare, which means that almost all part-timers have job security and social benefits (Sundström 1987). Many mothers make use of the option in the parental leave system, to take part-time leave of absence from their full-time position until the child is eight years old. They have the right to return full-time with two months notice. In 1994, 26% of the women aged 20-64 years old usually worked part-time, 20-23 hours per week. Only 4% of the women worked short part-time, i.e. less than 20 hours. Altogether, only 7% of the men in the same age group worked part-time (Statistics Sweden 1995).

In the family, women's part-time work means a remaining unequal division of domestic duties. Counting paid and unpaid work, we can see that men and women have the same work load, counted in hours at work, but of course the women do the unpaid work to a larger extent and men do more of the paid work (Rydenstam 1992).

This pattern, thus, makes women loose economic independence and also one aspect of quality of life, since their spare time is split up in bits and pieces to a larger extent than that of men. In many households, there is a heavy work load on both parents and a shortage of time is an often mentioned problem in families with children. When the children grow up, and do not demand so much care, the parents increase their working hours in the labour market instead. The total workload is then heavy also in families with schoolchildren (Jacoby & Näsman 1989). Fathers do, however, increase their hours in domestic work, when the workload of the mother is heavier (Nermo 1994).

Parental leave and part-time work are not the only means of reconciliation. Scheduling also means varying when during the day and night the parents work. Irregular hours and shiftwork is the traditional way for parents to combine. It is a pattern found in families from the 1960's onwards. Later on, flexitime became a common phenomenon, starting among white collar workers, but now found also in earlier "impossible" work organizations, such as among shift working men in factories and hospital staff in intensive care units. The next step in this development is an individualisation of working hours with the help of computerized scheduling, run by the local units themselves. On very short notice, workers can find out if they can shorten, increase or otherwise rearrange their work schedule, the next day or even during the same day (Näsman forthcoming 1996). This kind of working time organization offers a wide scope for parenting issues in the workplace.

Discussing reconciliation, in terms of leave and working hours, implies that working life and family life are separate spheres. Integrating these spheres is becoming a possible strategy to parents in Sweden, i.e. being available as parents although being in the workplace. That means for instance doing family errands and communicating by telephone with your children, with the day care staff or with the other parent at home, all during working hours.

A majority of the employed Swedish fathers in a Nordic study were able to communicate with their family during their working day, and about one third of them regularly were in contact with their children during working hours. A workplace is not a closed world. These options were not formally stated as such, but were informally accepted by supervisors and by work mates. A more flexible work organization was also applied in many of these workplaces. For instance, it became accepted to come in late or leave early for child care reasons, or to take temporary leave of absence at short notice (Näsman forthcoming 1995).

Comparing male and female dominated workplaces and occupations in the Nordic study, we can conclude that there were more options specifically targeted to child care needs in the female dominated occupations and workplaces, and that the men working in these occupations and workplaces made use of these options. The male dominated workplaces and occupations, on the other hand, offered more opportunities of general flexibility in working hours, i.e. options that were not targeted to child care, but available for a variety of reason.

On the whole, we found that these options were more frequent and widespread in Sweden than in the other Nordic countries, and that the Swedish men made more use of these options than the fathers in the other Nordic countries (Näsman forthcoming 1995). This surfaced, especially in the case studies, where we found a dramatic contrast between the Swedish metal plant and the corresponding Norwegian and Danish cases. In the latter, the parenting strategies of the fathers was not to make their fatherhood visible at all in their every day life in the workplace. They did not make use of the available general options for flexibility, for family reasons. The family and the workplace were treated as separate spheres. The few men who made use of, or asked for, these options for family reasons, met negative sanctions from their management and work mates.

Most of the fathers thus applied the traditional male model as their strategy and this was also the ideal worker at these workplaces: the one who works full-time, all the time, gladly accepts over-time and never has any other commitments to consider than those to the workplace. Fatherhood became visible at the workplace, but only as an exception, for instance at the company Christmas party.

In the Swedish metal plant, fathers were on leave during their ten *daddy days*, they shared the parental leave with their wife, and took some temporary leave when the child was ill. Some of them even did so more than their partners, since this kind of leave was easier to get at the metal plant than at the workplaces of their partners. They also used the flexitime options for care purposes. All this was accepted by management.

In this case, the employer saw his workplace policy not only as abiding the law, or as a way of adhering to the demands and needs of the employees. Representatives of the employer even explicitly promoted fathers' usage of these options. Parenthood and fatherhood was positively valued at the workplace, as taking care of a young child fostered flexibility and an open mind, and made the father mature. These characteristics in the fathers were positive for production, since they fitted into the demands when introducing a new work organization. The idea of the staff manager at the factory was, that paternal leave was profitable for the company (Magnusson & Granqvist 1993). It was written into the policy document of the workplace that men, as well as women, were to take parental leave, and this document further stressed that there would not be any negative consequences for parents who made use of these rights. This policy was accepted at lower levels in the



organization as well, both amongst supervisors and work mates. The policy also got support from the labour union.

Prospects for the future

How come Sweden seems to be able to produce such beautiful examples of reconciliation? One way of understanding the differences between the Nordic countries, is to see it as a matter of time, i.e. development. Sweden has been ahead in developing a family policy including labour market issues, especially a family policy targeted to fathers. We can also see traces of this story in the data from the workplaces. In the other Nordic countries, we can find open conflicts between generations, for instance older men demanding flexibility for their extra jobs, while the younger men try to get access to flexibility for child care reasons. We also find older men teasing and harassing younger men, who try to make use of these options. In the Swedish metal plant, there was a rumour that there were older metal workers who did not think that parental leave for fathers was a good idea, but they kept quiet.

In another workplace, the police station, we also found old constables who thought that the natural order is that women take care of infants, but of course, if the young policemen really wanted to take leave, it had to be arranged for them. The connection between these issues and the work organization is also pointing at social change. The new management philosophy of flexibility, individual responsibility, broader competence and more demands of productivity on an individual level, produced a larger scope for parenting.

This may be the development for the future. I have met employers, who even in these economically hard times, try actively to develop a workplace family policy of this kind. On the other hand, I see a risk in the tendencies of the labour market today, towards increased individual responsibility. The demands of productivity mean pressure for a very efficient and profitable work organization, that makes heavy demands on the employees.

At the same time, we have, in the Nordic countries, high demands on parents to be successful as such. They end up in a classical cross-pressure situation. Looking from a child's perspective, let us hope that they will not suffer, when working life, as well as family life, becomes part of a family project, a dual career for both men and women.

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Family Responsibilities and Social Welfare

by Yves Chassard

The European Commission, which every two years publishes a report entitled *Social Welfare in Europe*, is to publish its second report in September. I have been asked to use this occasion to say a few words on the subject of *family responsibilities and social welfare*. In other words to try to answer the question: What happens with regard to the right to social welfare when a person stops working, either to care for a young child or to look after an invalid or elderly person?

I am going to list a certain number of points. The first is the interruption in work to look after a young child; this is what is generally referred to as parental leave.

Parental leave

If one defines parental leave in terms of two elements, first a certain guarantee of reemployment at the end of the leave period, and secondly remuneration, eight of the member states of the European Union have parental leave.

As far as the others are concerned, two member states – Ireland and Luxembourg – have no provisions coming close to this type of leave, while five member states have parental leave which is unpaid, but with a certain guarantee of reemployment. These are the United Kingdom, Portugal, Greece, Spain and the Netherlands.

It should be added immediately that in the United Kingdom, there are very restrictive conditions for obtaining this unpaid leave; it is necessary to have worked for at least two years full-time or five years part-time for the same employer. This is the only member state where this provision exists. The Netherlands are also a special and somewhat atypical case, to the extent that, *in practice*, the great majority of workers are covered by collective agreements, giving them the right to be paid during parental leave. But there is no *legal* statutory system.

Let us return to the eight member states that have both paid leave *and* a guarantee of reemployment. We may wonder about the reality of the guarantee of reemployment in France; it is not certain that it is truly effective. In Italy, there is however a guarantee of reemployment and paid leave. This consists of approximately three months, after the five months of maternity leave, with remuneration at 30% of the previous salary.



We find the same type of leave in Denmark, in a far more advanced form, thanks to the reform of the labour market funds, which took place in 1994. Danish employees, and I believe even the unemployed, are able to benefit from leave for a maximum period of one year – as training leave, parental leave, or, more generally, as sabbatical leave – whilst being remunerated at 80% of the unemployment benefit, which corresponds to 72% of their previous salary, this being of course subject to an upper limit.

In the two other Nordic countries, Sweden and Finland, there are very sophisticated systems of parental leave. These countries have developed systems that provide the possibility of taking additional leave, in addition to the parental leave in the strict sense, in the event that the child is ill.

Three other countries have systems of parental leave. These are Belgium (maximum one year, with a lump-sum benefit payment of 11,500 Belgian Francs, i.e. a quite moderate amount), Germany (maximum three years but only six months without a means test) and Austria (a lump-sum benefit payment of 15 ecu a day for 2 years).

With regard to rights to social welfare, these rights are *more or less* assured. That means that, in all member states except Ireland and Luxembourg, a person who stops working to take parental leave keeps the rights to social insurance. In the countries where there is no national health system, this person also keeps the rights to sickness insurance.

Things are less advanced as regards the other main type of leave, i.e. the leave that is taken to care for an elderly or generally dependent person – probably because this is newer in the majority of member states.

Leave to care for elderly persons or invalids

There are two types of member states. On the one hand, there are countries that make a benefit payment to the invalid person, so that he or she is able to pay the person providing the care. This is the case for example in France, Italy and Greece. In these countries this type of benefit is however subject to an upper limit of resources, so that ultimately there are relatively few beneficiaries.

