Young parenthood, agency and social change

Thematic report

Written and edited by

Manuela du Bois-Reymond

University of Leiden

in cooperation with:

Carmen Leccardi & Sveva Magaraggia, University Milano-Bicocca, Italy

Simone Menz, Dresden University of Technology, Germany

Barbara Stauber, IRIS Tübingen, Germany

Andy Biggart, Queens University Belfast, United Kingdom

Siyka Kovacheva & Polina Manolova, NEC Plovidv, Bulgaria

Mirjana Ule, Metka Kuhar & Alenka Švab, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Mariska Kret, University of Leiden, Netherlands

Deliverable No. 19

of the project 'Youth – Actor of Social Change' (UP2YOUTH)

Contract no. 028317

October 2008

Table of contents

1. Introduction 4
2. Theoretical framing: agency in transitions to parenthood 8
3. Contextual framing; problems of comparability; research interests 10
United Kingdom 13
Germany 15
The Netherlands 17
Italy 19
Bulgaria 21
Slovenia 23
4. Policies for young parents 25
4.1 Introduction 25
4.2 EU politics 25
4.3 Present situation in the 6 research countries; bottle necks and best practices 29
Slovenia 30
Bulgaria 34
Germany 37
Italy 41
United Kingdom 46
Netherlands 51
4.4 Conclusions 55
5. Individualization 56
5.1 Introduction 56
5.2 Changing life courses 57
5.3 Youth trajectories to social and economic independence 59
5.4 Various transitions to young parenthood 62
Transitions into childlessness 63
Parental transitions into poverty 65
Pluralization indicators 74
5.5 Work participation and work-family models 75
5.6 Research gains and gaps 81
6. Cultures of young parenthood 83
6.1 Introduction 83
6.2 Imagery and agency 86
6.3 The making of young parenthood – cultural aspects 92
Young parenthood in a gendered life-course perspective 92
Negotiation; re-traditionalisation; engendering and degendering 93
Mismatch between fertility desires and fertility behaviour 96
Postponement 99
Transition to second child 100

Abortion issues 101
6.4 Work-life-family balance 102
Employment after birth 102
Working cultures 103
Blurring boundaries between private and working life 104
6.5 Specific aspects of young parenthood 105
Work-life-family balance of young parents with migrant or ethnic minority background 105
Making new fatherhood? 106
Teenage parenthood 107
Same sex couples 109
6.6 Research gains and gaps 111
7. Learning young parenthood 114
7.1 Introduction 114
7.2 Sensitizing concepts 116
7.3 Gender and intergenerational learning 119
7.4 Learning on the work floor 122
7.5 Learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings 128
7.7 Research gains and gaps 131
8. Conclusions 132
8.1 Introduction 132
8.2 Comparative Summary 132
8.3 Research questions revisited 136
8.4 Research gains and gaps – recommendations for future research 139
References 143
Annex: context table 156

1. Introduction

Discussion among European politicians and demographers about young parenthood gets increasingly heated each year. Dramatic changes on this topic are envisaged for practically all European member states, with scholars from the social sciences providing knowledge and interpretation from their research.[1] At the heart of the analyses always lies the problem of how to secure a viable work-life- family balance – viable for the individuals involved as well as for society at large.

It is in this context that the project "Young Parenthood" must be placed.[2] Yet in contrast to many other analyses, we do not approach the topic of young parenthood from the perspective of demographic developments, with concomitant economic implications. However this and other factors, such as the eroding of the contract between the generations, are taken into account. Instead, we view young people as *actors* who are in charge of giving meaning to their present lives and who want to keep doing that for their future lives in their respective countries. An actor perspective resonates with current EU policies which are anxious that young Europeans participate in society, not only in the labour market but in the advancement of civil society as well.[3]

As the transition to adulthood becomes not only prolonged but also more complex, young people have to develop their life-course continuously and in reaction to the challenges and obstacles they meet on their way. *Agency* is the way of using one's own subjectivity to rework the social steps to adulthood. Agency is therefore not a stable and prefixed property which suggests unequivocal actions – like behaving in a definite way as a young girl, a spouse, a parent – but has rather to be understood as a capacity which constantly and actively mitigates between biographical needs and wishes on the one hand and structural opportunities and obstacles on the other. Young people's development of agentic, self consciousness strategies to influence their immediate and prospective life conditions has become much more of an explicit – and difficult - task than in earlier periods when becoming an adult was framed within clear collective and behavioral norms. To develop agentic consciousness and power implies both: adaptation to present life circumstances *and* constantly questioning limits and trying to alter them so as to realize one's own biographical needs and in particular, one's own capacities. This is what is meant by young people as actors of social change; how they can become active actors, not just passive followers obeying the world as it is. This lies at the heart of the (often overused) notion of participation as we want to understand and enlarge it.

---

[1] Lutz et al. 2006, Huinink 2006, Knijn & Komter 2004; Pfau-Effinger & Geissler 2005; Bradshaw & Hatland 2006; Dykstra & Hagestad 2007; European Observatory 2003; Jensen 2007; Blossfeld & Hofmeister 2006; Jenson 2006; SOCCARE 2000-2004; Fahey & Spéder 2004; Walace 2003; Rapoport et al. 2002; Fine-Davis et al. 2004; Kremer 2007; OECD reports Babies and Bosses 2003-2005 and further see www.oecd.org/els/social/family.

[2] Young parenthood is one of three thematic strands of the European Research Project UP2YOUTH - Youth – actor of social change (Contract Number 028317 – 2006-2008), funded under the Sixth Framework Program of the European Commission.

[3] Therefore the two other strands of UP2YOUTH are about participation and the transition of ethnic minority youth to the labour market.

We interpret *young parenthood* as one of a complex set of identity stages young people pass through on their way to adulthood in post-industrial knowledge based societies (Leccardi & Ruspini 2006; du Bois-Reymond & Chisholm 2006; Walther et al. 2006). The *transition* to parenthood is what we are interested in. It involves the process of making the decision to become a parent (or not – and why not) and how to combine this new status with other developmental tasks associated with young adulthood, like continuing with education and building up a professional career, acquiring a job, leaving the parental home, building up a relationship with a love partner, finding adequate housing and developing coping strategies to deal with difficulties which may be encountered, like unemployment, precarious job, break-up of partnership, or an unresponsive housing market.

Dealing with young parenthood as an extended and complex transition makes it unwise to try to fix *age brackets*; in contemporary societies a first child mother (and father) may be 22 but also 38 years old and therefore an extended period within which "young" parenthood evolves must be taken into account. Youth-sociological and educational research shows that one of the main factors which delays parenthood is *prolonged educational trajectories*, but there are other determinants, such as unemployment which may discourage family building, career-related mobility which makes it difficult to settle, not finding a partner at the right time, lacking housing, and many other contextual influences. Thus, our research perspective is not a psychological, nor any other clear-cut disciplinary, approach. It is above all a youth research and transition research perspective, which – within the framework of social sciences – understands itself as interdisciplinary.

Depending on context, young parenthood is differently defined by *official policies* as well as by the subjects themselves. On a demographic plane young parenthood is perceived first and foremost as reproductive behaviour. In cultural terms young parenthood might be a very different stage, with different status, in the life-course depending on specific ethnic-cultural backgrounds and heritages. In terms of educational policies young parenthood is seen as clearly related to educational level and increasing educational demands might be at odds with becoming a parent before the biological window closes. The young persons themselves have to decide the turning point from not being a parent to becoming one according to their own and their partner's wishes and resources. As we will point out in the course of this report, all these different perceptions of young parenthood are translated in different policies and an urgent task in modern societies is effectuating a congruent approach to solve or at least ease existing problems.

Firstly, the methodology of the UP2YOUTH-process has been to develop a synthesis report on the basis of several sources of information. The first important sources were country reports of the participating research countries Bulgaria, Slovenia, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. The second source was an exchange with policy experts in a first workshop, which delivered insightful information from good practices in these countries.[4] The third source was an exchange with experts from running or just accomplished research projects in a second workshop, by which the UP2YOUTH-young parenthood-team got interesting feedback on its

[4] The workshop took place at the Valencia meeting, 19-22 October 2006; the invited experts for the young parent group were: Marjolijn Distelbrink (NL), Adelheid Kubitz-Eber (DE), Karin Jurczyk (DE), Azen Karagjozov (BG), Rositzka Petrova (BG), Angela Edwards (UK), Jana Javornik (Slovenia).

own work and latest research findings.[5] The UP2YOUTH-young parenthood-team then split up in working groups on the topics: culture, learning, and policies. These were finally integrated in the present report by M. du Bois-Reymond. together with B. Stauber who finalized the report.

Second, some comments need to be made about the choice of the *six countries* which took part in this research: Germany (East/West), the Netherlands, UK, Italy, Bulgaria, and Slovenia. Within the framework of EGRIS projects in general and UP2YOUTH in particular, an even distribution has been sought between North, South, East and West Europe. For comparison we base our analyses on welfare state typologies as the main theoretical reference point in European comparative research. In all three strands of the project UP2YOUTH – young parenthood, the transition of young people with migrant backgrounds, and the notion and policies of participation – the participating countries were so chosen that they represent the main welfare state types. There are numerous problems involved in dividing and analyzing countries according to these typologies. Throughout the report we will discuss this heuristic tool, pointing to limitations and modifying it according to care arrangements and gender policies. Depending on withheld or given (welfare) state support, which differs in our research countries, young people are to a greater or to a lesser extent held in *semi-dependency* on parental support and are to a greater or lesser extent able to lead adult lives. This also influences their reproductive behaviour, that is to say their decisions on when, if and how many children they want.

One remark regarding the problem of comparability of data: the situation becomes better with data files covering a broader range of related topics, but still not all aspects are covered. As soon as one has to switch between data sources, there are huge differences and contradictions between them. We therefore have to be very explicit regarding the different methods of generating data. Often, there are critical discussions on a national level regarding the reliability of data, as e.g. the critics on the Mikrocensus in Germany regarding its reliability on data on childlessness, which are neglected in European comparative statistics. Some crucial information, e.g. regarding the employment rates of women with small children may be misleading, because these official employment rates may in some countries include mothers in parental leave (as e.g. in Germany), but exclude them in others (see Gstrein et al. 2007)[6].

We aim to show the *frictions* which evolve between different conceptions of young parenthood in our countries/regions. Young parenthood in the Netherlands involves quite different life styles and resources than for example in Bulgaria; in North Italy the notion of "young mother" carries completely different connotations than in South Italy. In all cases the actors in the game have to come to terms with different interpretations and interests; they have to learn the manifold games of *negotiation*: males and females with each other; employers with employees; public carers with private parents; local housing companies with prospective young families, etc.

We realize that transition to parenthood is not just transition from 'not yet' to 'now' and that it stretches much longer into the course of life. However, we will not be able, in this project, to

[5] The workshop took place at the Lisbon meeting, 1-2 November 2007. The invited experts were: Rachel Thomson (Milton Keynes, UK), Julia Hirst (Sheffield Hallam University, UK), Eva Bernhardt (University of Stockholm, SE), Disa Bergnéhr (Linköping University, SE), An-Magritt Jensen (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, NO), Leeni Hansson (Tallin University (EST).

[6] The WORKCARE project (Gstrein et al. 2007) thus states, that a detailed analysis of *active employment rate* of women with children would require further research.

apply a consequent life-course approach but focus predominantly on the transition steps which lead to first child family building. It must be stated that within secondary analysis, to which our project is restricted, we have only limited means to focus on the *process* of the transition as such. Yet there will be material presented about the life plans of young adults that include wishes to become a parent (or not).

In short, our conception of young parenthood is a *multilevel concept*, relating youth transitions, the simultaneity of status passages in the life course, gender and ethnic-cultural differences, labour market situation and support systems to young parenthood. Such a multilevel concept needs analytical differentiation between structural and cultural, and between micro- and macro sociological dimensions.[7] On a macro level we take into account socio-economic and institutional structures which have individualizing effects on youth transitions, gender relations and institutional arrangements of (young) parenthood. This also includes collective representations and ideologies, such as motherhood ideologies and different kinds of "doing gender". On a meso level, we consider institutions and organisations, and the question how collective representations and ideologies are re-worked in such organisations in regional and local contexts. On a micro level we look at how individuals cope with the life course as an actual sequence of status and role figurations; it will show that sequence has become less unequivocal than it used to be –what youth sociologists discuss as the loss of linearity in the life course. Young parents are young *and* adult today whereas former young parents were *not* regarded as young anymore but definitely adult. Finally we consider the micro-cultural level on which individual representations of biography, individual perspectives and strategies are located: young women deliberating how to reconcile their identity as emancipated women with career ambitions and motherhood; young fathers struggling with unfortunate working conditions which prevent them to take over care tasks, etc.

Another way of coming to grips with the multileveled concept of young parenthood is the theoretical approach of *structured individualization* as it is referred to by Anglo-Saxon researchers.[8] Here the dynamics of social change and the tensions between social opportunity and constraints are stressed without contradicting the analytical distinctions referred to above. In any case it is a challenge for scholars of national analyses of young parenthood and even more so for comparative analyses to combine the "subjective" and the "objective" in such a way that they match. It will show that it is difficult, sometimes impossible, to meet that task; real life is more complex and muddled than analysts would like it to be. Therefore, the reader will find a certain *overlap* in the dimensions in each chapter.

The report is organized as follows: the following Chapter 2 outlines our theoretical framing – agency and social change. Chapter 3 deals with problems of welfare state typologies as tools for *country comparisons* and outlines our *research questions*. Chapter 4 presents *country portraits,* which give the reader a quick overview of the main features of each of our six countries, and how young people live there and become young parents. This contextual knowledge is deepened by portraying frameworks of *polices* for young parents in the respective research countries, and by presenting *good practices* (chapter 5). Chapter 6 on *individualization* deals primarily with the dimension of macro-structural developments and changes affecting youth transitions and young

[7] Many sociologists have suggested such differentiation. An especially convincing example is Buchmann, 1989.
[8] See the work of Giddens, Bauman, Bynner, Furlong, among many other scholars.

parenthood as well as institutional arrangements for young parents. The focus of Chapter 7 is *culture* and we closely investigate the cultural and gender context within which young parenthood is given form by women and men, how they negotiate gender and intergenerational relations, how they act within such contexts and what kind of cultural practices they develop to cope with new life tasks. It is here that the dimensions of the macro- and micro-cultural come to the foreground. In Chapter 8, we are especially interested in new challenges for informal and non-formal *learning* in various contexts: within and outside the family, in the work environment and between the generations. All are aspects of lifelong and life-wide learning and we endeavour to unfold the many different aspects of learning activities. In a way that chapter is a compound of the foregoing chapters in that it touches on macro as well as micro, structural as well as cultural aspects of young people, parents and their various reference groups. We close the report by reviewing our research questions and interests in light of what knowledge we have gathered and where the research gaps remain for future study (Chapter 9).

2. Theoretical framing: agency in transitions to parenthood

Transitions into parenthood are a complex process which needs explanation, theoretically as well as methodologically. Symbolic interactionism and an ethnomethodological approach are more appropriate to grasp transitions into parenthood in all their complexity than rational choice approaches (and all derivations - see Burkart 2002). With these approaches to agency, the dynamics of such decision making strategies to become parents can be understood, e.g. re-traditionalization of gender roles among partners when getting their first child (see for Germany Fthenakis et al. 2002), or how parenthood is negotiated between the partners (see for Sweden Bergnéhr 2006, see for Germany the PAIRFAM-project for first results of the preliminary panel see Brüderl et al. 2008; Rupp 2007). It can be assumed that both levels – the one of daily routines and the one of representation – influence the decisions and strategies of young women and men and might leave their mark in terms of gendering effects (see for an ethnomethodological approach of doing gender West and Zimmerman, 1987; Ridgeway and Correl, 2004, also Deutsch, 2007; for gendering practices Yancey Martin, 2000).

The need for including a temporal dimension into research on transitions into parenthood is emphasized by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) who highlight the (varying) interplay of (temporal) dimensions of agency: it seems to be highly relevant for our topic to explore in detail the iterative moments of young mothers' and fathers' agency. The latter includes decision-making-processes before and within the transition to parenthood as well as the whole management after the transition has taken place. Agency in this respect relates to traditional models and normalities of parental roles and family traditions and individual experiences, leading to idiosyncratic interpretations of such patterns. Structural factors have their impact on this iterative dimension, and so does the (changing) imagery of fatherhood and motherhood, framing the context in which concrete actions take place.

Also prospective components have to be considered: self-concepts of young women and men, their ideas about intimate relationships, the way they sketch their lives and see themselves in the nearer or farer future, how they evaluate their near and far life perspectives, how they deal with

contingencies, falling back to (gendered) role conceptions in order to achieve some security or resisting such stereotypes.

If agency is regarded as a time-related process of interaction, studies which take time-related dimensions into account are expected to shed light on these complex transition-making processes (see the Learning Lives project, Biesta/Tedder 2006). If agency refers in one way or the other to overcoming problematic situations, or to the capability of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations (Emirbayer & Mische 1998: 971), or in terms of pragmatism: to indeterminate actor-context transactions, we can locate *social change and transformation* within agency. As agency may vary from situation to situation, *learning* comes into focus as a central concept. To acquire new practices (or un-learning old habits), it is important to achieve agency, but it is not certain that a proceeding situation can be managed in the same way or if it needs again new learning. As long as we do not have knowledge about the negotiation processes going on before and after "traditional" solutions, we cannot evaluate them as such. To give an example: in a private context young parents may opt for equal partnership with shared care responsibilities, but that can be counteracted when the young father presents this option to his employer. As the Transitions Project shows (Brannen et al 2002), the context of the workplace is decisive for realizing options of work-life-balances, even if they are high on the political agenda, as in Sweden (see Bäck-Wiglund and Plantin 2007). Such findings point to the time-lag which exists between the so-called private life, institutions and official policies.

Young parenthood, understood as deeply rooted processes of social interactions which rework past, present and anticipated future: all of them transporting symbolic meaning, could now be transferred to concepts such as communicative or creative action: how would young women and men in their present agency choose between different options, create new ones, make normative decisions, step into negotiation with each other within their partnership, with former partners, within their family of origin etc., network with peers with and without children? In UP2YOUTH, creative actions (Joas 1996) concern the question in how far young adults do create new spaces for political influence, do create new concepts of fatherhood and motherhood, and establish new routes of transitions to work within a context they can hardly influence.

Last but not least, we can ask with Giddens (1991): How, by applying these different modes of agency, do young women and men re-structure or change former patterns of transitions into parenthood and create new structures? This question has to be enlarged by a point Zygmunt Bauman (1995) made: where would enlargement of the public sphere be needed to negotiate life politics, acknowledging ways of doing parenthood/doing family/doing gender (differently)?

Here we come closer to research issues emerging from the initial state-of-the-art-report. Of course, and despite of disadvantageous conditions, we have hints regarding agentic shaping of transitions into parenthood from research exploring young women's and men's every day practices. This agency can only with caution (and only by considering negotiation processes) be regarded partly as traditional, partly as innovative; there are a great variety of ways to perform the transition into parenthood (or to renounce to it), and as far as spurious studies show, they are full of ambivalences. There is a lot of learning and informal policy involved in young parents' agency, and this is not always easily detected. That has to do with a split between so-called private and so-called public discourses. Although some "aspects concerning the private life are increasingly made objects of public debates, stage-managed media events, and political attempts

at exerting control" (Jurczyk and Oechsle 2006), the split between public and private still exists in solutions young parents find on an informal level. To achieve new insights in young parents' agency it therefore seems a promising research strategy to look and think counter to the mainstream discourses. Some options for such an agency-oriented shift in research direction are:

- Taking into account the variety of motives for agency and explore them in detail;
- Looking critically at phenomena of modernized ideologies of 'motherhood' or 'new fatherhood' and how they impact on the agency of young mothers and fathers rather than joining dominant discourses on modernity and progress;
- Focussing on phenomena of agency within different contexts rather than adopting one-dimensional distinctions between 'modernity' and 'tradition';
- Searching for examples of young women and men who explicitly reject ascribed roles, e.g. young women explicitly disclaiming the role of the overburdened mother, longing for a youth life combined with new features of motherhood and then facing the problem of finding a partner for joining this route; or, on the other hand, young women feeling the need to fall back on traditional roles but under quite different conditions than their mothers and women of older generations;
- Searching for those young parents who, despite disadvantageous conditions and limiting structures, organize networks and find new, not (yet) officially acknowledged solutions rather than reiterate again and again well-known structural deficiencies such as the lack of childcare-facilities.

Such research strategies question the public-private-divide and are directed at a new balance between the agency of young women and men and (the necessity of) policies acknowledging this agency.

3. Contextual framing; problems of comparability; research interests

It has become common among European researchers who are faced with country comparisons to fall back on the *welfare state typology* as it was developed by Esping Andersen and others (Esping-Andersen et al.2002; Gallie & Paugam 2000; see also Blossfeld et al. 2005). Scholars dealing with gender relations have criticized the gender neutrality of the original welfare typology: Pfau-Effinger (1996) introduces her concept of "gender arrangements", and later introduces "care arrangements" (Pfau-Effinger 2005); Walby (2004) talks about "gender regimes"; Anttonen & Sipilä (1996) introduce "care regimes"; and Bettio & Platenga (2004) and Lewis and Ostner discuss breadwinner-models. (Lewis 2006/2007). For a broad overview of work-care-typologies see Vassilev and Wallace (2007). Scholars preferring "care regimes" clustered countries on the basis of how responsibility for caring is organized in a given society between family, state and the market, which may or may not converge with the original welfare typology (Jönsson 2003; Kay 2003; Wallace 2003; Pfau-Effinger 2005). For example, Ackers (2003) has reason to place France and Sweden in one cluster because both have a closely integrated family and employment policy, but for another research interest these two countries

would not be in one category. Kotowska (2004), discussing demographic and family trends in the CEE countries, makes again a different grouping while Georgas et al (2004), in their 33-country research on family values, come to four clusters which overlap with the Esping-Andersen et al. typology, i.e., Western European countries, Eastern European and Socialist countries, Southern European countries, and Scandinavian countries, including the Netherlands.[9]

Walther (2006) has modified and nuanced welfare state typologies by applying them more specifically to youth transitions, taking into account structures of education and training and of labour markets, dimensions of unemployment policies, cultures of "doing gender" and societal representations of youth. He arrives at five clusters: the *universalistic transition regime* of the Scandinavian countries, the *liberal transition regime* of Anglo-Saxon countries, the *employment-centered transition regime* of Central European countries, the *sub-protective transition regimes* which primarily apply to the Southern European countries, and the *transition in the heterogeneous regimes of post-communist societies.*

The WORKCARE project on Work, Care and Welfare in Europe (Gstrein et al. 2007) on the basis of a macro EU country grouping came to four macro work-care country groups, plus the group "countries in between" and "outliers". Variables are female employment rates, gender gaps in employment, female part-time rates, gender gaps in part-time employment, childcare participation rates for 3, 4 and 5 year olds, total fertility rates, and share of the young population (0-14). The difficulties of groupings are testimony for the almost impossible task to construct coherent clusters with all important factors.

Thus, we provisionally stick to the concept of transition regimes, which at least considers some crucial dimensions of the situation of young people, but formulate some criticism where we feel the need to do this.

In the sub-project Young Parenthood of UP2YOUTH, four transition regimes are represented: the liberal regime (UK), the employment-centred regime (Germany; the Netherlands) the sub-protective regime (Italy), and regimes of post-communist societies (Bulgaria; Slovenia). In the course of presenting national data and analyses we will see that this clustering can only be a heuristic tool, which of course is not meant to and able to serve our research interests in all respects; there are simply too many variables, pertaining to too many different national traditions and individual contexts to make that do. When Ilona Ostner (2004: 172) states: "attitudes do not neatly fit welfare state typologies", this is not the point regime typologies are meant to make. But we agree with Lück (2006) who says:

It can be argued that culture is shaped by welfare regime, since the impact of institutions on rational behaviour will, in the long run, lead to routines and finally to beliefs legitimizing those routines. It can also be argued that welfare regimes are shaped by culture since the only plausible reason why a certain government is elected in order to organize the welfare state in a certain way is the society's cultural background. (p. 408). This is what Kaufmann had called "Gestalt". To illustrate the relationship, he refers to ethnic minorities "who share a welfare system with the majority group but do not share the cultural background." (p. 409). And he goes

[9] Further objections: Kremer (2007, p. 241): "Welfare state analysis … is based on inadequate assumptions about the way mothers decide how much to work or to provide care."

on to argue that if it comes down to empirical research, welfare regimes cannot be disconnected from the cultural ground upon which they are built.[10]

We started from the transitions typologies developed in the context of our EGRIS-research (see Walther 2006); but with regard to our topic, we have preference for such typologies which give more consideration to care and gender policies. We think that the transition regime model is cross-cut by care arrangements, which necessarily transmit a strong gender message. With Birgit Pfau-Effinger (2005) we adhere to "the idea that, besides institutional, social and socioeconomic factors, values and cultural models ('Leitbilder') regarding the role of different spheres of society for the provision of care also contribute to explaining the way in which care policies and their transformation into social practices develop" (Pfau-Effinger 2005: 22). There are countries with a high, a moderate and a low contribution of the family – respectively the market or the state – to the welfare mix in relation to childcare, and this distinction cross-cuts the different transition regimes.

We alluded already to the importance of the dimension of *region* (North vs. South Italy; West vs. East Germany and also urban vs. rural regions). This dimension is not reflected in welfare typologies. However, local policies and local cultures of doing family can be decisive for transitions into parenthood. As an idea to be developed further we suggest to consider how transition regimes interact with what could be called *local contexts*.[11]

There are *normative expectations* which are reflected in institutional structures and which influence the transition paths of young adults concerning educational and occupational trajectories, time of leaving parental home, sexual behaviour and time of becoming parent. We will see that the often tense relationship between given institutions and individual biographies takes on different features in our research countries/clusters, but we will *also* see that there are convergences. For young parenthood, the most general and most extensively discussed convergence, uniting otherwise quite different countries as those in our project, is the double burden of work and family tasks for women.

Working from the paradigm of structured individualization means systematically regarding two perspectives in analyzing young parenthood: that of the individual, the actor, and that of social structure. At this point, also institutions and policies involved come into play. We will see that there is much more systematic knowledge about the structural and the institutional side of young parenthood (demographic and socio-economic data; policy measures) than the subjective side (motives for getting children, strategies how to deal with the new status, stress in managing daily life) and that there is particular scarcity of knowledge on the *interaction* of both sides of the concept of structured individualization. However, this is precisely what we are interested in, as becomes evident when we look at our *research questions*:

- How and when do young adults arrive at the decision of becoming (or not) parents, and in what societal context?

[10] See also the critique of L. Alanen (2004) who states the ambiguousness and multi-interpretability of the concept welfare in the present discussions.

[11] This concept is relevant for the other two strands of the project UP2YOUTH as well. It is open to discussion if the term *local* is correct.

- How do they manage the combination of family and work obligations?
- How do they negotiate (changing) gender roles and obligations?
- What problems do they face in realizing their family plans and how do they solve them – or fail to do so – in view of simultaneous transitions?
- Where do young parents acquire competences for parenting and what kind of personal and other information sources and support systems are available? What role do intergenerational relationships play in this?
- How does the world of work and family fit? Is the work floor a place of reconciliation or a battle field? Is there a learning transfer between family and work?
- How do young parents manage growing mobility demands?
- How can family and transition policy attribute to a viable work-life balance?

United Kingdom[12]

The UK report in discussing the life situation of young persons stresses two distinct features: *social class* affiliation and *teenage motherhood*. Young persons arrive at adulthood in fast or slow tracks which correspond to low or middle class membership. In comparison with other countries, young people enter the labour market early: around the age of 21/22. The fast trackers get into low-paid non-graduate short term and irregular jobs, the slow trackers find a more varied and advantageous labour offer at their disposal but they too often start their working career in low paid, on-graduate jobs. Fast trackers establish a family in their teens or early twenties – among them the teenage mothers (and fathers), with or without ethnic background – and have left their families earlier than the slow trackers who follow longer educational paths, cohabitate longer before marriage and get children in their early thirties (almost 50% of higher educated women were childless at age 33) or (shall) become DINKYs (Double Income No Kids Yet). But by comparison, the birth rate is high and new mothers are young: 28% of women aged 21-25 have at least one child and, and the share of teenage mothers (aged 14-19) is 26.9, while it is only 7.0in Italy and 6.3 in the Netherlands for example.[13]

Approximately half of couple parents are dual earners, and the most typical pattern is the fathers working full time and the mothers part time. Three-quarters of mothers, who actually return to work after giving birth, do that on a part-time basis, and that is disadvantageous to their income and further career prospects. Employed parents are more likely to work atypical hours (more than 50% of the coupled or lone mothers and 80% of the fathers) and parents try to reconcile family and work through 'shift parenting' where each parent works at times of the day that does not overlap with the other in order to be able to care for the children. Employers are generally not sympathetic to pregnant women and working mothers, and these women often experience significant stress in trying to combine parenthood and work.

A typology about women's preferences concerning work-life balance discerns five types which is interesting to compare with the typology in the Dutch report (see below):

[12] National report written by Andy Biggart.
[13] Teenage pregnancy rate counts pregnancies per 1000 females of this age.

- domestic life first;
- achieve a satisfactory combination of work and family obligations;
- "maximizers" who want to realize both, career and family life;
- careerist by economic or personal (divorce) necessity;
- careerist by choice (real or potential DINKY women – see Hakim 2003).

No estimation is made as to proportions of women belonging to one or the other type, but from the information given about graduate/non-graduate job opportunities for women it can be inferred that most women (will want to) realize a more or less satisfactory combination of work and family through part-time work.
Hakim's approach on work-orientations has been strongly critisized because of its voluntaristic connotations (see O'Reilly et al. 2007), and because it too little considers that there is always a – constraining or facilitating – context for "orientation". The authors from the WORKCARE-project introduce here the concept of constrained choice, which takes into account such conditions.

Gender solidarity is high among young couples as is intergenerational solidarity, especially among those from lower socio-economic groups; young fathers from these groups do even more child care work than those from higher status groups. For a vast majority of young people establishing a family is a central goal in life. More and more young men try to adjust their work schedules when they become fathers and astonishingly they feel that their employers support them with that while women report more impediments.

Childcare costs are among the highest in Europe, a reason for the less well-off to rely on informal care, preferably on grandparents. Private day nurseries cater for children from birth and there are registered child minders, normally women with their own children (as they are in Germany, the Netherlands and Italy as well). These forms of childcare are only affordable for very well-to-do parents, or those on low incomes who receive state subsidies. Recently the government has put considerable effort into providing affordable childcare facilities and has published a new strategy that places a statutory responsibility on local authorities to ensure that there is suitable childcare provision within their area. In addition there are government grants for schools to provide care facilities for children of working parents covering the hours of 8am to 6pm (extended schools - see also NL).

Young families who are on low incomes are entitled to a range of welfare benefits and tax credits, including assistance with childcare and housing costs. Also the government has launched a New Deal for Lone Mothers aimed at assisting lone mothers into employment, providing universal access to a nursery education for all four year olds. Middle class parents are more prepared to help their offspring financially with costs in purchasing a house. Young parents with more than average cultural capital use that capital to build up networks with other young parents to share child responsibilities.

Research on young parenthood in the UK is given predominantly to teenage mothers, often with a policy dimension to find out strategies for reducing that rate. Less is known about "normal", respectively unspectacular young parenthood, and generally there is a big lack of knowledge on

young fathers. Also, there is a lack of insight into ethnic minorities or groups with a migration background.

Germany[14]

Like other former communist states with a plan economy, East Germany was, and to a certain degree still is a transition country while West Germany belongs to the oldest EU member states and has developed a market economy over the past six decades. A welfare gradient between both parts of Germany still exists and the "going west" trend shows that there are more opportunities for East Germans in West Germany than in their living regions; approximately 1,4 million people left East Germany since the fall of the wall, leaving whole regions deserted and cities declining.

Youth research pictures the young Germans as a *pragmatic generation under pressure* (15th Shell Youth Report) which is demonstrated by a high level of youth unemployment (officially kept low, see BiBB 2007) and which impedes on the life plans and occupational wishes and careers of young people. Unresponsive labour markets are a chief reason for delayed parenthood. This concern shows also in trend figures: in 1990 almost 60% of women aged 25 – 29 years were mothers against 29% presently. At the same time, women are of the opinion that the best age to have children would be between 20 and 25 (as was the case in former East Germany); now they are afraid of drawbacks on the labour market if they establish a family too early. Career motives are not the only reason to postpone having children though. Highly individualized partnerships make agreement about when, and under which conditions to establish a family, a complicated process which takes time and might even result in refraining from having children in order to reconcile diverting life plans. If Germany is known as a *child-unfriendly country,* this refers to the many institutional barriers which make parenthood difficult, and to a climate which is felt by young parents (e.g. children appearing as "disturbance" in the public).[15]

There is also a cultural difference between East and West Germany concerning marriage: almost double as many West than East German women are married one year after the birth of the first child; unmarried and/or single mothers were much more common in the former GDR and still are today in the Eastern part of Germany; the number of single mothers has even risen since the fall of the wall and the general welfare level of East German families is considerably lower than in West Germany. Single mother families especially have lower income levels and are prone to the risk of poverty.

The culture of starting a family is notably determined by the problem of balancing work and life. This has been shown by biographical studies, especially gender studies. Usually it is for reason of the male partner's career and/or income situation that decisions are made in the traditional way. Experts speak about a "crisis of the second child" because young people fear that that would endanger their career. Family studies show that problems regarding time management especially occur in families with a double income, single parent families and families with one or both parents unemployed. While the former constellations explain time shortage for family duties, the

[14] National report written by Simone Menz.

[15] According to the OECD, in 2005, 36% of women aged 41-44 had no children. Childlessness (for all levels of educational attainment) is usually much lower at around 20% or less in most OECD countries (OECD Babies and Bosses – Policies towards reconciling work and family life (www.oecd/els/social/family).

latter point to too much time which can also create problems. Unemployment can push women into having a child (earlier) in order to fill their empty lives with meaning.

Gender roles and preferred work-family models mirror still existing differences between "the two Germany's": Eastern German women are more career minded and do not opt as gladly to the model of the female working part-time or being a housewife and the male being the main bread winner during the years of early childhood of their offspring but prefer the double-breadwinner model. But despite different ideas about the combination of work and children, *all* young Germans, East and West, put high value on the family, with East German women wanting even more to start a family than their Western contemporaries. All the more contrary to that wish is the real situation of many women and men who postpone parenthood because of precarious careers or unemployment. Figures show a clear correlation between employment and the realization of parenthood. Studies show that employers on the whole are not responsive to the wishes of young parents.

Contrary to common prejudice, young mothers with a migration background (mainly Turks; mainly in West Germany) do not divert much in procreative behaviour from German women; especially if belonging to the German society since generations, they do not have more children than German women. They occupy typically precarious and low paid but also higher qualified jobs, their risk of becoming unemployed is not considerably bigger, and if they work, they work more often full-time.

"Rainbow families" due to pluralisation are on the rise since the 1970- liberation and women movement, more so in West than East Germany. But same-sex (female) partnerships which include children are still highly controversial and it is still the ideological and cultural norm that a family consists of biological parents with their children.

A new family policy intends to enlarge parental leave and stimulate also fathers with financial incentives to make use of it. There is legal entitlement for all children age 3 to 6 to receive a (part-time) place in a Kindergarten; about half of all children under 8 years make use of it before going to school (at the age of 6 while many children enter first class even later). The bottleneck is here, as in most of our research countries, the age group 0-3. Big regional differences exist and in East Germany there are more facilities than in West Germany, but overall there is a severe shortage of crèches. According to the recent national statistics, only 8,1 % of West German families use a crèche, mostly single parents (mothers) and highly qualified mothers, whereas in the East, the figure is almost five times higher (37,4%) (destatis 2008: 8). These figures of course reflect above all the availability of places; they explain the preference for the housewife-male bread winner model to which most families adhere. "Preference" however, does not always mean according to one's own will. No exact figures are reported as to how many families would use a crèche place if it was available.

On the whole there are enough studies on the reasons and demographic implications of deferred parenthood and much attention is given to the East-West cleavage. Most pressing problems concern uncertain working careers of young people and expectant parents in combination with a lack of enough and adequate child care facilities which keep a fairly traditional gender and family ideology in place, especially in West Germany. But the report also indicates forceful counter tendencies in society to modernize parenthood and try to change demographic trends. There are

valuable qualitative studies which throw light on the interpersonal aspects of parenthood and gender roles. Less is known about ethnic minorities and young parenthood.

The Netherlands[16]

Of the six research countries, the Netherlands is the most individualised, and the one with the highest pluralisation of life-courses and welfare for broad layers of the population. Nevertheless, there exists a strong traditional motherhood ideology on one hand and a strong new fatherhood ideology on the other. The contradiction is explained by pointing to the "roaring seventies" of the last century which set free *emancipation processes* of women (later also men), secularization and more self-determination of (young) people to establish their life-course according to own choices. This *cultural and sexual revolution* was eventually smoothly absorbed and integrated in the social fabric which kept traditional threads of family life. This continuity despite all changes also shows in warm and tight intra-family relations.

The Netherlands belongs to the employment-centered transition regime but still provides a social security net for (young) people at risk although it is less closely knit than in former decades. Social climate hardens and tensions between ethnic minority groups (mainly Moroccans, Turks, Suriname and Antilleans) mount. The life chances of young Dutch are in general better than those of their contemporaries from ethnic minorities, mainly because of a higher educational level. The labour market is tight and unemployment rates are generally low, but not for the (very) low educated, among them disproportional many members from ethnic minorities. The government conducts a vigorous activation policy for young unemployed and also not working single parents, making state benefits dependent on re-entering education or finding work.

Almost all young people begin their working career with flexi jobs and without working contracts or with contracts of less than a year, and more than half of the working population works irregular times. The share of women who continue their career after motherhood has increased; only 10% of women quit their job after having their first baby. Most of them work part-time and therefore the dominant model is the one-and-a-half model with the father working full-time. Yet the Netherlands are also the country with the highest part-time percentage not only for women (74,9%) but also for men (23,7%) (figures from EU – LFS Spring 2007).

Most young people live in cohabitation before marrying and establishing a family and figures rise of young parents who do not marry at all. Late first birth rates are among the highest in Europe which partly explains overall declining birth rates. But the family is a high value in the lives of young people and most (expectant) parents wish to have two children. At the same time the rate of voluntary and involuntary childless women – mostly highly educated ones – grows.

Although most Dutch children still grow up in families with their own biological parents, a wide range of alternative family forms is present *and* accepted: same sex partnerships with and without children just as well as reconstituted families with children from different partners and former

[16] National report written by Manuela du Bois-Reymond and Mariska Kret.

marriages.[17] The number of single parents is small but expanding, especially among ethnic minorities.

Childcare facilities are available for every child of 3-4 years after which age school begins. The big bottleneck is the age group of 0-3 years. More than half of all households use some form of care for their baby children, private and/or public, formal and/or informal. Higher educated mothers (and fathers) prefer public facilities if quality standards are guaranteed; lower educated mothers fall back on kin and other informal care givers. Childcare is expensive and income-dependent. There is a strong conviction among parents and the public at large that baby children should not be put in extra familial care more than two or three days a week. A couple of years ago all-day schools ("brede school") were expanded for all pupils from the age of 4/5 years onwards to allow mothers to work and to provide stimulating non-formal education for the children, with special attention to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

"New fathers" are found more among the highly educated who can and wish to afford caring for their children at least one day a week. Chronic time shortage is a hallmark of young modern parenthood, especially among the ambitious couples who do not want to or cannot adjust their working schedule and who want to make full use of all the opportunities society offers. Many young couples with children are stressed; nevertheless most couples want two children, and two-child families outnumber one-child families. The government promotes vigorously that more childcare facilities are established, to be paid by the state, the employer and the employee. Employers cannot afford to be too rigid with young mothers and fathers because of the scarcity of labour, but much remains to be desired as to flexible working schedules according to the needs of parents.

Modern young parents are often worried and uncertain about the upbringing and education of their children, especially when they are small and when they become adolescents. That uncertainty mirrors the fundamental changes which have taken place within families: from self-evident and intergenerational transmitted values and practices to a more reflexive and open attitude with room for ambivalence. It also explains the ever growing market of psychological professional help, advice literature and information on TV about all kinds of parental and child problems.

A qualitative study developed a typology of young mothers and fathers reflecting cultural changes (see also UK country portrait):

- the full-time "tea mother";
- the traditional co-wage earner;
- the social contact employee who keeps on working as mother because she does not want to lose contacts with her colleagues.
- These women represent modernized traditions of motherhood. The following two types represent individualized motherhood:

[17] In 2006, there were 4600 same-sex families listed; the number of adoption families is on the rise (Equality nr. 3, dec. 2007, Jg. 9, p. 8). Also there are numerous organizations to represent the rights and interests of homosexuals, specifying even homo and lesbian farmers.

- stress- and career mothers
- neo-traditional mothers (consciously going back to being and perhaps remaining housewife mother, renouncing the 1970s ideology).

Among fathers the authors distinguish the main wage earner with more or less traditional opinions on gender relations, and "the new father". Percentages are given, but the sample was too small for generalization (see national report, p. 18).

There is abundant statistical material available documenting the structural and cultural changes which the Dutch society underwent during the last decades, remarkably also with respect to data on ethnic minorities. Despite many small-scale qualitative studies, there is lack of knowledge about specific young-parental coping strategies, with even less for ethnic minority parents and poor young families (but see the recent publication of the Dutch Social-cultural Advisory Board 2008).

Italy[18]

Social analyses about Italy cannot but deal with two realities: Southern Italy and Northern Italy – regarding socio-economic situation, social infrastructure for families, family sizes, gender normalities. The other pronounced feature figuring in research on young people and families is the "*long family*" which must and will make up for lacking state support and which is a reaction to the sub-protective transition regime of this country. Young people co-habit longer with their parents than in any other of our research countries, and they remain dependent on their support even when they have left the home. Intergenerational relations are close and traditional ways of life and family formation are maintained, such as parenthood within marriage. Cohabitation is rather a preparation for marriage than an autonomous stage in the youthful life-course; it is important to stress that cohabitations are rapidly increasing in recent years. At the same time Italy has one of the very lowest birth rates of Europe so that one can say that "old " structures survive within a new framework, where individualization processes are developing.

In comparison with other European countries, Italy is atypical in many respects: on the one hand are the typical dynamics underlying the changes in family formation (a long and fragmented transition to adulthood; low fertility rates); on the other hand these structures are embedded within a cultural context that still has to come to terms with tradition (childbearing within marriage or stable cohabitation unions; asymmetry in gender responsibilities). This produces conditions where the behaviour of young Italians reflects European modernity, while traditional family models are still widespread.

Social and cultural changes create friction between rigid gender roles and new ambitions of young women in the field of education and career building. The tension between traditional gender expectations and new female life-courses are reflected in the extremely high number of childless women and one-child families in North Italy and a corresponding very low availability of childcare facilities for young children. In South Italy, tradition prevails, especially if when comes to women's family obligations and a macho-attitude of men. Despite rigid gender roles, a great majority of Italians hold the opinion that the roles of men and women within the family

[18] National report written by Carmen Leccardi and Sveva Magaraggia.

should be interchangeable, in reality though gainfully employed women just as much as housewives do the main jobs in the house and with the children. Never-the-less, also in gender-conservative Italy, young "new" fatherhood begins to develop.

The labour market is extremely unfavourable to young workers, unemployment rates are high and job offers are of precarious, irregular and intermittent employment with atypical or fixed-term contracts. The general expectation that a family must only be established when the male has a steady job and housing is provided (which creates many difficulties) together with the absence of a supportive family policy delays family formation even further.

Until recently Italy was not an immigration country, like Germany, UK or the Netherlands. That has changed since the Balkan Wars and further opening of borders in the EU. For example, since the year 2000, about 40,000 Romania Roma have crossed the border in search of work and fleeing discrimination in their own country.

Although especially highly educated women have none or only one child, they too would wish for two children; here the discrepancy between the actual fertility rate and frustrated wishes for more children is especially noticeable. Women's unemployment rates are higher than with men and there exists a considerable "employment gender gap" with women having poorer employment opportunities and facing discrimination in the job market. Depending on the type of employment contract, maternity can sometimes lead to non-renewal of a work contract or to non conversion of a fixed-term contract into a permanent one. Indeed, the leave periods are becoming actually shorter, while the desire of young mothers to spend the longest possible period with their children after birth becomes stronger. It seems that in no other European country so many mothers with a university degree work (76%).

While in almost all European countries a decline in birth rates was accompanied by a sharp rise in women's participation in the labour market, this was not so in Italy where labour force participation, in particular for mothers with young children, have been modest.

Teenage mothers and one-parent family units are relatively stable and do not account for many families. The at-risk-of-poverty rate is high (23 % before and 19 % after transfers in 2005) and this national average covers the imbalance between a much more wealthy North and a much poorer South of the country.

In view of lacking public childcare facilities for age 0-3, a great majority of young mothers stop working; with only 6 per cent of children younger than 3 attending public childcare facilities. The expense of childcare takes about 30-50 per cent of the earnings of the employed mother with children less than 3 years). Most working mothers have to fall back on their parents, families and other informal care facilities. Grandparents play a major role in caring for their grandchildren. Childcare services for 3-5/6 year olds are generally of high quality and are attended by almost every child in that age. Company crèches are promoted, especially in big companies and in big cities (similar to the Netherlands).

As in other countries, the family policy of the (last centre left) government promoted a more active policy focused especially on a better work-life balance for women by removing obstacles that hinder a full women's participation in the labour market, assuring a growth of childcare

facilities, fulfilling the request of at least 33 per cent of the children from 0 to 3 years old. Subsidy to poor and especially to big families and tax deduction for dependent children are part of family policy. Family allowance is granted on the basis of family income, but is addressed only to those who have a regular income. In 2000, parental leave was enlarged (up to child's first 8 years) and allows for greater flexibility and longer leave periods, also for fathers. There are also subsidiary measures for small firms to compensate for parental leave.

There is a lack of more wide-ranging research on young parenthood and especially on migrant parents. There are no studies that deal with the horizons of meaning and the everyday difficulties faced by young parents and there is only spurious evidence about the negotiation processes which take place between young couples about family formation. While gender roles are broadly discussed, not much research is concerned with new fatherhood and the implications of changing gender roles for the family and society at large. And as in most other countries, there is a lack of research on topics concerned with learning how to be parents.

Bulgaria[19]

Young people's transition to parenthood in Bulgaria is influenced by several major trends: the *social transition from an authoritarian society with a state owned economy to a democratic and market oriented society*; the 'second demographic transition' toward a lower fertility, and the cultural shift from paternalistic (and pre-modern) to liberal (modern and post-modern) intergenerational relationships within the family. These changes have created both new opportunities and new risks for Bulgarian youths who are caught between the structures and cultures of "old" and "new" Bulgaria; they have to struggle hard to manage their lives under these conditions.

Bulgaria's post communist transition regime has complicated the life of young adults and family formation through a variety of factors, but the main problem is an unfriendly (youth) labour market in combination with a general low welfare level. Poverty rates are between 6% (Bulgarians) and 62% per cent (Roma). Among the employed, young people are overrepresented in the low-paid and low-qualified jobs and elementary occupations, which are concentrated in the precarious sectors of the economy, very often without contracts. The unemployment rate among young people aged 15-24 was over 20% in 2005, double the rate of all work force, and is often of a long term character. Activity rates among women are 10% lower than among men.

Ethnic minority young people from Roma and Turkish backgrounds are the most disadvantaged on the labour market and have the lowest chances to be integrated in society. While the educational system is generally not rigidly selective, the illiteracy rate is high among these groups, especially the Roma (13%). Half of Roma youth of compulsory schooling age have never been to school or dropped out in the first four years of schooling.

Pluralisation of family forms is mainly a result of the decline of the significance of marriage which is not perceived any longer as a necessary precondition to parenthood. Cohabitation is a preferred option for many young people. Young couples do not refute marriage but tend to postpone it; men marry now when they are 29, women 3 to 4 years earlier, both much later than a

[19] National report written by Siyka Kovacheva and Alexander Petkov.

couple of years ago. And despite a modernized youth life, marriage is still the traditional social norm for forming a family in Bulgaria. Same-sex marriages are illegal.

While there is unease among young people about becoming parents because of economic barriers, they would like to have (more) children; the two-child model is still the reproductive ideal for most young people and a negligible percentage does not want children. Young people with low *and* a university education prefer big families (three or more children) – but highly educated young people also opt more often than others for no children.

The fertility rate was at its lowest in 1997 and has been reversed in the beginning of the 21st century, but still the country has a negative natural population growth. While women on average gave birth to 1.8 children in 1990 (right after the transformation of the system), this was 1.3 in 2005 (as low as in Italy). The decrease of the birth rate is mainly a result of avoiding the birth of a second or subsequent child; in comparison with former Bulgaria, is a transition to the one-child family. Low educated women give birth to children earlier – as everywhere. High educated women may even refrain from having children because otherwise they endanger their career (like in Italy).

An additional reason, which is specific to Bulgaria, is an exceedingly high *emigration rate* of young people “going West” (similar trend among Eastern Germans moving to Western Germany).

Half of the young people aged 20 to 29 do not have children while only 10% of those aged 30 to 40 and fewer still of older cohorts are childless. Unique for Bulgaria is the reason given by women for remaining childless: *poor health facilities*. It is regarded reaseyxpe(ris ats:)Tf-0.0001 Tc 02 243

This is especially disadvantageous for (single) mothers because such employment does not make them eligible to receive maternity and parental leave.

Bulgaria still has the most full-grown parental leave and childcare system of all European countries: two years of paid maternal leave; an additional unpaid third year and a well-developed and cheap set of public crèches. Since 2000 a shortage of places is starting to be felt throughout the country and young parents have to fall back on grandparents and other kin. They are anxious about their work place and career and try to shorten maternity and parental leave as much as possible. Companies punish mothers coming from a long leave by demoting them to lower positions. Until recently women's salaries have been 20-25% lower than men's, but the gender pay gap in the meantime has reduced to 14 % (see table in appendix).

According to a gulf of recently published literature about parenting, the need and interest of young Bulgarian (expectant) parents in getting advice is high; NGO's are active in the field.

Although there is much valuable research, emphasis is laid more on economic and not so much on (youth-) cultural factors in explaining the reproductive behaviour of young people/parents. And although much attention is given to emigration, the focus in this respect is not on the implications for family forming and young parenthood but rather on economic consequences. Motives for wanting no children, or on the contrary many, require more research attention. There is also a lack of inquiries into the parental style for caring and educating very young children and into changes of life style once young people have become parents (especially young fathers). Finally there is a lack of studies about alternative living forms such as homosexual couples and couples living apart due to emigration.

Slovenia[21]

Slovenia seems in many respects incomparable with Bulgaria, another South-east post-communist country. It is unique in that *Western-style modernization trends* developed already in the 1970s and '80s when the country was approaching the Scandinavian level of ensuring social prosperity. That is also one of the reasons why adaptation to new conditions after the revolution occurred more smoothly – although certainly not without stress and frictions. The country managed to arrive at a relatively successful and stable economic and social situation and escaped the turbulences of the Balkan region. Slovenia has still quite a homogeneous population. Xenophobia in this country was always present to a certain extent and may now shift to new groups of immigrants.

The transition to neo-liberal market conditions put young people in front of new challenges: deregulation of the welfare state and the labour market lead to insecure employment, part-time or short-term employment, and to unemployment. Educational levels rise sharply to enhance career chances, but graduates take a share in unemployment as well. The labour market is segmented regarding age and gender: the youth unemployment rate is high, and the rate of unemployment of young women is 18% against 14,5% of young men although they are the better educated.

[21] National report written by Mirjana Ule and Metka Kuhar.

Slovenia is also an exception in terms of its reproductive patterns. Demographic changes following Western countries developed already in the 1980s and the fertility rate now belongs to the very lowest of Europe (1.26) while the average age of women at the birth of their first child is rising steadily (29.4) as is the proportion of childless women (almost 20% expected for the 1970-cohort). At the same time Slovenia has a strong family tradition and puts high values on the family as the most desirable and natural form of life and with an (unrealized) ideal of 2-3 children. It is a family-oriented society and despite many modern traits ideoloa.088mo thrh(oo, ()Tj0.0001 Tc

childre aregboernoute ofwedlock.d

wom

styouingom

srantgye

Slovenia, like Bulgaria has a well organized and affordable system of public day care centers, for crèche as well as pre-school ages which is used extensively by young parents, together with private facilities and the help of the grandparents and other kin; only 18% of parents take care of their 1-3 year old child. The main problems are rigid and not long enough opening hours which do not ally with the working schedules of the parents. There are special centers for psycho-social programs and other supportive institutions (among them NGO's) and networks (among them father networks) to assist (young) families; there are also many websites dealing with the matter.

As indicated, Slovenia has a child- and family friendly policy, resorting under a family ministry. With a one-year long maternity and parental leave it has one of the most favorable regulations in Europe. Yet there is, as in so many countries, a segmentation of concrete policy measures and there is no active policy to enforce more family-friendly working conditions. Recently the ministry has set up a developmental partnership of Young Mother/Family-friendly Employment in order to force back hidden discrimination of young women and potential mothers on the labour market.

The report gives the impression of a well documented country concerning our research questions although data on immigrant youth are scarce as are data on informal learning in occupational relations. Qualitative research shows that young Slovenians plan their status of parenthood with care and hesitation because of objective barriers (uncertain labour conditions, unavailable housing) but also because of subjective motives concerning self-realization, wanting a comfortable life and finding a (new) gender balance.

4. Policies for young parents

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will deepen the contextual knowledge with regard to policies for young parenthood. We will first have a look at EU policies (5.2) and then go on with presenting family politics in our respective research countries. We do that by also giving examples of promising measures, actions and projects which are not yet official policies, but which might guide such policies (5.3). Despite each country having its own political tradition and rationale, we will attempt to draw some general conclusions in the last paragraph 5.4.

4.2 EU politics

Since the female life-course no longer is purely home-centred and childcare based, that is to say roughly since 30 years in most western countries, a new family policy became necessary, taking the *feminization of the labour market* into consideration. In past communist states family policy was part of the planned economy which implied full-time female work and therefore all-day childcare. From the 1980s the EU began to concern itself with family and *work-life balance policy* and does this increasingly so since the majority of job growth in the EU is on account of women's labour market participation (Hemerijck 2002: 198). "The EU policy is mainly located within the gender-equality discourse. Policy initiatives were first developed within the framework of the EU's successive Equal Opportunities Programmes, but in more recent years also within the

framework of the European Employment Strategy and Social Inclusion guidelines." (Escobedo 2004: 19)[22]

The 1992 Council Recommendation on Childcare identified the need for four types of measures:

- childcare services;
- leave arrangements for employed parents;
- making the environment, structure and organization of the workplace responsive to the needs of workers with children;
- promoting increased participation by men in the care and upbringing of children.

In 2002, the Barcelona targets on childcare have been set up, which foresee that "Member States should remove disincentives to female labour force participation and strive, taking into account the demand for childcare facilities and in line with national patterns of provision, to provide childcare by 2010 to: at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age; and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age" (infobase Europe, 2002).

Esping-Andersen et al. (2002) have formulated a child-centered social investment strategy for the EC along these lines. He and others (Kay 2003) demand a comprehensive family policy from a life-course perspective integrating cross-sectional measures that would lead to a viable work-life balance which is much broader perceived than only in terms of work and family. Attention has to be paid to *gender-mainstreaming* and active participation of young parents in *all* life spheres.

In their insightful comparative study on 9 European countries[23] about "Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe" (Lister et al. 2007), the authors, otherwise critical of Esping-Andersens's typology, agree on the point of change in policy approaches, taking into account not only gender but the pluralisation of class, family forms, ethnicity, citizenship and care-related social rights as well.

Gauthier (1996) in her comparative analysis of family policies discerns five models of family policy which are close to Esping-Andersen's typology:

- The *pro-natalistic model* which defines family policy as populations policy with the aim of increasing fertility rates; measures are therefore transfer payments for families with many children as well as public day care provision in order to promote women's labour (France);
- The *pro-traditional model* which supports the single earner male breadwinner family with financial incentives (Germany; Austria);

[22] See also EC 2004, 2005 and European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2004) – all official documents which are concerned about closing the gap between wanted and realized number of children and working at a child-friendlier policy which must create a triangle between social, economic and labour market policy (EC 2005).

[23] DK, FI, F, DE, NL. NO, ES, SE, UK.

- The *pro-egalitarian model* with a well-established system of public childcare facilities to guarantee women and men alike a working career and support families financially for the care of their small children (Sweden; Denmark);
- The *non-intervention model* which assumes the family is a private affair and refrains from state intervention concerning public childcare; financial support is only given to poor families (Great Britain; Ireland);
- The *hybrid model*: family policy is only present in rudimentary form; there is a traditional attitude towards the family and support is regarded to be given through private networks (Italy; Spain).

None of our six countries would fit in the first model. Germany still fits in the pro-traditional model but tries hard to get out of it. The Netherlands are clearly a candidate of the pro-egalitarian model but it has less public childcare than Sweden and Denmark, although it now promotes an active policy in this direction. The UK still fits to some extent in the non-intervention model, but in recent years this is beginning to change with the promotion of more family friendly policy; while Italy remains in the hybrid model together with Slovenia and Bulgaria.

In tandem with the rise in female labour supply went a policy of *de-familialization* of caring responsibilities (Hemerijck 2002: 198), albeit of a different pace and form in the various European countries; those belonging to the Scandinavian welfare states were the earliest in that trend and have the best public childcare facilities, followed by liberal and employment centered regimes and ending with Southern sub-protective regimes. Post-communist countries begin to lose their full-care services but are still better equipped than most other countries where "children are perceived as a parental rather than a societal, economic responsibility" (Jenson 2007: 17). Jane Jenson points to an economic *privatisation of childhood*. In modern individualized societies, she states, it is no longer only the father who has to care for the family income but the mother as well, and the nation states promote this development by reducing welfare support to young families, leaving the double burden of working to the individual parents (mothers).

The EU tries to counteract purely economic interests, as do meanwhile the member states with different policy measures. European welfare states have "triggered a *change in governance* in the promotion of welfare and employment" and are looking for "new institutional connections between social security and employment policy and between the public and private sector." (Hemerijck 2002: 197). There is indeed growing attention for measures to improve parental leave for *both* parents – which means in most cases more leave for males, an increment of public childcare for the under three year olds and public pre-school education in order to prepare children for primary school. But even if these measures would be introduced with equal consequence in all member states, the life-courses and work-life balances of young parents still would differ widely because of different labour market situations. As Kay says: "The most fundamental division (between countries) is the broad distinction between the work-life balance issues confronting families that are work-rich and those that are work-poor." (2003: 231). That is another way of saying that active and influential family policies cannot be enforced without paying attention to labour market policies and stimulating the cooperation of enterprises in these matters.

Recently the European Commission has launched the *European Alliance for Families*[24]. It will act as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience. The Commission will support this initiative by promoting research on family-related issues and invite the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions* to set up an observatory of best family policy practices, which could inspire local and regional initiatives for creating better conditions for families.

There are essentially *four strategies* the state has at its disposal to influence the situation of young (expectant) parents; one concerns young people in transition before (or not) becoming parents, the others concern actualized young parenthood. The EGRIS research network has proposed *integrated transition policies* in previous work (Walther et al. 2002; 2006; López Blasco et al. 2003; du Bois-Reymond & Chisholm 2006). In that work we concentrated on the transition from education to labour market for various groups of young people, and showed how institutional arrangements can frustrate their biographical needs. Together with many other youth and labour market scholars we suggested a cross-sectional policy which is based on the principles of *flexicurity* and *participation*. These policy principles are also relevant for young parents but must now be specified more clearly which brings us to the second strategy: *state payments to young parents.*

Family policies which are based mainly on financial transfer via direct payments and through tax reduction do not essentially affect the traditional gender and work-life balance. West Germany is a classic example of having pursued such policies for the last decades and only recently begins to follow other lines. In Bulgaria in 2007 the well paid (at 90% of the previous salary) maternity leave was prolonged from 135 to 315 days which effectively excludes fathers from early childcare and thus strengthens traditional gender roles. Financial transfers must therefore be combined with *time policies* and *infrastructural provisions* (third and forth strategy).

Insufficient public childcare has proven to be one of the most influential factors which impede a viable work-life balance for both young mothers and fathers. This is all the more severe as young adults today have to cope with different life tasks simultaneously. There is a chronic time shortage; especially among working women ("rush hour of life" – Bittman 2004; see also Brannen et al. 2002; Wallace 2003), which leads them to delay or even renounce to parenthood. Yet Jane Jenson (2006) warns against a too rigid explanation of low birth rates by insufficient childcare by pointing to 2001 European-15 data when Europeans were asked to identify governments' priorities in supporting families. It showed that the fight against unemployment topped the list while problems of reconciling work and family ranked much lower (quoted after Fahey & Spéder 2004). And she concludes: "There is no one magic instrument to increase the birth rate" (p. 161). She stresses the underlying financial insecurity which many Europeans face and which in particular discourages women from deciding in favour of having children. Therefore labour market measures are required to close the income gaps between men and women, especially in part-time work ("avoid the too easy invocation of 'flexible working times' as a mechanism for fostering gender equality." p. 166). This is also the result of Kröhnert & Klingholz (2008) who can show in an overview over Europe, that only a combination of

[24] A newly created high-level group of government experts on demographic issues will serve as focal point for the activities of the European Alliance; it is chaired by the former Austrian Minister for employment, health and social affairs, Elenora Hostasch (see *Social Agenda Sept. 2007*, p. 11). See for further information http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_situation/index_en.htm.

"emancipatory policies", including labour market conditions, taxation of ways of living, and childcare facilities for children 1+, could explain higher or lower fertility rates.

Family policy implies the relationship between three generations; from the young persons' perspective it is their relationship with their own parents who are the grandparents of their prospective children. In the EGRIS project FATE we have researched the mutual support of young people and their parents (Biggart 2005; Stauber & du Bois-Reymond 2006; Biggart & Kovacheva 2006), and how policies of different welfare state regimes influence that relationship positively or negatively. Now, with young parents as a research focus, the question returns: how do parents support their children who are becoming young parents themselves, and what role does the state play? As we have shown in the foregoing, the less state support there is, the more parents have to support their young adults to manage their parental duties – while in countries with generous support for young people this parental support may be delivered more deliberately. Informal childcare is then one of the main forms of help that they can provide in their role as grandparents.

In sum: a viable policy for young adults/parents must develop arrangements which combine financial measures, infrastructural supply of high quality childcare and a life-course policy which takes gender differences into account by allowing young men/fathers and young women/mothers to find their own rhythms in learning, further education, working and parenting (Bertram et al. 2005). Such policy must intentionally connect to transition policies based upon flexicurity and participation, directed towards *all* groups of young people. That is not an easy task. It implies finding a balance between *general policy principles* yet paying attention also to the special needs of *specific groups* such as ethnic minority youth and young parents, teenage mothers (and fathers), poor families etc., and *specific constellations* that exist in big cities, rural areas, high mobility jobs and many other conditions.[25]

4.3 Present situation in the 6 research countries; bottle necks and best practices

The Netherlands, Germany and UK are the three of our six countries that have the most diverse young people and young parents from *migration backgrounds*. For these countries the greatest challenge is to work out approaches which better integrate education with improved family support. In Germany as well as the Netherlands, this would first of all challenge the highly segregated educational system which refuses equal options for children from migrant

[25] The project COFACE (2006) qualifies 5 broad areas for policy intervention and reflection: a) gender equality in employment (equal pay; equal employment status; equal conditions of employment), b) family service provision (pre-school and out-of-school childcare including facilities for holidays, outside normal working hours, sickness of the child), c) arrangements for parental and family leave and flexible working hours, d) education and training of professionals dealing with family issues, and e) company and public information campaigns. Finally the report suggests setting up *time management offices* (like in Italy and France) with the job of coordinating private time and public time. The coordination function of this service, the authors suggest, should not be focused mainly on orchestrating private and public time – necessary as that might be – but rather on "the different public times (work, school, the opening hours of childcare facilities, family care and help services and governmental agencies, schedules of public transport, etc.) the alignment of which plays into equality in employment and between parents. These services should have the power to put forward solutions for synchronizing times at the level of e g

backgrounds. As we have argued *integrated neighbourhood policies* is another potent strategy to reach that aim. It is at the same time the most complex and therefore difficult approach to realize because it involves not only the integration of various social, youth, family, health and educational policies but also, and most importantly, a *new housing policy*. Again, the Netherlands are experimenting with such local-based policy in run-down neighbourhoods with disproportionally high numbers of inhabitants with a migrant or otherwise non-Dutch background, but the obstacles are very difficult to overcome.

As to the transition countries of Slovenia and Bulgaria as well as parts of Germany and Italy, the results highlight that the retreat of the state from its obligation to provide basic security for their young generations is counter-productive in the long run under the conditions of (aggressive) free market economies. In those countries diversity in education and employment opportunities and cultural models of parenthood are also issues, both due to recent immigration and to traditional ethnic and religious minorities. Sharp regional inequalities here also require integrated neighborhood policies in support of young parents.

Slovenia

Despite many family-friendly measures, there is no public discourse about translating the experience of young people into a viable work-life perspective. Young people/parents, women in particular, may face discriminatory practices in the labour market and with employers. Recently, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs has set up a program "Development partnership young-mother/family-friendly employment" to combat the hidden discrimination of young women (potential mothers) in the labour market and informing young parents about their employment rights.

There are numerous NGO's involved in the policies and practices of care for families, among them those who care for single parents, families with violence and/or poverty problems and families of ethnic minorities (Roma). All maternity hospitals offer educational programs in a form of "school for parents" giving birth education and education for early parenthood. Many NGOs also offer educational programs regarding pregnancy, birth, child care, upbringing and education etc. Several programs on education and upbringing are also offered via public kindergartens and primary schools.

The main features and measures of public family policy are:

- Family policy is housed in the Ministry of Labour, Family & Social Affairs with cross-sectional ties to other departments;
- Maternity leave is 105 days. These 3 months must be taken exclusively by the mother After that time, one of the parents has the right to 260 days leave with full salary in the 12 months prior to the leave (the entire parental leave is therefore 365 days, either as 260 days of full leave or 520 half-days, combined with working part-time). The parent that is caring for the child up to their 3rd birthday, has the right to work shorter hours;
- A broad range of family payments, among them generous funding for pre-school care in public kindergarten;
- Public childcare 0-3 years is well organized;

- Costs of childcare is dependent on parental income;
- Child allowance is dependent on family income;
- Private childcare (grandparents) is a frequent option.

Slovenia has several *good practices* regarding parenthood and parenting; four of them are worth presenting in particular. The most well-known is the system of maternal, paternal and parental leave that dates back to the 1970s. This also goes with the second good practice, the well-developed system of public childcare that was developed during socialism when the state promoted the full employment of women. Both these measures have a long history and are an integral part of family policy in Slovenia. The third practice (certificates for family-friendly companies) and the forth (paid domestic work) are described more extensively; they testify to the intention of the government to introduce good practices in the field of parenting and the reconciliation of family and employment.

Parental leave

The system of parental leave has a long history starting in the 1970s and gradually developing into one of the most favorable systems in Europe. Besides the fact that the parental leave provides for 365 days of full absence from work with full compensation of salary, the most recently introduced form of parental leave that seems to have a good impact on fathering, the equal division of labour and reconciliation of family and work is the so-called paternal leave. It was introduced by the Parental Care and Family Relations Act. It began to be gradually implemented in 2003 to become fully effective on 1 January 2005. Since 2005, fathers have been entitled to 90 days of paternal leave. The first 15 days have to be used before the child is 6 months old; the other 75 days is in the form of full leave from work and can be used until the child is three years old. There is full compensation of salary for the first 15 days while compensation for the remainder is in the form of payment of social security contribution for the minimum wage. The share of fathers that take paternal leave is increasing (presently approximately 70%).

Public day care

Pre-school education and childcare are provided through public kindergartens and private concessionaires. The first public kindergartens were introduced in 1946, but the system significantly developed in the 1960s. Since 1993 preschool education has been part of the education system and belongs under the Ministry of Education. The system was further developed after the fall of communism and still represents the main form of daily child care in Slovenia as there are only a few private kindergartens (1,5% of all kindergartens).

Public day care is organized in various forms of daily, semi-daily and short programs. Daily programs last from 6 to 9 hours. A child can be enrolled in the public daycare from the age of 12 months and above. All public kindergartens are based around a curriculum that introduces various methods of education for pre-school children. Besides the daily care, the main emphasis is put on education.

Preschool education and care is financed by public and private funds; parents' payments depend on their level of income (per family member compared to the Slovenian average wage per employed person) and family assets. The share of children under 3 years included in public kindergartens in Slovenia was 25.6% and the share of children from 3-5 years 77.8% in the school year 2005/06. Compared with 2000/2001, the share of children aged three to five years

attending kindergartens increased by 10.9%, while the share of children less than three years old grew by 6.3%. Slovenia is thus progressively approaching the objectives set by the 2002 European Council in Barcelona: in EU countries 90% of children from three years of age until their enrolment in primary school and at least 33% of children younger than three years should be attending kindergartens by 2010. Access to kindergartens and other forms of pre-school childcare is also important in light of the reconciliation of family and working life and has a considerable impact on the scope and ways of involving women in the labor market and, consequently, on the level of household income (http://www.umar.gov.si/aprojekt/socov/sr2006eng.pdf).

Young mothers/family friendly employment

This program has recently introduced a family-friendly certificate that encourages employers to form family-friendly working 'policies' that enable parents to balance work and family life. It was developed within the Equal project "Young mothers/family-friendly employment" that was carried out in the period 2005-2007. The certificate was prepared by the transfer of new methodology and the adaptation to the Slovene situation.

Goals:

- Better knowledge of the problems of young parents in Slovenia which arise from the need to adjust to professional and family duties and a lack of understanding within the working environment;
- Better information on the practices of Slovene companies in relation to an adjustment of professional and family duties;
- Implementation of "The Family-Friendly Company" certificate;
- To better inform and make aware the employers and public in general as well as individuals who are discriminated against in the labour market due to parenthood.

Target groups:

- Persons who are discriminated against in the labour market due to parenthood (especially mothers of young children and young women in general);
- Employers, they can influence the improvement of opportunities for an easier adjustment of professional and family duties of their employees;
- Young people who are finishing their education, shortly they will encounter problems of adjusting to both professional and family duties;
- The wider public, informed people and positive public opinion can improve the condition of parents (especially those with small children) within the labour market.

Products

- "The Family-Friendly Company" certificate (the transfer of new methodology, the adaptation to the Slovene situation and the physical form of a certificate);
- Television advertisements which raise awareness of employers about their social responsibility towards employed parents;

- A publication "Work and Family – with partnership to family friendly working environment (eds. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela, Nevenka Černigoj Sadar, 2007, Ljubljana: Faculty of Social Sciences) about adjustment of professional and family duties in Slovenia, economic aspects of family-friendly policies in companies and organisations, the social responsibility of companies to their employees;
- Information leaflet for employees ("The Family-Friendly Company - Family and Professional Life Hand in Hand") and employers;
- CD with material on equal opportunities for men and women with the emphasis on the adjustment of professional and family duties (as an accessory to employers).

The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs gave an informal guarantee that it would seek the continuation of awarding "The Family-Friendly Company" certificate (probably in the scope of the Structural Funds of the European Social Fund, the operative programme for the development of human resources). The development partnership estimates that the continuity, the quality of performance and evaluation of the procedure of certification will have an important contribution to the realization of necessary changes in the field of the balance of professional and family duties. Sixty other companies/organizations have expressed an interest in acquiring "The Family-Friendly Company" certificate.

The system of domestic help (SIPA)
The goal of the (research) project was to prepare recommendations for the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs on how to make a system of paid domestic work in households with small children. This is to be regulated and affordable to a wider circle of people who require these services and will provide quality new workplaces for persons who encounter difficulties in finding employment, among them also women who have a long history of unemployment.

Two target groups were researched: 1) households with small children and households which are burdened with unpaid domestic work and who often pay for domestic services on the black market; 2) women who have been unemployed in the long-term. It is for these women that informal, paid domestic service represents a possibility to obtain the necessary resources needed for survival. If regulated and subsidized, these services could create new employment and regulated work conditions. At the same time the services could become more accessible to those who need them. Re-employed women who are interested, could perform domestic services through social companies.

Because there is no research in Slovenia in the field of informal paid domestic service, the theoretical part of the project included the analysis of studies, research and examples of regulation of paid domestic service, which have been done in this field internationally, especially in Europe. The empirical part of the research comprised the application of two questionnaires for two target groups (households with small children and women dealing with long-term unemployment, in the area of Ljubljana). On the basis of these two target groups a need for paid domestic service has been identified, and also interest for employment within this field. A pilot experiment of regular paid employment in domestic service in 30 households with sment in domest

This pilot experiment SIPA can contribute to the discussions on how to organize the field of paid domestic service in Slovenia with the following findings:

- The creation of new employment through subsidized work;
- The income of domestic workers should be stimulating; otherwise they will not be competitive against the earnings on the illicit market. At the same time, earnings should be limited reasonably in order for the service to be accessible to the wider circle of users;
- The quality of the work place is the most important element in creating new jobs in the service sector.
- The training of (formally) unemployed women should include the elements of motivation and pay attention to the psycho-social integration of the participants. The training should also include basic knowledge about the education of children (standards in Slovenia are very high in this respect);
- The coordination must be professional, accessible, and adaptable and it should know how to deal with the contemporary communication technology. It should inspire feelings of trust in the domestic workers and in the households involved. It should mediate in conflict situations and connect, organize and be the advocate of domestic workers. It should enable the self-organization of domestic workers in the form of self-employment and cooperatives. It should endeavour to provide a uniform standardization of paid domestic service, to quality working conditions and to the de-feminization of the field.

Bulgaria

Since the 1960s Bulgarian family policy has been driven by the contradiction of pro-natalist concerns and the desire to provide high activity rates of the population needed for the centrally planned economy. At present after twenty years of market reforms demography is still the main policy concern. The most recent documents in this field are the National Demographic Strategy 2006-2020 and the National Action Plan (2007) for the implementation of the Strategy. These have been developed in accordance with the Green Book of the EC: Facing the Demographic Change: New Solidarity between the Generations' (2005).

The four main goals of the policy are:

- slowing down the decrease of the population size;
- overcoming the negative effects of population aging;
- achieving social cohesion for all social groups;
- limiting the disproportions in the territorial distributions of the population.

Despite the rather narrow focus and the priorities given to raising the birth rate, there are some positive moments from the perspective of young parents' agency. Thus while the strategy first lists the measures generally described as birth incentives, it also admits that the demographic policy should go beyond those measures and provide regulations for achieving a higher quality of life and the opportunity for working parents to manage the reconciliation of the roles of employees and care givers. Bulgarian family policy strategy is shaped by the provision of long parental leave and public childcare while offering little flexibility of work to employed parents.

Leaves and payments

In Bulgaria there are three types of leave: maternity, parental leave and leave for caring for a sick child. Parents adopting a child have the same rights as 'natural' parents. There is no paternity leave given to the father around the birth of the child. Since January 2007 the maternity leave was prolonged from 135 to 315 days. This leave is paid at 90% of the salary of the mother over the preceding 6 months). This well paid leave is reserved only for the mother and cannot be transferred to the father and thus it tends to exclude the man in the family from childcare in the early stages of parenthood. In order to be eligible, the mother has to have made insurance payments for at least six months before (during communism the mother needed only 7 days of formal 'work experience'). The parental leave is longer than in most European countries and can be taken up to the second year of the child by both parents and by any of the grandparents. This leave is paid at a very low rate (equal to the minimum salary) and is typically taken by women since men in general receive 20 to 30 per cent higher salaries than women. This poses problems for women's careers when they return to the workplace while saving fathers the effort to take part of the paid leave. Additionally there is an unpaid parental leave of one year, after the paid parental leave. Since 2006 the unpaid leave was made more flexible – instead of taking it from the second to the third year of the child, it can now be taken from the second to the eighth year of the child and in theory this leave is split in two, reserving six months for the mother and six months for the father. Any part of the leave cannot be taken part time or simultaneously by the two parents making the leaves rather inflexible. Mothers studying full time at the university are entitled to a leave for two years paid at the minimum salary. Young women who have no work experience and have not made social security payments receive the minimum salary for one year. Specific for Bulgaria is the generous leave for caring for a sick child – it amounts up to 60 days per year and is paid at 100% of the salary.