There are also countries in which priority is given to the development of social services, i.e. the possibility of having access to a social service. This is the case in the Nordic countries, although in Sweden and Denmark employees have the possibility of interrupting their professional work in order to help elderly persons or invalids, who are often ill, and to remain with them for a limited period. The idea is that if the need to receive care from a third party is a medium-term need, it is up to the social services (social services subsidized by the state or by local authorities) to provide these services, and not up to members of the family.



In Belgium a somewhat novel experiment has been running since last year. This is a new mechanism for providing care for a person in the terminal phase, but, paradoxically, this leave is limited to a period of two months. I do not know what happens if the person has not died by the end of these two months. I do not exactly understand the logic of this type of leave.

There are several member states that have developed a more ambitious system of leave for caring for dependants. This includes in the first place the United Kingdom, which has created the Invalid Care Allowance, and Ireland, that has created a benefit of the same type, subject to a means test, and of course there is the country that many people are looking to at this time: Germany, with the new experiment known as *Pflegeversicherung*.

This system enables an invalid requiring care from a third party to receive a benefit the rate of which depends on the type of person providing the care. If the care is provided informally by members of the family there is a reduced rate; if the invalid requiring care turns to a firm of social workers that will provide care on a commercial and monetary basis, the benefit is higher. It is still too early to assess this type of system, but it is clear that here we are at the slightly delicate boundary between the formal sector and the informal sector.

It is clear that the solution involving the granting of benefit not to the invalid person, but to the one providing the care, does provide a more effective guarantee of rights to social security for members of the family providing such care to an elderly person or invalid.

I shall not elaborate on the reduction in continuous working time required to provide the care. I shall simply remind you that it remains the case that membership itself of the social security system is determined either by a certain number of hours of work, or in terms of minimum remuneration. This is the case in Spain, Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. These are the four main member states in which there is a minimum work condition for registration with the social security.

The impact of the interruption of work

With regard to the impact that the interruption of work has on the rights to social welfare, a distinction must be drawn between short-term benefits and long-term benefits. Short-term benefits are those that are received during a short interruption for reasons of sickness or unemployment, although unemployment is increasingly becoming a medium-term risk. Long-term benefits are essentially old age and invalidity benefits.

With regard to *short-term* benefits, that is when work is interrupted for reasons of sickness or unemployment, there is a tendency to extend the period of work that is required to receive the benefit.

This is particularly true in the case of unemployment. This extension of the required period of work is seen in many member states, and often consists of a minimum of 6 months of work, without which one is no longer eligible for unemployment benefits. Finland is a very atypical country from this point of view, as it is sufficient to have worked for five days in Finland to receive unemployment benefit.

As regards *long-term* benefits, that is to say old-age pensions, a very interesting discussion is under way. It is clear that the problem arises in a different way depending on the structure of the pension system.

There are countries that have a basic pension granted to every citizen. These are the three Nordic countries: Denmark, Sweden (but the system has recently been reformed) and Finland, as well as the Netherlands. But in general, these countries have a complementary earnings-related pension in addition to the basic pension. Therefore the problem still arises in these countries, just as in countries where the pension system is organized on a contributory basis, where it is clearer.

Many people over the last few years, and in particular women, have reached the legal age of retirement with so called incomplete careers, due essentially to the fact that they stopped working for a part of their career in order to bring up their children, or even at the end of their career to care for their ageing parents. This problem will arise increasingly in the European countries. We note a very clear tendency to move from a system referred to as defined benefits – where the amount of the pension is calculated as a function *either* of the salary received during the final year, *or* of the salary of the last years, *or* of the salary of the best years, let us say the five best years – to a system where the pension is calculated as a function of the total earnings throughout the whole career.

The best example of this is found in Italy, where a major reform of the pension system, which goes entirely in this direction, is currently under discussion. We have also seen a reform of this kind in the very different system in the United Kingdom. The rights to complementary pensions are no longer calculated on the basis of the twenty best years, but on all of the earnings received throughout the career. The same has occurred in France since the reform of 1993, with a progressive move from the 10 to the 25 best years, pending a move to a system taking into account the whole of the career.

Putting a value on the interruption in work

It is clear that one increasing question will be: How to value the years of interruption; what salary equivalent will be attributed to a period of interruption? For example, in Germany, it has just been decided that each child born after the 1st of January 1992 will entitle to a credit of three years for the parent that has stopped working to look after the child, with remuneration set



at a standard rate of 75% of the average salary. Therefore it has been decided to value them for the acquisition of pension rights at 75% of average salary.

I believe that these questions of valuation and of the impact that interruptions in work have on the rights to social welfare, take on a different complexion when we see the trend in a certain number of countries. Two countries that are interesting and specific from this point of view are the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. They have just broken with a long tradition of socializing the cost for the enterprise in the case of interruption as a result of sickness. Now, the enterprise has the legal obligation to continue to pay an employee who gets ill, but he or she is no longer reimbursed by the insurance system. This is to encourage enterprises to take preventive measures. We may of course wonder about the potentially perverse character of this type of mechanism, since it is an implicit incitement to enterprises to select workers who have the least risk of falling ill.

To conclude, I would like to comment on the important debate concerning the future of our pension systems. Last year the World Bank published a report that was widely distributed all over the world. It is based on a critique of our European contributory systems, in particular the system known as Bismarckian, on the basis that these systems are anti-redistributive, because life expectancy is a growing function of revenue. That means that the higher one's salary is, the longer one will receive a pension. This report by the World Bank recommends something simple: not putting all one's eggs in one basket. In other words: "A pension system has two objectives: the fight against poverty for the elderly, and the replacement of previous revenue. So let us make two different systems!"

I believe that one of the merits of the systems that do put all their eggs in one basket is that they lead to reflect on the following question: How does one penalize, or not penalize, those who interrupt their career to look after a child or a dependent?

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Flexi-1006



- a matter of organisation?



The History of Teleworking at Digital Equipment B.V.

by Kitty de Bruin

We do not know when it started, and the unions and management were not involved, but in the late seventies/early eighties, some technical specialist started with teleworking. The computer systems and applications had to be maintained, and preferably not during the working hours, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Moreover, the persons responsible for maintenance did not like to sit alone in the office late, after everybody was gone. They took a terminal and a modem with the low speed of 300 bps, and did the work from home. When they had to do a difficult job during the day, and wanted to work with concentration, they also liked to work from home. At that time, we did not realize that it was teleworking.

In 1985, the field engineers, who repair the computers, started to work from home, because they lived closer to the customer site, and all relevant information was accessible in databases. They also used a terminal and a modem of 1200 bps. Call logging, and even remote diagnosis, was possible that way. More functionality, such as e-mail, bulletin boards and videotext, was added to the network, so it became quite easy for other specialists, sales people, consultants and managers to access the information from another location than the office.

First pilot 1988

In 1988, my function was sales manager for the chemical industry in Holland. The corporation decided that each country had to be split in several districts, even the very small country of Holland. The decision was made to split Holland into Eastern and Western Holland.

The office for Eastern Holland was located in Utrecht. As some sales people lived more than 120 km from the office, I asked my group to consider teleworking. I submitted a project plan, but before the final approval, we just started. We measured the results during half a year in 1989:

Office space

Office space was reduced (12 persons in an office for five persons). The account managers, who used to have their own offices, now used this office for the whole team, and it was used as a kind of "war-room", with all projects and their results written on a board.



Social implications

This office was also used by people from other functions, so the teams integrated, and they also started to work from home. Some meetings were planned in the homes and they met each others' partners and children. Who says that teleworking brings social isolation?

Flexibility/relation work and home

For the employees, the timeframe shifted from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. to a diversified working period. When they came home, between 4 and 5 p.m., they spent time with the family, and made the reports after dinner.

Motivation

Because of the fact that they could influence their working hours, each member of the pilot group mentioned quality of life as the main advantage in this pilot.

Production

Customer visits went up 25%, and customer satisfaction increased. As the customer visits increased, we also measured more kilometers. One customer gave the team a room, where they had a PC and network connection to the office, so they could make proposals on site.

Changes in work environment for the secretaries

We had expected some changes, but what actually occurred was far more than we could have expected. The secretary had to set the priorities, and she did not have instant help to make these decisions. She had to select the information to be forwarded to the teleworkers, to set priorities in proposal requests, etcetera. During the holidays, when we had to involve temporary personnel from a bureau, we had major problems (they did not recognize what a proposal request was).

The secretary became the interface between the office and the teleworker, and in our situation, they experienced this as an upgrade of their function. What they liked most was the more quiet work environment, and the fact that they could set their own priorities, instead of having people claiming that their work had to be done first.

Second pilot

All people who were involved are still teleworkers, but it took five years to start a larger cross functional pilot. The project plan was made in 1992; in 1993 we started. We had expected 50–60 volunteers, but we had more than 140 volunteers in this large pilot. The functions involved are sales, consultancy, learning services. In addition a number of people telework on an ad-hoc basis when it suits their purposes.

Teleworkers outside the pilot

We have an employee who lived near the office, but with the integration of a part of another company, Philips, his office location changed, and he had to



drive more than 50 km to the office. He is a diabetic, and this caused some problems. With some minor changes in his work arrangements, he now works four days per week at home, and one day in the office. His manager told me that she will consider this for the rest of her group as well. A number of women wanted to work part-time, and teleworking could be a very good alternative in some situations.

Technology

The technology has changed. We now use laptops with 14.4 k bps speed and a server to guarantee automatic back-up, data integration, virus protection, etcetera. All teleworkers in this pilot have a contract, with a good arrangement for the costs made at home. Desk sharing has been introduced, and we have set up a helpdesk.