Child care

Bulgaria has a well developed set of public crèches (for children aged 1 to 3) and kindergartens (for children aged 3-6) and it is common for parents to use their services. These are usually full-time, five days a week, as the working schedule for most of the parents in the country is also full-time with regular working hours (9 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.). The fee for the public nurseries and kindergartens is very low and affordable to most parents. The fee covering only the food of the child is set by the municipality, while the state pays for the personnel's salaries and the building maintenance. Parents with income below the guaranteed minimal income including students do not have to pay any fees. Mothers in full time education are also allowed to use public day care (crèche or kindergarten) and for them it is free of charge.

The right to a public care is not always guaranteed in practice. Thus in the rural areas many kindergartens were closed with the argument that there was a decline in demand (less children and increasing practice of childcare in the home). In the large cities many crèches and kindergartens were closed and the buildings sold to private companies. For the 15 years of reforms, there has been a 40% drop in the number of public crèches and a 27% drop in the number of public kindergartens. Since 2000 a shortage of places in state childcare is starting to be felt throughout the country. There are also a small number of private kindergartens with much higher fees and private care services in the baby's home but the incidence is very low. Keremidchieva (1998) argues that in the 1990s the incidence of taking care of the children by their grandparents has been constantly growing, preferred as a cheaper option.

Reconciliation of family and work

The specifics of the situation in Bulgaria in comparison with other countries is that the debate on work-life balance occurred later than in the West and was linked to pressing demographic concerns, mostly falling fertility rates but also mass emigration abroad of young people in the fertility age. At present there is a very low official flexibility of work in terms of part-time work, flexible working time and place, and a-typical contracts such as agency work, on-a-call only basis, 0-hours contract and others. Less than 4 % of the employees work on a part-time basis. Besides the formal state policies, services for young parents are provided by other non-state actors but again with a limited scope. A study of the family-friendly policies in the country (Kovacheva and Matev, 2005) revealed that employers were not inclined to provide additional support for parents to combine work and family responsibilities. What the management used most were the mechanisms of additional financial remuneration for 'valuable' workers while caring for small children was seen as a personal responsibility of the employee. 'Good' employers were considered those who complied with the labour legislation. More active in support for young parenthood are the non-governmental organizations in the country. They offer various short-tern projects assisting young parents.

In sum, Bulgaria is the country offering the longest parental leaves while preserving the parents' link with the labour market but ignoring the opportunities of flexible forms of work to ease family care and make it more suitable to the individualized life courses of young people. The measures of *good practices* that are presented in the following as good practices are those that have tried to address the changing social conditions since the liberalization of the economy while giving more choice and room for young parents' agency.

"Family centers for children"

This project addresses the problems in the reconciliation of paid work and family responsibilities by offering alternative forms of childcare in addition to the traditional set of public childcare facilities. It underlines two main barriers: the fact that women's access to the labour market and career development is hampered by their taking the greater part of the care work at home; and also that employers are reluctant to recruit women fearing their frequent absences to care for sick children. The project "Family centers for children" is planed from 2005 till 2009 and at present is taking place in several municipalities only by creating and testing the model of family centers for care of small children. It provides employment in childcare to unemployed women, high quality services in family environment for children and allows young people who are also parents of young children to continue their careers without long interruptions.

The published results from the project show that it has a very thin spread. For its first three years 28 people have been involved in various forms of training and 20 have been employed at a salary of 220 BGN (about 115 Euro per month) which was slightly higher than the minimum salary for the country. Currently 14 centres are functioning as a result of the project and 4 new are envisioned before its end in 2009.

"Back to Work"

The challenges that this project addresses are the gender segregation of the developing labour market in Bulgaria and the disadvantaged position of women in terms of career development. The main goal is to provide conditions for employment and career growth of women returning to

work after taking childcare leave. Even though women's jobs are protected by law while on parental leave, the lengthy leaves in Bulgaria create problems for the mothers once back in the workplace. They need training to catch up with the changes and to refresh their knowledge and skills. The project provides funds from the state budget for motivational training, vocational training, stipends, and travel and housing expenses for the participants. The training is organized on a full-time basis or on a part-time basis for the employed mothers but no less than 4 hours of training daily. When the training is on a fulltime basis, the employer can employ a replacement from the Employment Centre and the salary will be paid by the Employment Office.

The project ran from 2003 till 2005 and was quite successful in recruiting unemployed mothers (381 persons) and helping them find jobs but failed to serve its main objective – to help the career development of mothers coming back from maternity leave – all in all, only four employed mothers have been trained during the project. Another negative outcome is that half of the participants (190) have lost their jobs and registered as unemployed after the end of the project. Building on the lessons from this practice, the Ministry developed the national program 'In Support of Motherhood' which focuses on the encouragement of the earlier return of mothers to work.

National program "In Support of Motherhood"
This program was launched in 2007 – the European Year of Equal Opportunities with the aim to encourage women's participation in the labor market and reduce the differences between the rates of unemployment, employment and payment between Bulgarian women and men. The programme covers the territory of the whole country. The main target groups are persons registered as unemployed in the Labour Offices and mothers or adopters who are on a maternity leave for raising a small child. The major condition for taking part in it is that the mother/adopter should have the right to maternity benefits. The mother has the right to choose by herself the unemployed person who will take care of her child.

The funding for the project comes from the state budget in accordance with the Law for Encouraging of Employment and the National Action Plan. The project runs from 2007 till 2009. The project has just finished its first year of implementation so the results are preliminary. The plan for 2007 included providing care for 2000 small children, encouraging the professional career of 2000 mothers of small children, involvement of 2000 unemployed women in the childcare. The data for the first ten months shows that 575 mothers and 576 unemployed people have been involved in the project.

Germany

German family policy is described as "explicit family policy" because a majority of family measures are located at the federal ministry of family, senior citizens, women and youth. Other measures can be found in labour market and education policy. Other ministries (labour market; education) also deal with family measures. In addition, family measures are also applied at the local level (Länder) which impedes a coherent family policy. Also here it should be highlighted that western and eastern parts of Germany have developed in different ways and that there are still areas of the welfare state which differ significantly between the east and west. For example, in West Germany public child care provision is still not widespread. But in general, family policy in Germany is dominated by the monetary "dual family and burden sharing".

Germany has one of Europe's most progressive legislation in terms of gender equality when it comes to reconciling employment and family, especially when the new regulations on "parent time" (Elternzeit) are taken into account. But still, Germany is behind compared to other European countries when it comes to integrating women with children in the labour market. The current transition system is rather rigid and highly institutionalised. Parents and young adults (the potential parents) are more or less left alone with the biographic risks of this stage in their lifespan (see Commission, 7th Family report, p. 249; p. 33). In Germany, the biographic time slot for starting a family is particularly narrow. This biographic slot is called "rush-hour of life".

As one result of the recommendations from the 7th National Family Report, some communities – within the "local alliances" for families have changed the schedules of the public infrastructure toward a "family-friendly time-policy". Recently strong incentives have been deployed on the basis of the latest Family Report of the Government to "create economic and political parameters which make it possible for the next generation to invest in the development and education of their children, to live in solidarity with all generations and to interpret caring for others as part of one's own life perspective" (see German national report, p. 245/246). A life-course policy and biography is propagated with the explicit aim to replace the traditional three-part life course with an age-integrated life-course model. This would lead (again) to an opening up of the time span for the transition to parenthood. Accumulation of life tasks in a very short time span could be "straightened out" and young adults could be enabled to "create partnerships and family forms on the basis of their own preferences" (ibid). In recent times a slow change of paradigm for all Germany seems to have started where involvement of different players are demanded for the responsibility of families and children on the local level[26]. However, in this debate, families with members in need are not taken into account.

Though employers or unions are only scarcely engaged in work-life-balance – an exception is the state as an employer – some initiatives and projects have been developed to support a change in life-course policy, for example the "Company monitor family friendliness". Besides, some (big) companies experiment with family friendly measures such as company crèches (immediate result: decrease of parental leave); flexible schedules, parent-child workplaces. The Bertelsmann-Stiftung started a "mentor project for family friendly work places in companies": mothers and fathers in executive positions are trained in work-balance-issues. Some trade unions offer online material on family-oriented personnel development, including tele-working, childcare facilities, returning to workplace after childbearing etc.

Among the measurements and regulations in the family policy field the following should be highlighted:

Payments

Parents are "free" to choose between child benefit or tax exemption. For single parents there are other special regulations. Compared to other European countries this financial support is not very generous. Since 2007, parents have been entitled to "parent money" (67 % of the last salary, with a limit of 1,800 EURO) for 12 months plus 2 additional months if used by the father. The tax regulations, especially the splitting of income for married couples, introduced in Germany in

[26] For example initiatives to build "local alliances" for families, see www.lokale-buendnisse-fuer-familie.de

1958, create long-term incentives to reduce gainful employment of one parent, thus encouraging the male breadwinner model. Altogether payments are criticised as being too unspecific and do not meet the requirements of modern family life.

Parental leave:
Parents are entitled to "parental time" (Elternzeit) to a maximum of 12 months (plus 2 months, if they are applied for by the father), which can be transferred until the child is 8 years old. During that time, gainful employment of not more than 30 hours each week is allowed. The "silent rule" valid until this new regulation, that one parent should stay with her small child until s/he is 3, seems to be broken – the new regulation might make it possible for mothers to develop continuous working careers.

Public day care
Availability of child care facilities for children under 3 is highly dependent on regional and local facilities, and there is still a big gap between east and west: whereas in the eastern Länder, 37 % of those under 3 are in public child care, in the West it is only 8 %. Of those only a small proportion are in day care: 60 % of those in childcare in the East and only 25% of those in childcare in the West are cared for full-time (national statistics, 2008). Recommendations of the government's scientific board on family problems in particular concern part-time education, part-time study courses and an increase in crèche places. According to the Barcelona targets, the government's promise is to create crèche places for one third of those under 3 by 2013; currently, big debates surround the question how to pay the bill for this promise.

Some good examples:

Audit of the Job & Family Ltd.
The audit of the Job & Family Ltd. supports employers when implementing family friendly personnel policy in profit and non-profit companies and organisations. In a broader sense it is a management instrument for a better balancing of work and family. Since January 2004 the audit has been under the patronage of the Federal Ministry of Family, Senior citizens, Women and Youth as well as under the Federal Ministry of Economy and Technology. The audit of the Job & Family Ltd. is compliant with the new life-course policy of the Federal Government. The audit is recommended by established umbrella organisations of the German economy, e.g. the Association of German Industry (BDI) and the Association of German Employers Federation (BDA).

The audit was developed by Hertie-Stiftung, a non-profit foundation. As the third biggest private foundation in Germany, Hertie-Stiftung campaigns for a change of perspective towards family in politics and economy. The foundation also financially supports the audit. It was founded by Hertie-Stiftung in 1995, resulting in 1998 in the foundation of the Job & Family Ltd. The audit is understood as a "professional overall strategy", which is offered to companies and organisations and adapted to their individual needs. It explicitly addresses companies which have already proven to be family friendly as well as companies which are starting to meet that aim.

A project group consists of representatives of the corporate divisions (staff council, women's representative, executives, employees, etc.) and starts the process on the different company and work levels. The reorganisation process is scheduled for three years. In order to strengthen

effectiveness and sustainability, different advisory committees have been founded. Once a year, the Job & Family Ltd. awards certificates to the auditing companies and institutions. The program distinguishes seven fields of action: working hours, work organisation and work place, information and communication policy, managerial capacity, human resources development, financial benefits, services for families.

Example: Deerberg consortium
The Deerberg Consortium consists of the Deerberg Versand GmbH, Deerberg Consulting GmbH, Deerberg Logistik Service GmbH and the Pen direct GmbH was awarded a certificate for the audit of the Job & Family in 2007. The company is a mail-order business for natural textiles, especially for children and women. The company was founded in 1986 in a structurally weak region (Lüneburger Heide) and employs mainly women (95 %) who predominantly work part-time. The distinctiveness of this company is that the middle management is composed of almost exclusively women. That fact has put the problem of work-life-balance on the company's agenda.

Several measurements have been executed, e.g. flexible organisation of working time, establishing an annual working-time-account, family friendly regulations in terms of holidays and leave of absence, health-promoting offers, a monthly information letter. There are special measurements for mothers and fathers when starting a family including allowing for temporary jobs to keep in contact with the company during parental leave, establishing a pool of experienced mothers in order to support young mothers in caring for their children. For the future there are plans to offer holiday programs for children and management training, as well as to cooperate with local providers of child care. http://www.beruf-und-familie.de/index.php?c=home.home

Father portals on the Internet
In Germany, fatherhood attracts wide interest in political public and political debates as well as in social sciences. The Federal Ministry of Family, Senior citizens, Women and Youth has initiated an expert report: "Facets of fatherhood" (2006) in the course of which several father campaigns have been started and there are efforts to sensitize the economy for the family needs of men and fathers, with the focus on father education. In order to encourage a greater commitment of men in general and fathers in particular concerning partnership and family, the expert report suggests educational and other measures which could take place in offices of midwives, community and information centres, nurseries and schools as well as on internet. Private initiatives are publicly supported on regional and nationwide levels.

Examples for father portals
www.vaeter-nrw.de is an internet portal of the Ministry of Generations, Family and Integration of North Rhine-Westphalia. The portal is served and regularly updated by several social and private actors. Texts are written mainly by men on an voluntary basis and an external agency takes the editorial responsibility and operates the portal. A marketing company is responsible for the internet presence and the layout. The portal is designed so as to allow for easy entry, guidance and mediation support for fathers and professionals. Its goal is to offer fathers as well as professionals selected and edited material on fatherhood in order to support fathers in balancing family, free- time and employment. The portal fills a gap when it comes to providing father specific information. One focus of the portal is the topic of balancing job, family and free-time. The web site offers help to young or future fathers in order to "create their fatherhood flexibly,

individually and responsibly." The portal also includes education and counselling for fathers and multiplicators, practical help when caring for children or dealing with teenagers. It offers best-practice examples of father friendly measures in companies and institutions, calendar of events: a database with short-term and medium-term events and dates for father specific topics. A newsletter is regularly published online. Until now no systematic (self-) evaluation of the portal has been carried out. It is however safe to assume that the portal works quite successfully according to its frequent use. One must assume though that it serves first and foremost well educated and already committed fathers.

Parent-Child-Counselling of the city of Braunschweig
Family policy is to be seen and implemented as a life course policy. This means to offer support to people in difficult and disadvantaged life contexts in order to lower poverty risks and mitigate negative consequences. The project is located within the youth services (Jugendhilfe) of the city of Braunschweig, more specifically for young parents in "significantly problematic situations". The project is supposed to work together with existing actions and institutions and is planned to initially run until the end of 2008. After that date, it should be taken over and continued by regional providers. What makes the project outstanding is the fact that it focuses on caring for infants and small children and their young parents – an area has not often been addressed in Germany. Principal and financer is the city of Braunschweig. The project is supposed to work together with local public and private support services. It unites trained professionals (social pedagogues, psychologists, paediatricians, midwives etc.). The distinct counselling and working methods derive from pedagogic and therapeutic fields. The target group is young mothers as well as fathers. The project addresses insecure, overburdened or overcharged parents. It preferably addresses parents in the early phase of starting a family (parents of children 0-3 years of age), i.e. parents with typical problems of infants and small children (cry babies, sleeping problems, nursing and feeding problems; behavioural problems as excessive clinginess, temper tantrums, romping, inability to play; fears of contact, contact disorders etc.). Activities offered are: providing special consultation times with qualified professionals in institutions e.g.in child guidance offices, crèches and day care centres; (trying out) consultation hours in other institutions e.g. at paediatricians or in churches; offering focus groups and information meetings on age and developmental related topics; providing home visits by midwives and family assistants so that professionals will come up to people in need instead of the other way round. http://www.erziehungsberatung-bs.de/aktuelles/eb-jahresbericht-2007-internet.pdf

Italy

In Italy the family remains strong and divorce rates are relatively low. Therefore, what affects fertility rates the most is the fact that 40% of Italians, aged 30-34, are still living with their parents. This postpones family formation and limits young couples' reproductive behaviour because Italians start having children later than other Europeans with limited possibilities of recovering the delay. Furthermore, Italy has a low level of social protection (especially social expenditures for families and children). For example, the amount of money assigned to the families according to the GDP, is one of lowest in Europe (Eurostat, 2004). While Italy has one of the lowest TFRs it is especially highly educated young women who refrain from having children because of rigid and discriminatory labour market practices. The public family policy is not geared to the needs of young couples and families.

However, family policies are developing in a period of transition, in a more gender sensitive direction and towards work-life balance, together with new monetary means of support for family income in order to promote an increase in birth rates. A ministry of family policies was established in 2006. In accordance with the European guidelines for these policies the general objectives of Italian family policy are to: increase by 2010 female activity rate from the current average of 51% up to 60%; removing obstacles for a full women's participation in the labour market; assuring growth of child care facilities, fulfilling the request of at least 33% of the children below age of three years.

Among the laws and regulations in the family policy field the following should be highlighted:

Parental leave

In compliance with the European directive on parental leave with guidelines for innovative work/family policies, a new law on parental leave was introduced in the Italian system over ten years ago. This also contributed to the production a new social construction of the paternal role. These measures have encouraged the slow transformation process recorded in fathers' involvement in childrearing. The reform of the Italian parental leave and benefits system in 2000 introduced greater flexibility and longer leave periods with the aim to increase female labour force participation, and raise the country's birth rate. The law explicitly recognises the role of the father and his right to parental leave, and it introduces the principle of shared responsibilities after childbirth and during the child's upbringing. It allows self–employed women to benefit from maternity leave, provides single parents additional months of leave, and finally, also extends the right to parental leave to those parents who chose not to get married. However, it is important to stress that these measures exclude atypical workers. The situation is all the more problematic if one considers that the majority of atypical workers are young women and young men (also young parents). Current legislation has therefore introduced measures to remedy legislative shortcomings by allowing funds to provide protection for working mothers and fathers on atypical contracts. Mothers working with an atypical contract get 3-months leave during the first year of the child's birth, with a salary up to 30% of the general salary.

Parental leave can be extended up to the child's first 8 years. In addition to the mandatory three months leave after birth at 80% of earnings of the mother, both parents together can now take a total of ten months (11 months if the father uses more than two months in a row). Six months of the total can be taken up to the child's third birthday at 30% of earnings, and the rest can be taken up to the child's eighth birthday without payment (an exception is for low–income families who continue to receive 30% of their earnings). The number of fathers who use this leave is increasing (the rate of civil servants applying for paternal leave increased from 6% in 1999 to 19% in 2003, see Gavio & Lelleri, 2005) but that figure remains low, also influenced by the negative interpretation placed on this choice by employers.

Furthermore, small firms (with fewer than 20 employees) which need to temporarily replace an employee on parental leave are entitled to a 50 % reduction on their social security contributions for the newly appointed worker. Firms can also apply for a grant to support the introduction of flexible working hours, telecommuting, and work at home for employees returning from their parental leave.

Child care

In terms of child care policies, Italy is ranked quite high for policies directed towards mothers with children between 3–6, but it is ranked quite low for policies directed to mothers with children under 3: while access to public nursery education from year 3 is universal and has an utilization rate of 95%, child care for children younger than 3 is used only by 6% of the population with children (OECD, 2005). The main public services offered to support children's care (0-3 years) are organised on a regional level and vary greatly from region to region. The proportion of children less than three years of age in public child care is around 15 – 20% in some areas of the North but only 1–2% in most Southern areas (Istituto degli Innocenti, 2002). Recently complementary services for 0-3 year olds have been created.

As state subsidies for child care are rather poor if compared with other European countries, the costs relating to children are higher. The expenses of child care amount to about 30-50% of the earnings of employed mothers with children aged less than 3 years. The variation in costs is due to the fact that the price of public child care for young children is very heterogeneous across regions. Unlike private child care, the cost of public child care depends on family size, family income, and family composition. Such high expenses can negatively influence women's decision to go back to work. Concerning private child care, even if all the children can gain access to private services, the cost is relatively higher and it is also not widespread. Therefore, it can be considered only as an imperfect substitute in the child care market (Del Boca, Locatelli & Vuri, 2005). Women with children (or those planning to give birth) who want to work must face this *mismatch* between the characteristics of the child care system and the demands of formal employment in the labour market.

Recently company crèches are becoming increasingly widespread especially in urban centres in Northern and Central Italy. The companies involved are usually international corporations. After investing considerable resources in training their staff, they wish to avoid female middle-ranking managers and executives leaving the company. This trend starts to involve public bodies as well.

Cohabitation

It needs to be highlighted that a serious flaw of Italian government family policy is its failure to recognise *unmarried couples*. This issue was part of the 2006 government's agenda, however, nothing has been done. There remains a huge gap in the legislation, and there is still staunch opposition from the Catholic Church, refusing to equate cohabiting couples (whether opposite–sex or same–sex) with married ones. This lack of legislation is one of the underlying reasons for the low number of unmarried cohabiting couples in Italy. In Italian law, as we already underlined, the "institutionalised" family is still held in higher repute than other forms of cohabitation, both because it complies with the "natural (that is to say, traditional) order of things" and because, thanks to the marriage bond, it guarantees stability and reciprocity of rights and duties. Society, however, seems to undergo more rapid changes than the legal system, showing an increasing trend towards premarital cohabitation.

Good practices:

"Parents together"

In Italy, a number of experiments have been conducted over the last years which were supposed to sustain parenthood through discussion groups. One in Florence, started in 1996, is called

"parents together", organized by the association *"Centro di Solidarietà di Firenze – onlus"* and funded by the City Council and the province. Participation is free for parents with small, as well as adolescent, children. The programme's aim is to advise and support parents who feel that they have difficulties in their personal life and with their parental tasks. After some individual *colloquiums* there is the opportunity to attend weekly parent groups, guided by specialised coordinators. In these groups there is the opportunity to talk with other parents and reflect on all kinds of personal problems and problems in the upbringing and education of children, as well as learn how to discover and use available local resources in order to become and act as a (responsible) parent. There are special sessions for fathers and couples to discuss their (new) roles as parent. There is also a telephone line which can be used for pressing questions.

This service can be considered a good practice because it adheres to the conviction, also known in feminist methodology, that "starting from the self" is the key to resolving problems. The program is an ongoing practice that has continued for 10 years, and the results seem to be appreciated by the parents who use it. There is no official evaluation.

"Mothers together"
The project "Mamme in Comune: Doppia presenza Doppia soddisfazione, tornare a lavorare meglio di prima" ("Mothers together: double presence, double satisfaction") was promoted by the City Council of Alessandria and was concerned with work-life balance issues. The project was financed on a regional level (the Piemonte Region) within the E1 Measure of the FSE in the period January 2006 - March 2007 and had the objective to work out models for employee-mothers who re-enter into the labour market after maternity leave. The main goal was to improve the quality of the personal and professional life of mothers by creating a (better) equilibrium between working life schedules and familiar life timing. Forty-five mothers (no fathers), all employed at the city council took part.

The project consolidated and developed further the results obtained in the pilot "Job on Measure" which was organized by the City Council of Alessandria in the period of September 2003-October 2004 and funded within the E1 Measure of the FSE[27]. The project "Mothers together" has introduced new practices of flexibility to reconcile company requirements as well as the needs of working mothers. Activities involved are:

- counselling aimed at coping with difficulties in the work-life balance, both from the perspective of the employee (mother) and the employer;
- focus groups aimed at locating the mothers' needs;
- initiating learning strategies aimed at solving problems in relation to:
- the well-being in the job environment;
- manage job-related stress;
- developing strategies of mental flexibility;
- the use of technology for women in their jobs;
- positive actions foreseen by the Equal Opportunities Law;

[27] The E1 Measure of the FSE of the European Social Fund promotes women's participation in the labour market.

- tutorial services in order to grant a stable reference point for the working mothers.

The overall purpose of the project was to help the Alessandria Municipality to optimize parental management of the double responsibility of child care and working engagement and to support working mothers to manage their maternal leave period and re-entry in the company in a (more) satisfactory way both for them and for the company. Although it has not continued because EU funding has ceased, the programme can be considered as a good practice because its combined interventions optimized the management of human resources in pre- and post maternity leave, lending attention to the necessities of the employees. The model consisted of a series of actions that were meant to influence the laws ordering parental leave: on the flexibility of the working hours, on the working atmosphere, on the organizational and individual well being. The application of the model pertains to the new political requirements of the development and management of human resources; and has the potential to be generalized on a broader scale. The evaluation of the project is still ongoing and it is to be hoped that it will be continued.

"Family card"
This project is organised by the City Council of Modena Councillorship of Economic policies, in cooperation with a private bank which also takes the financial responsibility. It is called "Family card", and the target group are families with three or more children under the age of eighteen. It is extended also to the non-married couples which is unusual for Italy, where the only legally recognised family is the married one. Families who meet the requirements get a card and can benefit from economic help which is provided by the bank and associated stores. With this plan, the City Council of Modena experiments with new collaborations/synergy with local economic participants.

The project can be valued as a good practice because:

- the direct costs are very low, thanks to the accessibility of the economic operators that have joined the plan and the presence of a sponsor (the bank);
- families that may benefit from this policy must have a salary between a minimum of EUR 1000 and maximum of EUR 1400; many families meet that criterion.

"Help in surviving bureaucracy"
This positive action is called "I tempi delle scadenze" (The times of the deadlines) and is promoted by the Municipality of Orvieto. It is funded with public money, on a local level. This policy measure provides useful information and deadlines connected to economic benefits, reimbursements or cost reductions of the public services. This is done through the distribution (to all the parents living in Orvieto) of a memorandum written by the Office responsible for this policy. When citizens contact the Public Relations Office of the municipality, they get a booklet containing all relevant information. It is particularly aimed at parents who do not know which benefits they are entitled to. The distribution of the memorandum, and the explanations offered by the staff of the office give ad hoc assistance to citizen-parents to help them access facilities, taking into account existing deadlines.

The measure can be considered as a good practice because it helps improve the communication between local municipality and citizens, and facilitates access to the services offered by the

public administration. It is also a useful instrument to remind parents on deadlines for the application for access to public services, for example, care services and school entrance dates. It also speeds up bureaucratic procedures. All this may provide economic advantages for the citizens of the respective town. The participants, both officials and citizens, positively value the action because it has caused a remarkable increase in requests by parents. More parents than prior to the measure have started to apply for public services and financial help thanks to the mediation of this service. In 2006, about 1000-1200 persons (about 500 families) used the service. The project has been published on the website of the National Family Observatory, which is an official site of the Ministry for Family Policies. Many other cities (i.e. Bergamo, Bologna, Trieste, Parma) have adopted the project and begun to experiment with forms of economic help for 3- or more children families. There is also a proposal by the Ministry for family policies to fund a *national family card*.

United Kingdom

The UK does not have a coherent family policy, and has generally been seen in comparative studies as belonging to the non-interventionist model of family policy without a specific family policy domain and where the privacy of family is seen as a deep-rooted principle. However, over the last ten years there have been many government initiatives aimed at addressing the pressures of family life, to support families and help families to become independent of welfare (Hantrais, 2004). Policies have been particularly concerned with government targets to reduce child poverty, by ensuring that families have some paid work, to address the issue of work life balance in response to EU directives and to reduce the high numbers of teenage parents. There have also been a number of monetary measures (various tax reductions) for different income groups such as Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and employer operated government subsidies for tax discounted childcare vouchers.

Although there is no central government department that deals specifically with family policy, in the last few years there have been a wide number of recent policy reforms in this area. In 2003, the remit of the government Minister for Children and Young People was expanded to include family issues and responsibilities for child welfare, and the Teenage Pregnancy Unit were transferred from the Department of Health to the Department for Education and Skills. To reflect these changes the word ‘families’ was added to the title of the Minister; it became the Minister for Children, Young People and Families. This increased focus upon the family within policy has been driven by the UK government’s concern with child poverty and welfare rather066 0 0 few years th02 To

and get priority for social housing. On coming to power in 1997 New Labour took a different emphasis, but retained a concern with the rate of teenage parents, and sought to both reduce the level of teenage parenthood and to provide a greater level of support for teenage parents to help ensure that they do not become reliant, in the long-term, on welfare benefits. This is part of the wider social exclusion strategy which has an explicit aim that the best way to reduce family poverty is through paid work.

There are various supportive and integrative projects in the context of the national Teenage Pregnancy Strategy with strong links to the Connexion Service (guidance counselling for 13-16 year olds in England). A cross-departmental Teenage Parent Unit was set-up following a report and analysis of teenage parenthood by the government's Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1999). There were two main objectives of the resultant strategy, to half the number of conceptions of young women under 18 years by 2010, and to minimise social exclusion of teen parents by increasing their participation in education, work or training by 60% by 2010.

In the recent past lone parents in the UK were typically caught in a 'benefit trap' and although welfare benefits were relatively modest, a lack of affordable childcare meant that without good informal support the economic benefits of work were limited. In the UK most pre-school formal childcare is provided through the private market and the costs of full-time childcare have typically hindered take-up to all except those on higher-level professional wages, mostly dual earner families, or those who are supported through recent welfare to work measures. However, there has been an increasing commitment by government to improve childcare provision as part of its ten year strategy for childcare launched in 2004, together with the subsequent Childcare Act (2006). This Act places a new duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents, through private, charitable and voluntary sectors.

Universal access to free nursery education is provided for all 3 and 4 year olds for 12.5 hours/week for 38 weeks of the year. However, the government in England is currently piloting an extension of the weekly hours to 15, with plans to extend this further to 20 hours. Enhanced provision is being provided for children under 5 years through Sure Start Children's Centres which aim to support young children and their parents through the integration of early education, childcare, healthcare and family support services in deprived areas. Although the current focus of Sure Start is on disadvantaged areas, the government in England intends to roll out Children's Centres across the country with 3,500 centres planned by 2010.

The development of 'extended schools' is another related recent policy development that aims to assist with childcare provision in England. The government is encouraging schools, particularly primary schools to develop separate childcare provision utilising school buildings to provide care out of school hours covering the hours of 8am to 6pm to facilitate working parents. The aim is that every child should have access to such services by 2010. While these are designed to be economically sustainable through parental fees, those on lower incomes can benefit with up to an 80% reduction of fees through the system of working tax credits (see above).

There has been new legislation in relation to maternity and paternity leave and pay. In terms of maternity leave, the new Work and Families Act (2006) increased the mother's entitlement of paid maternity leave from 26 weeks to 9 months. The first 6 weeks maternity pay is paid at 90% of the mother's average weekly earnings with the remaining 33 weeks at the minimum statutory

rate of £112.75 (144 Euro) or 90% of their average weekly pay if it is below this figure. A further additional unpaid 3 months maternity leave can be taken, whilst retaining the right to return to the same job position.

Unlike some other European countries there is currently no option to transfer maternity leave between partners, although the government has plans to introduce this within the next few years. There is provision within the Work and Families Act (2006), although not yet enacted, for new paternity rights and when introduced this will provide for paternal leave of up to 26 weeks while the child is under a year old (but this is related to certain conditions in terms of the mothers leave). For example, if the mother returns to work 6 months after the birth of the child, the father could take the following 6 months and receive statutory paternity pay. The main conditions relating to this increase in paternity leave is that the mother has returned to work and has not taken her full period of paid leave. Fathers are currently entitled to up to two weeks paid leave following the birth of the child. This is paid at the same statutory rate as maternity pay, and must be taken within 56 days of the birth of the child; it is not possible to take 'odd days' leave and therefore it must be taken in a consecutive block of two weeks or two separate weeks.

The 2006 Act also introduced the concept of 'keep in touch days' whereby women can keep in touch with their workplace, for example by working 'odd days' without jeopardizing their statutory maternity pay. New legislation has also been introduced that allows parents with a child under the age of 6 years to request flexible working from their employer. While they have acquired this new right to request flexible working that includes the number of hours worked, the timing of the hours worked or place of work; there is no requirement on the part of the employer to automatically grant flexible working. Therefore the legislation is relatively weak and although employers are required to consider such requests seriously, there are no sanctions for not granting flexible working.

Good examples:

Teenage pregnancy strategy
The Teenage Pregnancy strategy was launched by Tony Blair in June 1999 and charged each Local Authority to reduce their under 18 conception rates by 50% by 2010. To implement the TP Strategy each local authority developed a 10 year strategy for achieving local targets of reducing their under 18 conception rate. Local strategies are led by a teenage pregnancy partnership board with representatives from relevant statutory and voluntary stakeholders. Strategic co-ordination is provided by local teenage pregnancy coordinators who are performance managed by regional teenage pregnancy coordinators and supported by the government's cross-departmental Teenage Pregnancy Unit (TPU). The TP Strategy has four overall major components: A national media awareness campaign via independent radio and teenage magazines; joined up action to ensure that action is co-ordinated nationally and locally across all relevant statutory and voluntary agencies; better prevention through improving sex and relationships education and improving access to contraception and sexual health services; as well as support for teenage parents to reduce their long term risk of social exclusion by increasing the proportion returning to education, training or employment.

The Final Report of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Evaluation 2005 outlines that during the first four years of the Strategy, conception rates for women in England aged under 18 have fallen.

This is a reversal of the upward trend seen in the period immediately preceding the Strategy, and a change of course from the largely static comparatively high rates of the previous two decades in the UK. The rate of decline has been steeper in areas characterised by higher social deprivation and lower educational attainment, and in areas that have received more funding to implement the Strategy.

The TPU has recently produced a *Teenage Pregnancy: Good practice and self-assessment toolkit*[28] to facilitate the work of practitioners and policy makers at regional and local levels with responsibility for teenage pregnancy. A wide number of factors have been identified for a successful strategy, these include:

- The seniority and personal commitment of key post-holders. Engagement is required by all agencies as well as the voluntary sector.
- Detailed, accurate and up to date data and information for use in determining need, planning and commissioning appropriately targeted programs and performance management.
- Effective communication which is central to partnership working, access to services and informed choice. Information must be tailored to the needs of young people, parents and communities, ensuring they are culturally appropriate, as well as accurate and timely.

New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) Program

The New Deal for Lone Parents, launched nationally in October 1998, is a voluntary program that helps lone parents achieve job readiness through a range of provision, and is part of the broader Labour Government's New Deal welfare to work program with its emphasis on rights and responsibilities. It is delivered through a network of local offices called 'Jobcentre Plus' that integrate welfare benefits and employment services. The New Deal for Lone Parents shares common features with other New Deal programs in the UK where Personal Advisers play a key role in the program by assisting participants to overcome their personal barriers to finding employment. After an initial Lone Parent Work Focused Interview, lone parents who participate in NDLP work with their Personal Adviser to develop an individual action plan. The types of support provided includes:

- assisting participants who are job ready with job searches;
- helping lone parents to identify their skills and develop confidence;
- identifying and providing access to education and training opportunities;
- improving awareness of welfare benefits;
- providing practical support and information on finding childcare;
- providing 'better off' calculations and assisting with benefit claims;

[28] Teenage Pregnancy Unit (2006) *Teenage Pregnancy: working towards 2010. Good practice and self-assessment toolkit.* Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health. Available at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk [retrieved 17 January 2008.

- liaising with employers and other agencies offering in-work support.

Another key feature of the New Deals is their partnership approach to service delivery with the private and voluntary sectors as key stakeholders. The private and voluntary sector directly provides a substantial proportion of the support available through the New Deals; and the Department of Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus work with a network of around 600 providers, with contracts worth around £1billion a year. Private partners range from some of Britain's largest employment agencies to specialist voluntary sector providers working with people with specific types of disability.

Rigorous evaluation has been another key feature of the programme and on the basis of the results the provision has been continuously improved and augmented. The British Government reports that the New Deals, including the New Deal for Lone Parents, have been the most successful innovation in the history of the UK labour market[29]. The lone parent employment rate has gone up by 12.5 percentage points since 1997, while the number of lone parents on Income Support has fallen by nearly a quarter of a million. The New Deal for Lone Parents has helped more than half a million lone parents into work. This in turn has contributed to a reduction of more than half a million in the numbers of children in poverty.

The Father Figures Project

The Father Figures Project was initially set up by Nacro (a charity working on crime reduction www.nacro.org) in April 2000 in Sheffield, England, UK. The local context was one in which there was a legacy of provision that prioritised the primary carer (mainly women), scant recognition of the important influence men have, or can have, in children's lives, and lack of familiarity with fathers and fatherhood work. This rendered challenges but also opportunities that have seen the project evolve into a multidisciplinary, social, therapeutic, creative arts-based service that supports the needs of fathers, which has innovated to reflect best practice guidelines as spearheaded by the Fathers Direct organisation[30]. The project, which currently depends solely on external funding, has been successful in offering an effective service to a wide spectrum of fathers including fathers of older children who offend; fathers of young people at risk, new fathers, young fathers, fathers from different cultural backgrounds, single, co-habiting, married and non-resident fathers. The project currently has a working team of four staff. The project's main components are:

- the provision of a dedicated support service for fathers;
- networking with statutory and voluntary services to develop referral mechanisms and inter-agency working and promote deeper understanding of fathers and their needs;
- working with existing agencies and strategy groups to position Father Figures in mainstream policy and practice; and:
- identifying sources of funding for the project.

[29] Department of Work and Pensions (2008) *Transforming Britain's labour market. Ten years of the New Deal*. Available at www.dwp.gov.uk [retrieved 16 January 2008]

[30] Burgess A and Bartlett D (2004) Working with Fathers: A Guide for Everyone Working with Fathers, www.fathersdirect.com

Key features are one to one emotional and practical support, counselling, weekly group work, creative arts activities, advocacy, support for social services related issues and court proceedings, entitlements advice, sign-posting to other agencies and monthly family socials. Research evaluation[31] has shown Father Figures Project is achieving its aims to provide a city wide support service for fathers and develop mechanisms for partnership, referral and liaison with key partner agencies. The support offered is instrumental in enhancing fathers' sense of self, self-esteem, communication skills and ultimately their role and identity as fathers. Fathers who were referred to Father Figures because of difficulties in their children's behaviour report improvements in abilities to work effectively with their children. Significant to this success is the unique model of provision developed, which is holistic, visionary, flexible, adaptable, responsive, therapeutic, needs-led and unusual in its creative, expressive arts-based-approach. The variety of types of provision offered is effective in meeting a plethora of needs. The partner agencies interviewed in the last evaluation believe that this unique model of provision is significant to its success.

Netherlands

In recent years the climate of the formally generous Dutch welfare state has hardened; traditional Christian and social democrat ideology is interspersed with neo-liberal theories and ideas about the relationship between citizens and state (van den Brink 2004). Citizens must develop agency, become active, and must not wait and look for help passively but *learn to earn* the right to be helped if needed. That is the reason why most efforts of official programs to help (young) parents are concerned with learning and education one way or the other, and that is also the reason why so many programs and initiatives target (young) minority ethnic parents (Distelbrink & Hooghiemstra 2005). Often these parents are less well informed about welfare measures, childcare facilities and in particular parental leave policies.

In what follows, we first enumerate the main official family measures and then give some examples of how the Dutch state and municipalities try to activate their citizens. The reader will notice that there is no special attention for *young* parents; *all* citizens - children, youth and parents - must be activated and must be helped by professionals if there are problems.

Main legal and welfare measures
Since 2007 the Netherlands has had a special family ministry for the first time in its history. Family policies are also issued in various other ministries, like ministry of interior, justice, finance and foreign affairs (for immigrant families). Besides these, there are numerous intergovernmental committees, commissions and taskforces established to promote an integrated policy but fragmentation of family policies is still a lasting evil.

There are several main legal and welfare measures for young parents, for example *pregnancy leave* which is a minimum of 16 weeks, (mothers receive the equivalent of their last earned salary and may negotiate more (unpaid) weeks with their employers). Parents may take *parental leave* up to the age of 8 of the child. There are many other leave rights, like sickness leave. Parents are entitled to parental leave that is 13 times their weekly working hours and the employee has the

[31] Hirst, J. (2004) The Father Figures Project Evaluation. Sheffield Hallam University. Available at www.shu.ac.uk/research/ceir/downloads/father20figures20report.pdf [retrieved 11 January 2008]

right to take up the full leave or spread it over a longer period, albeit in agreement with the employer. The government intends to double the leave to 26 weeks. *Family allowance* depends on the age and number of children but is minimal. The government plans to enlarge the budget of child-bound money and see to it that minimum earners also profit from it even if their income is too low for tax reduction.

For young children there are three institutions: day nurseries, kindergarten and preschool education. Day nurseries are for 0-4 year olds for half or full days. They are usually visited by children of working and/or studying parents. Besides that there are host parents who look after children half or full days. Since 2005 formerly publicly financed day nurseries have been part of free market facilities and have to be paid for by the parents. If both parents work they get tax reduction to compensate for part of the costs. Kindergarten is for 2.5 – 4 year olds who attend two, three or four half days (about three hours) per week. Kindergartens fall under the welfare sector and are subsidized by the municipalities. Parents contribute to the costs, dependent on their income. Preschool programs are meant for children who are at risk for failing school requirements; they are usually from migrant backgrounds and have language deficiencies. Those programs are linked to kindergartens which work closely together with primary schools and are then called "preschool". The kindergarten teachers are professionalized with further education courses for their work as preschool teachers.[32]

From 2007, each school is legally obliged to offer *pre- and after school care facilities* for children in primary school age (4-12 years). Many schools have big difficulties in realizing that goal because of lack of facilities and personnel; they would out-source the care to commercial agencies. Employers have to contribute to the costs of childcare. Depending on income, parents get a subsidy from one third to total compensation for the costs. Since 2006, a *life-course policy* has been introduced allowing all employees to save maximum of 12% of their gross salary for unpaid leave to be taken up ad libidum; up to now only 5% make use of that possibility.

What is praised as a truly worthwhile good practice are the so-called *mother contracts*, first introduced in 2001. In these contracts (first introduced by an Academic Hospital), working hours for female *and* male employees are adjusted to school time schedules, including longer holidays for parents. These types of contracts have received widespread attention from policy makers and have been adopted by several public institutions. Such agreements may be beneficial to both, employers and employees; they reduce sick leave, prevent early burn-out and help combat scarcity of (female) labour supply.

The neighbourhood school[33]

In the 1990s, the extended school (neighbourhood school) was introduced in the educational system. In 2007, there were about 1,000 primary and 350 secondary of such schools. The concept of these schools is based on the educational idea that formal and non-formal as well as informal learning should become more integrated. These schools, with their strong neighbourhood affiliation, are particularly important in backward living quarters with high percentages of non-

[32] See also OECD (2006) which proposes for all member states a harmonization of early childhood facilities linking early childhood education to the (best form of) exploitation of human capital and the insertion of women in the labour market.

[33] Parts of the text taken from M. du Bois-Reymond 2008)

Dutch inhabitants, as in the big cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, but also in smaller ethnically mixed communities.

Neighbourhood schools offer services for children 0-12 years or older[34], their parents and all other inhabitants of a local community. They have two main aims:

- combating educational deprivation by offering extra-curricular activities for educationally disadvantaged (minority) children;
- providing care facilities for working parents (mothers).

A neighbourhood school is realized in many different forms, but basic commonalities are:

- The cooperation between an existing school and one or more existing institutions like a crèche, a sport club or any other child, youth or parent-related service;
- The activation of potential and real partners (to be) involved in the school, like a library or a neighbourhood association.

The most fitting definition of such a school is that it is a *network organization* with the individual school as the spin in the web.

There is broad consensus in Dutch society that the initiation of a neighbourhood school must come from the school and/or local actors, instead of being imposed from above. While in the initial years, the government looked benevolently from a distance at the development of neighbourhood schools, in the last years one observes more active steering through financial incentives, explicit inclusion in government documents, and issuing evaluation reports. The reform is thus becoming part of a much broader social policy and community development. An example is the resolve of the government to engage neighbourhood schools in its recent campaign of transforming 40 neighbourhoods with most severe problems into 40 "success neighbourhoods". Integration of minority ethnic groups is a prime aim in this operation.

Parent-child centres; youth and family centres
Also since the 1990s, there are experiments with integrated child and family policy. Partly they overlap with the neighbourhood school. They are called parent-child centres and/or youth and family centres. The different names and overlaps signify the decentralized approach of the Dutch government in initiating new policies. Again the idea is to integrate decentralized systems in the area of health (from pregnancy and after-pregnancy support up to the age of 23 of the child), social work in the neighbourhood and in schools, family help and educational support for parents in need. In the same vein of integrated approaches is an initiative of the Council of mental health and care which organizes discussions, among all societal actors in the fields of gynaecology and social science, about: (the problem of) delayed parenthood, proposing broad information about the risks of late pregnancy, the development of a balanced life-course policy and career planning (e.g. career prospects for part-time workers); enlargement of paid parental leave, the creation of dual trajectories parenthood – study/further education; and the necessity of providing affordable housing for young starters and parents.[35]

[34] Extended schools ("brede school") are mostly in the primary school sector but begin to spread in the secondary sector as well.
[35] See also the recent report on the emancipation of women, Meer kansen voor vrouwen (2007).

Have a brief look at The Umbrella centre in a neighbourhood in Nijmegen, a middle sized town in the south of the NL with a substantial number of migrant inhabitants (20%). The "white flee" from primary schools is one of the biggest problems of the town.[36]

Fatima Tahri is the mother of two children and daily user of the center. First she came as a visitor, after a while she became a volunteer and presently she holds a paid job as child minder. The center, she tells, is like a second home. Parents just come in and meet other parents (peer learning). *Here, come women of all different cultures: Turks and Moroccans, Iraqis and Iranians, Somalis and Chinese, Americans and Dutch. Some Dutch never had contact before with people from other cultures, they were afraid. But here everything is relaxed"* (intercultural learning). 60% of the participants are women with migrant backgrounds.

One quarter of the visitors (women, hardly any men) become volunteers, like Fatima, which is a decisive step on their way to more emancipation in and outside their home, social integration and empowerment. The alderman of youth and family in Nijmegen sees the centers as one of the most successful policy measures to promote participation of parents through an integrated policy approach and reactivate neighbourhoods.

Another example, which demonstrates the decentralized approach of Dutch policy, is the establishing of a Youth and family center (YFC) in Zwolle, a middle-sized town in the North of the country. The organization was given to a foundation specialized in youth participation.[37] The foundation investigated as a first step the local situation and needs of all actors (to be) involved in the center by conducting extensive individual and focus group interviews with adolescents (12-14 years; all educational levels, various groups of ethnic minorities), various groups of parents (Dutch and non-Dutch, with young and older children; single parents) and all categories of professionals to be (later) involved from education, health, youth help, social work and other support systems. In that way a close-up of the specific and diverse needs and wishes of all potential users of the planned centre were collected and analyzed.

Ideal as this example of local child and family policy seems, critical observers and professionals have their doubts if the intended approach of low threshold and effective transfer to specific help will work. There are too many existing institutions with specific traditions, budgets, professionals and interests to guarantee success. Still, the effort is impressive and the results must prove the value of this approach.

Besides problems of double and triple bureaucratic layers of professionals and long-existing facilities who feel threatened by new institutions and arrangements, there is another aspect of government intervention which may not be as supportive to young parents: There is a growing inclination of *forced intervention* with regard to families which are judged by professionals to not comply with educational and upbringing standards. Amsterdam and Rotterdam for instance, known for their many migrants and run-down quarters, experiment with establishing such standards and making them obligatory for parents. Professionals would visit "problem families", offer support but keep the pressure on the family if the parents do not accept help offers. Officials would then put in further actors, like school teachers, sports clubs and other municipal civic

[36] See EQUITY Nr. 1, May 2007.

[37] Stichting Alexander; it is unique in that is specialized in research which always includes the voice of children and youth.

servants. Intervention to enforce behavioural norms for parent and child might go far: there would be control to find out whether or not the child is sent to school without breakfast; there would be standards for sexual education given on time to prevent sexual misbehavior; there would be fixed time in the evening for the child to be and stay at home, etc. (RRC Handelsblad 1 November 2007). Although the "Rotterdam education norm" is still in discussion, it shows the tension between, on the one hand, the political tenet of the autonomous and active and self-responsible (young) citizen, and on the other the need felt by professionals and politicians to do something about growing educational problems of (young) parents and neglected children.

4.4 Conclusions

It is impressive and disturbing that despite the diversity of our research countries, not only in regime type but in many other aspects as well, family policies do not respond sufficiently to the needs of young people on their way to and during parenthood. The following main bottle necks are present in all countries:

First: discriminatory practices on the labour market through insecure work and inflexible work schedules are detrimental to the planning and realizing of parenthood. Women and young mothers suffer severe drawbacks and react with strategies of delaying parenthood – or even stay childless. Governments begin to realize that they should intervene and not solely rely on the "working of the free market economy".[38]

Second: existing supply of public childcare especially for the age 0-3 is not sufficient in a number of places and is insufficient concerning flexible openings times as well as qualified personnel. In cases where the private sector fills these gaps, childcare facilities become expensive and are therefore not available for everybody. An extension of publicly financed (pre-) school education is also seen as a means of relating childcare to education policies (see OECD-PISA Survey 2008).

Third: family policy in all countries seems to be reluctant to face the reality of heterogeneous (post-) modern societies with groups of young people and families from minority ethnic backgrounds. That is understandable; it is balancing on the razor's edge between support and discrimination. If minority ethnic parents are part of "target groups", they are also part of intervention measures, like black teenage mothers in the UK or Moroccan families in the NL with young children who have language deficits. Policies (should) learn to pay attention to well integrated and functioning young families among those groups and look for resilient factors.

Forth: family policy seems to be starting to get seriously concerned with developing a coherent life-course approach. Growing consciousness about the negative consequences of a neglect of such an approach comes with the European discourse on population decrease and its far-reaching consequences for the continent.

[38] As Hofmeister and Blossfeld state at the end of their 13-country study on women's careers: "Systems, societies and policy makers who assume a woman's earnings are legitimately marginalized – as 'pin money' or just for extras like vacations and dining out – create dangerous consequences for women and children and fail at their task to ensure full and equal human rights for their citizens." (2006: 434).

Fifth: current family policy still does not sufficiently recognise and build upon the agency of young people as parents and workers. Young peoples' preferences remain largely neglected among the provided measures and their choices for autonomy and self-fulfilment. Frictions and contradictions exist between different policies and between the welfare policy and the economic sphere. There is a need for a holistic approach in supporting youth transitions in integrating lifelong learning, employment and parenthood.

5. Individualization

5.1 Introduction

Looking back at our country portraits, we find much variation in young people's trajectories to adulthood and parenthood, but we also find some general traits which unite contemporary generations of young Europeans. The sociological concept of *structured individualization* points to the intricate relationship between individualized life-courses that are realized within societal systems of political governance, education, labour market, gender division, cultural values and behavioural standards in a given society. It is within these structures that the space for action and choices of young people is determined, but not invariably. Through their actions, choices, decisions and also their protests, young people influence social structures; they interpret and modify them according to their needs and resources. 'Action and choice room' for young people to give meaning to their lives varies according to the level of opportunities and resources provided by their home country; This is certainly evident in our research countries which differ widely in giving and withholding opportunities to their young adult population.

In Chapter 2 we already alluded to the problems of welfare state typologies when comparing countries. It now becomes obvious, that they primarily serve as a heuristic orientation tool, which distinguishes above all different societal logics regarding the ways in which transitions are organized in terms of institutions, ideologies, and option spaces. Of course there are (interesting) differences within regimes as well as commonalities between them. For example: Italy and Bulgaria, countires that belong to two different regime types and are in many other respects each other's opposites, share some remarkable traits in relation to reproductive behaviour; both countries produce very low birth rates, and that leads in both countries to many one-child families. However, the context within which such behaviour takes plac0 0 12 390.468362 3659 0 12 70.92837

It seems fruitful to find indicators for comparison and typology construction on a lower analytical level, constructed of the trajectory properties of young people on their way to parenthood (or not). It cannot be our aim to make conclusive comparisons between our six research countries in all respects – too much data is missing or is not directly comparable. Our aim is rather to draw attention to the kind of knowledge that is relevant for parental trajectories. We will find that such knowledge is scarce.

In what follows, we firstly briefly examine the changes in the life course of (young) people (section 6.2) before sketching the country and region-specific structural properties of youth trajectories to economic and social independence (section 6.3). We discuss general trends of pluralization of family forms and present structural data on transitions to young parenthood for our respective countries, including data on childlessness and poverty-stricken families. The term pluralization is highly disputed – and we agree with Andrea Maihofer (2004), that it is historically incorrect, as there is a limited range of family forms, which all have their historical predecessors; nevertheless, we use this term in order to point to a new degree of normal family forms such as patchwork families, lone parents families etc. Depending on the availability of data, we will also refer to the specific situation of ethnic-cultural minority groups and we will refer to comparable research of other countries where appropriate (section 6.4)[39]. By that stage we will have approached the core of the topic of young parenthood, which is the relationship between work participation of men and women and what models are offered (or withheld) by the different countries to realize a viable work-family-life balance[40]; availability or absence of childcare facilities play a major role in that (section 6.5). We conclude by mapping briefly the research landscape we have entered in search of answers to our research questions (section 6.6).

5.2 Changing life courses

Since the 1980s sociologists have discussed and debated social changes in Western societies and how they impact on the life course of (young) people. Although with different thematic emphasis, analytical scope and reference to different grand theories (Weber, Elias, Habermas, more recently Beck, Bauman and Giddens – among many others), scholars converge on the analysis of main trends which transform the standard life course of the Post-war period into individualized biographies. For youth sociologists these decades proved particularly fruitful as the transition from youth to adulthood is perhaps more affected by societal changes than other life stages. Put differently: it is the young generation which is first in being confronted with social changes and which suffer lack of role models to cope with these changes. Prolonged educational careers lead to ever longer periods of youth and delay the acquisition of the formerly well defined status of adulthood with the markers of economic independence and newly acquired family roles as mothers and fathers.

[39] With gratitude to co-researchers who attended an expert meeting of UP2YOUTH/Young parenthood in Lisbon, 1-2 November 2007: Rachel Thomson (Milton Keynes, UK), Julia Hirst (Sheffield Hallam University, UK), Eva Bernhardt (University of Stockholm, SE), Disa Bergnéhr (Linköping University, SE), An-Magritt Jensen (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, NO), Leeni Hansson (Tallin University (EST)

[40] The term "balance" has been critisized within the WORKCARE-project (see Keller et al. 2007: 73), because it assumes 2 different spheres of life, which in reality are much more interwoven and have to be actively re-conciled. The concept of re-conciliation of course has also this bias.

Life course and youth sociologists point to the development that former life stages lose their distinctness and tend to blur and overlap; a concept the EGRIS group has portrayed in the notion of *yoyo transitions* with less clarity about when and if at all "adulthood" in its traditional meaning is reached (see Walther et al. 2006). By typifying subjects who are somewhere between youth and adulthood as *young adults*, we denote the ambivalences which have crept into life stages. A first-time mother of 35 today may feel as young as her sister who is her minor by six or seven years and at the same time more adult because of her motherhood. The same idea lies behind the notion of "new adulthood" which Blatteren introduced in order to resolve the controversies about post-adolescence, "emerging adulthood", "arrested adulthood" etc., and take changes in the life course into account that deal with new status ambivalences (Blatteren 2007). Parenthood in a way challenges these general ambivalences and insecurities.

As M. Buchmann wrote already twenty years ago, "A peculiar dynamic exists between individualization and standardization of the life course: Life comes to be less constrained by traditions and customs and thus more susceptible to individualized action orientations, but it has to be fitted into standardized and bureaucratized life patterns defined by status rules… Individuals *can* make life course-related choices, but they *must* make them in correspondence with the requirements of the standardized life course"(Buchmann 1989, p. 18). By emphasizing the intricate relationship between choice and constraint, she also points to the not less intricate relationship between standardization, destandardization and restandardization of life course patterns. Standard behavioral patterns, like gendered behavioral norms have come to be less governed by tradition and collectivities, moreover destandardization of old patterns leads to restandardization of new patterns. Cohabitation before or instead of marriage is such restandardization in the life course of young people, as is the expectation that one must go on acquiring qualifications throughout life. Individual independence, while it has grown and given the subject more room for their own choices, reinforces the responsibilities for bearing the consequences of made choices – even the wrong one's.

In as much as individual independence becomes a new behavioral norm, it is accompanied by notions (demands) of ongoing personal growth and self-explorations. At the same time, societal institutions still take adulthood as a point of reference, a final-to-reach status to acquire full personhood; the *agentic efforts* of young people must be directed, so they are told by the educational system, the labour market and the state, towards their *social inclusion*. But then, as sociologists argue, such personhood can only be acquired through *social recognition*; social recognition is the medium of social integration that transmutes social norms and values into subjective identities (Blatteren 2007).

Through these openings and constraints in the life course and the lives of young people, they acquire their sense of dependence-independence; it will always be a mixture of the two. But gender, social class, migration background, educational level, labour market conditions and the general political-economic circumstances of their country and living location will influence the ingredients of that mixture.

5.3 Youth trajectories to social and economic independence

Education has become a main marker for life chances in modern societies and it therefore follows that differential educational attainment makes for structural differences in youth and young adult life. This viewpoint guides much youth research, especially in a British context where scholars discern slow to fast trackers (Bynner et al., 2002 - see Biggart, national report UK). This division is primarily based on what chances young people have to enter the labour market and occupy comfortable positions or face continuous uncertainty and risk of unemployment. The opposition: slow vs. fast trackers is not as decisive for other countries, with precarious and short-term contracts not only for young people with low education but for others as well, like in Bulgaria. The notion of "yoyo trajectories" that we have developed in various comparative projects might be more apt to catch non-linear trajectories which have become more common in all contemporary societies (Walther et al. 2006; for detailed information see the national reports).

When family building is the focus, the idea of the yo-yoing of transitions must be enlarged with the notion of "rush-hour of life" (Bittman 2004; Bertram et al. 2005), which affects especially western countries with prolonged educational routes. The "rush-hour of life" belongs to the highly gendered issues in young family discussions, indicating that for most young women (but also young men by now) the prolongation of their educational careers creates new stress: only a few years – mostly in their thirties – are left over to become settled in almost all areas of life: job, housing, partnership, children.

Young people with educational careers at low levels try to enter the labour market as soon as possible. The percentage of early school leavers (18-24 years – see Appendix) and youth unemployment rates differ widely between our countries. Bulgaria and Italy take the lead with more than one fifth of their young population leaving school early and being unemployed while Slovenia and the Netherlands have the lowest figures, followed by Germany and UK. Not all young people with long educational careers run equally high risks of becoming unemployed, in the respective countries. If the labour market is tight and many further education and qualification options are provided, as in the Netherlands, even young people with low educational trajectories have better entry chances than for example Eastern and Western German youth, for whom there are too few training places (or for whom training is not an option because they dropped out of school).

But also, young people who follow long educational trajectories do not have equally good chances on the labour market in all our countries. They have excellent chances in the Netherlands, good chances in the UK and in Slovenia whose economy is much more vigorous than in other post-communist countries, they might have more difficulties in Germany with high unemployment rates and fierce competition for quality occupations while Italy and Bulgaria (but also Slovenia) have disproportional amounts of irregular and short-term contracts, not only in the low range of occupations. Still the overall picture remains: in post-fordist and knowledge-based societies and economies, young people with low education run much higher risks than slow trackers (Duncan 2002; Walther et al. 2006).

Our countries have differing *ethnic minority groups*, as well as differing proportions of them. Bulgaria's main two groups are Turks and Roma and the overall rate is relatively low; the UK has a very substantial number of ethnic minorities from a wide range of countries, mainly from

West Indies and South Asia; the Netherlands have many non-Dutch young people from Turkey, Morocco and Suriname; Germany, people from Turkey while Slovenia and Italy are both homogeneous societies by comparison (although Italy begins to get a more diverse population composition through a constant stream of illegal immigrants from African countries). Different as the life chances of these ethnic minorities are, and despite considerable variations between them, *as groups* they run higher risks of not accumulating enough mainstream social and cultural capital to build sustainable educational success and consequent careers. But again one must distinguish carefully among them: Bulgarian Roma with high rates of illiteracy even among young people are not comparable with young Turkish-Germans or Moroccan-Dutch of the second or third generation; and Bangladeshi in the UK run a much higher risk of being unemployed than Black Africans there. And also within these groups, generalization is difficult.

While there is fairly well comparable quantitative data on educational level and labour market situation of young people in our countries, this does not hold for all various groups of youth with ethnic minority background; European statistics do not differentiate between indigenous and other population groups. This is another reason that makes comparisons difficult and incomplete.

In as much as *gender* is concerned, our countries show as a general trend that females do not lag behind males in educational capital any longer, they even outnumber males at higher education and university level in some countries, like Italy, the Netherlands and Slovenia. But when it comes to youth unemployment, differences show up to the disadvantage of women, albeit not big ones (greatest in Italy, followed by Slovenia least pronounced in the Netherlands, with the UK, Germany and Bulgaria showing the opposite: more males than females are unemployed - see context table.

Gender-related differences are more pronounced when it comes to overall employment rates of women; females are generally underrepresented (by far mostly in Italy with Germany, the Netherlands and UK in next, followed by Bulgaria and the least in Slovenia, see table in Appendix). There are also gender pay gaps. Interestingly they do not correspond with previously mentioned labour market discrimination: here Slovenia shows the lowest value and Germany, the Netherlands and the UK the biggest (see Appendix[41]). When it comes to occupational qualification levels, females are generally underrepresented on higher levels of the job hierarchy, and they are inclined to choose "gender-affined" studies that are directly related to their present and future roles as mothers.

A prolongation of the youth phase because of longer educational trajectories implies longer dependency on *parental and/or state support*.[42] Generally young people with long educational trajectories leave their parental home earlier than those with short educational careers, but the age of leaving depends on a variety of objective factors, subjective motives and country traditions. In

[41] These figures do not correspond to those given in the Report on Equality between women and men 2007 of the European Commission which says that Italy belongs with 20 % difference to the highest in the EU (Bulgaria and Slovenia with 10 % to the lowest). Women in BG have a small gap in employment rates in comparison to men but a big gap in payment rates. One explanation is that BG women do not leave the labour market when having children as they use the long maternity and parental leaves (up to 3 years for each child) and the statistics counts them as employed. However this long absence from the workplace results in blocked careers and lower pay. Hidden discrimination is an additional factor.

[42] In a previous EGRIS project – FATE Families in Transition – we investigated state and parental support during the transition of young people in comparative perspective (see Biggart 2005; Stauber & du Bois-Reymond 2006).

the UK it is expected that young people leave their parental home as soon as possible and become economically independent. Nowadays this tradition is still alive but especially fast trackers might become stuck because of unemployment and stay in semi-dependency longer than they (and their parents) would like to. The situation is similar in other countries that cannot provide enough labour for fast trackers, but the amount of state support and the character of intergenerational relationships differ widely (Stauber & du Bois-Reymond 2006). In Germany for example, only parents are supported by the state; a reason for long-lasting family dependency of their offspring whereas in Italy, with insufficient state support, young people (males more than females) enjoy their prolonged stay with their parents and do not suffer as much from prolonged semi-dependency as do young people in other countries. The "long family" (own parents and other kin) gives them enough space to be on their own and gives them emotional warmth and financial support to survive delayed labour market entry and times of unemployment (see national report Italy by Leccardi and Magaraggia 2006). Other countries may also have warm and supportive parent-child relationships but suffer under poverty constraints (see national report Bulgaria by Kovacheva and Petkov 2006).

Prolonged education and prolonged economic dependency in tandem with a general liberalization of sexual norms lead to a new stage in the youth life-course: *cohabitation*. Here we observe that young people in Central European welfare states have decoupled cohabitation from marriage more rigorously and have established it as an autonomous life phase and way of life while Southern societies follow that trend more hesitantly.[43] The Netherlands and Germany, but also Slovenia, are the less rigid countries in this respect while cohabitation in Italy and Bulgaria and in the UK is more of a preparatory phase before marriage takes place.

A last point must be mentioned which determines the transition from dependence to independence and possibly parenthood, and that is a dramatic shortage of affordable *housing* for young people individually, as couples, and as young parents in *all* our research countries. It needs no further commentary that this shortage is even more severe and pressing in poor than rich countries. In all countries the parents of the young people feel obliged to help as much as they possibly can to find solutions for this problem. Research shows a clear correlation between available and affordable housing and making the transition to parenthood. In Germany, the Netherlands and the UK this association is very strong (Forssén & Ritakallio 2006: 175).

Overlooking the state of affairs up to this point, one might try a cautious "optimism – pessimism scale" of young people in transition to economic and social independence in the respective research countries as indicated by opinions about their future (see studies in the respective national reports). On such a scale, the positive side would be occupied by the Netherlands, West Germany and Slovenia, and the negative side by Bulgaria, Italy and East Germany, with the UK somewhere in between.[44] If one constructs, again with caution, an "opportunity – risk scale" based on objective indicators as labour market participation and degree of wealth/poverty, the

[43]A study on childbearing behaviour in the New EU Member States shows growing acceptance of the status of cohabitation. Interestingly, Italy scores more traditional (Spéder 2006: 73).

[44] According to EUYOUPART study 2004, which interviewed 1,000 young people aged 15-25, in Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Finland, Austria, Estonia and Slovakia, most young people assessed their standard of living as average, with *Italy* having the highest positive values, followed by Great Britain and Germany. But when asked about their expectations in ten years, German young people are much more pessimistic than Italy and Great Britain (DJI Bulletin Special English edition 2008, p. 7).

picture becomes less unequivocal. One would be fairly safe to place the Netherlands at the opportunity side and Bulgaria at the opposite, but for the other countries this exercise becomes fishy: the many fast trackers in the UK drag the country to the risk side, but the New Deal of the government conducts a vigorous activation policy to diminish these risks (also and especially for lone parents). The situation is again different in Italy with little state support, in Germany with high unemployment rates but more state support, and for Slovenia with an overall flourishing economy but a sharply divided labour market, with a secure segment for the older and an insecure segment for the younger population.

For all outlined research countries one can state that the youthful life-course is not stable anymore but reflects the turbulences in contemporary European societies (Walther et al. 2006; Leccari & Ruspini 2006; Jensen 2006). The metaphor of "yoyo life courses" is chosen to get to grips with that situation. Young people do not feel as actors in making and managing their lives in many respects, certainly not with regards to accessing the labour market and free choice of occupation and work schedule. Many young people do not feel that they can lead an independent life with enough income to afford housing and use available option spaces. Due to mechanisms of social selection in educational systems (above all in Germany) and segmented labour markets these option spaces are especially limited for ethnic minority youths. In as much as young people are dependent in these realms they have to fall back on their families and kin, on badly paid, insecure and irregular work, and on hopes for a better future. Social capital is crucial in that: young people who have access to this resource are the best off of them all and feel the most in charge of their lives.

5.4 Various transitions to young parenthood

Most young people today have grown up in family formations that were different from their mothers' and fathers', and certainly their grandparents. They have experienced fewer siblings – perhaps none – and possibly a divorce of their parents and perhaps have had a step-parent to contend with. They might have been born out of wedlock and the chance that their children will be born out of wedlock is also great. They have seen their mothers – not their fathers – managing working inside and outside the family; also conveying to them, in particular their daughters, the message that learning is important and opens the doors for good occupations and an independent life. They might have noticed also that their mothers' lives changed more in relation to that of their grandmothers than did their fathers' in relation to their grandfathers. They might begin speculating about how they will experience young parenthood, combining work and childcare; especially young women who anticipate an earlier parental role than men. This underlines the relevance of a temporal dimension in the conceptualisation of agency (see Emirbayer & Mische 1989) within transitions into parenthood.

Individualized societies produce pluralized life-courses and as a consequence greater variety of family forms. Our research countries all show that trend, but to different degrees and also in different forms. Seen from the outside, the Netherlands and Germany are the less rigid countries in terms of liberties to make own life choices in the private sphere, leading to a whole range of different family forms, from traditional (biological) father-mother-child families to reconstituted and same-sex families with all possible variants in between (see extensive literature in the respective national reports). Slovenia also allows for highly individualized life styles. Italy and

Bulgaria would be located at the other side of the scale, with the UK somewhere in between with less variation and more stability in family and gender relations, though this grouping needs explanation and qualification. Northern Italy is a good example of modernization *within* traditional family culture but this is also evident in the the South of the country, where small families start to become the "modern" norm. Bulgaria, however, is still catching up with central European trends and developments of modern life styles; its gender roles and family forms are still firmly rooted in longstanding local and religious traditions. Grouping Germany close together with the Netherlands in terms of family and gender relations must also be qualified; there are still differences between East and West Germany in these respects, having to do with their different recent history.

A high degree of individualization and pluralisation does not necessarily mean that the majority of young people will divert from "normal" life-course regimes; it does mean however that alternative choices are tolerated. In all countries – though to different degrees – there is a consciousness in the parent as well as child generation that traditional biography, unequal gender relations and the standard family of father-mother-children are not unquestioned givens any longer. Authors refer in this context to the "second demographic transition" which, from the 1960s onwards, set in motion similar trends in all developed industrial nations in the direction of de-standardization of life-courses, family forms and traditional gender values leading to later parenthood and fewer children (Burkart 2006; Carnoy 2000; Huinink 2006; Lutz et al. 2006; Georgas et al. 2004; see for a critical survey Spéder 2005). The aging of "young" parenthood makes Europe an aging continent.[45] The societal trends and features leading to an aging Europe are the result of structured individualization which is to say, they are not the result of completely individual choices but precisely of the interaction of individual choice and structural restrain and demand. This interaction can – and does – take on the form of stable family and gender relations, of a rise of single mother/single earner families with new forms of child poverty, of childlessness, of highly modernized double earner/double parent families (possibly former DINKYS – double income no kids yet), and all these possible forms may be present in one and the same society.

While this kind of family pluralization is broadly acknowledged in family sociology and is documented by family surveys on national and European levels, no research exists, to our knowledge, about a systematic combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators in a comparative perspective.

Transitions into childlessness

Demographic analyses show that childlessness in Europe is on the rise, but with different trends in different countries and regions (Dorbritz 2005). West Germany, together with Switzerland, is the country with the highest numbers of childless women; there is even talk of a "culture of childlessness" in Germany. Figures show a rise of up to 30 percent for women born in the second half of 1960 and up to 40 percent for academically educated women. At the same time, these

[45] Recent demographic analyses show a constant decrease of the young population, not only in "old Europe" but on a world scale. Since the 1960s the birth rates in practically all Third World countries have decreased, including countries as China. The reproduction rate of Thailand for instance is now down on 1.9. (extensive statistical data reported in NRC Handelsblad 16-17 June 2007).

figures have to be handled with care: micro census data did not take into account children from former relationships neither women older than 39 years who might still become a mother.[46]

Comparing data, Dorbritz states that "childlessness has become a European fertility pattern" (p. 378), not only for the Northern part but also in Southeast Europe. Reasons for not having and not wanting children are, in Germany, primarily connected with fear of not being able to maintain the living standards one is used to. In addition, roughly 60 per cent of men *and* women opt against children with the argument that they would not be able to enjoy life as they do now; fear of poverty rather than fun plays a major role. Interestingly there were no differences in the percentages of men and women who rejected children because of fear to jeopardize their career (Dorbritz, p. 390).

There is much ignorance about the *trajectories into childlessness*, about the relation between voluntary and involuntary childlessness, and about childlessness among men (Dorbritz 2005: 398).[47] Ruckdeschel (2007) partly filled the gap for Germany. She discerned between wanted and unwanted childlessness, the latter to be estimated at a rate of 12 – 15 % of couples. For our project it is of interest that among the childless persons, over one quarter of young West Germans between 26-29 years did not want a child (one fifth in East Germany) – a figure which rises to almost one third for the 30-34 year olds and even to over fifty percent for the 35-39 year olds (lower in East Germany: 35 per cent) (p. 221). The most important reasons given for not wanting children were "don't want to go back in living standard"; "uncertain about the future", and "don't want to give up leisure activities." Problems of compatibility between job/career and children only figured in fourth position.[48]

J. MacInnes analyzed Eurobarometer data of 2001 and computed data of childlessness. For four of our countries he presents data which tell much about intercultural differences. "No children wanted" percentages:

- West Germany: 6% (9.8 men; 3.4 women)
- East Germany: 7% (9.9 men; 5,0 women)
- Italy : 1% (1.4 men; 0.9 women)
- Netherlands : 2% (2.7 men; 2.9 women)
- UK : 1% (1.7 men; 1.2 women)

Germany in this overview confirms the image of a "culture of childlessness" whereas Italy and UK are the most family-minded with the Netherlands close to them. MacInnes comes to the conclusion that "fertility plans or forecasts made before respondents reached ages where

[46] From 2008 on, data will be adjusted to include such cases.

[47] An-Margritt Jensen, invited to the expert meeting of UP2Youth in Lisbon, 2-4 November 2007, reported data which showed for all countries substantially higher percentages of young men than women (both 25-29 years old) who were not (yet) parent. Also an ever longer stretch in the life-span of men is spent fatherless. In the Netherlands, involuntary childlessness has grown over the last ten years and more couples ask for IVF with less chance of success (NRC Handelsblad 13 December 207).

[48] According to a recent representative survey of the German Central Bureau of Statistics, 20% of the 35-49 year olds have no children, and their number has increased over the last couple of years. Childlessness in Germany is a *west G*erman phenomenon; in east Germany, almost 90% of the same age groups have children, and despite rapid decrease after the fall of the wall, a life with children is the normal standard (Süddeutsche Zeitung 19.12.2007).

childbearing is common, are an unreliable guide for future behaviour, at least on the basis of their own recall of those plans. (…) Personal or partner health and inability to find the right partner are the most frequently cited reasons for childlessness. *Economic and work-life balance* reason are much less frequently cited." (MacInnes 2006, p. 50/51 – emphasis added by MdBR).

Yet it is known (Jenson 2006) that male unemployment increases the risk of delaying fatherhood or even leads to childlessness because of fear of not being able to support a family. Especially young unemployed males in the UK and (East) Germany feel and act that way while unemployed females might be led to choose deliberately for motherhood to give meaning to their lives as is impressively shown in the national report of Germany (see Menz 2006) and was reported by Julia Hirst for the UK on the Lisbon expert meeting.

Research about childlessness fights a couple of methodological problems as that status can only be established with certainty in retrospective. Also, the motives for wanting or not wanting a child can change within the life-course. A 35 year old woman might have wanted a child earlier, but not anymore, because she has separated from her partner or moved up the career ladder. Only a longitudinal life-course methodology can explore these circumstances.[49]

Parental transitions into poverty

There is a growing trend in European countries and societies, the old EU member states as well as the newly entered, of a growing polarization between well-to-do families and families threatened by poverty. The much lamented decline in birth rates is not at all the result of a general devaluation of children in society at large. Taken together, that means that on the one hand families with more children have a much higher risk to be stricken by poverty, and that on the other hand poverty starts to become one important reason for renouncing children (most visible in the case of Bulgaria). It also means growing unequal life chances for the coming generations and by implication more cultural capital by fewer and less cultural capital by more families. As child researcher, An-Magritt Jensen puts it pointedly: young parenthood is associated with child poverty while old parenthood is associated with too few children; all in all a wide and very complex field for research and policy intervention (McDonald 2006; Jensen 2007 and at Lisbon meeting 2007; Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU 2008).

While there is, in all our countries, data on child poverty and poverty-stricken families, also in comparative perspective, little is known about young adults' parental transitions which end up in poverty; with the following exceptions.

A recent study of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany (Aassve et al. 2006)[50] on youth poverty[51] and transition to adulthood in Europe makes a valuable contribution to fill in that gap by comparing different categories of young people aged 25-29 years[52] with and without children in various European countries. Among them, 27% live with

[49] See also MacInnes (2006) on these and other methodological problems.
[50] http://www.demographic-research.org/Volumes/Vol15/2/
[51] Poverty in this study is based on measures of relative poverty based on percentages of national median household equivalent income (Aassve et al. 2006, p. 45).
[52] They also included 20-24 year olds of whom only 7% live with children.

children. Of the 13 countries which were included, four belong to our research: NL, UK, GER and IT. Four categories of poverty are compared: Single persons, Lone parents, Couples without children, Couples with children. In every country, lone parents are worst off; as is known from much research on child poverty, lone parents are almost exclusively women. That is what scholars in the field term the *feminization* of family and child poverty (Jensen 2007). Of our countries, Italy has the lowest percentage of lone parents and this category is underrepresented in all Southern countries. The UK has the most lone parents, followed by Germany (not split up in East and West here) with the Netherlands in third place. For the missing countries in our sample, Bulgaria and Slovenia, we can infer positions closer to Italy than the UK.[53]

Overall the figure shows that young adults with children are much more in danger of ending up in poverty than single persons and couples without children; which is another way of saying that the transition to parenthood increases the risk of becoming poor. From a demographic-political point of view this is a dramatic development which is only mitigated by the fact that the risk of poverty declines with age; it is lower in the thirties, when young people get more permanent jobs than in the twenties. But "even when social transfers are taken into account, a significant proportion of young people remain unable to support themselves – and much less, a family – before their mid- to late twenties." (Aassve et al. 2006: 27).