Learning process

Step by step

We introduced a new work environment and new technology, which delayed the project three months. Involvement of all functions is very important, and we are still working on this involvement by awareness sessions, publications etcetera.

Focus on exchange of experience

We had a meeting with all secretaries involved to learn how to deal with telephone calls, direct connections to the home, or via electronic mail, etcetera.

The internal selling process takes time; it took us five years to have a large project established. A lot of managers are resistant to change, and that resistance increases when somebody else tells them that they could work more efficiently. Thus, the right involvement is very important. Some managers, who were first against this project started to telework themselves, and are now very happy with the option.

At Digital Equipment B.V., we had the major advantage that we have a world-wide network, and that everybody is used to electronic mail. Teleworking is networking, and brings a lot of advantages for both the employee and the employer.

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Space and Time in Teleworking

by Jean-Claude Kaufmann

In discussions on teleworking, one question in particular often arises: "Just how important is it; is it not just a gimmick, unworthy of having too much importance attributed to it?" Such a question shows that society at large is still unaware of the full-scale revolution in attitudes that is taking place, and of which teleworking is a part. In order to understand it, we need to take a broader view, and to look not just at jobs which fit the conventional definition of teleworking, in the strict sense, but rather at what is happening on the labour market as a whole.

What do we see? That the relationship between work and time, and between work and space, is changing. A little background information is called for at this point. In previous centuries, a large portion of work was done in the home. This was particularly true of farmers, tradesmen and piece-workers. By contrast, the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century saw the advent of structured, collective labour and its concentration in large industrial sites. Since the late 1970's, we have entered (albeit without fully realizing it) a new, radically different, phase, whose development pattern is actually the opposite. Work is increasingly occurring outside the places explicitly designated for it, and companies are less and less able to control the time factor. The measurement of time is being replaced by performance appraisal.

One key aspect is that innovation is developing as part of a chain effect, starting from the top, with the most highly skilled professions and the most highly educated circles, and percolating down (finally meeting with resistance at the bottom of the social ladder, as I will explain later on).

The central aspect of the new model is the personalisation of work, the individualised management of the way work is organized, resulting for example in more relocation, and the blurring of spatial boundaries. Less and less, workers (particularly if they are management) travel to work, to a particular place, separated from the rest of society. Increasingly, they take their work with them: they are becoming, in terms of both themselves and their environment, the mobile workspace.

As I see it, there are three levels. The first is the most visible, namely the files or portable computers, that can be brought home or on the train, and the ubiquitous mobile phone. The second level is more scattered, but probably

far more extensive: namely, the work that we carry around in our heads in the most diverse circumstances, a mental workload that is all the more onerous, since, historically, work is tending to become intellectualised. The third level is very hard to analyse: it consists precisely of that which, officially, is not classed as work at all. Educational leisure, for instance: cinema, reading, television. These activities, however, that you might think of as being strictly personal, can in fact be regarded as training activities. They may even play a vital role. A recent study thus showed that the managers of high-performing companies spent more time at home, that they read more and watched more television. So you see, the most effective work is not always done where you might think, and the boundaries between work and non-work have become extraordinarily fluid. Teleworking in the strict sense, apart from fitting perfectly into the general trend I have just described, is also a sort of spearhead of it, whith specific problems.

The major, widely recognized advantage of teleworking is the flexibility afforded by the personal nature of the set-up. Flexibility is a precious means of reconciling professional life and family life, particularly for women. That goes without saying. My job, rather, is to underline the risks. And to point out certain truths. Such as the fact that the idea of being able to merge two activities into one is – alas – merely an illusion. On the contrary, the confusion of activity, the constant to-ing and fro-ing between work and family (which can sometimes happen in very short sequences, lasting only a few seconds, such as when you are trying to work while at the same time looking after a child, for instance) cancels out the advantages of flexibility: in seeking to do twice as much, you end up doing half as much.

The notion of mental workload is key to our analysis here. Engaging in a work activity demands a specific mental attitude. Taking care of the family or the home requires a different type of intellectual investment (*intellectual* being the correct term, as running a family as a matter of fact requires a considerable mental effort). Too frequent shifts between one and the other can therefore introduce disorganization, fatigue and loss of effectiveness in the two areas that one is trying to pursue in parallel. In addition, there is a third mental burden, which is quite specific to working at home, and may require a great expenditure of energy: the intellectual effort required to manage the shifts between work and family, and vice versa. The counterpart of the advantages of flexibility of organization in daily life is therefore clear: a considerable mental burden, that can however be markedly reduced if one is very organized. The external organizational constraints are in a way overcome by personal internal organizational skills that require a specific intellectual effort. If this personal organizational skill is lacking (and not everyone has it), the result is a confusion of activities, fatigue and inefficiency.

In the projects currently under way to promote teleworking, the house has too often been seen as an empty area that exerts no pressure on the individual, particularly on women. A typical example is that of the so-called school-

time formula, or what in French has been labelled *formule télépendulaire*, in which women choose school holidays to do partial teleworking, whilst keeping the essential elements of their activity in line with the traditional model. From the point of view of flexibility and reconciliation, the experience seems absolutely perfect. But the result is only achieved with a doubling-up of the rate of personal activity, with the work at home taking place just at the time when the family burden is heaviest. Many women can manage this, and still prefer flexibility even if it increases the rate of work and the mental burden. But what is harmful is the invisible nature of this effort, as if women could infinitely carry out all sorts of activities in the home.

Several studies have shown that teleworking increases productivity by eliminating the time wasted in discussions with colleagues at work, chatting, tea-breaks, etcetera. But this is to forget that these lulls are part of the structure of work, that follows an irregular rhythm, and requires moments in which to regain one's breath. Such moments exist in the same way at home for the teleworker. The difference is that they are not counted as wasted time, and that one conducts any discussions on one's own.

Space at home poses a problem for women. The very factor that can make reconciliation between family life and professional life easier for them (i.e. proximity and the possibility of mixing the two spheres) can in fact also be a source of difficulty. Working outside the home gives women independence in society, by virtue of financial independence. But it also gives them something else: social contacts other than those within the residential sphere. Teleworking can carry the risk of confining them within the world of the home. In certain cases even more so than in others, like dynamic housewives who have time for a range of activities. This risk is much less significant for men, who traditionally socialize more outside the home. For women, being closed in is feared even more as there is a confusion of activities, mental burden and fatigue. Men and women are not equal in teleworking. The two major risks (mental overload as a result of having to manage the reconciliation, and isolation and confinement within the home) are in fact predominantly feminine risks.

The configuration of the living space, in which teleworking takes place, plays an important role in avoiding confusion of activities: the quality of the set-up, and the clearly separate character of the office, indeed make it possible to commit oneself effectively to the work. But not everyone can afford this, and it is rare for companies to meet the cost of financing the workplace at home.

The third major risk in teleworking is accentuating social inequalities, in a precise area that today is playing an increasingly significant role: isolation. Understanding this requires some notions of the contemporary changes in social bonding. Social contacts today represent a capital that marks one's social position: the richest and the most cultured people have more and more of them, whilst the poorest have less and less. At the top of the social scale,



contacts are increasingly individual, remote and virtual in character. They develop in vast networks in which the individual becomes accustomed to navigating. At the bottom of the scale, on the other hand, the need of a close and stable circle of human support remains essential. The role of teleworking differs greatly between these two extreme poles. At the top, it adds new branches to the network, and can allow one to become even more connected, to know even more people. At the bottom, on the other hand, it can cut one off from the immediate work community, basic for giving work a meaning. This is especially so in the case of the most fragile. Evidence shows that handicapped people have seen their isolation made worse by teleworking: they only need to look daily into the eyes of others to see the reality of their professional integration.

Admittedly, such negative trends are currently difficult to discern. This is because teleworking takes place predominantly in very highly qualified (and masculine) professions. As teleworking jobs become less qualified, involving mere execution, the three risks that I have indicated will become more visible. Mental fatigue linked to an insufficiency of personal skills of self-organization. The confinement of women in the domestic world. The isolation and exclusion of the weakest.

These specific risks are not without solutions. But if the solutions are to be found, the risks must be borne in mind, without waiting for the problems to appear. Growth in teleworking is inevitable. Not only for reasons of internal management of enterprises, but because it is part of a vast historical process of personalization. This is an exciting and very positive movement, even if it is full of dangers, a movement which leads no more and no less to men and women taking charge of their own lives.

In other words, I would not want my very critical comments to be misinterpreted: I would not wish to call into question the growth of teleworking, nor to understate its positive aspects. My role today has simply been to underline the risks – risks which are very significant, but which do not prevent teleworking from being a very positive experience for a majority of people. Moreover, I myself have been a teleworker for 15 years, and a happy one too!

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On the Road



– for new partnerships?

On the Threshold of Europe – Comments and Reflections

by Agneta Stark

Sweden is on the threshold of Europe, and we are looking forward. The future is uncertain – or is it, really? I will concentrate on a few things that are absolutely certain, but that we, as it seems, prefer to forget and dismiss, we would rather be talking about other things.

The caring society

The theme of this conference is *Work and Family Life*. It could also be labelled *Paid Work and Family Life* or even *Paid and Unpaid Work – Labour Market and Family Life*. It is a fact to be noted, that work can be both paid and unpaid, and that payment in itself does not separate work from leisure, or from other non-work activities. Care work, for instance, is work, even if the carer is doing it without payment.

The fast changes in the lives of Europeans today are often expressed as the characteristics of our time. There is technological change, economic change, political change, etcetera. We are now moving away from industrial society into post-modern society, or information society, just as we moved from agricultural society into industrial society at the beginning of this century.