At the end of their report, the researchers state rightly that it is only within a life-course perspective that the dynamics of getting in and out poverty – or staying in that status permanently - can be studied adequately (Aassve et al. 2006: 44). We can here only give brief *country sketches* with rough poverty figures and constellations:

Bulgaria

The National Action Plan (NAP) against Poverty and Social Inclusion /2005-2006/ focuses on the following groups and individuals who are at risk of poverty in Bulgaria: unemployed people and households with an unemployed member, long-term unemployed people, economically inactive people with low incomes, pensioners with low incomes, single parents, households with many children, socially disadvantaged children, disabled people, low-educated people, poor Roma and Turks, people living in isolated and undeveloped areas, working poor, deviant, risk and marginal groups. The national report (MLSP, 2006: 4) defines the official poverty line for 2005 as 78 Euro per person per month or 936 Euro per person per year. The poverty level has started to decline, although slowly – it was 15.3% in 2004 and 14.2% in 2005. The report established higher poverty rates among women than among men, among children and in particular those living with a single parent or in many-children households, and among elderly people, particularly among single women aged 65+.

According to the National Action Plan the most important factors of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria are: low incomes, low education, bad living conditions, unemployment, living in distant isolated areas, and ethnic-cultural background. Going back in time, one comes across the unfavorable legacy before 1990, the negative consequences of the transition to a market

[53] Note that the figures here are relative to other youth constellations, not relative to the whole population as in our table 5.1.

economy, the unequal development of the rural and urban regions, and problems connected with the healthcare reform and the educational system after 1990.

Social research has explored several other factors influencing poverty in Bulgaria. Mitev (2001) argues that there is a strange disharmony between status, ownership and income to be observed in Bulgaria: individuals may not have enough money for food and clothes but own flats, refrigerators and a TV set. The same with stratification: well placed strata such as experts and professionals have to rely on subsistence economy, growing their own fruits and vegetables and producing a significant portion of their food. Mitev also points to the *feminization of poverty*: households headed by women tend to be poorer than other households, including single mothers, women with many children, divorced women, elderly single women in cities, and women belonging to ethnic minorities.

Younger cohorts are in a relatively better position than the members of older cohorts ("*poverty ageism*"). There are age-based ghettoes populated by isolated elderly people deprived of public transport, regular supplies and medical services. The very low pensions in Bulgaria force the individuals to fight for sheer survival in terms of health, food and heating. Mitev perceives the formation of an underclass consisting of elderly people.

Ethnicity is perhaps the strongest predictor of poverty in Bulgaria. After the market transition there has been a rapidly growing distance between the living standards of the *Roma* and non-Roma. There is a drastic deterioration of material living conditions among the Roma which approaches the biological survival threshold. There is a large group among the Roma who do not eat enough or even starve. Explanations, according to Mitev, are: exceptionally high unemployment rates together with low levels of education and qualification. Isolated Roma, living in spatial segregation from other Bulgarians, form an ethnic-cultural underclass.

The Ministry of labour and social policy in Bulgaria proposes, in The Action Plan for 2005-2006, strategies to reduce poverty and social exclusion. Strategic goal number one is to enhance employment rates by creating better working conditions for at risk groups. Strategic goal number two is to raise the incomes of poor people and social groups who risk poverty by increasing wages, salaries, and income from pensions. An official poverty line has to be established and a system for measuring and evaluating poverty needs to be institutionalized. Strategic goal number three is to facilitate the access to resources, rights, goods and services for all individuals by taking away hindrances and high thresholds, thus providing access to healthcare, education and training, administrative, legal and informational services, housing etc. Strategic goal number four is to use educational programs to eliminate the risk of social isolation as a result of regional inequalities. Strategic goal number five is to provide social care for the most vulnerable groups, families and individuals by improving the mechanisms of social care, deinstitutionalization and decentralization when offering social services.

In conclusion we can say that after the market transition in Bulgaria socio-structural factors and class/culture affiliation are increasingly important while demographic factors tend to loosee their influence on life conditions. Presently, poverty is not an individual life course phenomenon but affects entire social groups. The most characteristic trends for Bulgaria are the formation of an age-based underclass, the feminization of poverty, and the ethnization of poverty. Concerning (young) parenthood, the number of children is a serious burden on the family budget, and the risk

of poverty works against the desire of young people to fulfil their ideal of family and parenthood.[54]

Netherlands

In accordance with the European objectives set out by the European Commission in the report *National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Inclusion in the Netherlands* (EC/NSR 2006), the Dutch government has pointed out several objectives which are to be prioritized in Dutch policies in the time period 2006-2008 for combating poverty and decreasing the social exclusion of at risk groups in Dutch society. The goal to be achieved is twofold: on the one hand participation (in the broad sense of the word) must be promoted to fight social exclusion and to prevent the passing-on of poverty to future generations, and on the other hand the accessibility of resources must be enhanced to reduce poverty in present generations.

What does it mean to be poor in the Netherlands? If families have a lower income than a fixed social minimum, they are said to live in poverty. The social minimum is calculated on the basis of two measures: the so-called low-income limit and the so-called policy limit. The low-income limit is based on the social security level of 1979, when purchasing power was at its peak in the Netherlands. The policy limit is set at 105 percent of the social minimum, which is also the social security payment level. According to these measures, the net income of a married couple, or couples living in cohabitation, in the age category of 21-65 is € 1208 a month, the net income of a single parent is € 845 and the net income of a single person household is € 603. People younger than 21 years are worst off: single person households may collect € 209, and single parents under the age of 21 are entitled to € 450 (SCP 2006).

Not all inhabitants of the Netherlands have the same likelihood of becoming poor; certain groups are more prone to poverty than others. Risk groups are single parent families, households on welfare, (non-western) ethnic minorities, the self-employed and the elderly (65+). In 2003, 9.8 percent of the Dutch population was in the low- or social minimum income category, which translates to 642.000 households (SCP/CBS 2005: 12). Single parent families are most likely to live in poverty, for them, the so-called *poverty-trap* - when accepting work is less attractive than to stay on welfare payment - is the most pronounced. After single parent families, non-western ethnic minorities run the highest risk of living in poverty: one third of Moroccans living in the Netherlands have incomes below or at the social minimum level, almost 30 percent Turkish and Antilleans, and one third of Surinamese (SCP/CBS 2005: 12).

The prioritized objectives of the Dutch government put high value on the responsibility of the citizen to take care of him or herself and his or her family. The first objective, *participation*, is testament to that tenet. To realize participation, the distance to the labour market must be reduced, especially for members of the risk groups. This is done by developing policies along the lines of four subfields: *education*, *command of the Dutch language, decrease of benefit dependency* and *increase of health.* Intervention must take place in problem families at an early stage, and ethnic youth projects are being funded by the government to provide opportunities for children to participate in meaningful leisure activities (EC/NSR 2006: 21). Children with a minority background must learn to have full command of the Dutch language; only 3 percent of

[54] Besides Mitev (2001) see Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (2005, 2006).

non-Dutch speaking people are able to obtain a job. Special emphasis is, therefore, put on education to help combate poverty in the future. Leaving school without a diploma is discouraged and a recently adopted law compels children to stay in school until they reach the age of 18 (used to be 16). Leaving school with a basic qualification enhances the chances of youngsters to get a good job. To reduce youth unemployment a taskforce, Youth Unemployment. has been set up. The government has promised to create 40.000 suitable jobs for young people at risk.

The realisation of the second objective, combating already existing poverty, is done by making people aware of the support possibilities offered by the state and addressing the issue of over-indebtedness. Part of this strategy is finding solutions to the problem that not all people know where and how to obtain state support. Instead, many poor Dutch families rely on privatised support, like foodbanks.

In *conclusion*: Although poverty is not as dire in the Netherlands as it is in some other countries involved in the research, problems do occur, especially in (young) single parent families and (young) non-western ethnic minorities.

United Kingdom

In a time of rapid demographic change and rising global competition, the UK shares the EU's concern about jobs and growth. Social cohesion contributes to this agenda, and a concern for social justice is central to its strategy. Therefore, tackling poverty and promoting equality of opportunity lie at the heart of the UK's policy agenda. The *UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08* (Department for Work and Pensions, 2006a) summarises under five headings the key challenges in pursuing opportunity for all: (a) the economic situation; (b) tackling child poverty; (c) ensuring access to employment; (d) ensuring access to services; and (e) tackling discrimination.

The proportion of population persistently at risk of poverty, at 11 per cent, continues to be a matter of concern, although there has been an improvement in the latest reporting period (2001-04). Tackling *child poverty* is one of the Government's key priorities and, although the UK is now close to the EU average for child poverty, children continue to be at greater risk of poverty than other age groups. The proportion of children living in low-income households has fallen from being among the highest in Europe, with a rate of 27 per cent in 1997/98, to 22 per cent in 2004/05, which is now close to the EU average of 20 per cent in the same period.

A central challenge to the UK's anti-poverty strategy is to help parents to gain and retain jobs that will provide a regular family income while at the same time improving social support, increasing the educational attainment of children from deprived backgrounds and supporting the transition to adulthood. Forty-two per cent of poor children live in lone-parent households – and most non-working lone-parent families are poor. Helping lone parents back in to the labour market is a main strategy of the government to combat poverty and to ensure their social inclusion. Since more than 90 per cent of lone parents are women, this is also a gender issue.

Despite the government's commitment to diversity in the workforce and access for all to rights, goods and services, some groups are still at greater risk of deprivation than others, in particular disabled people and *people from minority ethnic groups*. They are still at greater risk of exclusion

from the labour market – the employment rate of minority groups is 59.7 per cent compared with 74.7 per cent for the whole population and they have a higher risk of being in a household with low income.

The UK government has recently prepared a number of policy measures to tackle all the above issues (Department of Work and Pensions, 2006a). *Promoting financial security*: the strategy focuses on providing support for families at risk, including larger families and those with a disabled parent. The welfare reform Green Paper (Department of Work and Pensions, 2006b) set out proposals for helping more lone parents into work, including: changes to the work-focused interview regime (interviews at six-months intervals for all claimants with a youngest child aged 13 or below); piloting the payment of a premium on top of Income Support to lone parents whose children are all aged at least 11, in return for undertaking work-related activity; and working with employers to develop 'work taster' programmes for lone parents.

Another important element of promoting financial security is the *Child Support.* Around 580,000 children and their parents, most of whom are mothers, are benefiting from maintenance collected or arranged by the Child Support Agency. It is estimated that child maintenance payments in the UK currently lift 100,000 children out of poverty. The 2006 National Action Plan on Social Inclusion announced that an additional £120 million would be invested before 2008 to help stabilise and improve the performance of the Child Support Agency in the short term, helping 200,000 more children to benefit from maintenance payments and lifting 30,000 to 40,000 more children out of poverty.

Breaking cycles of deprivation: poverty in childhood has led too often to poverty in later life. To break this cycle the government believes that encouraging parents to engage with formal childcare offers potential developmental benefits to the child that can help to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and deprivation. The Government has invested over £20 billion on early-years and childcare services since 1997 – services with particular benefits for lone parents, most of whom are women. Particularly important are the Sure Start programmes, which aim to give children the best possible start in life through improvement of childcare, early education, health and family support. It is expected that by 2010 there will be a childcare place for all 3 to 14-year-olds between the hours of 8am and 6pm each weekday, in over 3,500 centres, so every community will have easy access to a centre.

In conclusion the UK Government is strongly committed to tackling poverty and discrimination and there has been considerable progress over the last 30 years. However, some groups are still at greater risk of deprivation than others, in particular disabled people and people from minority ethnic groups.

Germany

Among the EU countries, Germany has a relatively low poverty risk (2005: 13 %; see Third Poverty and wealth report 2008). But whereas the risk of poverty has decreased among the group of self-employed and older people, it has increased for other groups, namely the working poor and young people. The poverty rate of young people between 16 and 24 is now 28.3 % - and more than double as high as of those over 50 years of age. The Seventh family report (2005) talks

about an "infantilisation" of poverty. Various representative polls proceed from the concept of relative poverty[55].

The majority of families live in material secure conditions while certain family forms are more likely to face poverty. According to the Second Poverty and wealth report (2004), among all households with children, *single parents/mothers* have a three times higher poverty risk (35.4 %) than couples with children. In the majority of cases, relative poverty is a temporary state; nonetheless seven per cent is faced permanently with relative poverty which may result in poverty careers on account of precarious and irregular working situations and situations of ongoing unemployment. Transition into parenthood also increases the risk of poverty. In the Survey on parenthood and education (2004) the focus is on *young women in "precarious poverty"* who give birth to a child before finishing education. In this survey, too, it is proven that early parenthood increases the risk of permanent unemployment. Young mothers are unattractive for employers or apprenticeship programs (Friedrich & Remberg 2005).

Butterwegge et al. (2005) find a higher risk of poverty among children of East than West Germany and discuss the negative effects of the accumulation of poverty factors. In the eastern part of Germany there has been a displacement of women from the labour market, a process that is still going on and which has put large segments of the population under the risk of poverty. There are also more single parents in East than in West Germany. Especially when these and other risk factors coincide, poverty is felt much more.

A significant poverty risk is to be found among families with a *migration background.* Poverty rates of these groups are two to three times higher than those of the overall population. These groups often remain longer and more frequently in poverty (Hanesch et.al. 2000). Another factor, pointed out by the Seventh family report, concerns the *depopulation* of certain areas in East Germany through migration of eastern Germans to West Germany with better working prospects. Also, there is the tendency that middle class families move out of impoverished inner city quarters and resettle in suburb neighbourhoods.

The Seventh Family report questions the concept of relative poverty which cannot fully explain the phenomenon of poverty and suggests the resource-related approach. Material resources as income and other assets must be combined with resources of education, health, "social capital", "region" and last but not least with the resource of time. New work and gender relations lead to a rearrangement of the time given (or withheld) to children. In poor (single) parent families the time management is particularly stressful and can lead to tensions and further disadvantages of the children.

The *measurements* of the government to combat poverty have been specified in the National Action Plan (2004). This plan takes into account the results of the government's Second Poverty and wealth report. The measurements are explicitly formulated as "strategies to strengthen social integration" and promote a "concentrated process for all agents of all levels". The measurements

[55] Poverty is defined as a disadvantage based on the median living standard; the poverty risk quota is based on the net income of a household, when a household earns less than 60 per cent of the median income we speak of relative poverty. The definition of the poverty risk threshold (mentioned 60 per cent) has been agreed on by the EU countries. The family report refers to a 50 per cent threshold (7th Family report 2005, p. 167).

deal with reforms on the labour market encouraging participation of the "poor population" in the working life, including education. Another goal is to facilitate access to resources, rights, goods and services. When it comes to single parents, the government focuses on expanded child care facilities for children under three years of age.

Italy

In 2005 in Italy the spending on social protection (including all private and public institutions) was equal to 26% of the GDP (average EU27%). Between 2001 and 2005, the medium growth of the GDP was 0.6% per year but rose to 1.6% in 2006, not least on account of positive trends in the global economy. The distribution of services according to the various sectors shows a prevalence of spending in the old age sector. In 2005, this accounted for more than 60% of the total (almost 16% of the GDP). In particular, in 2005 *less than 4 per cent* was *spent on families* (European average: 8%). The comparison with average EU distribution per sector highlights the well-known limits of Italian spending on social protection: there is an excessive burden of the old age sector (average EU spending for this sector accounts for less than half of the total while in Italy it accounts for almost two-thirds). This is done at the expense of the family sector (less than half the European average) and the housing sector (virtually insignificant in Italy).

Despite the negative economic situation, the Italian labour market presents a slightly positive profile. During 2001 and 2006 new jobs have been created, even if many of them did offer only a precarious contract. The employment rate has increased by almost two percentage points during these years, going from 54% to 56%. But although the general improvement in the labour market situation has led to a reduction in the level of long-term unemployment[56] and in the number of people living in families without work, the relative poverty remained relatively stable.

In 2006, 11% of the families were living in a state of poverty; almost 13% of the total population. In 2006 the poverty line for a household with two components was 970.34 Euros. More precisely, households with two members are classified as being poor if their mean expenditure for consumption is less or equal than 970.34 Euro (Istat 2007).

Poverty is mainly concentrated in some regions: in 2005 almost 23% of all households resident in the South are poor (this means 65% of all poor families living in Italy); 7% of households living in the Centre and 5% in the North are poor (Istat 2007).

More of these poor were made up of *households with many children* and households whose heads were over 65 years of age. Households with more than five members accounted for a larger share of the total number of poor households: 24% are poor. Fourteen percent of couples with two children and 26% of those with at least three children are poor. These percentages rise to 17% and 30% respectively when the children are less than 18 years old (Istat 2007). Less widespread, even if higher than the national average, is the poverty rate of *single parent families*; almost 14% of these households are under the poverty line.

[56] The unemployment rate in 2006 was 7%, the lowest since 20 years. In particular the long-term unemployment rate in 2005 was lower than the 4%, the same European average. The female employment rate is still one of the lowest of Europe, almost 47% in 2006, but in the last ten years it has gone up 10 points. There are still main differences between North and the South Italy.

The incidence of poverty is less widespread between singles and childless couples: it is 3% for singles and almost 5 % for childless couples (Istat 2007).

Comparing the data of 2005 and 2006, there is a positive trend for younger families: the incidence of poverty between young households (less than 35 years old) living in the South decreased with nearly 5 percentage points, from almost 25% to 20%. In 2006, 4% of young households living in the North and almost 7% of young households living in the Centre were under the poverty line (Istat 2007).

Slovenia

Slovenia adopted the *Programme to Fight Poverty and Social Exclusion* in spring 2000. The Programme primarily aimed at poverty reduction in order to help those who had already fallen into poverty or were at risk of sliding into it, with special emphasis being put on the inter-ministerial co-ordination of measures. Slovenia has since 2002 been included in the Programme of the European Commission for the prevention of social exclusion. At the end of 2003, a *Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM)* was signed which gave Slovenia the basis for drafting the *National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2004-2006* (NAP Inclusion, 2004) while, for the 2006- 2008 period, it prepared the *National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion.*

The key challenges of social inclusion in Slovenia set out in the NAP Inclusion (and previously in the Joint Memorandum) are the following: further development of an inclusive labour market, the promotion of employment as a right and opportunity for all, the provision of adequate education, the supply of adequate housing conditions for all, the reduction of regional disparities, an improvement in providing social services and the provision of an adequate income and means for a decent standard of living (NAP Inclusion, 2004: 5-7).

The NAP inclusion defines the following groups as the most vulnerable (i.e. groups with the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion): certain groups of disabled people (persons without status, with severe disability, unemployed, with unsuitable housing conditions), unemployed young people (first-time job-seekers), children (where owing to poverty or social exclusion their physical, mental/emotional and social development are at risk and have negative and long-term consequences), adolescents with developmental difficulties, homeless people (health and housing problems), the Roma (unemployment, low education level, poor housing conditions), people with a low income (unemployed and sole parent families), other vulnerable groups (victims of abuse, addicts, persons with mental health problems, persons without work permits) (NAP Inclusion, 2004: 5).

Between 1998 and 2003 the at-risk-of-poverty rate has fallen. In 2005 10 % of people in Slovenia were living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. In that year, the disposable monthly income of these people was below EUR 440, while a four-member family (two adults and two children) should have at least EUR 924 of disposable monthly income to rise above the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

A considerable contribution to the reduction of risk of poverty is provided by social transfers. The at-risk-of-poverty rate would be higher if social transfers were not considered as income; in

this case the rate in Slovenia would rise to 25%. Among all categories and socio-economic groups, the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate in Slovenia can be found in people aged 65 and over and living in single households (39.9%), followed by unemployed men (38.8%).

The at-risk-of-poverty rate among *women* is almost 3 p.p. higher (11.4% for women and 8.6% for men). The gap in the risk of poverty between men and women during 1998-2003 even widened to the detriment of women. Broken down by *age*, the at-risk-of-poverty rate was highest among people aged 65 and over, i.e. 18.5% (irrespective of the number of members of a household in which they lived). The at-risk-of-poverty rate of *children* was, like poverty of persons in employment, below average; with children it was 8.8% and with people aged 16-64 8.5%. In both cases, the at-risk-of-poverty rate decreased in the 1998-2003 period. Together with Sweden, Slovenia has the lowest at risk of poverty rate of single parents.

As regards *employment*, the risk of poverty was highest among the unemployed, notably among men. From 1998 to 2003, the at-risk-of-poverty rate declined among the employed but not among the unemployed and the retired. The highest at-risk-of-poverty rate in the entire group was held by the unemployed (38.4%), followed by persons not at work (17.2%) and other economically inactive persons (16.3%). Unemployment both creates the risk of poverty and signals the beginning of the social exclusion process (Javornik Skrbinsek 2006; Statistical Office of RS 2004).

Single households are at the greatest risk of poverty. Among them, single households with people aged 65 and over are the poorest. In all types of households with children the at-risk-of-poverty rate was below the average, the exception being single-parent household in which it was above average (24.5% in 2003, which is 7.3% more than in 2002). In the 1998- 2003 period, the at-risk-of-poverty rate fell the most, i.e. by 6.5 percentage points, in large families (having three or more children) and totalled 10.3% (Javornik Skrbinsek 2006).

As regards the *size of household*, in 2004 single-member households were most vulnerable to poverty (44%), irrespective of age and sex of their members. High rates were also observed among single-parent households with at least one dependent child (21%) and couples with at least three dependent children (17%). Slightly less at risk were couples with one or two dependent children and couples without children; the at-risk-of-poverty rates of these groups were just below the average. If we compare households by employment members of working age, we can see that households with unemployed persons and children were much more vulnerable than households with unemployed persons and no children. (Statistical Office of RS 2004).

A comparison of at-risk-of-poverty rates among European countries shows that only five countries had lower rates than Slovenia (the Netherlands, Norway, Czech Republic, Iceland and Sweden), while Austria, Denmark and Finland had the same rate as Slovenia. The average at-risk-of-poverty rate in 25 EU member states was 16% (Statistical Office of RS 2004).

Pluralization indicators

Table 5.1 assembles available as well as not available or incomplete indicators, which on a structural level tell us something about the transition trajectories to young parenthood. We

deliberately included comparative statistics which usually do not appear in order to show which aspects of parenthood are undervalued.

Table 5.1 Indicators pluralisation

	BG	*SI*	*IT*	*DE*	*NL*	*UK*
Fertility rate women **a)**	1,31	1,23	1,32	1,36	1,73	1,80
Average age of women at birth 1st child **b)**	25,3	28,8	30,3	28,8	29,4	28,7
Average age of men at birth 1st child	no data	30.7 **c)**	no data	no data	no data	no data
Percentage of children born out of wedlock **a)**	48,7	44,8	14,9	27,9	32,4	42,2
Average age of women at first marriage or consensual unit **b)**	25.9	28,2 **d)**	29,9	29 **h)**	29,7	30
Average age of men at first marriage or consensual unit **b)**	29.3	30,6 **d)**	33,2	32 **h)**	32,4	32
Divorce/separation when 1st child is 0-4 years old **f)**	no data	**e)**	53,0%**i)**	?	19,0 %	no data
Percentage of single parent families **a) (mothers/fathers)**	no data	8%	16%	16%	13%	24%
teenage mothers/fathers (per 1.000 births) **b)**	no data	6.1	7.0	10.7	6.3	26.,9
Percentage of same-sex families	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data
Percentage of one-child families **a)**	no data	18%	17%	13%	12%	14%
Percentage of two-child families **a)**	no data	16%	13%	9%	14%	12%
Percentage of three and more-child families **a)**	no data	4%	3%	3%	6%	5%
Percentage first-parents living below poverty lines **g)**	no data			no data	7,8%	no data

a) Eurostat 2005-06 b) CBS Statline 2005-06 c)2004: estimation statistical office d) data only for marriages e) 1.500 (of 2.647 of total rate in 2005; 458.8 divorces per 1000 marriages) f) CBS Statline 2005 g) CBS Statline Data for Bulgaria from National Statistical Institute 2007 Population in 2006. Sofia: NSI. h) Federal Statistics Office 2004 i) 53% separation and 36% divorce in families with children under 18 years (ISTAT 2007).

The table shows, first, that our research countries differ widely as to available information. It shows, secondly, that there is more information available about (young) *women/mothers* than *men/fathers*. That reflects a feminization of the topic of young parenthood and a strong ideological bias in demographic statistics towards fertility and family being defined through female behaviour. Such bias, common as it is, does not comply with individualized life-courses and a reconstruction of the gender balance, yet it is by implication highly influential for all discourses and policies on (young) parenthood.

In general, there is neglect in the data on *young* parenthood, and there are only some cohort studies reflecting changes in the transition to parenthood (Crompton et al. 2007). If we want to know more about the *dynamics* of young parenthood, the micro processes of the steps taken by young women, young men, and young couples together before they enter parenthood, we have to rely on qualitative studies; we do that more extensively in the following chapters.

5.5 Work participation and work-family models

Decreasing fertility rates and their implication for population growth/shrinkage connect with female labour market participation and work-family models, topics which are extensively and controversially discussed in the arena of public opinion and media, policy makers and scholars of social sciences. The pluralisation of life-courses and life styles have at least qualified the

breadwinner model with the male as single earner and the female as single care giver as the only or even dominant model. Since ca. 30 years in most European countries the "second demographic transition" in tandem with economic changes has opened labour markets for more women to enter, whether out of necessity or inclination.

Those changes do not mean, however, that complete gender equality as to an equal share in care and work is reached in any European (and non-European) country, what Jane Lewis calls an "adult worker model family". She rightly observes that the activation (social) policy in many countries is more concerned with the labour market than care policies: "Care-policies is mostly realized, if it serves employment-policies"(Lewis 2006/2007: 160).

In order to judge the situation of (expectant) young parents we compared the working situation of women *and* men, and which work-family model is dominant in their country. At a single glance we see the differences in full-time – part-time work in the various countries and between males and females, and to what dominant work-family model that leads.

The *Netherlands* takes the lead in making part-time work available, not only for women but also – albeit less – for men. However, the Netherlands have the highest percentage of all countries where both, father and mother work part-time, this is still only 23 per cent (Kremer 2007: 103). Accordingly the dominant model is the one-and-a-half model with the male working (almost) full-time and the female taking big or small part-time jobs. The full-time dual earner model is definitely not chosen. Second best is the dual part-time earner model whereby the male takes on a big part-time job and the female a small one. As is described in the national report (du Bois-Reymond & Kret 2007), a minority of full-time working mothers are either at the top of the occupational ladder (highly educated women who can and want to afford quality care), or at the bottom (poor [ethnic] families) while there is still a substantial number of young mothers who adhere to the housewife model while the children are below school age.

Table 5.2 Work situation males/ females in percentages; dominant work-family model

	BG	SI	IT	DE	NL	UK
Dominant work-family model	WEAK BREAD WINNER MODEL (FULL-TIME DUAL EARNER	WEAK BREADWINNER MODEL (FULL-TIME DUAL EARNER)	MODIFIED BREADWINNER (NORTH) STRONG BREADWINNER (SOUTH)	MODIFIED BREADWINNER (EAST) STRONG BREADWINNER (WEST)	MODIFIED BREADWINNER	MODIFIED BREADWINNER
Male: f-t	60,0	70,4	69,9	71,2	86,0	**89i**
Male: p-t	1,5	8,2	4,9	9,5	23,7,0	**11i**
Female: f-t	51,7	61,3	45,3	59,6	32,0	**58i**
Female: p-t	2,3	12,1	26,6	46,2	74,9	**42j**
MotherS: f-t	No data	No data	55% of mothers work: 59% f-t	E-G: 24 **f** W-G: 9 **f**	3,0 **d**	**28j**
Mother: p-t	No data	No data	41% h	20 **f**	73-83,0**d**	**42j**
Mother: housewife	No data	No data	38% h	E-G: 30 **f** W-G: 49 **f**	11,0	**23k**
Mother-Father: p-t	No data	?	?	?	2,3 **e**	0.7 **e**
Female return	No data	80% **a**	57% **b**	50% mothers **b**	72% **c**	54% **b**

rate to labour market after birth 1st child fulltime/ parttime		55% mothers **f; g**	mothers with a child under 5 years

a) no spliting mothers/ females
b) no spliting fulltime/ part-time
c) 55% mothers with children under 3 work part-time
d) One-child (0-12): 73%; two or more children: 83% (OECD 2002)
e) Kremer 2007 Eurostat. Labour Foce Survey 2006, LSD data.
f) Federal Statistics Office 2005
g) with a child under 5 years
h) Istat, 2007a
i) Data restricted to those in employment
j) Includes all mothers, not just those in Employment
k) Figure relates to Father in employment only

In *Bulgaria* and *Slovenia* the full-time dual earner model is dominant reflecting on the one hand remains of the socialist past with female work promoted and available because of public care facilities, and on the other hand the new realities of a market economy with high living costs as well as labour market demands which lead to a rise of female occupations. As in all countries, the share of household tasks and care obligations is extremely unequally divided between young fathers and mothers; the double burden of women is all the more heavy in view of low living standards, lack of adequate housing and restricted state support. The full-time earner model is followed by the one-and-a-half earner model in both countries.

In *Bulgaria* with a well developed public care system women will return after parental leave, which is two years, in full-time work, if possible. Their return is not in all respects voluntary but induced by economic necessity. Probably not many women would like to become full-time housewives but would like part-time jobs if those were available (less than 5 per cent). Low pay is another barrier to young mothers taking up part-time jobs as only two fulltime jobs provide a decent income for raising a family. It is a peculiarity of Bulgarian family policy that generous parental leave (two years) only holds for women with steady jobs. All other young mothers have to re-enter the labour market earlier. Women in professional jobs would not take up the whole period of parental leave but return earlier, anxious not to lose their job.

In *Slovenia* the situation is similar to Bulgaria: high rates of full-time working women and generous parental leave. Here we have exact data on return percentages, showing that the vast majority of returning mothers (80 per cent) work the same number of hours or even more; only a minority of 7.4 per cent stops working altogether. Again: part-time work is wanted but scarce and like in the UK (see below), (young) parents work weekends, shifts and extra hours to make up for leave because of family obligations.

Germany is a case apart: *East Germany* partook, like all post-socialist countries, in full-time work of women and full-time public childcare. During the transformation period East and West German living conditions became more similar although by no means identical: more East German women would like to work full-time but are hit by unemployment (as are men) and also free public childcare has been severely restricted. That makes for a transition from the full-time earner model of both, men and women, to the one-and-a-half model, or worse to the involuntary

housewife or houseman model. Gender relations and task division are more in balance than in Bulgaria and Slovenia but far from equal.

In *West Germany* the situation is different, here the housewife model has been more firmly rooted than in many other countries and is only recently under pressure and in fierce discussion. West Germany has about the lowest percentage of public childcare facilities for babies and children below the age of three (3 per cent; East Germany 30 per cent) and that alone restricts the choices of young parents. Apart from that there are too few part-time jobs available and the same holds for East Germany. In both, West and East Germany frustration mounts in young families and gender relations are rather strained.

The *United Kingdom* is in some respects similar to West Germany's tradition of full-time working men ("long hour culture") and housewives. In other respects it is not. There is also a substantial percentage of full-time working couples (54 per cent of all mothers work) as well as one-and-a-half model workers. There is also the "unemployment model" with the houseman, as in East Germany. The national report (Biggart 2006) emphasizes an increase of work in atypical hours of (young) parents in order to compensate for lacking public care facilities. Gender relations are traditional rather than equal with high intergenerational solidarity like in Bulgaria and Italy.

Of all our research countries, *Italy*'s women face perhaps the most discrepant situation if it comes to work- and family schedules: On the one hand, full-time working men and full-time or part-time working women who have to carry the whole burden of double tasks (this is the situation of highly educated women in North Italy), and on the other hand, there is a strong tradition of the housewife model which also makes for an uneven gender balance; that is the situation in South-Italy. The entire situation points to the doubling effects of lacking care facilities and the increase of the work load for women living in a still patriarchal culture.

Categorizing the breadwinner typology broadly according to:

- strong breadwinner model (single male breadwinner/female housewife);
- weak breadwinner model (high level of female employment);
- modified breadwinner model (high or medium female employment rate/patriarchal role of male)(c.f. Widener 2006),

our research countries cover all three models: West Germany and South Italy adhere to the strong breadwinner model, East Germany, Bulgaria and Slovenia to the weak breadwinner model and the Netherlands, UK and North Italy to the modified model. But in all countries changes are going on in the direction of the weak breadwinner model.[57]

All country reports mention *pressure from employers* on young (expectant) mothers, more so in Bulgaria, Slovenia and Italy and less in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. But even if discrimination of employers against young parents is implicit, young women feel under pressure

[57] The most advanced country with respect to gender equality within and outside the family, due to a longstanding societal tradition and backed up by family friendly policies is Sweden (cf. Bernhardt et al. 2007 who was also present at our expert meeting in Lisbon, Nov. 2007).

as do young men in countries with little or no leave for fathers. Several countries (UK; Slovenia) report that on the lower levels in the enterprise hierarchy superiors are more lenient with flexible work schedules for young parents, trying to ease the strain of combining work and family.

Almost inseparable from the labour participation of women and work-family models are *childcare provisions* for 0-3 year olds. That is obviously the most crucial age of children for young parents in need of extra familial care. Childcare facilities differ widely in our research country as came already to the foreground in the country portraits. The national reports describe various constellations between public and private care arrangements which are more or less family friendly and more or less lenient for female work. The following arrangements can be discerned:

- publicly financed full-time care
- mix between public and private care
- largely private care
- largely informal care of family, kin and friends (parent networks)
- company crèches

Table 5.3 shows the situation in our research countries.

A publicly financed all-day care system was typical of communist plan economies which needed full engagement of women on the labour market. Within our research countries, *Bulgaria* and *Slovenia* still profit from state-financed childcare, but like in *East Germany*, that system is going to be submitted to the private sector. Because the females are still used to full-time working, they have to rely more heavily on their own parents for support.

Table 5.3 Care facilities

0-3 YEAR *	*BG*	*SI*	*IT*	*DE*	*NL*	*UK*
Availability public care	Very good	Very good	Very bad 7%	Very bad in W-D: 7%; quite good E-D: 40%	Good: 22.5%	Very bad: 10.8% **a)**
Availability private care	Very low	Low	High	High	High	High
Costs childcare (public & private)	Still low (public, very high private)	Still low	Very high	High	Moderate	Very high
Use of public care	Very high 85% children age 6; 64% children age 3	High (54%)	Low (12%)	Very low (8%) in W-G high in E-G (30%)	Moderate	Very low %?
Use of private (paid) care	Very low	Very low (5%)	High (20%)	Low	Moderate	High: 31% b)
Use of informal care (family; neighbours)	Very high	Moderate	Very high	Low-moderate	Low-moderate	Very high
Company crèches	Insignificant	Not available	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing	Increasing

* EU average: 30%
a) Mainly for single mothers only
b) According to Kremer (2007, p. 223
Sources for Bulgaria Eurostat. Education and training (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/)

In *West Germany*, *the Netherlands,* the *UK* and *Italy*, the situation is different: apart from lack of childcare places for under 3 year olds, there is a strong resistance to put babies in a crèche and even older children are only sent for a couple of hours per day to Kindergarten. The central aim of public childcare was up to now decidedly *not* to enable the mother to be gainfully employed and to support gender equality on the labour market. Childcare facilities were and still are seen as providers of additional socialization to that of the family (mother).The scarce public places are mainly occupied by children of single mothers or, on the other hand of highly qualified mothers. Meanwhile public and private pressure mounts to enlarge the number of available crèche places. Until that target is met by politicians, young parents also in these countries have to fall back on parental support and/or privately organized (and paid) care.

In none of our research countries, the *work-life balance* is in perfect harmony. Also, one must state that the concept itself is too restricted to throw light on the involved transitions. Especially missing in research is evidence about the intricate relationships on *individual* level between men/fathers and women/mothers concerning further, work and private/parental life. This is an inexcusable neglect in view of the growing importance of lifelong learning and rising qualification standards. One should ask are all transitions and statuses in harmony. Swedish demographer Eva Bernhardt and her team (2007) and Dutch scholar Liefbroer (2005) state a clear relationship between a set of conditions which have to be fulfilled and the decision of women and men have children. A completed education is a prime condition, as well as the security of becoming gainfully employed; career considerations will delay first child birth considerably.

On a structural level, lack of public child care and unfavorable labour market conditions are the main misbalancing factors. In Chapter 6 we will turn to the subjective side of that misbalance. In

Chapter 7 informal care provided by family members – grandparents – and other kin, and friends forming (caring) networks will come to the forefront. Here we can say that the young parents in *all* our countries are dependent on informal care although there are differences, depending on the financial situation of the young family. Not every family can afford private care to compensate for lacking public crèches; dependent also on national and local traditions: in Bulgaria and Italy with close family ties, falling back on family help is more evident than for example in West Germany or the Netherlands with higher degrees of family pluralization and mobility, whereas in the UK there is still a strong family bond in working class families.

5.6 Research gains and gaps

The state of the art research about youth transitions to economic and social independence yields overall a positive balance as is documented in the national reports: there is a wealth of structural data on the modernization of the youth phase, of educational achievements, of labour market conditions as well as transition related educational and labour market policies. There are also qualitative studies which go into the subjective side of structured individualization, not only in the old EU countries but in the new ones (Slovenia; Bulgaria) as well, throwing light on youth values and life plans of young people, their frustrations and their hopes.

Research is thinner when it comes to the transition to young parenthood. From the material of the national reports we learn that youth transitions, seen from the structured part of "structured individualization", share some features for all countries which can be briefly summarized as follows: In all countries, whatever the welfare regime, we observe *prolonged youth status* and delayed family status the most conspicuous of which is prolonged education. Pluralisation of family forms on account of the "second demographic transition" is more pronounced in Central and Western European countries but begins to develop in the South East European societies like Bulgaria and Slovenia as well.

The *housing and labour market situation* in all our countries is disadvantageous for young people and worse still for young parents. Work conditions make it difficult to combine family and work, particularly because of the absence of enough part-time work for women and even more so for men. How couples deal with that problem shows in different work-family models, ranging from the traditional housewife-male earner model to full-time working dual earners. The latter model is mostly applied in societies with enough public childcare facilities, the former in societies which lack them. All young couples and parents suffer under a general unwillingness of employers to take their family situation into account, especially expectant and first time mothers suffer from discriminatory measures.