Or did we? To characterize a society, I think it is useful to look at what is *constant* – and therefore often forgotten. So far, the labelling of societies has been based on what men have worked with for pay. Taking both men's and women's work into account, and both paid and unpaid work, it gets very clear that the largest amount of work is not that of industry, nor was it that of agriculture, but that of care, of nursing. It is that of helping the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, the unstable, the fragile, the depressed, the dying and the new-born. We live in *the care and nursing age*, as we always did and always will.

Dimensions of development

Industrial work is now diminishing, since the worker has been replaced with technology. One can see it as a sad loss, or as a liberation of men and women from sometimes dangerous jobs. Unemployment shows that we have shifted the burden of this technological and economic change on to some people, while others enjoy the benefits of these changes. The outcomes are not evenly distributed.

Technological and medical development, endless patient work, research, and large amounts of money, put into medical research, have bettered human life, and have allowed people to grow very old, in good health, for longer periods than ever before. And we continue the work: safety belts, more fibre and less fat in food, vaccines, safety in the work-place, food hygiene, bans on tobacco advertisements, hip replacements, surgery, etcetera. This is *progress*. This is *success*.

It is strange to hear how often we describe this success, this progress, as a *problem*. We first prevent illness and death, and when we look upon the result, we say: "O God, these people grow old! *Very* old!" And we talk about an old-age explosion, and a care burden on everybody else. Our success is seen as a huge problem. But this is not a problem to everybody; ageing is not gender neutral.

Gender differences

On average, women live about 6 years longer than men. In 1990, there were 700,000 persons who were 75 years and older in Sweden (1990, Statistics Sweden). Out of those people, 62% were women, and 38% men (which is just about the same quota as everywhere else in Western Europe). As men are often used as the unmentioned, but evident, norm, also for women, women are said to *survive*. But let us shift the perspective, and set *women as the norm for men*. We could then say that men are *sub-viving* – under-living.

There were 257,000 Swedes, aged 75 or more, who were married or cohabiting, i.e. living in a two-income, privileged, situation. Among them, the proportions were reversed: 61 per cent of those married were men, 39 per cent women.

The non-cohabiting, either widows and widowers, or never married, formed the largest group: 433,000 people. Out of them, 3/4 were women and only 1/4 men. This means that only 23 per cent of the women over 75 were married, and 77 per cent of them were on their own, while the majority of men over 75 were married.

These old and non-cohabiting women have the lowest income in society. If they have had paid jobs they have been less paid than men. Women still are. They have carried out much more of the unpaid work. Women still do. They nursed their husbands, if they had one. But when he is gone, and they, in their turn, need care – then what?

There are some Swedish studies on what care old men and women wish to have. It seems that men quite willingly accept even intimate help from family members, as they will generally get it from their wives. Women, however, do not want to be helped by family members (daughters and daughters-in-law) with intimate needs; they prefer professional helpers. That they pay. Why is



that so? Perhaps these women have done care work themselves, and know what it means. They also express that they want to meet their children without being a burden on them. They want independence. And they need qualified care, by qualified people. Love helps, but not always.

Who cares for the carers?

Are these old women on the threshold of Europe? What will information technology, teleworking or fast international travel do for them? Changing nappies, of babies or of the incontinent, can not be done at a distance, and not by high technology. But it must be done, and it must be done with dignity. What can the EU do?

If an old needy woman has children, they may belong to the new mobile work-force, and work in another part of the European union – mobility is a key to the future. If her daughter is working within the services, it may be with long working days and low pay – the new service jobs must not have too high wages, since this would diminish economic growth. (I am quoting recent proposals and ideas for the EU). It may be the case that this woman once worked unpaid herself, thus diminishing public spending on care and nursing – we have EU criteria for the economy. Thus, with the new pension schemes, introduced in most EU countries, she will be entitled to very little pension.

This is the hard truth, showing women's economic conditions throughout their lives. The disadvantages they encounter show up with absolutely no mercy. Low pay, the new low paid service jobs, much unpaid work, work force mobility, continued pay discrimination of women, care work valued less than work with machinery – all this is still going on. We will have exactly the same situation in the future. *We know that – the future is known.* Unless we change women's conditions profoundly, this situation will not change.

The future of families

I will make a very short diversion here, into the interesting new report from the Commission on the demography of Europe. On page 59, it states: "The family is a plan for happiness, but for balanced happiness."

Other parts give a picture that is less happy, though. On page 54, it says that the economic recession and the job crisis have meant that instrumental values are regaining a strong foothold in the family. As solidarity in society is breaking down, the family appears to be the only safe haven for young, unemployed people, handicapped parents, discouraged teenagers, and others. Surprisingly enough, it concludes that this rediscovered function of unconditional solidarity would provide the family with new vigour. To me, that sounds very surprising, after observing a breakdown of solidarity elsewhere.



How can these people, thrown at each other as a last resort, be expected to feel happy, solidaric, strong and equal?

There is a last comment I would like to make about the difficulties of understanding the new family patterns in Europe. On page 62, it is stated that the situation of the Scandinavian countries, which are both the most emancipated and the most fertile, is paradoxical. The reasons why the fertility rate in Germany is close to the rate in the Mediterranean countries also seem hard to understand.

To me, this is not paradoxical at all, but rather very easy to understand. In countries where women have to choose between paid work and children, they increasingly choose paid work. But I do not call that freedom of choice. I call it being forced to choose, in a situation which is impossible. The countries that have come a little bit further ahead in this area, where people do not have to choose between work or children, show that when opportunities for reconciling work and family life are offered, men and women have both work *and* children.

Visions for a better share

Men have greater economic resources – women have longer lives. Being a woman does not pay in money, while men loose out in life years. Women have lower material standards and higher poverty risks. They turn old, worn, wrinkly and sick – and live. Men have more material resources, feel more healthy – and die. They pay with their lives. It seems to be like in the old black and white Western films: “Your money or your life!” If you enjoy money – be a man! If you enjoy life – be a woman! But we do not have that choice. Ageing is no zero-sum game between men and women. If men were to live longer, it would not make women live shorter.

If men married women of the same age, statistically speaking, women would have 6 years on their own at the end of their lives. There is this stupid tradition all over the world, though, that women marry men who are *older* than themselves. In the Nordic countries, widowhood is therefore about 9 years.

I will make a hopeless proposal, and that is: Make women marry men younger than themselves! It would be cheap, it would shift the burdens, and men and women would be left alone about equally. When I tell my young university students this, and suggest the 20 year-old girls to go looking for 14 year-old boys, you can well imagine the reaction, though.

But women have to take half the economic and political power, and men will have to take half the power at home. Power is never given. It is *taken*. And today’s decision makers have few successes in this area to boast about.

Perhaps the key to equality between women and men, of all social classes, of



different ethnic origins, lies in the possibility that equality may mean progress for both. My vision is a society in which women and men can grow old and, once again in their lives, rely on help from others – with security and dignity. We are not there today. Not in the Scandinavian countries, and even less so in some other countries.

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Strategies for Future Action – European Comments

by Lucien Bouis

I would like to thank the DG V and our Swedish hosts for inviting COFACE to participate in this session of reflections. Reconciliation between work and family life is not a simple matter of research but a reality that is experienced every day for each family and for each one of the 75 associations in our 15 countries, participating in the programme of the Union.

The notion of family policy

You have invited me to consider the question "What strategy should be adopted for the families of Europe". First and foremost I would like to show modesty in my assertions, since we must show respect for the wishes of each one of the members being concerned in the family group, particularly the children. But we must also show determination in making it clear at all times, that the family dimension must be involved in all economic and social policies.

In this sense, the notion of reconciliation between work and family life is to be considered as a structural element of family policy as such, and not as a by-product of social policies. Family policy should thus be defined as the family dimension to be given to all the policies of the Union and of the member states, presuming that such a policy concerns all families, and not only those facing particular difficulties.

It should, in other words, not be confused with a policy of providing assistance for families. Neither should it be confused with a population policy. The objective of family policy is to improve the living conditions of families, not to promote an increase in the birth rate.

This distinction between family policy and population policy is important. Indeed, a policy with strictly demographic objectives would run the risk of having a perverse effect on the dignity and independence of homes; an authentic family policy on the other hand could have a positive impact on the demographic trend.

The diversity of family models

We know that the word "Family" today covers different notions, on structural, economic, social and educational levels. We cannot, and moreover the



family movement defends itself from having only one vision, designing a specific family model.

This holds for the status of diverse forms of families. It also holds for the division of labour between the family members within the family and should therefore be respected.

Through the growing diversity of family models, one feature persists: the family is a system of relationships. A system is a set of interdependent elements, that define themselves by reference to each other, and in which any modification of one element entails a certain reorganization of the whole.

The family is thus not a simple juxtaposition of individuals, that are totally independent of each other. It is therefore the family group, in all its diversity, that should be the subject of family policy. It must not favour one family model rather than another. On the contrary it must tend to widen the sphere of independence of families, in order to provide them with support for their own decision-making and for assuming their own responsibility.

Neither can it be a simple juxtaposition of policies targeting the child in splendid isolation, or the man and woman treated exclusively in terms of equality, or still, the grandparents as if they were alone in the world, etcetera. It must take account of the family as a system of relationships. And if it is to be a system, this implies that the relationships are not set, but that they evolve in time and according to circumstances. Therefore, any family policy, while being specific, must also be evolutionary and flexible.

The dynamics of family relations

Today, we can observe two trends in each one of us, in our families, in our societies, in our actions and within the Union that may appear to be contradictory. They may therefore have an impact on the implementation of policies, that could prove to be contradictory and that would then pose a certain number of problems.

First of all, in any one of our countries, there is an increasing demand from women in general, as well as from mothers, for access to employment, in spite of high unemployment and a static labour market. This demand urges us to reconsider the present situation on a political and economic level, as well as on a social and educational level. This reconsideration should be made in terms of new allocations of work throughout the life cycle.

It is evident that in the present situation of economic crisis, the best insurance against poverty for a family, is to double the chances of escape, and thus to have two sources of income.

Women wish to work, but, their choices are also those of a couple and even of families. Children are more and more involved and participate in the deli-



berations on how to co-ordinate and harmonise time for work and time for domestic tasks, as well as for the responsibilities that everyone is able to take, if time allows, in social life and civil society, in the form of associative or political commitments for achieving life conditions of good quality, within the family as well as outside. This is one of the great challenges facing us at the end of the twentieth century.

The dynamics of social investments

The second observation is that, for economic reasons, states are tending to limit social expenditure, and to offload, without hesitation, onto families, and above all onto women and mothers, the burdens that could and should be assumed within a context of collective solidarity.

Whereas it is no doubt necessary to share existing work, it is above all necessary to create new jobs in sectors which have the capacity, and in particular in sectors, such as the social services, in the broad sense of the term, e.g. care in the home, child care and preventive services, but also in public services, such as transport, which are important as an element for promoting reconciliation between work and family life.

The investment in job creation in these sectors will be profitable in the long term, but it goes without saying that appropriate training must accompany job-creation policies.

The systems of education and vocational training must be revised and adapted in order to respond better to the changing requirements of the market. Young people must be guaranteed a job, activities or training, that is of use for themselves as well as for the society of which they are a part.

Alongside vocational qualifications, oriented towards the labour market, there is a need to develop other qualifications, on various levels, in order to mobilise people who are unable to find a position in the labour market in the strict sense, and to enable them to participate in other activities which are useful to society.

Exchanging hours of available time for hours of delivering useful services may promote the social integration of a certain number of people. One should be careful, however, not to offload unemployed people, or people on early retirement, without formal qualifications, onto the social service sector.

Aims for policy action

The drafting, development, application and evaluation of any family policy should take account of three elements, ensuring the autonomy of each person within the coherence of the group, i.e. allowing dialogue, choice and responsibility. The three elements are:



- benefits, purchasing power
- services, equipment
- planning of space (urban development is an important area in this context) and planning of time.

It is in this sense that family organizations have been amongst the leading advocates of a reallocation of work, more compatible with the combination of professional activity and responsibilities within the family, as well as within civil society, for both men and women.

The recommendation of March 1992 on child care gives member states a period of three years in which to inform the Commission of the follow-up measures taken.

Today, COFACE is requesting:

- that this assessment report should be produced during 1995
- that the draft directive envisaged by the white paper on European social policy should include at the very least the planned provisions relating to parental leave and leave for family reasons, i.e.: a) paid parental leave of a minimum duration of 3 months, for the father and for the mother, b) with a guaranteed return to his or her job or an equivalent job, c) leave for reasons of force majeure of a family nature.

In this area, as in others, particular attention must be paid to ensuring that any European measure does not serve as a pretext for backtracking from national policies that are already in place.

The issue of individual rights

The medium term programme of social action, that has just been presented by the Commission, provides for a study to be made on the individualization of rights. We are in favour of this. Such a reform, however, must be progressive. You cannot show contempt for the past, and simply change, from one day to the next, the social security system as if nothing had existed before. Moreover, a great deal of research is necessary: we must predict and avoid the perverse effects that the individualization of rights could have in certain cases, in particular for single-parent families, whatever the origin of their situation, be it death of the spouse, divorce, separation or simply the decision not to get married. The situation of single parent families would clearly be better protected by specific social rights, rather than by additional means-tested child benefits, etcetera.

This cannot be achieved overnight, suddenly, without consideration for the situation of people, particularly those who are already 40 to 50 years old, and who can therefore no longer change their career plans. Transitional periods will be required, while heading for new directions. We must try to incorporate into the new system, periods deemed equivalent to periods of



work, which would meet some of the demands of women having no professional activity.

Parental leave and leave for family reasons should of course be taken into account in the calculation of pension rights. A series of questions thus have to be addressed before any move towards general individual rights can be taken. It is therefore necessary that the European observatories study these questions thoroughly before any implementation.

Intergenerational solidarity within the family group is not an empty term. If it did not exist, just imagine how the many dramas caused by unemployment, idleness, lack of resources, isolation, loss of independence and dependency would affect the harmony of social life and the life of our societies.

But this solidarity needs to be strengthened and extended by solidarity at community level. It is therefore up to society to create the conditions in favour of this, on the basis of needs and proposals made by families themselves through their organizations.

All this requires an enhanced social dialogue between the institutions of the community and partners in society, including the NGOs.

Requests for a dialogue

COFACE is requesting the implementation of institutional resources, enabling enhanced mediation to take place between civil society and the political and economic institutions. Although not in favour of increasing the number of sector-based forums, COFACE demands the institutionalization of an annual meeting of a Council of Ministers responsible for overall family policy, and consultations with representatives of family organizations, the same as for the social partners in the world of work, wherever the interests and rights of families are concerned, and particularly on issues related to the reconciliation of work and family life.

Finally, COFACE would like to restate its wish that an unquestionable legal foundation should be given to family policy in the Treaty of the Union when it is revised in 1996. This family policy should, on the one hand, be closely linked to the other policies of the Union, in the areas of economic, social and cultural affairs, and, on the other hand, incorporate the diversity of family models, while respecting national contexts.

It should also respect the foundations of a real family grouping. Indeed, let us not forget that today, reconciliation between work and family life is still limited. It does not go beyond spouses and children in certain cases. In others, workers, who are third-country nationals, still have no real possibility to live on Union territory together with their families.



In conclusion then, with regard to reconciliation, it is necessary that the requirements of a society undergoing change, and the diversity of family models, are taken into account in the implementation of the instruments and policies of the Union.

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The European Commission – What Conclusions?

by Michèle Thozet-Teirlinck

Allow me to say a few words on behalf of the Commission about the seminar, during which we have spent these two days together.

In search of balance in diversity and partnership

In a recent interview in a French magazine, Jacques Delors, former President of the Commission, compared Europe to the other continents, and declared: “Europe is the continent of *balance*; balance between the needs of society and those of the individual, balance between a certain togetherness and the solitude that helps us recharge our batteries”.

It is indeed balance that we have been talking about during this seminar; a balance resulting from a compromise between all the contradictions that we have talked about. Speaking on child care, Peter Moss told us about the necessary balance between the needs of the children, equality of opportunity, and the proper working of the family, and between the quantity and the quality of service. With regard to service vouchers, we have heard about the balance between the public sector and the private sector. Speaking about parental leave, Jeanne Fagnani told us that, in order to create the conditions in which fathers would take parental leave, there must be a balance between the established family policies, the changes in the family sphere, and the relations between government and social partners. Speaking about telework, Jean-Claude Kaufmann told us about the need for a balance between this new way of working, and the preservation of family and personal space.

The danger for the European Union is that it might lose this balance, which is part of our European social model. We must try to preserve it, without respite, or risk losing our social cohesion, that is precisely the balance between the group and the individual, the maintenance of the social bond and the preservation of personal space.

I would like to add that this balance cannot be achieved without *partnership*. Partnership with everyone. Men, women, companies, trade unions, family and feminist associations, and government. We heard the companies speak earlier, and it was indeed cohesion within each of their companies that they talked about. They told us that if all the participants were not involved, success would not be possible.



In the same interview, Jacques Delors remarked that Europe is the continent of *diversity*. In terms of family policy, there are almost as many approaches as there are countries in the European Union. I will quote, for example, the search for individualism in the countries of the North, and a search aimed more towards the group in the countries of the South. With regard to children, we have heard about different approaches. Social integration, which Ulla Björnberg talked about when describing the Swedish and Scandinavian experiences, equality of opportunity being stressed in France and Belgium, and a more social approach, towards disadvantaged children, in the United Kingdom.

What is interesting is to see the way in which these differences relate to each other, and how, finally, they come together in a common picture. I will say more; it is interesting to see how differences and unity combine, and how unity is created, while differences are respected, and, thus, how preservation and acceptance of this diversity can even help us to create greater unity. It is the role of the Commission to stimulate analysis of these differences, which finally, through the comparative dimension, will encourage the convergence between policies. This is where the National Observatory of Family Policies, and also the Network on Families and Work, both dealing with family policy and new ways of organizing work, have important roles to play. I have spoken a great deal about search; search for balance, search for unity in diversity. This search goes on without cease; it is never at an end. What would balance be if we found it? That's the point of seminars like this, where we can confront our ideas, our experiences, in the context of a project which is common to us all.