Female labour participation puts the problem of the combination of family and work tasks on the private and public agenda. The *return rates of women to the labour market* after giving birth to their first child depend on institutional availability of public childcare, statutory laws on parental leave, economic conditions (labour market demand; income situation family), private resources (family support for child caring) and also on the individual choices of (expectant) parents. Data which takes into account all these factors, in a systematic way for all our research countries, are not available. And yet, investigating the transition to (young) parenthood would be incomplete without such information.

There is a severe gap concerning information on the transition trajectories of the various *ethnic minority groups* in our countries, with the exception of the Netherlands which stands out in collecting such data. What we also miss is systematic differentiation between statistical categories to discern between women and mothers, mothers and *young* mothers, work situations full-time – part-time, and between mothers with one, two or more children. While some of our countries produce such information, others do not or use different categories, which make comparisons diificult. The same holds for forms of pluralisation where especially the males are disregarded, reflecting a statistical obsession with the fertility behaviour of women only.

Table 5.1 demonstrates systematic information gaps about different groups of young (ethnic) parents and *new (modernized) life styles and family forms*, as is shown in lacking information on reconstituted families, same sex families, differentiated divorce rate according to number of children, etc. The more specific the categories are, the less statistical information is available pointing to the well-known problem of representative data being unfit to catch nuances (an example would be highly mobile families – see Schneider 2005). We therefore assembled qualitative studies in each country which highlight some of the problems and singularities involved in the categories mentioned but unfortunately are not apt for comparing country trends.

One has to point to the fact that *local and regional differences* besides broader country differences are not reflected in most statistical data. Although we certainly did not find all studies which give information of such differences, we can state with sufficient certainty that certain groups of young people and young parents, and certain *transition constellations* have little chance to enter statistical data. They would have to be researched with qualitative in-depth studies. Examples of such groups and constellations in our countries are for example: youth's different opportunity structure to become economically self-sufficient depending on regional labour markets; high educated Moroccan young women in the Netherlands and how they manage to reconcile career and family obligations; overworked young British fathers who nevertheless would like – and do – partake in childcare; young South Italian women who do combine work and children vs. their contemporaries who do not; different housing opportunities for young people and young parents in rural vs. urban areas etc.

The reader will have noticed that we divided the transition to parenthood into two parts: we first concentrated on the transition from education to the labour market and independence; then we moved on to parenthood. Evaluating the research in these two areas, one remarkable missing link comes to mind, and that is how these two transitions are interconnected – a question which is of huge interest from a gender perspective. Some relations are obvious, like enhanced poverty risk with unemployment or delay of entering parenthood on account of longer educational trajectories. But is it an iron law that short educational career people enter parenthood at a younger age in one or all (our) countries? And: does male unemployment delay or prevent parenthood in all cases – and in which perhaps not?

These and many more questions point to *ambivalences* in the trajectories to young parenthood. In particular, available structural data does not focus on *young* parenthood and therefore on the

transition to young parenthood.[58] The dynamic aspects of the transition therefore evaporate and the *agency* dimension in the lives of young people on their way to young parenthood operates under structural-static properties. We will catch some of these aspects and constellations in the following chapters.

6. Cultures of young parenthood

6.1 Introduction

The fact that young people take actions with regard to family in different ways and forms compared to the generation of their parents and to the expectation of institutional actors, may be ascribed to new demands and constraints. It may be also interpreted as different cultures of practices of parenthood. By culture we refer to a non-essentialist concept for understanding the meaning of practice as it evolves both individually and collectively. Culture, as has been outlined in the UP2YOUTH interim report (Pohl et al. 2007) embodies sets of practices developed by groups, communities or societies. These sets of practice are the totality of social actions which are interlinked within a given social context and which share values, principles and norms. Thereby they represent the repertoire from which individuals construct meaning and relate it to specific forms of practice. Relating agency to cultural change implies that also practices and meanings might change, or that established and new forms of agency coexist and compete with each other. Concerning transitions to young parenthood, young people's agency is dealing with a reconciliation of youth cultural life styles and new roles as fathers and mothers, and much agency is focussed on struggling for a new and more fitting (gendered) imagery. Therefore young people are belonging to (and depending on) culture and at the same time they are doing culture.

Parenthood forms a central part in the life-course expectations of almost all people and in the whole world, it is an expected life transition and the maker of (true) adulthood, as Dykstra and Hagestad (2007) rightly state, regardless of all other political, economic, biographical and family changes which have developed during the post-war period up to the present. The value study of Georgas et al. (2004) confirms that: an overwhelming majority of EU citizens believe that the family is the most important thing in their lives. It also shows the "family" is not only understood as the traditional two-generation unit of biological parents and children but includes unconventional forms as well. Indeed, across Europe, as the data tell us, more and more children are being born outside marriage – the traditional and conventional place for the transition to parenthood. In the majority of countries, even if the favourite setting for the bearing and rearing of children continues to be the married couple, there is a good deal of cross-national variation in

[58] Chr. Rille-Pfeiffer, in a working paper of the Austrian Institute for Family Studies (2007) discerns four main categories of family research concerned with fertility and states that least research exists about *causal* relationships between fertility behaviour and outcomes. As many other researchers in the field she observes a lack in research designs which take care of all variables involved in order to determine the manifold of interdependencies. She also notes that the subjective dimension is neglected.

partnership behaviour, perhaps more so than in fertility behaviour (Kiernan 1993). With the rise of cohabiting unions, more couples are likely to include partners where one or both may have children from a previous union. Increasingly, one partner may be making the transition to parenthood whilst the other partner is having a second or later child.

C. Kagitcibasi (2006) has shown in a number of comparative studies that the value of children in different parts of the world[59] tend to change in the course of modernization processes (in parallel to Inglehart's theory of materialistic – postmaterialistic value shift http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/): motivation for childbearing and the values attributed to children by parents change from economic and utilitarian motives to psychological ones (love, pride, joy that children give parents). For young couples transiting from independent to parent status, the gender and work-life balance comes under discussion and pressure as now negotiations begin or continue about the division of care and work tasks, independent of their (expectant) joy with their child.

In the life-course-perspective it can be seen: Young people today seem to go more and more through a process of planning[60] and preparation when and under which conditions they want to get a child. We speak here of a process of planning even though planning ones life is becoming more and more difficult among young people; regarding the decision to have a child can be more a scheduling issue than a planning one. It is a predictable consequence that the lengthening of (women's) education affects the existing sets of values, and that women want to participate actively in the public sphere and in paid work. As a matter of fact, young women aim to construct an identity unrelated to univocal itineraries exclusively centred on the private sphere of life (Leccardi 2005); for example, two thirds of the Dutch women regard paid work important for their personal development (Portegijs et al. 2006; Plug & du Bois-Reymond 2005).

A recent study (Bernhardt 2000) on young Swedish people's attitudes on family and work confirms changing values and highlights gender differences: fewer men than women consider having children as the main or only meaning of life, and give higher priority to work and leisure before having children. In Norway, young men vision a future life with good earnings, while women emphasise options of part time work and time with the family (Jensen 2001).

High educational investments and expectations in the labour market collide with the reality of deciding when to become parents, especially when the actual participation of mothers in the labour market suffers from an unequal treatment and when child care facilities do not meet the real needs. Table 5.1, stresses the gender gap in employment rates, although it does not distinguish between the age effect and the generation effect. The gender employment gap rises tremendously in the age group 25-54, when, according to the mean age of first time mothers, most women become responsible for a child. In short, we can state that the double burden is still heavy in all the countries involved in our research.

[59] Countries in East and South East Asia as well as Turkey, Germany, United States, see also *Current Sociology* Vol. 55 Nr. 4 (July 2007) Special Issue on Intergenerational Relationships in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Fertility, Interaction and Support.

[60] Main differences rise between our countries, where, for example in Bulgaria modern methods of contraception are not widely spread, whereas in general, the other countries align on good levels of knowledge about contraceptives.

Table 6.1: Gender employment by age group in some OECD countries (2004)

	15-24	25-54	54-65
EU 15	5.8	18.8	19.4
OECD	8.4	22.1	21
Australia	0.2	17.4	18.9
Canada	-1.1	9.3	16
United States	55.5	86.3	66
Japan	-1.2	27.1	29.5
Belgium	5.2	17.2	19.1
Denmark	3.9	8.9	14.4
Germany	2.4	12.9	16.6
Greece	11.1	32.9	33.2
Spain	11.3	29.3	35.9
France	6.9	15.1	8
Ireland	6.1	22.2	31.5
Italy	9.1	31.6	24.3
Luxembourg	1.4	26.7	18.2
Netherlands	1.1	16.2	24.9
Austria	9.2	14.2	19.6
Portugal	8.7	13.5	19.7
Finland	0.9	4.4	2.7
Sweden	-1.7	3.6	4.5
UK	3.2	13.8	18.5

Source: LFS, Eurostat, OECD (2006)

Young men and women know very well that when becoming parents, their whole life will change – which refers to the prospective dimension of agency. Besides that, we have to be aware that the changes parenthood brings about are gendered: in this transition, the life of women changes more dramatically than that of men. A deep restructuring process involves everyday life especially for young mothers. This aspect consequently makes a significant contribution to moulding a central dimension in the biographic construction of women: the anticipation, at the present time, of a probable future biographic discontinuity. A consequence of this existential discontinuity is richness in conceptualising the time experience of many women: namely, the ways and forms, through which they synchronise different times, creating ex novo, from a multiplicity of existential times, a unitary time system (Leccardi 2005).

Another contradiction and ambivalence of modern family life emerges from recent research carried out in Sweden (Bergnéhr 2007): young adults distinguish between the discourse of romantic love and the discourse of what is best for the child. A liquid love relationship (Bauman 2000) implies that if an intimate relationship is seen to restrain individual happiness and self-fulfilment, it might be better to move on. Notions of what is best for the child, on the other hand, relate to the nuclear family discourse and thoughts about "settling down". Bäck-Wiklund and Bergsten, 1997 (quoted in Bergnehr) call the child "non-modern", in that it is a hindrance to the individualistic aspirations of the parents. These contradictory forces complicate and at the same time enrich the family formation process of young parents.

In the different disciplines as well as in the political prognoses and programmes it is assumed that more and more is going to be expected of young parents – this is true for first and future mothers and fathers all over Europe. The intensifying of parenthood is due to a stronger subjectivity of the

different tasks of parenthood. The process of becoming parents is considered a very personal and intimate matter of two individuals (see Bergnehr 2007). For a couple to have a child is subject to the romantic "love-code" and has also become a planned and a biographical negotiated individual-project (see Lenz 2002). This is at least a common ideology. Reality might be more complicated. Parental decisions for or against a child are dependent on many context variables, like sufficient or a lack of housing, or in the case of migration.

It is, however, a fact that not only the processes of caring and parenting have intensified but also processes concerning gainful employment are more intensified and individualised, which, of course, have effects on parenthood. New parent practices have to be reconciled with new production and working cultures, and vice versa (see Jurczyk & Lange 2002). The concept of "ideal mother" is not necessarily easy to reconcile with that of "ideal employee". It is the well known and currently exacerbated problem of reconciliation which revives traditional ideologies of motherhood. The discussion about work-life-balance, however, brings about new and desirable images of mothers and parents. Today men too are faced with having to balance family and their work/career.

In this chapter we will look at cultural aspects of young parenthood in a comparative perspective in our research countries with a multilevel concept in mind: On the macro-cultural level we describe collective representations and discourses. On the micro-cultural level we describe individual perspectives and strategies, like first parenting between negotiations and degendering, reconciling work and family etc. These two levels of analysis allow us to look at the complexity and contradictions of the cultural aspects of young parenthood today.[61] We will deal with the new and old demands in the areas of work and family, investigate how young parents start their family and working career, how they react to the growing problem of time stress and how they manage their "rush-hour of life" (Bittman 2004; Bertram 2005).

In what follows we focus on various aspects of imagery and how those aspects differ in our respective research countries (6.2). The sections 6.3 – 6.6 take up specific issues which throw light on young parent cultures. The closing section 6.7 is reserved for concluding remarks with regard to further research.

6.2 Imagery and agency

Throughout the European countries there are different ideas concerning the make-up of a modern family, of what is needed to start a family and how to accommodate children and family. The different "childcare cultures" (Veil 2003) in Europe give a first insight of how the different needs of young (expectant) parents are taken into consideration. Whereas Sweden for example has a comparably high density of public childcare facilities, France has the biggest variety of private childcare facilities. In both countries the model of the double-income-household is prevalent. Sweden is reported to be "obsessed by the idea of gender equality" (Veil 2003, Boje & Strandh 2003). This kind of gender and family policies cannot be found in France, Germany or in the UK, perhaps somewhat more in the Netherlands. In the UK, the family is more or less treated as a private matter with an accordingly loose net of public facilities for pre-school children. Germany shows a split: in West Germany the classic male breadwinner family model is still predominant

[61] Further research should include the meso level of collective pracitices and institutional framings.

although ideas about childcare begin to gain ground and more families raise their voices to ask for public childcare facilities. In East Germany the model of the working mother was and still is commonly accepted and public childcare benefits from reformed models. These examples already show how diverse life and family cultures are in Europe. Analytical models derived from comparative welfare state research therefore are insufficient, as long as they do not include policies and values regarding family, care, and gender (see Pfau-Effinger 2005). In this framework we discern between images of the family and the actual efforts of young people in times of transition into parenthood.

Pfau-Effinger and Geissler (2005) suggest making direct inferences from welfare regime type to childcare arrangements – and by implication gender policies. Such policies are related to cultural models of what is a 'good childhood' and accordingly 'good parenthood'. The Netherlands and West Germany are a point in case: even if there were enough places in crèches (which in both countries there are not), most parents would refuse to send their young-children all day for five days a week; such practice does not comply to longstanding public ideologies and private convictions that small children must not be institutionalised too early for too many hours a day. What is 'good' or 'bad' for a child is discussed by societal actors with more option space in the "richer" than in the "poorer" countries: it might be good or bad for Bulgarian and Slovenian children to spend long hours in crèche – but if women are forced out of pure economic necessity to work full-time, the question does not pose itself in the same vein as in countries like the Netherlands or West Germany.

How "mother did it" influences young parents, positively or negatively as attachment theory tells us, and as is reflected in our understanding of agency, as well as how the media portrays young people and what they tell young parents to do and to avoid. Research in our countries shows that intergenerational relations between the parent generation and young adults are close; seldom at an emotional distance. The parents, (not only) in their role as baby sitters, help their children in practical ways but also transmit emotional attitudes and ideological values to the next generation. For example, a Dutch study on timing preferences for young women's transition steps found that parents transmit their own timing preferences to their children which have a substantial effect on marriage age and entry into motherhood (de Valk & Liefbroer 2007). Barber et al. (2002 – quoted after Spéder 2006: 71) showed how mothers' values and attitudes about the ideal number of children influence their daughters' decision about how many children they want, and when. Spéder, speaking of the ideational climate surrounding family formation and referring to Bernardi (2003), states: "The influence of the ideational climate, the importance of attitudes, values and economic rationality is often mentioned but not yet fully understood" (p. 72).

We discuss the ideational climate from a negotiation perspective. The negotiation cultures which in most countries govern parent-child relationships and influence educational values, together with changing gender roles and demands, media imagery about youthfulness, beauty, loving partners, happy-unhappy and successful-failing young parents as well as real life situations of working stress and time stress, of housing problems and financial obligations or plain poverty. They all deprive young parenthood of self-evidence and promote self-reflection and self-questioning if one has, as a young parent, made the right choices (right partner? right timing of childrearing? right decision about career, childcare and housing facility in the right neighbourhood?) Theoretical approaches to late modernity point to these kinds of self-reflective attitudes which go irrevocably along with modernization. It is generally assumed that in this

modernisation process increasing uncertainty around young parenthood and childrearing can be found, which intermingles with still existing traditional orientations.

Current discourses and existing images of parenthood as well as actually realised transitions into parenthood amount to a kind of "biographical background knowledge" (Alheit 2003), which structures the life course just as daily routines do. At the same time first and future parents should be looked at from an agency-perspective. "Subjects are not only meaning reproducers of discourses…but (influence) discourse information and (are indirectly involved) in production and transformation. However, they do not control them, but are subjected to their agency to the degree they themselves develop agency" (Jäger 2003, quoted after Schäfer & Völter 2003). Imageries of what is good or bad parenthood or motherhood is constituted and reconstituted in mutual dependency and intercourse between political discourses, institutional facilities and the convictions, values and daily practices of societal actors.

The following country overview of discourses is far from complete. In the respective national context we took "the obvious" and "what catches one's eye", the image of family, that expectant and first parents and non-parents are confronted with. We take these eye catchers from the national reports.

United Kingdom

Among young people there is a broad consensus of the domestic ideal. Most young people perceive their futures in conventional ways such as a nice husband or wife, nice house and nice car and settle down in a good job, buy a car and get married" (UK-report, p. 15). Although the majority of young people in the UK still hold on to traditional life and family patterns, the image of family and parenthood is in the process of changing in the direction of more individualised partnerships and family forms. The fact remains though that the UK has the highest rate of teenage mothers in Western Europe. These very young mothers are in the centre of public attention. Teenage mothers are contrasted with "late mothers" (30 years or older - see UK-Report, p. 11, after Rendall et al. 2005). Both groups belong to the so-called blaming groups. Whereas teenage and (young) single mothers are blamed to exploit the welfare state, for example in order to get their own flat, late mothers are blamed to be a burden for the labour market. Typically and paradoxically, the public opinion insists that the transition to parenthood should be made at a rather young age (see Hirst 2005).

In addition to "young problem mothers" also young (problem) fathers are a focus of research. The study of Quintin et al. (2002) shows that these young men can accomplish fatherhood just as well as young women yet fewer do, this may be an example of rocking the dominant traditional image of gendered partnership and family life through modernisation processes that weaken gender walls.

Ethnic minorities together with their ideas of family and parenthood are traditionally an integral part of the public discourse.

Italy

In the case of young women in particular, several findings clearly show that they have not lost interest in motherhood: on the contrary, it appears that, while only few women do not want children at all, having two children is still the desire of most Italian women (Italian report; p. 4). The cultural context in which young Italian parents act seems to be ambivalent. On the one hand, researchers register radical changes in the family structure, on the other hand traditional family forms and values prevail. Italy seems to live in two era's with two imageries of parenthood: the old mom-era and the new era of young women who want, but can hardly, combine children with work and have to fight for new images of women and mothers. There still remains a great continuity of traditional gender roles. For young Italians, it is still normal to leave the parental home only after starting a family of their own and to move to one's own house.

The Italian report points to the socially produced contradictions young people have to deal with. Italy is in the process of gender equalisation but at the same time family matters like care and negotiating gender roles are still considered to be female responsibilities. In comparison with the UK, family in Italy is still a very protected and isolated sphere. Neither the government and the public nor social science should intervene. Only if problems become rampant family issues do they enter the political agenda. Not-yet parents are left alone in the sense that starting a family is a highly individual decision.

With regard to imageries, Italy represents differences between the northern part of the country, more in line with North European countries, and the more traditional South, in which an ideal of small families now seems to predominate.

Bulgaria

"Parenthood is not perceived as a youth problem" (National report Bulgaria, p.1). This seems to be the core of the Bulgarian discourse on family and transition to parenthood, notwithstanding the dramatic demographic development since the fall of communism. Over the last 15 years the country has lost more than one million people due to emigration. And while that problem is fiercely discussed in Germany (internal migration from East- to West Germany), this is not the case in Bulgaria. Youth debates concentrate on issues such as building a national and European identity in the context of the big social problems of the country, unemployment, poverty and poor health facilities.

What drives Bulgarian family discussions is the widespread anxiety of being infiltrated by ethnic minorities, Roma in particular. Similar to the UK and Germany, there are two opposite groups of parents: the "late" parents and the "too early" parents. The "late" parents are to be found among the Bulgarian population whereas the "too early" and young parents are characteristic for the Roma and Turkish population. In public discourse, practises of starting a family and migration problems intermingle and evolve into an ethnic problem. Besides differences between majorities and minorities, the Bulgarian report points to great differences between rural regions and cities.

Altogether, the Bulgarian situation of young people shows the confines of the European modern way of life, global changes, moments of feeling secluded from the modernisation process - all of which has a negative influence on young people's family planning. Young people in Bulgaria

seem to have a much more distinct pessimistic undertone than can be seen in young people of other countries. It is rather typical that young mothers express their anxieties and depressions, their concrete financial insecurities, their fears of unemployment and becoming sick. Also very typical is that the "absent father syndrome" (Yachkova 2002) adumbrates but does not rule out "new fatherhood".

Slovenia

The main changes that are going on are on the level of values, perceptions, and images, according to the Slovenian report. Like Bulgaria and East Germany, Slovenia is in a process of adjustment of family ideologies, looking to "the west" but finding more discrepancies than clear cut images about modern parenthood. Popular parenting concepts are frequently even more traditional than before the regime change. Transition into parenthood in Slovenia is also an ambivalent matter. Compared to Bulgaria, the modernisation and liberalisation process runs more smoothly. Despite changes in terms of values and images, children and family are still highly valued by young people in Slovenia (see Ule et al. 1998). The political as well as the private discourse aims for gender equality. Valorisation of parenthood and family are opposed to the new market ideology, which leaves young people in Slovenia with ambivalent life and family patterns. Similar to Bulgaria, in Slovenia there is no discourse about translating the experiences of young people into a viable work-life-perspective. Family life and family friendly workplace practises are a matter of daily informal negotiation.

The Netherlands

In comparison with other welfare state countries like Scandinavia, the Netherlands reaches out to individualisation and emancipation (National Report Netherlands, p. 10). A high degree of pluralisation goes along with high values put on the family; parenthood is seen as an individual and negotiable life project for both genders. In the Netherlands, changes in family forms are not a recent phenomenon. Parents still prefer a two children family with both biological parents, but alternative forms (one parent, step-parents, two parents of equal sex) become more accepted. Delayed parenthood is discussed widely in public as well as among academics and the needs of young parents (and not-yet-parents) draws the attention of politicians. One of the reasons for this openness and the force of the family discourse can be found in a very active women's movement that has been well established over several generations. Comparable trends can be found in the history of West Germany. The emphasis is on the western modern family variant which puts both, mothers and fathers, in responsibilities when it comes to educating their children.

In the Netherlands as well, first parents find themselves confronted with a typical paradoxical situation. The "highly individualised (post-) modern society" is neither everyone's reality nor ideal. First generation migrants do not share the western way of life. Second generation young non-Dutch often live with two sets of values, ideologies and practices. Young parenthood for them means finding a compromise between the lifestyle of their parents and the modern lifestyle of the dominant Dutch culture. But one must be careful with all kinds of generalisations: not all Dutch people follow a modern life style, based on negotiation, and not all immigrant people stick to their original values and practices.

Germany

In only a few countries has family such a low value as in the case of Germany (Hinte 2007, press release). This is the result of a recently released comparative study on the status of family, comparing 78 countries. According to the study, family ties are the weakest in Germany, Lithuania and also in the Netherlands, closely followed by the Scandinavian countries. Taking this family image into account, it is rather unusual to see Germany on one level with the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, given that the northern countries like to emphasis their family friendly image whereas in Germany there is rather a pessimistic view of the future of the family. Currently, the Federal Government is working on improving its image and bad reputation in this respect. The Minister of Family calls for a "change of image", at the same time there are voices warning of surrendering the family to the evils of modern society (see Robert Bosch Stiftung 2007). The released result contrasts with the latest youth studies which concludes that the value of family and children is unbroken (BMFSFJ 2007). In West Germany the discussion whether to have a child or not is more subject to individualisation than in East Germany.

The awareness of an ever present historic disruption after Germany's reunification is unique for the county and reflects, sometimes more, sometimes less evident, the attitudes towards starting a family of young Germans. At the same time, media imageries of young mothers and fathers are shifting and are opening new discrepancies to the possibilities to set them into reality (Thiessen & Villa 2008, forthcoming).

We close this section by summarising our analysis in table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Family imagery/ ideational climate; intergenerational relationships

	BG	**SI**	**IT**	**DE**	**NL**	**UK**
Family Ideology	Traditional family & motherhood ideology	Traditional family & motherhood ideology	Traditional family & motherhood ideology	Modernised motherhood ideology	Egalitarian parenthood ideology	Traditional-solidarity family ideology
Inter-generational relationships	Highly supportive inter-generational relationship	Highly supportive inter-generational relationship	Highly supportive inter-generational relationship	Supportive inter-generational relationship	Supportive inter-generational relationship	Supportive inter-generational relationship
Gender roles	Traditional gender role / gender imageries dominant	Traditional gender role ideology /imageries & coincides with egalitarian gender role imageries	Traditional gender role ideology still strong & coincides with egalitarian gender role ideology (regional differences!)	Egalitarian gender role ideology; in some respects "culture of childlessnes s" (regional differences!)	Egalitarian gender role ideology;	Traditional & egalitarian gender role ideologies; negative imagery about teenage mothers (regional differences!)

6.3 The making of young parenthood – cultural aspects

Young parenthood in a gendered life-course perspective

Research on Swedish young adults suggests that for many individuals the decision to enter parenthood is related to tension and anxiety. “Will I change? Will my partner change? Will the relationship change? What will happen if things change? A fear of change is prominent; it is a fear of making a decision without knowing the outcome” (Bergnehr 2007, p. 10). Becoming a parent involves the most radical change in an individual's life-course. (Young) parents have to take the responsibility for a totally dependent being, and the advent of the first child is the one who brings the main change in lifestyle. Today, as Hobcraft and Kiernan (1995) stress, “in modern, low fertility societies the few births that couples or individuals have are usually tightly clustered in a period of a very few years and the two most crucial decisions are the timing of entry into parenthood and how many births to have” (p 4).

At the same time, the transition to parenthood coexists simultaneously with the functioning of other adult roles, both within the family and in wider society. This means that how we act as parents is contextualised within other social roles, which are deeply affected by the yoyoisation of transitions into adulthood, which means: that they are inevitably un-plannable. How much this would restrict family building, refers directly to the national and historic context. It is this context which allows and at the same time confines the decisions and actions of young parents and non-parents.

Family life and the child(ren) tie parents down in some respects, and make it harder for them to be flexible and mobile with regard to work and social life. In all our countries it amounts to an intensification of family practices. In this respect, Kovacheva and Petkov talk about the tendency of intensified “parenting” (Kovacheva & Petkov, 2007: 4), an inward intensification, whereby the family, including family of origin and newly started family face increasing demands in terms of care and negotiation processes. This negotiation process is still gendered, although with different nuances depending on the countries and on the social capital of the parents. “The way to reduced gender inequality and to an increased sharing of family burdens still seems to be long“ (Leccardi & Magaraggia 2007, p.7). This describes the situation of all the countries in this study. Across Europe it is still mainly women that are responsible for family and care work, even if in all countries we also record a greater female attachment to the labour force. This double involvement makes the large amounts of time required for childrearing much more difficult to find than before.

Although the traditional family image (father as breadwinner/mother care giver) seems to dissolve, young parents cling to this gender-typical distribution of tasks – as the UK report points out (Biggart 2007). Fthenakis et al. (2002) bring to light a systematic and structural re-traditionalisation of partnership when starting a family. Even partners, who before they started a family agreed on shared gender roles based on equality, seem to return to a traditional distribution of tasks. The conditions for an equal share of burden are not present, either in terms of childcare facilities, or in terms of the options for parental leave that are provided by employers. In addition to the gender pay gap that still remains. In this respect, the transition to parenthood is (also) a transition back to gender inequality. This is especially true for the period when babies and small children have to be taken care of (Leccardi & Magaraggia 2007).

Education and economic background, of course, influence inner-family negotiation processes but do not always result in equality (Böhnisch & Menz 2007; Biggart 2007). It is interesting to notice that even among highly educated couples established-pragmatic and therewith gender-specific care strategies remain dominant. In any case, the simple formula: the higher educated or socially situated men and women are, the more family life is characterised by negotiation and equality needs to be questioned.

Negotiation; re-traditionalisation; engendering and degendering

Our country portraits have already provided an indication that negotiation cultures differ widely and do not resonate with the systematic of welfare regimes[62] (Kay 2003). In the UK (liberal regime) there is probably much less effect of the public gender discussion on the private partner relations than is the case, for example, in Germany and the Netherlands (employment centred regimes). Here that discussion is led almost obsessively by public discourses, as well as private, and where gender relations seem to be more under pressure to change. On the other hand (North) Italy is much closer culturally to the latter than to other Southern countries, like Spain and Portugal, yet it belongs to the southern welfare regime. It seems that Bulgaria is also more traditionally oriented in relation to issues of gender when compared to Slovenia, while both are post-communist countries. Slovenia is in many respects is similar to countries of the universalistic regime type and allows for much more negotiation space (see Kovacheva 2006). But beyond all evident and more subtle differences between our countries (and others) it holds that high educated couples (women) are more inclined towards egalitarian gender values than the low educated and will therefore be more active in negotiating a fair division of tasks.[63] Yet at the same time countries report a certain re-traditionalization of household and care obligations after the birth of a child. That might be more the case in countries with a patriarchal culture, like Bulgaria, Slovenia and also Italy, but even in the liberal and "emancipation-advanced" Netherlands a similar trend is also observed, albeit less pronounced.

In all countries, the birth of the first child implies a slipping back to more traditional gender roles, even if the couples had organized their lives on a cooperative basis. If before there was time for negotiating divergent interests, as soon as the child is born parents slip into chronic time shortage and apparently old models of the distribution of household duties re-emerge; obviously the different labour situation plays a major role in this respect. Time budget studies carried out in various countries show persistently that the women, gainfully employed or not, work (much) more hours in the household and take care of the children in comparison to men (Gershuny 2000; Portegijs et al. 2006; Fthenakis et al. 2002). So, even if it has become widely accepted that fatherhood is undergoing significant changes and that 'new fathering' has replaced more traditional versions, there is still the evidence that the 'new father' remains rather opaque.

[62] But Georgas et al., in a 30-country comparison, found that on the dimension of family values: companionship in marriage; values and attitudes, discussing problems, talking about mutual interests, spending time together, understanding and tolerance, mutual respect and appreciation was a universal construct in all countries. They found only minor differences between the constructed country clusters (except the Scandinavian cluster which was the most progressive) (2004: 196).

[63] True as this may be in general, it is not uncontradicted. Jutta Allmendinger for example found counter evidence in Germany (Allmendinger 2008).

In Germany and many other countries, before the birth of a child many couples talk about a more or less balanced distribution of household duties. After the birth the duties are redistributed to the disadvantage of the woman/mother. Long-term practiced gender roles are seldom the result of active negotiation and conscious decision making processes between the partners, rather, certain patterns of the division of work seem to stabilise over time. Comparing German data from 1991 onwards, one can even notice an increase in this imbalance (Family Survey 2005). Because of the dual-breadwinner model in East Germany, fathers here are more involved in household chores even if this does not mean an egalitarian distribution.

In Bulgaria the unequal gender division of housework is a major problem and this is exacerbated by the low mechanisation of daily activities.[64] One might even find that the way in which women have to negotiate gender roles and family tasks contributes to control their fertility (as also in South Italy – see Oppo et al. 2000). The national report tells us that the reproductive attitudes and desires of Bulgarian men and women are different. The two-child model, as we saw, is equally accepted by Bulgarian men and women but men more often prefer the two or more-child model. The fact that Bulgarian women more often prefer a one-child model points to the highly unequal division of labour and the continuing dominant patriarchal structure of society.

The dual-provider family is the norm in Slovenia but a traditional division of labour is usually found in the home when it comes to unpaid household work. Results of surveys on time use are showing that unpaid domestic work is highly gender segregated, that is to say women do most of it (Hrženjak 2006). But Slovenian women seem very well aware of the unequal gender situation (Slovenian Public Opinion Surveys SJM 2003/2; SJM 2004/2) and in particular mothers of small children feel overburdened. Even men acknowledge that they do much less domestic labour than would be fair (Rener, Sedmak, Švab, Urek 2006). Both sexes agree that men should spend more time doing housework and care much more for the children (Rener, Sedmak, Švab, Urek 2005; 2006). Still, dissent between partners is rare and it seems that women internalise inequality even when think it is not fair (Kuhar in press). Although there is a trend towards a more active role of the father, the main changes concern values, perceptions and images of fatherhood rather than actual practice (Rener, Sedmak, Švab, Urek 2005; 2006). In addition to having a full workload, in over three quart of Slovenian cases it is exclusively the women who do most of the housework and childcare (Hrženjak 2006).

In the Netherlands, if parents can afford it, they would buy time through outsourcing as many tasks as possible, like laundry, professional cleaning, food orders and nannies for their children. That should not cloud the view, though, that most young parents do not have the money to do so extensively. If women complain that their partners do not fulfil sufficient household tasks, and men complain that their partners are always criticising them for their lack of support, eventually there is a tendency to stop arguing and to acquiesce to a more traditional division of household and care tasks. This is less true among high educated than lower educated women who tend to adhere overall to more conventional gender imagery.

In Italy, the innovative aspect of perceiving parenthood as a process of becoming, a progressive transforma

gender stereotypes (Leccardi & Camussi 2005). For example, the importance attached to male help in domestic chores both by young men and young women, decreased sharply between 1996 and 2004 (Leccardi 2007). The willingness and the desire expressed by both partners to be involved in care cannot be explained by the interchangeability of parental roles. For young parents the involvement in their life as a couple is considered as closely linked to personal satisfaction. But still, when fathers are not in the family, like in lone-mother families, women's family workload decreases (Rosina & Sabbadini 2005). In fact, according to all Italian research, the amount of time that fathers dedicate to domestic work and childcare is increasing, but still very little. However, Italian women are not content any longer with their partners only to be "there"; they seek their active involvement which includes psychological, emotional and everyday collaboration. Models tending towards gender balance spread faster among young women (as is true in all countries – albeit to different pace and degree) (Sartori 2002). Traditional couples are much more frequent in the South than in the North of the country. This is, one might add, a trend everywhere although the urban/industrialised – rural/agricultural divide is not as sharp in other countries as in Italy – least perhaps in the densely populated Netherlands. Besides that, there is evidence that cohabiting couples are more inclined towards egalitarian gender roles than married ones (Pinnelli et al. 2007), mainly because of the 'modern' values of the women (rather than of the men) who decide not to marry but to cohabit.

Although evidence suggests that overall gender roles and childcare remain traditional in the UK with the mother being the prime caretaker of the children and have a smaller involvement in the labour market than the father, gender role images have shifted dramatically over the past few decades. How widespread this is mirrored in practice is less clear but certainly among dual professional couples the male partner takes time out from his career to look after the children. In these cases it is most often the case that the female partner has the higher or more secure position (Stanley et al. 2003). A time budget analysis found that the increase of men's participation in domestic work is significant. This study highlights a reduction in gender inequality in the household; men from lower socio economic strata increase the amount of time they contribute to domestic work tasks, and position themselves next to the behaviour of the men from higher socio economic positions (Sullivan 2000).

But also here there is a sort of gendered unequal expectation of reciprocal help in the household tasks. Most women have low expectations as to the contribution they may expect of their partners and many men agree that the women have the more difficult parenting role and that men get away without changing that much when they have children. A traditional and stereotypical ideology about a gendered division of child caring responsibilities is still strong in the UK[65]. Nevertheless, Yaxley et al. (2005) found that about three quarters of mothers agreed that their partners were as confident as they were when caring for their child.

On the other hand, higher levels of gender equality go along with higher levels of expectation regarding the contribution of men (or society) to equal opportunities. This explains why Swedish young women are still not very satisfied with the social reality of a gender-balanced reconciliation of work and care (see Transitions-project Lewis and Smithson 2006).

[65] Evidence from research done in the early 1990s showed that women reported relatively high levels of perceived fairness given the degree of inequality of the division of family labor (Thompson 1991).

Sanchez and Thomson (1997), in older research, stress that it is not feminist or egalitarian attitudes that make fathers spur the process of more egalitarian gender participation, but rather a feeling of compassion, sympathy and support for their wives arising out of the experience of child rearing. As already mentioned, similar findings can be traced in recent Italian research and it would be interesting to deepen this aspect in a comparative international framework.

There is also a paradoxical way in which gender conflicts in the division and negotiation of housework seems to change, as may be illustrated by German research (Hearn et. al. 2003): while in the early 1980's women living with men were generally more likely than their partner to claim that they did more housework, some studies in the 1990s have shown the opposite. Men now tend to be the ones who claim they do relatively little, while women insist that the work is shared evenly (Frerichs & Steinrück 1994). More recent studies show that today women are generally more aware of this re-traditionalisation process than men (see also Schulz & Blossfeld 2006; Fthenakis et al. 2002). Apparently there is also a shift in the perception between housework allocation and domestic fairness, which has to be considered, as suggested by the "Distributive Justice Framework" developed in the theoretical framework of psychology (Thompson 1991). This framework states that in order to explain the persistence of gender inequalities in domestic labour, researchers must consider the factors that determine women's sense of fairness in close relationships.

Mismatch between fertility desires and fertility behaviour

Even if the ideal family size has declined over the past half-century in Europe, when young adults imagine their future, they aspire to have more children than they will actually have during their life course. This implies that in most of our countries the ideal number of children diverts from the real number of children (Testa 2006). However, as highlighted by Jane Jenson (Jenson 2006): these discrepancies exist in both directions – there are under-attainers and over-attainers – although the former are a much stronger group. Her argument is that from a quality-of-life-perspective, this double direction has to be taken into account.

Recent research conducted as part of the 2002 Eurobarometer highlights some of the reasons of this 'fertility mismatch'; respondents aged 25 and over were asked to give the reasons why they had fewer children than they wanted when they were aged 20. Looking at women's responses, health and relationship factors (own health, partner's health, and problems with the partner) account for about one third of the reasons. Financial problems are less prominent among women than health problems. However, when a number of other factors that are closely related to financial problems are taken into account (such as the cost of children being too high and problems with accommodation), obstacles of a broadly economic character seem to make up the most important cluster of reasons (Fahey & Spéder, 2004, see also Jenson 2006). A recent comparative study came to a slightly different conclusion: it identified the degree of equality between women and men in a society as the most important loading factor on the realisation of the wish to have children (Kröhnert & Klingholz 2008).

The ideal of most young parents is still, as it was for their parents, to have two children[66] while statistics show that this wish is not fulfilled for the majority of parents. For example, two-thirds of Slovenian young people are negatively inclined against one-child families while in Italy about the same percentage as in Slovenia are negative, a forth are positive about having only one child (Spéder 2006: 76). The reason probably is the difficulty to combine a career and a family which is particularly severe – in feeling and practice – among Italian women. At the same time, young Italians (18-34) expect to have two children despite Italy having one of the lowest total fertility rates in Europe.

Slovenian and Italian researchers point out that although young people desire to have children in the future; the actual decision to start a family is tied to so many social and personal conditions and barriers that the gap between their wishes and reality is large. It is in these two countries that young men stay for an extensively long period of their adulthood in their parental homes where they are "cradled" by their mothers and expect the same of their future wives. Italy shows the highest levels of prolonged dependency, suggesting a widespread and deep-seated "postponement syndrome", as Giovanni Sgritta calls it (Sgritta 2002). And especially in the Italian case the centrality of marriage for family formation and also as a prerequisite of a stable job remains a persistent feature (Barbagli et al. 2003).

In Bulgaria young adults put children among their highest personal values and consider them necessary for achieving completeness in life. In a recent survey (Belcheva, 2002) over two thirds of young respondents declared the two-child model as their own reproductive ideal, while less than 10% considered it best to have one child and 1.5% - to have no children at all. The majority expressed a feeling of emotional and moral discomfort that they could not have as many children as they want to – mainly for economic reasons and distrust in the future development of the country (Belcheva 2002).

According to a recent study on young people in their twenties and thirties, carried out in the UK, the great majority had or wanted to have children, but one in five women in their thirties does not have children, and of these women, half said they did not want children. One of the reasons suggested for having fewer children is what has been called "consumption smoothing": young adults want to have enough income to have a child without foregoing consumption (Stanley et al. 2003). Another study carried out in the UK confirms that while it is common to believe that men have more children than women – since their fertility period is longer – the reality is the opposite. The proportion of childless men is now higher than among women, at all ages (Burghes et al., 1997: 17).

The longstanding hypothesis that early socialisation exercises a strong influence on fertility motivations and desires is supported by recent research (Heiland et al. 2007). Using West

[66] The desired family size of young European adults is two, for both males and females, but interestingly, males were somewhat less clear on this question than females: more than a quarter of males were in one of the 'don't know' or 'didn't think about it' categories compared with about 18% of females. Furthermore, males were more likely to say they had wanted no children than females, and this again may partly be taken to mean that they were less likely to have thought seriously about the question. However the difference between males and females was slight, with a mean desired number of children among males of 1.99 and among females of 2.02 (Fahey and Spéder, 2004).

German panel data constructed from the 1988 and 1994/95 wave of the DJI Familiensurvey, they found considerable variation in the total desired number of children across respondents (this number changes in up to 50% of the cases). Desired fertility is more likely to change among young Catholics and respondents with higher education, while being raised in an "intact family" and with greater financial resources. As conjectured, background factors and early experiences tend to affect total desired fertility.

Goldstein et al. (2003) also on the basis of Eurobarometer 2001, provide data about the number of children men and women judge as ideal, and the actual number they expect. It shows that men in general want fewer children than women but that the difference between what men want and what women want are smallest in the Netherlands (almost equal!) and widest in Germany.[67] If we look at what both, men and women expect, the same differences occur.[68] Interestingly in the Netherlands and UK as opposed to Germany, the ideal and expected number is assessed at above reproduction level. These countries divert in family policies, available crèche space and also in family ideology. In Bulgaria the two-child model is equally accepted between men and women, however, men more often than women want two or more children (Stefano & Dimitrov 2003), while in Slovenia young people desire 2-3 children.

Most people across Europe have a negative view of childlessness and disapprove of one-child families. Regarding the manifold factors which have to be taken into account and have to be combined according to national cultures, MacKellar (2006) concludes: "We really do not understand why fertility in Europe is currently so low." (p. 355; see also Spéder 2006: 75). According to the regularly quoted theory of "second demographic transition", countries which score high on post-materialistic values have lower fertility rates than those with lower scores. But the reverse is actually true. Lower fertility is found in countries considered less advanced in the second transition process, not only in the southern countries of Europe but also in Germany. "In fact, we may just consider that there is no empirical evidence of a relationship between a country's degree of post-materialism….and the period level of fertility." (Cordón 2006: 49). Italy adds to the puzzle: it diverts from negative opinions surrounding childlessness among young people by producing extraordinary high positive scores (24.5 % against, for example, 4.1% in Slovenia – Spéder 2006: 75). Again, the difficulty to combine career and family might explain the high score.

From the viewpoint of demography, especially the discrepancy between one-child and two-child families, it is noteworthy that in none of our countries the figure of the latter exceeds 16% (Slovenia) and drops even to a meagre 9% for Germany (a country which is known for a "culture of childlessness" and child-unfriendly climate) while most young people would like to have two children. If "most" in most countries means 80% or more, this discrepancy is dramatic and might make policy makers think harder about a child and family friendly policy.[69]

---

[67] DE: 1.38 (vs. 1.72 for women); NL: 2.07 (2.08); UK: 2.33 (2.42) (Knijn et al. 2006: 187).
[68] DE: 1.32 (1.67); NL: 2.02 (2.00); UK 2.42 (2.39) (Knijn et al. 2006: 187).
[69] A recent UNICEF-study (2006) brought big country differences to light about the life situation of children according to material well-being, health, education, relationship with parents and peers, lifestyle and risks. The Netherlands scored internationally the best. It occupied the 1st place of 21 included industrialized nations. Great Brita91.8114 100.44 Tm(e58)Tj310..42 10.02 373.81637610(9ude)Tj10.02 0 0 10.610.02 0 0 10.02 531509.7386 111.9 Tm(k)T8 159

Jane Jenson (2006), in an insightful article, warns against mono-causal explanations of actual and desired numbers of children. She states, first, that the younger the women of prime child-bearing age, the smaller the gap between actual and desired children, but that is widening particularly in the EU-15 and to some degree also in the AC-10. Secondly, that men and women do not diverge greatly in terms of desired number of children. However, "the widening gap between ideal and actual fertility turns out to be a consequence of a falling incidence of over-attainment of fertility rather than a rising incidence of under-attainment. It therefore reflects an increase in women's ability to avoid excess childbearing rather than a decrease in their ability to reach their ideal family size. The gap between ideal and actual fertility is on average arising out of an amalgam of quite different components. This is made up of a majority who attain their ideal number of children, a minority (usually around one third) who fall short of that ideal, and a small minority who over-attain their ideal. The problem of attaining fertility ideals is two-fold, it is a problem of too much and too little, rather than just of too little" (p. 159).

From a different angle, Jane Lewis (2006/2007) also warns against mono-causal explanations by stating that it would be a dangerous political misconception to assume that a policy intended to make a better balance between care and work, would automatically lead to more children per woman (the US, with less social policy in this respect, nevertheless have higher fertility rates).

Postponement

For both dimensions, ideal/real childbearing age and number of children, the implications for demographic and family politics are obvious. The fact that women give birth to their first child only in their late twenties or early /middle thirties and that men seem to be reluctant to start or enlarge a family, influences the chances for a second child; many older first child mothers (less so men) would like to have a second child but will not get pregnant anymore.

As An-Magritt Jensen (2001) highlights in a recent study from the Netherlands, the investments made in children are equivalent to the price tag of a luxury car. It is named "the Porsche option" (Kalle et al. 2000). Who wants a Porsche and who wants a child? The study finds that men prefer the Porsche. Women want a child sooner, men want to postpone. Women want a third child more often; men tend to take "a blocking position". The conclusion drawn is that "Male power in decision making [therefore] seems to be mostly blocking or postponing power. The decision for parenthood, therefore, is in the first place a decision for motherhood" (Jensen 2001: 6).

German research has found that the major reasons for the postponement of starting a family are anticipated family duties, mutual interests and role models of parents. If these attitudes differ in a partnership, couples postpone having children (Keddi 2003; Friedrich & Remberg 2005). Childlessness is discussed as a way of conflict management: the desire to have a child is postponed until the biological border has been crossed and then given up due to the precarious job situations of the woman or both partners.

Knijn et al. (2006) provide data on the basis of 2001 Eurobarometer for three of our countries: Germany (East and West), UK and the Netherlands about male nuptiality, fertility and childlessness. On the basis of the Eurobarometer 2001 and their own interview study they could clearly relate the reservations of young men towards family building to an ever prolonged phase

of economic insecurity. Male nuptiality has been eroding more than that of women, falling below female rates (Coleman 2000). UK men divert from the pattern; they (and their female partners) are younger than their counterparts in other (Western) countries and produce lower rates of deferred parenthood or childlessness on account of higher proportions of low skilled young people, resulting in higher rates of teenage parents.[70]

There are social and biological limits to the delay of childbearing. The perception of normative age limits to fertility postponement was common in the past and continues in some contexts. In the Northern Italian area, Billari and Micheli (1999) found that 90% of the respondents perceive an age deadline for childbearing. Average age deadlines range from 40.4 years to 41.4 years, not unlike similar estimates obtained by Toulemon and Leridon (1999) for France (Billari et al. 2007).

Transition to second child

The fact that women give birth to their first child only in their late twenties/early or middle thirties influences the chances for a second child; many older first-child-mothers would like to have a second child (so would their partners, albeit not so urgently), but will not get pregnant anymore.

In the Netherlands, the birth rate is 1.9. Although young people think the ideal age to get a first child is 26.4 years (Raad voor de Volksgezondheid en Zorg, 2007), women actually give birth to their first child at a mean age of 29.4, five years later than in 1970. They also plan their second child much later than some years ago (CBS 2007). But one-child families are rare (6%) while two children are the (desired) norm (50%); 40% of all families have three children (4 children: 4%) (CBS 2005). Non-western migrants start (larger) families more often and at younger age, but also in this group mean birth age has increased.

In Germany, 50% of west German mothers and 25% of east German mothers have their second child before the first child is five years old. The family survey refers to a “crisis of the second child” (p. 63). Women often have a second child when the partner is very well educated and brings home a decent salary. With the birth of the second child, a sound work-life balance becomes rather unlikely for women. Today, especially in East Germany, having a second child creates problems. Taking past norms into account, this is astonishing as the three-children-family used to be the social political model in the GDR. Therefore, at least two children were the norm. As a matter of fact, the decision to have only one child is less often taken voluntarily and is generally the result of family unfriendly conditions.

In Bulgaria the decision to have a child is associated with long-term costs and uncertainties that significantly intervene in a household’s economic situation and social relationships. In order to make such a decision, women should be aware of what access they have to the necessary amount of resources. The intention to have a second child also depends on the employment situation: the unemployed, those in education or inactive postpone the birth of a second child or do not plan this event at all.

[70] The mean age at the birth of the first child for the male cohort 1952-1966 was 26.4 (24.3 for females) in DE; 26.8 (25.4) in NL; 25.3 (23.6) in UK (Knijn et al 2006: 185).

In Italy, for the generations born around 1960, the incidence of childless women or women with one child is greater than the incidence of women with two children[71]. Interestingly, among couples with one child, women's willingness to have another child is not shared by their partner in one case out of three (Menniti and Palomba 2000). It therefore appears that younger generations increasingly rarely decide to have two children. Also, young parents' choice to have a second child often comes after careful consideration of their experience with the first one. In particular women reflect on the actual sharing of family responsibilities, on the availability of external support (both informal and public-sector), and on the difficulty of achieving a satisfactory work-life balance.

In general, in all the countries, the decision to have a second child strongly depends on the age of the partners – women who had their first child by the age of 30 significantly more often plan a second child than those who had the first child at the age 30 to 34. Low educated women have their first child earlier than higher educated women. By comparison, higher educated women plan their children and rarely get accidentally pregnant. High educated women are by then on top of their career, and so are their partners. They will now have to look for new care arrangements for their two little children and will have to be even more resourceful to manage their lives.

The Dutch report makes note of the phenomenon of peer pressure among young parents (mothers) for getting a second child: if most of your best (girl) friends enlarge their families with a second child, this sets behavioural norms. In Italy, research tells us that as far as reference groups are concerned (parents, siblings, and peer groups), they tend to have an influence on the decision of whether to have children at all rather than on the propensity to have a second child.

If we focus on the gendered division of labour inside the couples, there is evidence that, if the allocation of roles within the parental dyad is already well-established, there are no further changes after the birth of the second child. But the shift towards a more traditional relationship within the couple is not confined to the distribution of occupational and family obligations. The acquired responsibility of mothers for the whole family is also reflected in causal explanations for the onset of pregnancy. While the childless partners consensually attribute the decision of not having children in an egalitarian way (same influence of both partners), parental couples expecting a further child consensually attribute the responsibility for this event to the woman (Kalicki, Fthenakis & Peitz, 1999).

Abortion issues

Abortion is legal in all countries involved in our research. However in Germany, since an amendment to the law in 1993, even in the first three month of pregnancy abortions are illegal, yet no criminal charges are brought forward. Abortion is not considered as a main form of contraception anymore, except in Bulgaria, where a high number of abortions is linked to the lack of sufficient information on modern methods of contraception and mostly lagging cultural patterns (Philipov, 1999).

[71] In Italy, the two-child family started becoming a popular family size among the cohorts born in the late 1930s (Santini 1995 quoted in Rosina & Sabbadini 2005) and started declining with the cohorts born in the late '60s.

Analysis conducted in Slovenia and in Italy found that a relatively high percentage of women would keep a baby if governmental financial support was higher (conversation with dr. Bojana Pinter, daily newspaper Dnevnik, 8th Jan 2007; Billari and Dalla Zuanna 2006). In Italy, the law that introduced a subsidy for large families with at least three underage children brought an increase of 25% on the probability of giving birth to a third child, and a decrease of 13% on the probability of abortion of the third child (Billari and Dalla Zuanna 2006).

Interviews with English young women who had experienced an unplanned pregnancy showed that many young women had relatively few dilemmas about deciding what to do. Those whose background and experience led to a strong belief that their future life would centrally include activities such as higher education and a career were clear and decisive in their choice for abortion. By contrast many of those who continued their pregnancies perceived motherhood in a more positive light, whereby it did not appear to interfere with plans for the immediate future and in fact could be perceived as an opportunity to take personal responsibility. A significant minority found the decision more difficult and among those who adopted abortion explained their decision by referring to future plans, lack of financial independence and the absence of a stable relationship (Lee et al, 2004).

6.4 Work-life-family balance[72]

Daily negotiations in families always include the negotiation of parents' work-life-family balance. Actually, as pointed out by the large volume of studies on this issue, the areas of work and life respectively work and family are very imbalanced, which always leadsture10 0 122

In our other partner countries, the part-time-model is not so widespread. Slovenian and Bulgarian women know that they will stay involved in full-time employment after the birth of their child. Italian women, as well as Slovenians and Bulgarians, do not have good access to part-time employment, and so decide either to work full-time, or stop working all together. About 57% of Italian mothers are employed (ISTAT–CNEL, 2003), but there are big regional differences: in the South, 25% of mothers stop working; in the North it is 15%. In the South labour market restrictions combine with a very traditionally orientated way of life among couples.
In Germany the situation is different. According to the LBS-study only every second woman is gainfully employed 18 months after having given birth. There are differences between west and east, 56% of mothers in the West but only 42% in the East have quit their jobs (at least temporarily) after the birth of the first child. In Bulgaria, Slovenia and also in East Germany the reservation against new work-life-models is high. Young mothers in East Germany still tend to aim to return to the labour market much more so than West German mothers and also work more often full-time.

An important factor which impacts on the work-life-family is parental leave regulations. It differs across European countries and leads to different role allocations in families. In all our partner countries women make use of parental leave and risk a break in their working careers. Different involvement in work and parenting therefore begins with differences in access and the use of parental leave. If they can, almost all mothers take up maternal leave while fathers less frequently are inclined to do so. This does not mean that fathers would not like to be more involved in the fathering process; it simply means that institutional changes are slower than cultural ones. In Germany, for example, also in the Netherlands, organisations have been founded to offer professional advice how they can arrive at more flexible working hours or how to convince their boss that they want to take up paternity leave. In the UK fathers are overwhelmingly in support of the concept of transferable parental leave, which is not currently available in the UK. In Slovenia, the obligatory part of the paternity leave (15 days after the birth of a child) seems to be effective, and fathers are actively involved in family life during that period whereas in Bulgaria the dominant family culture does not see fathers as capable of taking care of small children (see also Cousin and Tang, 2004, for a comparison between NL, SE and UK).

The gender pay gap and gender discrimination, even if with major differences, still exists in each country. Even if they are better educated they would have to suffer such drawbacks (see Gershuny 2000; McRae 1993).

Working cultures

Paradoxically, it is the Europe-wide establishing “business culture” (Kovacheva 2007, Report Bulgaria) which brings about changes of traditional gender roles dissolving the boundaries of the male normal biography (see Böhnisch 2003). On one hand, that leads to a convergence between the genders and a more even balance between the areas of work and family. On the other hand, business culture demands that women and men make themselves fully available for the enterprises (see Jurczyk & Lange 2002). Transition research in Bulgaria shows that managers and employees have accepted the values of business efficiency, commitment to work, long hours-culture and loyalty to the company.

All over Europe one can make out a trend towards more flexible and mobile life and work concepts. Young and committed employees are perticularly affected by this trend – the preferred age to reproduce and build a family. There is an ongoing FP 6 project on "Job Mobility and Family lives in Europe", which focuses on this new demand (Schneider & Limmer 2007). In the UK, "shift parenting" is quite common: where the mother leaves home to go to work when the father comes home to look after the children – and vice versa.

In Bulgaria and East Germany work related mobility is high: young people leave their home regions and emigrate to the west with more promising labour markets. Well educated young women in the South of Italy will have to leave their region and move to the North if they want to find work in accordance with their educational qualifications and may still not be able to develop a satisfactory work-life-family balance because their partners stick to their male role pattern.

In the Netherlands the generally short distances involved make "biographical compatible" variants possible. "Split families" with one parent working in another country are on the increase, especially in high status jobs or, on the contrary, in the case of migrant families where one partner works abroad.[73]

"More time wanted!" is a universal outcry of young parents which echoes throughout Europe. Practically all studies dealing with the reconciliation of work-life and family note that young parents are under enormous time pressure and would want more time to spend with their children. Fine-Davis et al. (2004) for example found among their sample of Danish, French, Italian and Irish young parents that 59% would like "more time" and 16.5% would like "much more time" and a European-wide survey among the 25-39 age group which includes most parents with young children, reported a greater desire for more free time (personal time) (Eurostat 2001: 224).

The Transitions-project (Lewis & Smithson 2006) clearly indicated the relevance of the working culture. They could show through in-depth case studies that even in countries with an assumingly high awareness for gender equity it is not at all taken for granted, that general attitudes transfer into working place realities. Even here, a lot depends on the professional sector and on explicit organisational rules (Bäck-Wiklund and Plantin 2005).

Blurring boundaries between private and working life

An increasing time dilemma in modern society is considered by an approach on "blurring boundaries" (in German: Entgrenzung). Blurring boundaries can be found in every aspect of life: in the areas of life and family, but also in the area of education, leisure etc., which affects all ages and genders. Triggers of blurring boundaries are rationalisation processes and dynamics of the branch of production. This process, however, does not lead to more space and time for individuals. Instead, people have to deal with enormous problems of coordination between given objectives and subjective desires and needs. In the end, there is less and less "free time" available.

[73] This situation becomes common also within the EU-countries: Polish mothers commuting between their home city and their work as cleaning women or care givers for old people in western European countries.

German studies which deal with the compatibility between work and family life looked into second birth risks in West Germany and France controlling for educational level. Köppen (2004) showed that the second birth risk correlates with the mother's educational level. The effect is especially distinct in France. In West Germany, the professional status of the husband or male partner becomes more and more important. "In West Germany, where work and family life are rather incompatible, women often have to make decisions between an employment career and motherhood as two exclusive life options. In such a situation it is primarily the partner's economic situation that influences fertility" (Köppen 2004, p. 1). For women, the moment of actually pursuing a professional career splits the work-life-balance into a couple relationship and work, making both mutually exclusive.

A German qualitative-biographic study by Behnke and Meuser (2003; 2005) came to similar conclusions for dual career couples. Highly qualified women tend to look for highly qualified partners. "Educational homogeneity" (Köppen 2004) seems to find its expression in the well-educated strata. Dual career couples are marked by a high commitment towards their jobs and careers. The same is not necessarily true when it comes to family matters. The desire to start a family develops into a "child project" (Behnke & Meuser 2006), the couples of this study were impressive in terms of the rational ways in which they described their strategies to make this project work. Women here typically take on the greater part in caring, although often, the "decision" is against having children.

For dual career couples, as well as other couples, the blurring boundaries between job and family have similar effects. The operative logic of structure and action crucially influences practices within the family (Behnke & Meuser 2006, p. 13). When the career plans of the two partners "cross", the work-life-balance tends to shift to the disadvantage of the family or to starting a family. When it comes to inner-family negotiation of the work-life-complex, the course of one's career plays a very important role. The Yoyo-isation of transition into work makes family planning more hazardous and delays starting a family. Highly flexible and atypical career courses make negotiation of gainful employment and care work more difficult. A safe working career of the husband endangers egalitarian partner concepts; precarious work lead men to invest even more in work while women tend to invest more in the family when faced with the same conditions (see German Report, Böhnisch & Menz 2007; Beckmann 2007).

6.5 Specific aspects of young parenthood

Work-life-family balance of young parents with migrant or ethnic minority background

There is a lack of material on how parents with a minority ethnic background organise their family day-to-day life and how they deal with the complexities of work-life-balance. Throughout our research countries we find different ways of migration and migration cultures. Established migration cultures are subject to other family dynamics than multicultural families. In the UK as well as in the Netherlands, parents of minorities seem to simply go with the territory in regards of the social or family image. In Bulgaria there is more opposition between the Bulgarian population and minority ethnic communities, in particular the Roma. Whereas in West Germany, especially in the big cities, families with an ethnic minority and/or migrant background are well

integrated, minorities in East Germany find it harder to do so. These families have to find a balance between keeping their own identity and dealing with new possibilities.[74]

When taking a closer look at family life, various negotiation modes are to be found within the respective minority ethnic groups – between genders and generations, between areas of work and care, between country of origin and host country. It is primarily women who strive for integration and therefore are responsible for starting a modernisation process in the family. Of course these processes have to be qualified not only between but also within minority groups. In Bulgaria, the two main minority groups are the Turks and Roma, but they adhere to very different norms and forms of family life. In the UK, African Caribbean families live a comparably individualised life. While in the public discourse the high rate of single motherhood among Caribbean's is considered to be problematic, Indians and African Asians are considered to live rather traditional family lives (arranged marriages not precluded). In the Netherlands, there is a special group, mainly from Turkey and Morocco, who come as „marriage migrants". In the German report, the strong positions and dominant attitudes of Eastern European women and mothers about gender roles and distribution of work are mentioned. These women had a good education in their home countries; they normally formed a dual-breadwinner household. They can therefore look back at a work biography which they want to continue and their self image contrasts sharply with mainstream images (prejudices) of foreigners. Strong family and/or religious bounds have the effect that these women feel rejected in their host country.

For families with a migrant background, security and long-term residency are of great importance because decisions such as marriage, forming a household, birth of children and children's education are made within the context of a long-term planning perspective. The migration process often has to be viewed as a family project; the migration situation causes an increase of inner-family tasks and decisions. In terms of agency and future parenthood this means that individualistic and traditional strategies merge. Moments of negotiation and traditionalism exist next to each other. In the reports, obstacles, counter trends and a growing polarisation between minorities and majorities are mentioned, not least in the Netherlands which for a long time stood out for its tolerant attitudes towards foreigners and newcomers (du Bois-Reymond 2008), but today reveals a backlash in the public discourse. All these social trends influence efforts of integration and individualisation and consequently the lives of young parents with a migration background.

Making new fatherhood?

Scholars have noticed a trend of "new fatherhood". The scientific and public discussion about the new-father phenomenon takes place in all western countries. Subject of the discussions are changes in the work-life-family balance ushering men into more active fatherhood roles with their baby children. In the former east-bloc countries there is a different father discourse. In Bulgaria and East Germany the "absent father" is made the subject of discussion. Although in these countries "new fathers" are also put high on the political agenda (for example in Slovenia), but men seem to hesitate in taking over a more active father role.

[74] It has to be considered, that Ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds are not the same and are differently discussed in the respective discourses.

There is a contradiction in all countries between the reality of working and the business culture of modern societies and the concept of active fatherhood. Bearers of inner-family change are still, throughout Europe, more typically women. According to a British study of mothers from ethnic minorities they put a lot of pressure on their partners when it comes to take over care work (see UK-Report, Biggart 2007, after Yaxley et al. 2003). Also in Germany women with a migration background look for a fast integration and confront their husbands with new father/men images (see German Report, Böhnisch & Menz 2007, after 6th Family Report; Bereswill 2006).

So what is true about new fatherhood? How real and negotiable is it? Is it really wanted? And by whom? Qualitative studies tell about a growing sensitivity among males concerning childcare and being emotionally involved in the family. But in order to establish new fatherhood, social actors and institutions must be supportive. All over Europe new progressive programs are started and laws are issued which give incentives for fathers on parental leave (for a recent example see the German "Erziehungsgeld"). In the everyday life of families men tend to take up more room when it comes to their personal matters (work-life balance in a male perspective) or in taking over care-work ("doing things for others"). In the Dutch report, a lively interest of fathers in their partner's pregnancy is mentioned. The same holds for other (west) European countries, whereas in Slovenia many men become rather active immediately after the birth of a child, but return to traditional concepts of gender soon after. The majority of German and British fathers increase their working hours after the birth of a child; this can be a way to engage for the family but really reinforces a gendered task division, especially if the young mothers decrease their working hours. From the perspective of working fathers it is by "going for a career" that they make possible or stabilise the family situation (see Behnke & Meuser 2005).

Some signs of change are visible, but they are still contradictory. Furthermore, everyday behaviour does not seem to be oriented towards a real shared responsibility for childcare and upbringing between men and women. Hardly any other phenomenon illustrates the discrepancy between the image and the reality of modern parenthood so much.

Teenage parenthood

Starting a family "too early" or "too late" – both variants bring about difficulties when integrating children into one's life plan. Countries deal differently with teenage-motherhood. Most often teenage mothers are mentioned as part of single mothers. In the UK teenagers with children are at the centre of academic and public discussions. In Italy, too, very young parenthood is discussed in the framework of changes of family forms and the increased emergence of one-parent-families. In Bulgaria, teenage motherhood is discussed and even scandalised from a racist perspective: Roma are blamed for starting families at a very early age and having (too) many children. Where ever this phenomenon is dealt with in public or research, teenage motherhood stands for the disapproved of exception rather then the accepted role. The very young mothers (and fathers) find themselves stigmatised in various and controversial ways. Latest qualitative studies from the UK, Germany and Slovenia show that the individuals are aware of the (negative) discourses around them.

The British biographic pilot study "Pathways into Parenthood: Reflections from three generations of teenage mothers and fathers" by Hirst *et al* (2006) reveals the interplay of active agency and social ascription processes of young mothers and fathers. The study was designed to explore the

views and experiences of very young parents in three generations (young parents currently aged under twenty and those in their parents' and grandparents' generations). The questions put to the interviewees were about the transition into parenthood and dealing with being young parents, also about formal or informal support – with the following results: The transition process into parenthood is strongly problematised in society. In broader public, e.g. in school, teenage motherhood is perceived in terms of sexualisation. „Social policy issue is frequently overlooked for fear of 'encouraging' underage-sex by discussing it in schools" (Hirst et al. 2006, p. 14).

This influences young people's self-confidence when it comes to practicing Safer-Sex, taking advantage of public counselling or support services, etc. (ibid.) But it is not only school that is of little support concerning sex-education or coping with teenage pregnancies and respectively teenage motherhood; at the work place, too, reactions are unfriendly. "Mixed messages" set the tune: If teenage-mothers want to work, they neglect their children; if they do not want to work they are accused of being parasitic welfare-dependents. These young mothers are hardly ever allowed to negotiate their individual work-life-family balance; instead it is assumed as self-evident that they find themselves in a crises situation. These young parents are confronted with similar mixed messages when looking for a place to live, when looking for childcare facilities – they are always confronted with their youthfulness. Young fathers in particular talk about negative perceptions towards them from health services and care workers. Particularly problematic are these discriminations when it comes to young minority ethnic parents although it is this group in particular that hope that parenthood will have a positive effect on their lives. The study of Hirst does not only refer to ascription processes, it also points out often the neglected coping possibilities of young parents. Whereas pregnancy is perceived as an "initial shock", transition into parenthood is a more active process: "In contrast to the weak sense of agency displayed in relation to becoming pregnant, a much bolder sense of agency is evident in decisions to reject abortion, to take responsibility becoming a parent…" (Hirst et al. 2006, p. 5).

The longitudinal study[75] "When teenagers become parents..." (Friedrich & Remberg 2005) from Germany comes to similar conclusions. The interview study analysed the living situation of pregnant teenagers and teenage parents. The majority of teenage mothers and couples are successful in developing a positive attitude towards their children, they "grow with their tasks of being a mother" (ibid. p. 353). The majority of the interviewed young women lived in a partnership, about half of them with the father of their child. The young men were not only present but also willing to play an active role as a father. The authors of the study point to the high value of partnership, more or less independent of their parenthood, which united these young couples. Reasons for the "new responsibility" among young men can be found in general social developments such as growing individualisation and rationalisation tendencies and the necessity to organise one's biography (keyword: "planned parenthood").

It seems paradoxical that it is especially young mothers who, against their original ideas, push forward a kind of traditionalism in their biography and families. The majority of the interviewed young women do not succeed in keeping up their ambitions to work, which they talked about before the birth, under the new situation of being a young parent. Especially with the very young mothers resignation and insecurity are clearly recognisable. For some of these teen mothers,

[75] Study ordered by the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung des Bundesministeriums für Gesundheit, Deutschland (Federal Ministry of Health, Germany).

however, the new situation brings more stability and a clearer idea about future occupational perspectives. Although most young fathers and mothers show a great ability to organise their everyday life, and work on their young families, the study confirms that the transition to parenthood brings about "typical" traditional role models. About two years after the birth of the child it becomes apparent that despite great individual motivation and efforts only few mothers or couples succeed in upholding "initial" biographic plans and putting them into operation.

The trend towards individualised life and life plan does not obliterate the idea of "the right moment of time for a child" (Friedrich & Remberg 2005, p. 20). The young interviewees have clear ideas about the "right time" of starting a family and how to know when this will be. The majority view their parenthood as "very early" or "too early" or have to deal with an environment which considers it to early. Binde-Kögel describes early motherhood as a "compressed learning process" (Binde-Kögel 2006, p. 71). This might, at first sight, be true for parenthood in general, very young mothers however find themselves in a comparably more complex situation. Their behaviour and that of their child is examined by others "with a fine-tooth comb" (ibid., p. 69). It is rather typical that they find themselves between the needs of adolescents and the wish to be close to their child. "They are astonished when the 'mother instinct' and the right way of caring for a child don't come instinctively" (ibid., p. 71). However, very young mothers are often left alone with these feelings.

Same sex couples

Varying legal conditions about same sex couples in our countries[76] mirror national differences in recognition of homosexual couples and families, from invisibility (Bulgaria and Italy) to new normality (Netherlands). The study of Švab and Kuhar (2005) analyses the homosexual condition in Slovenia but not homosexual parenthood. In general the data show that Slovenian society is homophobic; gays and lesbians experience explicit and implicit forms of discrimination, even violence. Gay and lesbian young people retreat into private life where they are supported by friends and also their parents. The researchers found that task distribution in homosexual partnerships is more equal than in heterosexual ones, including parenthood. A quantitative part of the study showed that almost half of the sample would like to have a child, mostly through adoption; however, a qualitative part of the study (focus groups) revealed a great hesitation regarding the decision to have one's own child. This hesitation is due to the fears that a child would be exposed to the homophobic reactions of the society (Švab 2007). The majority of the respondents in the survey said that they would like to have their partnership registered (in 2003 this option was not available yet), however the number of subsequent partnerships registered is very low.

In Bulgarian family research, homosexuality is seen as one of the factors which account for low reproduction rates, besides high rates of abortion, the spread of HIV/AIDS, prostitution, juvenile

[76] In Bulgaria and Italy there is still no recognition for same sex couples; in Slovenia, the law covers property relations, the right and obligation to support the socially weaker partner and only partly inheritance rights. But same sex couples are not allowed to register their partnership. In Germany registered partners have the right to change their family names and qualify for same inheritance and tax exemption as married couples. They are allowed to joint custody and are authorized to adopt each others children. In the Netherlands since 2001 and in the UK since 2005, same sex marriages are legally recognized.

crime, and early and promiscuous sexual life (Mirchev 2005; Dinkova 2005). The values of young people on particular trajectories to parenthood (such as homosexuals) are totally ignored.

At the moment, it is impossible to know how many same sex couples live in Italy because of the lack of legislation[77] and official figures. There are a few recent studies on homosexual parents (Bottino & Danna 2005; Barbagli & Colombo 2001; D... aspect remains under cover in the wider research on parenthood. Recent research findings (Barbagli & Colombo 2001) stress how modern homosexual couples share a principle of equality. These homosexual couples confine a gendered behaviour (Saraceno et al. 2003), that is to say they show different orientations according to the sex of the couples (male homosexual couples or female ones). Indeed, an important conclusion of this research is th

concerning interests, behaviour and psychic well-being (Bos & Hooghiemstra 2004). A difference was found though between non-biological lesbian mothers and the heterosexual fathers. These women felt more obliged to justify their parenthood because they did not have a "blood line" with their child. Furthermore, these mothers had less traditional opinions about upbringing such as more self control and less conformist behaviour. They restricted their child less than the fathers did and on the whole, the well-being of children living in two-mother families did not differ from heterosexual families (Zevenhuizen 2005).

6.6 Research gains and gaps

Looking at "structured individualisation" from the side of individualisation, we find features which pertain to all our research countries, especially with the high value young people attach to a family. In general family formation is increasingly delayed, there are fewer children born, and in particular highly educated women tend to delay parenthood until it is too late ("perpetual postponement") or refrain from it altogether. And while young people may want to extend their childless life in order to have the extended benefits of consumption and youth culture, an overwhelming majority perceive themselves as future parents. This great desire of making a happy family life – different perhaps from their parents' lives but nevertheless strongly family oriented - is then step for step realised or frustrated through structural barriers and subjective motives and cultural traditions. Respectively the options young women and men have to deal with these traditions, to interpret them in their own way, to rework them, to emancipate from them.

We have shown that "transitions into "young parenthood" are intimately related to changing gender roles; it is almost impossible to talk about young parenthood without taking into account the dominant gender role ideologies in the respective countries. Everywhere, not only in those countries with a patriarchal tradition, there is a discrepancy between opinion and actual behaviour. While all (young) people claim that they are in favour of egalitarian gender roles and (thus) an equal share in childcare tasks, the actual behaviour soon changes towards re-traditionalisation. In no country is there complete agreement between gender equality and an equal share in childcare and labour market participation. Of our countries, the Netherlands are the most advanced in this respect with models of both partners working part-time and looking after the children. The UK also knows the model of equality of both parents working full-time and sharing family tasks in a spirit of solidarity; however, for both countries these equality models are not dominant. In other countries such as Italy, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Germany the bulk of childcare and domestic work is still left to women, no matter how strong they are involved in the labour market. In Germany, new regulations on parental leave might initiate some changes; but how deep and how sustainable such changes are, will need to be observed carefully over the coming years.

From a gender perspective it would be worthwhile concentrating on different groups of young adults:

- First, highly educated women with and without a desire for motherhood – and the circumstances that influence their wishes. There are two variants: on the one side is the career woman, who is so involved in her job and so ambitious that she does not consider children as an option. On the other side the career women who would love to have

children, but does not find the right partner in time and/or finds labour market conditions too disadvantageous.

- Second, and less in the focus of public attention, are highly educated men who refrain from founding a family. What are their motives, their anxieties, their preferred life-styles? Highly educated potential parents are of special interest for demographic developments and national and European policies to turn potential into actual behaviour as this group of educated parents is likely to produce educated children needed in knowledge societies.
- We are however not so much interested in the issue of human resources, as we are in the issue of the cultural practices of young parents; in the focus of our future research are therefore practices and concepts, young parents develop in different living arrangements. If we start from the assumption that culture is not only framing agency, but is also done and reworked by agency (see Pohl et al. 2007), these practices have to be explored in-depth. It is not sure, if new normalities are developing from these practices, but at least such practices are always struggling with and challenging normalities. Young parents reconciling higher education and parenthood, young parents reconciling the start of a career and parenthood, young parents equipped with different amounts of social, cultural and economic capital are therefore of high interest.
- It seems to be even more important, as we already know, that regional differences be taken into account within countries, between urban and rural sites. Cultures themselves do not represent closed or homogeneous settings, but are heterogeneous from the start and dynamic by nature. It would therefore be worthwhile to explore the regional panorama of "solutions" found for transitions into parenthood.
- We have not yet exploited the topic extensively of poor young families and possibly discernable cultures of poverty in our research countries. To discuss them only under policy measures, as we do in Chapter 5, is not enough. There are other minority groups of young parents about which there is little known, like same-sex couples with children or with strong desires to have children, teenage moms and dads, living in institutionalised settings etc.
- The discrepancy between opinion and actual behaviour in questions of gender is felt more painfully by young women than men because the balance of task division is always to their disadvantage. The phenomenon of the "new father" points to modernisation pressures to alter this imbalance but finds its limits with labour market conditions which discourage part-time work and financial conditions which would make two part-time incomes insufficient for the young family (Hobson 2007). In all reports we find anecdotal evidence – though little research – on the time pressures on young parents and complaints that existing work arrangements and childcare facilities are not flexible enough and therefore frustrate a satisfactory work-life balance. Frustration might go as far as limiting family size as a strategy for manipulating that balance.
- A first investigation into family imagery demonstrates strong motherhood ideologies which are an indication of imbalanced gender relations, but bursts begin to come. Media transmitted family imagery shows on the one hand the happy family with mother in fashionable clothes still in the centre and on the other the trouble-ridden couples and families which need and seek professional help because (young) mothers and fathers feel overburdened with the responsibility of upbringing and the "right" educational approach.

Into both these aspects of young parenthood more research is required (for an exception see Hannover & Birkenstock 2005). It would be worthwhile to venture into this area by studying popular advice literature and TV programs in the various countries. For example, in most countries there are similar TV programs broadcast about (young) families who struggle with the educational problems of their (small) children and who are advised by an expert (social worker; medical health person; social pedagogue) on how to solve the problems and get back to a happy and harmonious family life (see further Chapter 7). We should look carefully at en-gendering and de-gendering processes in the whole complex of imageries, which young women and men only partly can shape themselves. The complicated interplay of old and new ideologies (e.g. the "natural birth" and its potential stress for young females) need further exploration.