Thanks

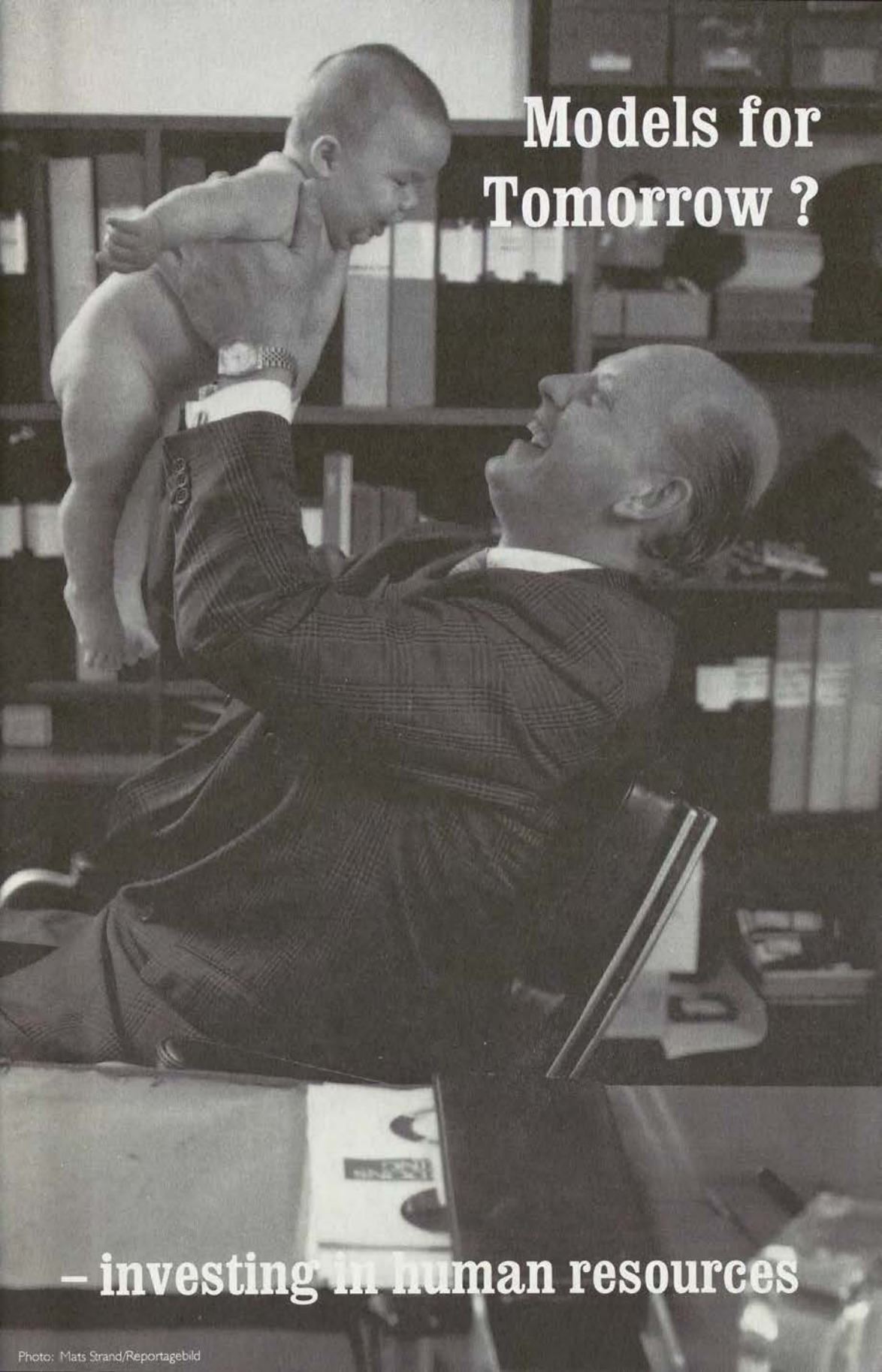
Now it's time to say our thank-yous. First of all, I would like to thank the Swedish authorities, and particularly Birgit Arve-Parès, without whom this seminar would not have taken place. I still remember the morning in the middle of December 1994, when I called her to ask if she could receive us here, and organize the seminar with me. We have worked together non-stop for six months by now.

With regard to the Awards, I particularly want to thank the Network experts, who all, each in their own country, have worked to make this Award a success. I also want to thank the members of the Jury.

Finally I want to thank Frédérique Deroure for the work that we have done together for many years, creating together the Network, and establishing the European Social Innovation Award.

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Models for Tomorrow ?

– investing in human resources

The Network Families & Work and the European Social Innovation Award

by **Michèle Thozet-Teirlinck**

I am delighted that we are all here together in Stockholm today – the Commission, the Network Families & Work, and the winners of the Social Innovation Award.

First of all, I would like to remind you of the fundamental objectives of the Network, which are as follows:

- to identify, analyse, stimulate and distribute, over three years, a package of model experiences from companies and organisations, relating to ways of achieving a better balance between family life and work;
- to create and activate a European and national movement for study and action, given concrete form by several initiatives, a Social Innovation Award, to reward organisations that have implemented good practices, in order to better reconcile work and family life; a Newsletter, published twice a year, and the production of various documents (reports, audio-visual documents, etcetera);
- to build up a resource centre with information and advice for organisations, both on a European and a national level.

The fifteen national experts thus have a multiple role as observers, activators and proliferators. They are establishing, with privileged national partners (social partners, personnel directors' associations, media specialised in human resources management, and researchers), an active and independent national Network, at the same time enhancing it with a European dimension.

This Social Innovation Award for reconciling work and family life was originally inspired by the French award of the same kind. Thanks to the Network, it has been possible to establish it on a Union level.

The Award comprises two sections:

- measures to create a better balance between work and family life (arrangement of working time, distance work, career breaks, sabbatical leave etcetera)
- measures to assist mobile families (on a national and trans-national level, assistance for the mobile partner, education of children, material support).

Within these two sections, there are four categories:

1. the multinationals and large companies;



2. the small and medium-sized companies;
3. the organisations (public services, public administrations, local authorities, associations etcetera);
4. help for mobility.

The first three are found in the first section (balance between family life and work), and the fourth is found in the second section (assisting mobile families).

The selection of the winning candidates was made in several stages:

- first of all, a candidacy file in nine languages was widely distributed in the member states through Network experts;
- then, the Network experts made a pre-selection of the candidacies;
- the final selection was made by the Award Jury.

This Jury is made up of multiple representatives:

- of the Commission (DG V: Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, and DG X: Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual);
- of social partners on a European level (UNICE, CEEP, CES);
- of the Confederation of Family Organisations of the European Community (COFACE), and
- of the Network Families & Work.

Awards were made in the first three categories. No Award was made in the fourth category (help for mobility), though, as the Jury thought that the candidacies who were submitted to us were too weak. This is to do with the general context in which companies at present find themselves; faced with the economic recession, they are not able to offer a package to the employee and his family for a long-term mission. Instead, companies give priority to short missions, or prefer to appoint personnel on a local level.

Added to the three main Awards, there are also three special Awards, one in each of the first three categories. Two Awards were also made to Swedish companies outside the competition, as they were not members at the time of the selection.

I now hand over to the winners to explain what makes their contributions innovative and exemplary.



Drägerwerk AG (Germany) **– the flexi-time company**

Ms Carola Mentrup, member of the subsidiary board, responsible for technical further training, and organizing measures for better compatibility between work and family life:

“

Everyone has to be present in the company between 10 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., but apart from that, the employees have flexible working hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., both in the administration department and in the production area. Thus, Drägerwerk AG has more than 250 varieties of individually arranged working hours, part-time and full-time, including the possibility of teleworking.

In 1994, I invited all male employees who took parental leave, or worked part-time, for a breakfast in my flat. Our aim was to inform this group about different measures for better compatibility between work and family life, and to sanction their position.

There is a kindergarten on the company grounds. It is open between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., and welcomes 60 children between the ages of 1 and 6. It was started by a group of Drägerwerk AG employees, but the children also belong to employees from other companies.

”



Type of Company:

Industrial sector with technical products for underwater-, air- and space-craft technology, for medical laboratories, and for safety technology.

Staff:

5,300 employees in Germany, 8,000 world-wide

Female employees: 30%

Women in management positions: 2%

Innovations:

The employees have been offered flexi-time schemes for more than 20 years. At the moment, 230 employees (10% men) take benefit of them. Drägerwerk AG has 50 different patterns of *flexi-time measures*, made to fit individual conditions of working-time, such as:

- flexible hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (all the employees have to be present in the company between 10 a.m. and 1.30 p.m.)
- half-day pattern (20 hours a week)
- 32 hours a week (2 afternoons off)
- 25 hours a week (19 hours at the company site, 6 hours at home)
- 18 hours a week (3 days a week, 6 hours a day)
- 20 hours a week (job-sharing pattern in administration department)
- long-term time-account for managers (longer holidays, for example)

Other good measures:

Drägerwerk is famous for its *equal opportunities approach*: integrating promotion of women in daily work life instead of taking isolated measures for them. It provides:

- a *company-owned crèche* of 60 places (full- or half-day child care). Parents and children can have lunch together at the canteen;
- a *parental leave scheme* for parents with children up to 7 years;
- a *campaign*, encouraging male employees to change their working-time from full- to part-time;
- *regular meetings with parents* during the period of upbringing, to communicate news from the company;
- *reintegration of women* wanting to return after a break of 10 years;
- support of the *circle of females employees*, called "Arbeitwelt bei Dräger im Wandel", a consulting group, working on the reconciliation of work and family life;
- *co-operative management*: self-directed groups of 6-8 people, and job-rotation, in the production sector.

Drägerwerk won the Award of the *Most Family-Friendly Company*, organised by the Federal Ministry of Family and Women (1993).

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**DuPont de Nemours
Italiana S.p.A. (Italy)**
– teleworking and equal opportunities

Special award

Mr Silvano Riva, manager human resources :

“

DuPont is aware that its success depends on the competence and commitment of its personnel. DuPont has introduced, well in advance, working ways and procedures, able to help its people to cope with their personal responsibilities, and, in the meantime, to give a great competitive advantage to the company.

We are developing a broad, long-range understanding of social dynamics, to achieve our business goals, and we are taking many initiatives to promote equal opportunities.

...we set the objective to triple the rate of women in managerial and professional positions by the year 2000. In 1994 and 1995, all managers and employees were enrolled in a programme consisting of seminars and exercises to understand the relationship between men and women in both working and social environment.

A sexual harassment prevention programme has been implemented throughout the company, significantly increasing the awareness among the employees of both male and female behaviour that presents barriers to women.

”



Type of Company:

DuPont is a research- and technology-based chemical and energy company, serving worldwide markets in the aerospace, apparel, automotive, agriculture, construction, packaging, refining and transportation industries.

Staff:

512 employees (135 women and 377 men)

Innovations:

- Since 1982, *flexi-time* is organized with a monthly compensation of maximum 8 hours without time limit. The core time is 9.30 to 12.30 and 13.30 to 16.30. The flexi-time is spread from 8.00 to 9.30 and from 16.30 to 18.30. The company does not control the employees' time; they manage their working hours themselves.
- Since 1986, *part-time* is provided at all career levels. At the moment, 16 employees are involved in part-time (15 women and one man), specially for childcare and in some case for eldercare.
- Since 1991, *tele-working* is organized. It involves 250 employees, who mainly perform sales and technical tasks. Most of them (150) are linked to DuPont International Network by computer, and use portable phones.

Other good practices:

Equal opportunities became an issue at DuPont Italiana in 1993, when an internal survey showed an unbalanced proportion of male and female jobs. In order to improve this situation, DPI leadership set the objective to triple the rate of women in managerial and professional positions by the year 2000, and launch a programme to reach that target.

In early 1994, all managers and employees were enrolled in a programme consisting of seminars and exercises to understand the relationship between men and women in both working and social environment. The "DPI Equal Opportunity Programme" was submitted for review to the Italian Ministry of Labour, receiving a very positive judgement, mainly for its innovative approach and the participation to various initiatives of the entire workforce, and last March 1995, the Ministry of Labour awarded DPI with a financial grant, which will be used to finance equal opportunity initiatives.

At present, the company is working to sign agreements with local crèches to help women in sales department. There are five women working in this field, but 40 are planned for the year 2000.

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Danvalve (Denmark) **- individualization of responses**

Mr Simon Palm, shop steward:

“

The demands for efficiency and flexibility facing today's industrial workers carry with them another requirement: a satisfactory family life, since this offers good criteria for high quality work for the company on the part of the individual.

A satisfactory family life also presupposes a satisfactory working life. We therefore endeavour to place the individual in the centre. We try to give our employees responsibility and contributory influence in the daily work, and consequently motivation that both the management and the employee benefit from.

We have drawn up what we call 'negative lists' of situations that are always a problem in the company, and to which we would like to find solutions. We also work with self-governing groups in the company. The individual worker is able to plan his own working day. This means that people find satisfaction in going to work and therefore come home with a feeling of satisfaction.

Danvalve is an equal work place in which all work functions are equally important and equally necessary, from the administrative director to the man who hammers the last nail into the crate before it leaves the building. It is the collected, individual efforts that produce the final result.

We are not a social experiment. We are part of a group and a producing company that must survive tough competition. However, our conclusion is that responsibility and motivation enable people to create a good product and thus preserve the work places that are so important to us.

”



Type of Company:
Iron metal industry

Staff:
90 employees (a majority of men)

Innovations:
Danvalve is not the only Danish company providing flexi-time, but Danvalve tries to find a flexi-time that is suitable for the *individual*. Each employee is given the opportunity to find the flexi-time that matches work and family life the best.

There are different work shifts; it is a shift industry:

- teamshift (day, evening, night)
- fixed nightshift - week-days
- fixed nightshift - weekend
- fixed dayshift
- flexi-shift

Individual needs:
The management and the middle management accept individual flexibility, and that the employees exchange duties and shift hours; the employees can take care of each others machines. The cooperation culture is so strong that the employees can always get help they need that way.

Focus groups:
Ivan Thaulow worked with 1 focus group of 6 employees. 5 or 6 members came from the production, working on different shifts. The group had 5 or 6 meetings, discussing the possibility of flexibility. The representative from the organisation participated in the meetings. The employees were so satisfied with the flexibility system, that they did not feel any need for an action plan. The cooperation culture was so strong, that they did not think it was necessary to take formal initiatives. A lot of the flexibility is organised by the employees themselves. But the management and the middle management also support the flexibility. If an employee needs to come two hours late, he can call a colleague, who can do his job and his own at the same time.

The trade unions:
The trade unions in the company have accepted that there are no demarcations between the skilled and the unskilled workers, so there is an extended flexibility not only in the working hours, but also in the job content. The employees can work with each other's machines. However, there still are differences between the wages of the skilled and the unskilled workers.

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Steuerberater Zoll (Germany) **– flexi-time and flexi-place**

Special award

Mr. Klaus Zoll, manager:

“

All my employees are completely free in choosing their working-hours. I have created a system of flexible working-hours, based on the wishes of my employees. As I conclude individual work contracts, the work-time can easily be adapted to personal wishes and needs. This way, the employees are working without the feeling that their family is being neglected. This leads to a very good social climate and a high staff retention in the company.

I promote working at home, to enable female employees to keep in touch with the company during maternity leave, and then return, as full- or part-timers. If needed, I provide furniture, personal computers, printers, faxes, calculators and lap-tops.

Professional further education is necessary. A training program for each employee is therefore developed every year, and the new experiences are transmitted in internal discussions. This further education is payed by the company.

All of my employees have a company car, that they can use also for private purposes. Child benefits, travel allowances, and financial aid in case of marriage or child-birth are also financed by the company. I have suggested a shopping and ironing service. My team has not decided whether that will be organised yet.

”



Category 2: Small and medium size companies

Type of company:

Tax Consultant in Friedrichshafen, Lake of Constance, Baden-Württemberg

Staff:

37 employees (more than 2/3 are women)

3 women in management positions

Innovations:

- a high share of part-timers (17 of 37 employees)
- promotion of women; 3 female managers
- the possibility of working either in the office or at home
- home office equipment supplied by the company
- time accounts according to the individual working contract
- further professional education and training is paid by the company
- the company car can also be used for private purposes
- child care and transportation fees paid by the company
- financial aid from the company in case of marriage or birth
- a shopping and ironing service is suggested by the manager

Social Aspects:

- a good social climate and high staff retention with little fluctuation
- high flexibility in space and time for working mothers

Philosophy:

- we must strive for a good compatibility between work and family life
- the best data processing equipment is necessary for optimal results
- a progressive staff-planning on a long-term basis assures a high flexibility in working hours

Steuerberater Zoll received a Certificate in the *Family friendly companies Competition* in Baden-Württemberg 1993.

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Saint-Camille Hospital (France) **– services for employees and** **local service jobs**

Mr François Lelièvre, personnel manager:

“

What exactly is a hospital? It is a hundred different jobs, from a very broad socio-professional spectrum, performed in the same place, with the common aim of caring for the patients. The staff cannot bring their personal problems to work, because if they did, they could not look after the patients properly.

In this particular context, it is absolutely necessary to consider the quality of the staff's working conditions. One general problem encountered by the staff was that of reconciling their personal life with their professional life. Hence the idea of creating an association offering the staff “family services”, to help them reconcile work and family life.

This association, which encompasses 10 employees, is run by the hospital employees, on a joint-management and joint-authority basis with the participation of union and management. Roughly half of the seats have been reserved for the latter. The trade union members of the main association are thus in charge of the smaller association.

The organisation is strictly self-financing. In other words, we did not want charity. We wanted the funding to come exclusively from the hospital employees. So it is a closed-shop association. By paying dues, the employee is not only saying ‘I want to be part of community life’ but also ‘I am jointly responsible for the smooth running, so I do not have the same attitude as if I were going to the cleaner's to drop off my laundry. I may agree, or disagree, but I take part, I give my opinion, I provide ideas, I vote. All this creates a very important internal dynamic for the life of the community.

”

Type of organisation:

The Saint-Camille Hospital is a private, non-profit-making hospital, run by an association, situated in the Paris region at Bry-sur-Marne. It has 300 beds.

Staff:

700 employees, 80% of whom are women. Work schedules include nights, Sundays and public holidays

Innovations:

- Draft contract with the Health and Social Affairs Directorate, designed to improve the staff's working conditions.
- A questionnaire distributed to the staff showed that they had problems reconciling work and family life.
- The idea of relieving the staff of household chores resulted in the establishment, in 1992, of the local service association E.V.T. (Equilibre Vie - Travail). Members of the hospital staff join the association in order to benefit from its modestly priced services. Today, 250 of the 700 hospital employees are members of the association. Four types of services are offered:
 - 1 *ironing*, which is done over the day;
 - 2 *sewing*, darning, sewing on buttons, etcetera;
 - 3 *precooked meals* are prepared, different each day;
 - 4 *housework* can be provided by a cleaning lady.

Conclusion - a progressive social policy:

- With the help of the National Employment Agency, 10 people from among the long-term unemployed were recruited for the service association.
- The E.V.T. association is controlled by the staff, who ensure that the services provided are of good quality.

Other projects:

- help with school work for children of staff (to be reexamined)
- child-minding scheme (to be explored with outside partners)
- gardening and odd jobs

The Saint-Camille Hospital has been awarded several Prizes in France:

- the *Creativity Prize* in 1993 (Ministry of Health),
- the *Social Innovation Prize* in 1993 (Ministry of Labour),
- the *Région Ile de France Prize*, and the
- national trophy of the *Fondation du Crédit Coopératif* in 1994.

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Post Danmark (Denmark) – the cultural change

Special award

Ms Grethe Møller, manager and chairperson for the Equal Opportunities' Committee:

“

There are two kinds of company culture: There is the official, written, culture, concerning the organisation of the work. We can also call it the official personnel policy. There is also an unofficial corporate culture, i.e. an unwritten law on values and attitudes among the employees, based on tradition, and shining through their behaviour towards each other.

This unofficial corporate culture is very powerful. It can delay, or even stop, the implementation of a new official policy. According to the personnel policy of Post Danmark, work and training must be organised with great attention to the patterns of family life and gender roles in society. However, before trying to implement an official policy aiming at creating more family benevolent work places, it is necessary to change the unofficial corporate culture, i.e. to change the attitudes of many senior employees, who do not accept that colleagues with young children may need flexible working conditions.

Therefore, we want to have a discussion among the employees. We have made a debate paper for all the employees in Post Danmark. We have also published a small book of 12 pages, with questions like “Do you feel envy towards the new generations because of their improved working conditions?”. The issue of corporate culture will be discussed by everybody in the company, both management and employees.

”



Category 3: Organisations

Type of organisation:

Mail and post services

Staff:

35,000 employees (39.4% women), and 29 local sites

Innovations:

Post Danmark has been working with equal opportunities and family policies for the last 5 years. The following measures are coming from the Equal Opportunities Board:

- Flexi-time and part-time have been introduced. There are also attempts made to introduce individual schemes.
- A child-minding project was set up in 1990, to influence the opening hours of child care centers. This has led to an extension of the opening hours in about ten major towns, with evening-care and night-care of children in five towns, and the establishment of three 24-hour care centres in two towns.
- The National Institute of Social Research conducted a research in 1993–1994 on so called *family friendly companies*. One workplace of Post Danmark took part of the project, and employees worked in focus groups to identify elements of the corporate culture that could be troublesome to employees with young children, and discussed methods of improving their working conditions.
- In the summer of 1994, a consultancy firm studied the workplace culture of Post Danmark, to see if the corporate culture was an obstacle to harmony between work and family life. The results showed that the attitude of senior employees restricted the possibilities of offering more flexible working conditions to employees with young children.

Plans:

To increase the acceptance of the needs of employees with young children, a nation-wide campaign will be launched during one year and a half. The aim is to create a debate on corporate culture among the employees. An action plan is set up, to involve employees at all levels: A number of employees will conduct the implementation of the plan at the various post offices. A summary will be distributed to all committees representing management and employees at the operational units. Then, all employees will get a discussion paper and a letter, signed by the local postmaster. Finally, there will be meetings with the people in charge of the implementation, to discuss present culture and the implementation of the plan, and follow-up meetings one year later, with the same people, to exchange experiences and discuss plans for the future work.

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Folksam (Sweden) **– sharing responsibilities**

Special award

Mr Gunnar Söderberg, personnel manager:

“

Our employees have a significant influence over the decision-making process through representation in management groups at all decision levels, throughout the whole organisation, from the board of directors to representation in group-executive management.

At Folksam, we have always maintained job security; we have never made people redundant due to lack of work. Instead, we retrain staff for future vacancies, and arrange retirement contracts. There is a special course for preparing active employees for life after retirement.

Our employees have flexible working hours between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., in order to make it easier to combine work and family life, especially for families with small children.

Finally, I would like to mention that Folksam's research center has produced a considerable number of recognized books in the area of family and work.

”



Type of company:

Corporate insurance company

Staff:

3,700 employees (53,4% women)

Innovations:

- The working week is only 37.5 hours;
- To encourage fathers to stay at home with their children, Folksam offers parents, mothers and fathers alike, 1.5 months extra salary when they take parental leave more than three months following the birth/adoption of a child;
- Full-time employees have the right to shorten their work-time to 75% until their children have reached the age of 12;
- Folksam has offered a broad educational and competence developing activity for several years, with subjects such as: Women and Leadership, Professional Development, and Coming Years;
- The company has a policy document on equal opportunity, based on Sweden's Equal Opportunity Act. Each year, the goals are clarified in a so called Equal Opportunity Plan, that is closely followed by Folksam's executive group. Folksam's managers are responsible for integrating equal opportunity concepts in day-to-day activities, with support of an equal opportunity manager. All groups of employees include both women and men, who therefore share power, influence and responsibility. There is a course to promote female leadership, training women to cope with the situation of having both career and family life.

In 1992, Folksam received an Award from the Swedish business magazine *Veckans Affärer* and the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman because of various activities favouring equality.

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Gargnäs Elteknik (Sweden) **– responsibility of the collaborators**

Special award

Mr Anders Grundström, managing director:

“

At Gargnäs Elteknik we believe that a harmonious work place is one of the conditions for a harmonious family life. They are linked.

We have worked a great deal with communication and information. We have lots of meetings where we all sit together and plan the future. The company has no secrets from its employees; they get to know all about our strategies and our financial results.

I prefer to call myself the person with ultimate responsibility rather than the managing director.

I have nothing whatever against working from home, but I see that many of our employees find the social side and comradeship at work very stimulating.

It is a question of learning all the time, together, in the organisation. We all learn from each other and from customers, suppliers and authorities.

The reason for our competitiveness is not that we have better machines and equipment. Anyone can purchase the same equipment as we have. Instead, our competitiveness must lie in our having a better work force.

Self confidence and intrinsic value are among the most important qualities in our company and we aim at increasing the level constantly. Achieve that, and you have a very successful company.

”



Type of company:

Industrial sector with electrotechnical products and manufacturing of customer adapted cables. Gargnäs Elteknik is a small company, situated in a small village with 200 inhabitants in the north of Sweden. The company is one of the largest in the rural district. It is a subcontractor for industries in Northern Sweden, and makes customer adapted cables and strain gauges (load cell force, -pressure, -displacement, -transducer).

Staff:

About 50% women

Innovations:

The company has changed its work organization totally. From being an enterprise completely run by a managing director who made all decisions one-sided, it has developed into a company where the responsibility is spread among all the employees. This has made the company more beneficial to the staff, and all the employees take responsibility and a great deal of interest in the business.

The responsibility is spread among all collaborators in the company, which results in the employees' taking decisions in questions as follows:

- flexible hours (the employees decide themselves how to locate work-time)
- overtime
- appointments of new staff
- economy (reports and budget check off)
- needs of training
- contacts with customers

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Seminar Programme and Participants



Reconciling Work and Family Life – Contradictions and Partnerships

Monday, 19 June 1995

Opening session

Chairperson: Ms Gun-Britt Andersson,
Under-Secretary of State for Social Security (S)

- 09.30–09.45 Welcome address
Ms Anna Hedborg, Minister of Social Security and Family Affairs (S)

Developing policies for reconciling work and family life

- 09.45–10.05 Aims and achievements of the
European Commission
Mr Terence Stewart,
Commission for the European Communities (DG V)
- 10.05–10.25 The Case of Sweden
Ms Birgit Arve-Parès, Swedish National Committee on the
International Year of the Family (S)

Policy measures and means of implementation

Services

Chairperson: Ms Marina Mauro Piazza,
Network "Families & Work" (I)

- 11.00–11.20 Child care
Mr Peter Moss, Network on childcare and other measures to
reconcile employment and family responsibilities of men and women
- 11.20–11.40 Close-to-home services:
new sources of employment?
Mr Jean-Francois Lebrun, Commission of the European Communities
- 11.40–12.00 The Contradictions of Service Vouchers
Ms Dominique Decoux, Vie Féminine (B)
- 12.00–12.20 Services for social integration
– the Scandinavian approach
Ms Ulla Björnberg, European Observatory on National Family Policies (S)
- 12.20–13.00 Discussion



Flexi-time

Chairperson: Mr Miguel Yáñez,
Network "Families & Work" (E)

- 14.30–14.50 Parental Leave: Why don't men make use of their rights?
Ms Jeanne Fagnani, CNRS (F)
- 14.50–15.10 Part-time work:
– *The Situation in the Netherlands*
Ms Catelene Passchier,
Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions (FNV)

– *Regulating part-time work at European Union level.*
Mr Johan ten Geuzendam,
Commission of the European Communities
- 15.40–16.00 Job-sharing – the British experience
Ms Pam Walton, New Ways to Work (UK)
- 16.00–16.20 Timebudgets – Scandinavian experiences
with regard to time policies
Ms Elisabet Näsman, University of Uppsala (S)
- 16.20–16.40 Family Responsibilities and Social Welfare
Mr Yves Chassard, Commission of the European Communities
- 16.40–18.00 Discussion
- 18.00 End of first day

Evening: the European Social Innovation Award ceremony

- 19.00–19.15 The Network "Families & Work"
and the Social Innovation Award
Ms Michèle Thozet-Teirlinck,
Commission of the European Communities (DG V)
- 19.15–19.30 Distribution of prizes
Mr Terence Stewart,
Commission of the European Communities (DG V)
- 19.30–20.00 Press conference
Coordinator: Ms Cecilia Modig,
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (S)



Tuesday, 20 June 1995

Continuation of
**Policy measures and
means of implementation**

Flexi-place

**Chairperson: Professor Loukia Moussourou,
Observatory on family policies (G)**

- 09.00–09.20 Experience with teleworking
Ms C. C. de Bruin, Digital Equipment (NL)
- 09.20–09.40 Preserving family and personal space
Mr Jean-Claude Kaufmann, CNRS (F)
- 09.40–10.30 Discussion

Models for tomorrow?

**Chairperson: Ms Frédérique Deroure,
Network "Families & Work" (DG V)**

- 11.00–12.00 Presentation of initiatives by the prize-winners of
the European Social Innovation Prize
- 12.00–12.15 Questions from the floor

Conclusions and recommendations

**Chairperson: Ms Anna Hedborg
Minister of Social Security and Family Affairs (S)**

- 12.15–12.35 On the treshold of Europe – comments and reflections
Ms Agneta Stark, University of Stockholm (S)
- 12.35–12.50 Strategies for future action – European comments
Mr Lucien Bouis, Confederation of Family Organizations in
the European Community (COFACE)
- 12.50–13.00 What conclusions for the Commission?
Ms Michèle Thozet-Teirlinck, Commission of
the European Communities (DG V)



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