- Relatively little research has been carried out about men as primary care givers. In particular, a redefinition of masculinity in relation to high participation in housework has not been considered. Further exploration of the complex dynamics surrounding negotiations between women and men in relationships regarding care work (parenting and emotional work) is needed. For example, researching couples where the female partner is the long-term main earner, or young couples obliged to accept working times that do not allow for a traditional distribution of household chores.

- Very little is known about young parents from migrant backgrounds and how they navigate between the gender roles of their parents' culture and ideological norms and behaviours of the dominant culture of the country in which they live[78]. All the more interesting it would be to know more about negotiation processes in second and third generation families of the various cultural-ethnic groups in our countries.

For all these reasons, becoming a parent is not something that still happens self-evidently but is for most parents a carefully planned project. For highly educated couples that planning process has mostly to do with career considerations; for low educated and/or unemployed young people financial problems influence choices. The Bulgarian and Slovenian, but also the East German report highlights a delay or postponement of parenthood for economic reasons. From all reports it becomes clear that forming a family is increasingly perceived by young people as a choice that entails risk that they themselves have to shoulder. In none of our countries – independent of welfare regime – it seems that the cohorts of expectant parents feel sufficiently supported by institutions. Instead, they have to seek and find support from their parents and other kin. Evidently, the less institutional support, the more young parents are dependent on their family of origin; where intergenerational solidarity must compensate for a lack of state engagement.

In terms of our core focus, the transition into parenthood, we feel obliged to draw attention to one of the few extensive publications on the topic. Its title reflects the intention of the authors to research the process of becoming parents: "Paare werden Eltern" (couples becoming parents) of Fthenakis et al. (2002). The scientific perspective is individual- and social psychological rather than sociological, but all possible aspects of becoming parents are covered with refined methodologies and a review of existing German and English literature. Core issues are: planning a family, child wish - coping with pregnancy – re-traditionalisation of gender roles after having become a parent – fatherhood – housing situation and subjective satisfaction with housing in

[78] But consider the 2008 wave of the Generation and Gender Survey, http://www.bib-demographie.de/cln_090/nn_979622/SharedDocs/Publikationen/DE/Download/Materialienbaende/121b.html.

relation to parenthood – relationship between the generations, grandparents – satisfaction with partner after having become a parent and the social-psychological development of the child – gender roles and new male roles – prevention and intervention measures for young couples

Structural as well as subjective factors concerning learning processes of young adults/parents come to the forefront: changes on European labour markets, and what the "new" parent and worker are supposed to be and to adjust to. Education has become a key variable in adjustment to uncertain careers and life situations. Young parents have to invest in their children's upbringing early and with view to their future. The family is not a private affair anymore but is part of societal investments and expectations.

All this has to do with the *transformation from traditional industrial into post-industrial knowledge societies*. Much has been written about this transition which affects European societies and connects them with the rest of the world economies through processes of globalization.[79] While the concept obviously does not suggest the abolishment of industrial modes of production, it puts emphasis on the changes in industrial production that alter the needs of enterprises and leads to the extension and invention of new service sectors in banking and financial services as well as in the health, education, commercial and personal services, both in the public, semi-public and private sectors; among them childcare. On the one hand, this leads to the requirement for more qualified personnel to satisfy advanced industries and services; on the other the very same development de-qualifies workers and keeps them in low and badly paid positions doing routine and other unqualified work. Both, the high and low qualified are supposed to be flexible and prepared for continuous change within and between working fields (Sennett 2006).

Young parents are affected by these changes in two ways: as (potential) workers, facing uncertainty and the demands for flexibility (see below), and when they seek affordable childcare that is part of the new service economy.

The changes also imply a dual meaning of "lifelong learning" (LLL): while the concept suggests at first sight that continuous learning is advantageous for everybody and pays off, it does so only for certain groups and jobs and not for others. As social scientists have pointed out, in the neo-liberal stance of politics, the notion of LLL is used to put pressure on young adults to put efforts in their further qualification without justified hope of getting a (better) job (Field 2002; Coffield 2000; also Nicoll 2006). Young parents are caught by these ambivalent developments just as well.

Much youth and educational research has focused on the nature of social inequality as a result of the differential learning outcomes from formal education. *Cultural and social capital* play not only a decisive role in the formal educational system and determine the life chances of individuals but also influence later parental learning when it comes to gender learning, upbringing practices, negotiating work schedules with employers and partners, and using informal contacts and resources tp coordinate all these different tasks.[80] The chances and risks of social inclusion or exclusion of young adults and young families are determined to a great extent already in earlier life phases through successes and failures in learning trajectories.

In this chapter we explore the manifold aspects of "learning young parenthood". We begin by introducing sensitizing concepts which must help us grasp the complexity of the notion of

[79] For a thorough and at the same time critical evaluation see Ranson 1998.

[80] The last years it seems that the notion of social and cultural and network capital , and thereby the work of Bourdieu, experiences a revival in social research. See for others Field 2003; Bassani 2007.

learning in the context of changes to life courses, gender and generational relations, labour market demands and what it takes to make a work-life-family balance work (8.2). In what follows, we concentrate in first instance on three main areas: gender and intergenerational learning (8.3), learning concerned with employment (8.4) and learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings (8.5). We close with a short comment on research gains and gaps (8.6).

7.2 Sensitizing concepts

As youth studies do not get tired of emphasizing the modern life course has become ever more complex. Former step-by-step transitions have transformed into developmental tasks for young people that demand coping with many transitions simultaneously: work *and* further education; motherhood *in combination with* career planning; flexibility at work *and* creating a stable financial basis for the young family, etc. In young parenthood the simultaneity, not only of developmental tasks but simply managing the daily duties lead to constant time pressure: how to combine work schedules with parental duties, family obligations for aging parents, keeping up social contacts, and many more other activities and planning necessities. In that sense, all the various aspects of learning young parenthood are *transitional learning* without which young adults living in contemporary European societies cannot build a satisfying life.

The most important concept, threading through our whole project, is the dimension of *agency* in the life of young adults. We have defined and discussed this notion extensively in our interim paper "Youth – Actor of Social Change. Theoretical and empirical perspectives" (Pohl et al. 2007). Agency refers to the active use of one's own potentials to give meaning to one's present and future life; agency has to come to terms with structural opportunities and constraints in relation to biographical needs and capacities. It is immediately plausible that learning processes as they are initiated by individuals and proceed in various contexts – formal as well as informal – lie at the heart of agentic power.

It belongs to modern life that individuals must find a sound balance between the necessity of planning following transition steps and changing present conditions accordingly (i.e. from expectant to realized parenthood), and the acceptance of contingency which is a central feature of late modernity. In other words: social change demands of the subjects planning as well as a flexible attitude which may be better acquired by adhering to a philosophy of "situationalism" (Leccardi 2006). This is illustrated prominently with the career planning of women when they plan to become a mother but cannot foresee all consequences for their future career, or with young parents who are forced to anticipate future policies and developments when they reserve a crèche place long in advance, or plan to move to another neighbourhood with better schools before their child is even two years old. Dealing with the paradox of the necessity of planning and the impossibility of knowing the outcome, *anticipatory learning* in the face of uncertainty is perhaps one of the most stressful aspects of learning young parenthood.

Young parents often feel the ambivalence between biographical needs and structural restraints. A key competence to manage modern life inside and outside the family is the ability to negotiate one's own and others' interests. The *capacity to negotiate* determines to a large extent the agentic potentials of young adults. Individualized, and at the same time highly institutionalized societies demand from their members that they are able to make informed choices within the range of possibilities and opportunities offered in a specific context. Young men and women have to learn

parental roles, young women and mothers have to learn to fight for their rights on the work floor; young fathers might want to re-define narrow gender roles. *Gender learning* and *intergenerational learning* reflect changes in gender and generation relations as a consequence and outcome of modernization. Becoming parents is a crucial point in the life courses of young men and women and opens up new (battle-) fields to readjust gender roles, attitudes and daily practices. Cultural practices, ideological outlook and provision of support of one's own parent generation influence the agency space of young parents in supportive or contra-productive ways, as we have shown in our FATE study and discussed in the foregoing chapter (Biggart 2005).

A main field for negotiating concerns the *reconcilitation of work-life and family* which involves gender learning as well as learning to find and use all available resources which can ease the tension between family tasks and work obligations. As a matter of fact, most research done in the field of young parenthood and gender studies is concerned with discussions about obstacles for young parents – mothers – to create a viable balance in this respect as we have shown in previous chapters and also in the national reports. We pointed out that one severe research gap is nevertheless that there is a deficit of knowledge about the concrete negotiation processes in this respect, and the types of learning that are involved. We suggest the notion of *compressed learning* to analyze the consequences of unbalanced work-life-family balance and how young parents deal with the "rush hour of life". The use of media – *ICT learning* – in private as well as working contexts has become probably the most dynamic learning field for young adults and is of high relevance for young parents who use cellular phones and email to keep in touch with the family when at work, and with work when at home. Young parents utilise the internet for all kinds of issues and problems, they participate in chat rooms and web blogs and find attractive offers to buy and sell baby stuff.

When becoming and being a parent becomes less evident because of more uncertain and open life courses, one result is self-uncertainty: am I ready for parenthood? Do I do a good parenting job? How do I know that I am a good father or mother? Learning to come to grips with that uncertainty takes place by talking to friends and kin, going online, reading books and magazines about upbringing practices, looking for references and information, comparing one's own attitudes, wishes and practices with other young parents, forming reassuring networks and using modern information technology - those are consciously adopted strategies to reduce that uncertainty. We subsume all these different strategies under the notion of *self- and semi professionalisation* (see also Brannen and Moss 1998; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995; du Bois-Reymond 2001; Textor 2007). Both, self-professionalisation and semi-professionalisation add to, or replace, traditional and professional support systems. But the development is not unequivocally positive: the more information that is produced by the media about parental problems and the "best" solutions and practices, the more that this can also unsettles inexperienced parents and might even increase their feelings of inadequacy.[81]

In tandem with the ongoing pluralisation of lifestyles goes a pluralisation of upbringing styles; there is no longer one right solution and practice in late modern societies. On the individual level this could cause tremendous stress. It could – and does – make working mothers (rather than fathers) conscious of the possible negative outcomes of their educating style (do I have a "cry-

[81] A point in case was reported recently in a Dutch daily: since the Dutch version of the program "Super-Nanny", parents with "problem children" are now rushing to ask for official help because they get the idea that problems of upbringing can (only) be solved that way.

baby" because I did something wrong?). Again, the internet is used to exchange such problems with other young parents (mothers), but it also leads to the call for more professional help.

Internet communication is an individual as well as collective activity and therefore involves *peer learning*; mostly among the same generation and interest groups, for example father chat rooms. But face-to-face peer contacts are equally important (and may result from internet contacts) in the exchange of "parental knowledge" and produce collective solutions to individual problems, like organizing baby sitting, informing each other about legal rights and strategies against work floor discrimination, or moving together in one neighbourhood or house to concentrate mutual help. Virtual-learning in and through media use as well as in face-to-face social situations is a crucial form of coping with young parenthood these days.

An often neglected aspect of peer learning is *peer pressure,* for example when other young women friends are planning their following career steps more successfully than one self or when young couples plan their first or second child and set an example for one's own planning schedule. Peer pressure might also influence the decision to have or have not an abortion.[82] Qualitative interviews conducted in a British study showed for example that those young women whose background and experience led to a strong belief that their future life (and that of their female peers) would centrally include higher education and a career were clear and decisive in their choice of abortion. By contrast many of those who continued their pregnancy (as did their friends) perceived motherhood in a more positive light, whereby it did not appear to interfere with plans for the immediate future and in fact could be a positive development perceived as an opportunity to take personal responsibility (Lee et al. 2004).

In the framework of our 6-country study it is important to acknowledge the fact that there are different learning obligations and opportunities that are dependent on both national state and geographical-political area. For example, young mothers in southern Italy have completely different life-courses and life chances compared to their contemporaries in north Italy. Both women are faced with quite different learning opportunities and obligations in terms of gender learning and negotiating a work-life-family balance in and outside the home. Or take the case of East German young families who must learn to become mobile because they have less labour market opportunities compared to their contemporaries in West Germany.

Young adults and parents who live in transformation societies (BG; SI) are involved in adaptive learning contexts, whereby they have to adjust to western life-styles and standards, as in gender learning. Too big discrepancies in gender relations, between geographical regions and, perhaps most important, between groups with different migration backgrounds, may trigger off *counter-reactions*, like when women consciously resist gainful employment and work out neo-traditional mother ideologies, Italian or Bulgarian males refusing to adjust to modern gender values, or Turkish families re-emphasizing cultural values and upbringing practices of their countries of origin and consciously refusing assimilation. Although one might argue that rigid upbringing norms and practices are a reaction to their situation as immigrants and not so much a heritage of their cultural origin. Hanging on to traditional values, norms and practices should not only be

[82] Abortion is legal in all countries involved in our research. Except for Bulgaria, where a high number of abortions is linked to lack of information on modern methods of contraception and lagging cultural patterns (Philipov 1999), abortion is not considered a main form of contraception anymore.

regarded in negative terms though; they may also serve to stabilize identity as we learn from cultural studies.[83]

Intercultural learning also represents an important resource, although in the literature this concept has been predominantly confined in educational contexts. In view of the neglect of attention for the social situation of parents with migrant backgrounds, intercultural learning in a broader meaning can inform research on young parenthood. It should be remembered that intercultural learning has a long-standing tradition in Europe, incorporated in the work of the Council of Europe which has developed the concept and has applied it in non-formal education since its founding in 1949. Also the EU youth programs pay much attention to intercultural learning as a strategy to better understand and estimate cultural differences as a resource instead of reacting to them with resentments. Recently intercultural learning becomes more prominent in discourses about citizenship and the revitalization of urban space. Young parents can play an important role in revitalize run-down neighbourhoods through activating local politics, for example demand more and better crèches and pre-schools.

7.3 Gender and intergenerational learning

Much has already been said about gender and intergenerational relationships in Chapter 7. Here we add the following aspects:

It is known from youth and gender research that girls and young women are earlier and more concerned about the "combination problematic" than boys and young men, they are more inclined to choose "female" studies and occupations (preferably teaching and service jobs) rather than "hard-core" subjects such as the sciences and engineering, anticipating their future gender role as mother (and housewife). This was less the case in the former communist countries but may become more so in the further course of transformation. These choices are not all voluntary but based on prejudices – girls often perceived as not fit for studying science and high managerial jobs – and self-excluding attitudes as result of socialization in early and late adolescence (see here also Leccardi's studies in time perspective of young people, especially women – Italian national report Leccardi and Magaraggia 2007). By and large, when the mother generation of present-day young women have followed higher education themselves, (future) young mothers will have more examples of emancipation and female careers than previously and can learn from these models.[84] For young men this is less so: their fathers were, or are, full-time workers and career builders and did little family work, and neither will their sons, as time studies in all countries tell us (c.f. Fthenakis et al 2002). In *both* cases, model learning is involved. Still, as we have seen with the entrance of the "new father", present males begin to create alternative examples of role behaviour (consciously divert from their father-models). Gender-meaning giving processes are no longer solely the field of women studies but also of men's (Böhnisch & Winter 1993).

[83] Research shows that voluntarily immigrated families are much more willing to overcome cultural differences than families who were forced by economic necessity to immigrate; they would hold on more forcefully to their own cultural habits and norms (Stamm 2007).

[84] An investigation of McKinsey (Women matter, 2007) compared the percentage of women in fifty European top enterprises. Norway took the lead with 1/3 of female professionals. Of our countries, Bulgaria topped the rest with 20%, followed by UK and Germany (10%), the Netherlands (about 8 %) and Italy at the bottom with 2,5% (Slovenia not included). (Quoted in www.Intermediair.nl 15 February 2008).

How do the parents of young people transmit their own experiences of upbringing and dealing with child-related problems to their young adult children's families? We know of the warm and supportive relationship between the parent and child generation, but there is a deficit in our knowledge about the extent that (grand-) parents actively intervene in the upbringing or not, and whether there are conflicts between daughters and mothers (in-law) about diverging norms and practices. From our anecdotal evidence we get the impression that this is not the case. The daily pressure – and therefore the relief felt about whatever parental support is available – is great and there seems to be mutual acceptance about educational norms, values and practices even if they might diverge in some respects. In other words, there seem to be stable "cohort bridges" (Dykstra and Hagestad 2007: 22) between the generations. Also, as Palme (2006/2007) in an article on social welfare systems argues, there is (much) more financial and time investment transfer of the (grand) parent generation to the child/grandchild generation than the other way round. It should be mentioned that especially the present generation of grand*fathers* are fond of being emotionally and practically engaged in childcare, enjoying emotional closeness with their grandchildren that many of them did not have with their own children when they were small because of the then still rigid gender divisions in labour and care and corresponding imagery. Along this new cohort bridge male socialization enters the following generation of boys.

As we found already in our previous FATE research, intergenerational relations, while close in all countries, are steered more by material necessity in the south eastern countries and more by freely chosen association in central and northern countries Biggart 2005). Accordingly, different learning tasks for both generations are involved: while freely chosen relations in the context of more affluent societies invite both generations to work out individualized lifestyles and stimulate open discussion, also about topics of disagreement, in less affluent societies where young families are more dependent on the support of the older generation, it is harder for both to communicate possible differences in opinions and experiences (Stauber and du Bois-Reymond 2006; for BG see Kovacheva and Mitev 2004). Also, in the former countries, grandparents are less willing to take on obligatory baby sitting because they have their own life and activities and want to be free, while in the latter grandparents know that the young parents are dependent on their support and behave accordingly, even if that means less freedom for them selves. In those countries, the arrival of a (grand) child is perceived as an intergenerational family project in which each member takes an active interest and part in, creating embeddedness in kin-based exchange systems.

Gender and intergenerational learning may cause stress especially for young women in Italy and also in Slovenia if they have big ambitions to accumulate (much) more educational and social capital than their parents – and possibly their male partners. In Slovenia there exists a longstanding tradition of overburdened mothers and "cradled" children – mainly sons, like in Italy – which young ambitious women must learn to counter with their own life plans. The male Italians remain "cradled sons" of their mothers and want to be cradled by their spouses. Gender learning for them means trust in gender continuity which makes for extra sharp gender differences between Italian males and young females – while the mothers and mothers-in-law coalesce with their sons and sons-in-law. Nevertheless, young women are dependent on the support of their (in-law) families for baby sitting because of the work contracts for young mothers and because of rigid opening and closing times of kindergartens.

The UK is in many ways is located between the affluent and highly individualized (West-) German and Dutch societies, and also Slovenia on one hand and the south eastern countries like (South-) Italy and Bulgaria on the other. There exist in many aspects more traditional cultural roots which bind the generations together and transfer norms and practices of intergenerational support. The grandparents (grandmothers) of teenage mothers often play a major role in the care of their grandchild. Do they try to "teach" their daughters to do better in the future? Or, the other way round, will the teenage mother reproach her parents for not having done a good upbringing job themselves? Available studies indicate that "learning fatherhood" of the male partners of young (teenage) mothers is an integral part of this issue. The mother-in-law may form an obstacle for the engagement of the young father especially if the mother of their child still lives at home with her parents (Blunting and McAuley 2004; Quinton et al. 2002).

In the UK pronounced among better educated middle class young people, there is a greater emphasis on geographical mobility in order to advance careers Brannen 2003). With older more educated mothers not only is there more frequently a greater degree of geographical distance between young parents and grandparents but the frequent deferment of parenthood leads to a wider spectrum between the two generations. In this respect young mothers tend to rely on other sources of informal and non-formal learning in relation to parenthood. Geographical distance between the generations is less pronounced in more deprived areas, and in particular in the case of single teenage parents, grandmothers frequently provide major caring and support roles for younger mothers. In such cases there tends to be a smaller gap in the age distance between mother and parent and a greater acceptance of assistance with parenting styles between generations.

Likewise strong cultural traditions associated with minority ethnic groups combined with weak educational credentials may help explain the higher level of intergenerational learning reported among Turkish and Roma groups than among Bulgarian families as well as such families in our other countries. The higher educated, the more likely it is that the distance between the generations is greater and intergenerational contacts less frequent and close. On the other hand, research shows that on the whole the geographic mobility of the younger generations is far less great than popular opinion will have it (Mulder & Kalmijn 2004).

What we learn from these examples is that gender and intergenerational learning takes place differently in various groups and generational constellations and has therefore many connotations and meanings. Recently more research attention is given in the Netherlands (Distelbrink et al. 2005; Portegijs 2006) and Germany (Sixth family report 2000; Boos-Nünning and Karakasoglu 2006; Lutz 2007) to *inter- and intra differences* between and within ethnic minority groups instead of making global statements about more traditional gender and generational relationships, thereby confirming stereotypes. The UK has already a longer research tradition for these questions (Berthoux 2000; Dale et al. 2006) while in Slovenia, Italy and Bulgaria attention to such differential research is largely absent.

All parents want to be "good" parents, and it would be worthwhile studying different learning approaches aimed at reaching that goal. What is globally known from youth and family studies is that in highly individualized countries the partner is the first and most important person to turn to, to discuss emotional problems and issues of upbringing; for the young mother that is her male (or

female) partner, for the young father his female (possibly male) partner. Support seeking and giving is a form of gender learning.

To our knowledge less is known about support giving and seeking between young parents in other social and ethnic-cultural contexts.[85] Eastern European countries, like Slovenia and Bulgaria, emphasize the general trend in their countries to follow western standards of upbringing which by implication means a modernization and individualization of gender relations; an example of *transfer learning*. The rapid reported increase of educational and women magazines in transition countries styled on western publications, puts emphasis on that development.

7.4 Learning on the work floor

At the European level there has been much written on motherhood and work-life balance. In this section we attempt to draw on this literature to illustrate how parents must learn to negotiate with different degrees of flexibility that are inherent across different national contexts and organisational settings.

Of our six countries, Dutch young parents seem to have the best chances to reconcile family needs with gainful employment due to the higher availability/acceptance of part-time work for both partners, compared to any other European country. Also there is a longstanding Dutch tradition of mitigating conflicts and to developing solutions for social problems through a "policy of round tables", bringing together all actors involved (or to be involved), on national as well (and even more so) on the local level. None of the other countries have such a well-established institution and tradition. But as in all countries, there are insufficient crèche places, and high percentages of part time jobs do not necessarily mean that parental wishes for flexible work schedules are fulfilled. They are more common in public organizations than in private enterprises – a fact which holds more or less for all (our) countries, albeit there are exceptions: big firms may be more motivated and better equipped to provide working schemes which attend to the needs of young parents – they need highly qualified workers, also when they are parents.[86]

Recently Chung et al. (2007) have developed a highly interesting typology which shows different flexibility concepts of enterprises in Europe, broadly to be distinguished between worker oriented and company oriented. According to this typology, the Netherlands scores very high on life-course flexibility but also on day-to-day flexibility which is more in the interest of the company. Germany on the other hand, also scores highly on day-to-day flexibility (and very high on overtime) but has a very low score on life-course flexibility.[87] Their data suggests the following typology for our countries:

- High/intermediate flexibility and worker oriented: NL and UK
- Low/intermediate flexibility and company oriented: DE and SI (BG)

[85] The study by Ann Phoenix (1991) on teenage mothers, one of the earliest qualitative studies on this group of parents, shows that they want *and* receive much support from their partners.

[86] The project "Gender, Parenthood and the Changing European Workplace: Young Adults Negotiating the Work-Family Boundary" of the 5th Framework Programme of the EU confirms this finding (Lewis and Smithson 2006).

[87] UK shows medium values for both worker and company flexibility (highest scores on day-to-day flexibility); Italy belongs, together with Slovenia to the countries with the lowest scores of worker friendly flexibility; no data available for Bulgaria (see Chung et al. 2007, table 11, p. 36).

- Low flexibility and company oriented: IT (BG)[88]

In the report previously mentioned on "Gender, Parenthood and the Changing European Workplace", a general result of the 8-country study[89] was that the pressure of work and an intensification of parenting are growing. On the side of work, the pressure comes with restructuring in organizations, downsizing of tasks and qualifications and other "efficiency" initiatives over which employees have no influence.[90] As a result, high levels of sick leave and early or staggered retirement are on the increase, especially in Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, UK and Slovenia (Lewis and Smithson 2006: 81). One can interpret this result purely in passive terms, but one can also interpret it as a deliberate (although not voluntary) choice of young parents to resist the rationale of economic forces in favour of having more quality time for parenting. One must realize though that the "intensification of parenting" is not a voluntary choice either. It rather points to the *pressure of further self-education and qualification in child upbringing*. Am I a good mother (father) is not to be answered purely within the private sphere but must be referred to in the context of available literature, peer contacts and societal expectations which all increase parenting standards.

The report also points to the complex and ambivalent relation which exists between wanted *and* unwanted *blurring of work-family boundaries* on one hand and wanted *and* unwanted separation between work and family. Wanted blurring is when parents are allowed to work at home and use their work place also for managing family tasks. Yet blurring becomes unwanted by young parents if it means that the work load intrudes into their homes and increases the density of working time. In that case they might negotiate with themselves and their employer clearer boundaries between private and work life while unwanted separation refers to work contracts which prohibit flexible schedules for young parents. *ICT learning*, we may conclude, helps young parents in managing boundaries between work and family but creates new problems at the same time through the unwanted blurring of such boundaries (see also Sullivan and Lewis 2001; Perrons 2003).

Within this field of tensions negotiation processes between young mothers, young fathers and employers take place. In most countries it shows that public employers are more lenient in granting "parental room" and are more open for flexible arrangement whereas that is much less the case in private enterprises. But as mentioned before, some big private enterprises might be more generous and flexible, realizing that they need qualifying female workforce now and in the future. It also shows that lower-level managers are more open for the needs of parents as opposed to senior mangers; plausible if one takes career paths and (thus) age and gender affiliation into account. The aforementioned study of Chung et al. (2007) shows a positive relationship between management and employee representatives in enterprises with a high and *worker* oriented flexibility, but it also shows a correlation between a high and *company* oriented flexibility (tab. 17, p. 52), which is surprising.

[88] BG might belong to either of the two types; none of our countries belong to the forth category: high flexibility and worker oriented, represented by the Nordic countries Finland and Sweden.
[89] NL, UK, SE, NO, SI, BG, IT, F.
[90] The Australian labour market researcher Catherine Casey analyses labour markets in knowledge economies and finds that one strategy of enterprises is to keep high qualified employees in positions of lower qualification in order to form a reserve in case of future shortage (Casey 2004). Scholars of life long learning point to similar effects (Coffield 2000).

In their extensive study on work-life balance, Fine-Davis et al. (2004) compared, among many other issues, the *work cultures* in four countries[91] and found that private enterprises are more demanding than public ones, that high position employees were under more pressure than others, and that interestingly enough, the Danes *and* Italians reported more relaxed work place cultures than the French and the Irish (p. 160).

It is easier for parents to negotiate parental space in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands than is the case in Bulgaria and Slovenia where not only men but also mothers are supposed and forced through economic necessity to work full-time. Likewise in Italy, it is close to impossible for young mothers to negotiate flexible work schedules; one, if not the main reason why (North-) Italian women refrain from parenthood.

In negotiating parent rights on the work floor, sympathetic colleagues are crucial, and they would be more sympathetic if they are parents themselves. Mutual *peer learning* as well as *peer pressure* can develop; the first would encourage collective strategies, the latter to comply with the needs of colleagues: parents may refrain from using their rights for flexible working hours and/or parental leave because their colleagues must do the work. Such conflicting loyalties might be counter-productive for the active negotiation of parental rights and collective strategies would be better to free individual employees from loyalty conflict.

This brings us to the *role of the unions* in work place negotiations. The study we draw on (Lewis and Smithson 2006) states that their influence is small; Kovacheva (2005) reports from Bulgaria that (female) employees do not get any support from unions and instead rely on informal forms and ways of creating solutions to combination problems, like advising each other about better job conditions and helping out with childcare. Evidence on the matter is scattered and inconclusive. In the Netherlands for example unions are active in protecting the rights of their members and provide extensive information for young parents on how to combine work and parenthood via the web and other information channels, as do all ministries concerned with young parents. But we do not know what kinds of groups of young parents use this information. While it is more likely that lower and middle class employees are members of their respective unions and might call on them for defending their rights, higher professionals are less likely be organized in unions. More detailed research in our respective countries is necessary, also in relation to regional differences.

Regional differences in work place cultures and the blurring of boundaries play a role, and these regional differences can make an important difference regarding gender: young adults in east southern countries have less ambitious expectations about negotiating work schedules and conditions than their contemporaries in affluent Scandinavian societies. In view of changing labour markets and uncertain employment they dare not enforce their rights, certainly not in Bulgaria where young women in particular fear of dismissal if they negotiate their rights (Kovacheva 2005). Slovenia reports similar pressures on female workers: mothers who dare not take up sick leave because they fear to lose their job. This general finding should be specified with further research about the “negotiation capital” of young fathers: are they more self-assured than young mothers? It is known from British males that they tend to work more after having become father in order to gain enough money for their family. The same is reported from Slovenia where fathers suffer overwork and shift work and where the labour market is even more

[91] France, Italy, Denmark and Ireland.

precarious than in western countries. Still, one in five British fathers had made some form of adjustment to their working pattern, including one in ten (10%) that made some permanent adjustment (Thompson et al. 2005).

In the UK with well enshrined gender equality legislation few employers would blatantly discriminate against women with children (the same holds for Germany and emphatically so for the Netherlands). While those women who work part-time or have flexible working hours within their contracts may have little to negotiate with employers. There are fewer opportunities for professional women for part-time or flexible forms of employment and this can be exacerbated by the long hour culture in the UK. In these careers there is a general expectation among both employers and employees that sufficient childcare strategies are in place in order to compete on an equal footing to men. Professional women in all our research countries are under special pressure to learn compete in a male environment.

Faced with considerable economic constraints many young Bulgarians actively chose to emigrate for better working conditions, mostly to Spain, Germany and the USA, Canada and Australia (BBSS Gallup International 2006). Research up to now has concentrated on the reasons of young adults for emigration but less on their experiences of living and working abroad, building up a family there or having to accept long stretches of time not seeing their children and spouses. While undoubtedly peer learning influences patterns of emigration we know little about peer contacts among young émigrés abroad.

Fahey and Spéder (2004) present an analysis of people's preferences about child-related policy measures in 28 European countries. It shows that countries differ strongly in ranking, our six countries in particular. Obviously, preferences depend on available measures and infrastructural facilities. Measures against unemployment are felt of greater importance than part-time work in Bulgaria while the Netherlands opts most of all for flexible work conditions. And while all countries put availability of childcare facilities high on the agenda, not all do so to the same amount. Cousins and Tang (2004) report similar findings when they compared the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK on the dimensions of working time, work and family conflict. It showed that Swedish parents with the best childcare facilities and working conditions of the three countries were the most *dis*satisfied with their work-life balance; an example of rising ambitions with rising welfare (see also Strand and Nordenmark 2003).

Workplace cultures appear to foster persistent gendered organizational values and assumptions that the "ideal employee" does not work part-time, and especially not in higher status jobs – one of the main pillars under the glass ceiling which prevents females to climb up the professional ladder. But change seems slowly to take place in organizations (the "learning organization") in that "new style managers" begin to enter (bigger) companies. They may be more open for the needs of young employees who want to negotiate better work schedules. In that case it would be a strategy for young parents to form coalitions with those managers. But the situation is far from unambiguous: the younger managerial personnel may stand under pressure themselves and will choose their own career and loyalties. Still, the permeability of work-family boundaries becomes increasingly a matter of daily and informal negotiation with managers in local organizations; mutual learning processes are thus initiated between enterprises and employees.

The role of managers in easing parental stress in their workforce is indeed not clear: Scholz (2007) found in a West German case study of a big chemistry enterprise that the difference between sympathetic and less sympathetic managers to parental needs is not so much their age as the style and tradition of management in a given enterprise; the "old" type manager would identify with the enterprise and feel responsible for the well-being of the employees while the new type would not and would apply pure instrumental and efficiency criteria, knowing that he himself would move on to another job soon.

Another German study showed clear economic advantages for an enterprise that applies family friendly policies, like better work motivation and higher work satisfaction, less sick leave, more identification of the (parent) employees with the enterprise etc. Enterprise crèches, flexible working time and possibly financial incentives for care facilities belong to such a family friendly policy. The authors admit though that research in this field is still premature and does not allow unequivocally for generalizations (Dilger and König 2007).

One of the most extensive investigations into work-family balance and flexible work situations in the EU is the study by Wallace et al. (2003). They distinguish, similar to Chung et al. 2007, between "employer-led" vs. "employee-led" flexibility, corresponding with "good" vs. "bad" flexibility. As with all other similar research, they find big differences between countries – in their project UK, Sweden, Netherland, Slovenia, Check Republic, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria – according to welfare state provisions and labour market conditions. The Netherlands and UK see a shift from employer-led flexibility to employee-led flexibility and a family friendly policy. Slovenia with an extremely family friendly policy – in this respect resembling Sweden – misses out on "good" flexibility while Bulgaria has lost its good family facility and has to cope with a very unstable labour market.

High status parents are more likely than those of lower status to have permeable family boundaries prior to becoming parents. When they continue their career after having become parents, they may be under even more pressure than lower status parents to accept work that intrudes in their private family sphere. And because those parents are ambitious in all respects, they also want fiercely to be "good parents" and may also in this respect feel under more *peer pressure* than others. As we suggested earlier: this pressure is one of the roots for counter-ideologies of *re-traditionalizing motherhood*. Taken together with country differences, this makes the combination problem especially pressing for Italian and parents in Slovenia and Bulgaria with hardly any part-time work available. We can conclude that high status women/mothers/employees in affluent societies have to endure more *mental* pressure in comparison to their lower status sisters in poorer countries who suffer more *material* pressure.

To highlight this last point with an example of the UK: negotiating with employers implies negotiating with one self as prospective mother: an educated woman who has her first baby at the age of 24 will miss out on up to £ 564,000 in earnings over her lifetime, compared with losing £ 165,000 if she delays motherhood by just four more years. Those losses must then be set against the £ 50,000 cost of bringing up a baby (Dixon and Margo 2006, p. 23; see also McRae 1993).

In this context Italy stresses the point of *feminization of part-time employment*: part-time contracts are used particularly by women with two or more children and many contracts do not

grant maternity protection or renewal of contract (Leccardi and Magaraggia 2007); again an indication for the particularly weak negotiation position of Italian women.

In the Netherlands, more reassuring examples can be quoted of employers who encourage young mothers to keep on working. For example: a 3-child mother – she was 33 when she got her first child – had worked part-time for three years in accordance with the *ideology of part-time feminism* which dominated female career patterns until recently. Her employer, a fashion firm, asked her to go regularly abroad for a couple of days to do business there. She hesitated in the first instance but then agreed, thereby restarting her career on a *higher* level than before. She hired an au pair for help with the children (NRC Handelsblad 19 June 2007). Women who are caught between contradictory ideologies and (new) societal demands will have to *learn* to respond with active strategies. This example is quoted here, not to be generalized, but to show that a generally encouraging societal climate for women to work is an important factor in the whole matter of family-work balances.[92]

German women can illustrate this point further: while a majority (56%) of women in West Germany resign their job (at least temporarily) after the birth of their first child, only 42% do so in the eastern part of the country (Menz 2006, p. 10). In other words, East German women still profit from (forced) learning of normalities under state communism to combine the mother role with work. But part-time jobs are rare in the whole of Germany and so young parents must further learn to negotiate their rights (see also Chapter 5 for new policy initiatives to support that learning).

In all countries, *mothers with migration backgrounds* are more often found in precarious job situations and have therefore to overcome a triple hurdle: first they are more prone to suffer discrimination on the labour market because of their background; second they occupy the least attractive positions on the labour market and third their cultural heritage often implies rigid gender segregation and traditional gender norms and practices. They would therefore have to negotiate at three fronts simultaneously: fight for more social recognition as migrants, fight for better education and working conditions for themselves and their children, and fight at home for more gender equality. One should not neglect that in the opposite direction this holds for migrant males as well; further comparative research on this matter is urgently needed.

All over Europe the trend towards more flexible and mobile life-work styles wins ground. Particularly young and committed (highly educated) employees – among them young parents - are affected by this trend. Little research has been conducted about this specific group; an exception is an Austrian study which is concerned with the biographical effects of such trends, especially for women (Boyle et al. 2006). There is also a German study which is relevant in this context (Behnke & Meuser 2005). The authors interviewed young couples with and without children with both partners working in high positions and at different places. They found that before there were children, there was an egalitarian task division between the two but even then it was more the female who was concerned with planning such a mobile life while the male relied on her initiatives. Also the female was already prior to (planned) motherhood much more concerned with anticipating possible solutions to the combination problems of care and career.

[92] According to a recent report of a Dutch advisory board on economic developments, the Netherlands score highest in Europe in protecting older employees and employees of the first labour market and scores highest on discriminating the opposite groups of employees (NRC Handelsblad 25 September 2007).

7.5 Learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings

Official support for young parents has two target groups. One is composed of principally *all* young parents and is mainly concerned with the mental and physical health of mother and child. Through state financed facilities first child parents learn the essential skills of parenting and acquire knowledge where to find further information and possibly help for themselves, their child and their family. Essentially all countries offer similar services in this area, but to different degrees. Bulgaria stands out negatively when it comes to health services for (young) mothers while the other countries offer sufficient or even excellent services, mainly in the field of medical pregnancy control, mental and physical health check-ups of the child during the first years of their lives. Depending on national and, more important, local politics, it is easier or more cumbersome for young parents to find their way to these facilities.

The second group is composed of *specific* parent clientele which needs specific support, and here the countries differ in the degree in which families are regarded by politicians as producing more problems than solutions for themselves and their children and must therefore be urged to accept interventions. Migrant parents are the biggest of these target groups, although they are often underrepresented in public support. In the Netherlands and Germany immigrants from the Mediterranean countries and former Dutch colonies deviate in many ways from western-style parenting practices and are regarded by officials as having to learn to adapt to those of the receiving country while the problem of diverging norms and values of (young) parents of Roma or Sinti origin is specific for Slovenia and Bulgaria. The UK's most specifically targeted group is teenage parents although it is the country with the most diverse migrant population in the whole of Europe. All these different groups of parents are confronted with learning tasks which many of them find hard to accept and might resist them violently. Official support is then perceived not as help but more as unwanted interference with their own life-style and traditions.

Official support systems are non-coercive by nature: young parents cannot be forced to use them. That leads to differential use: high educated parents will find it self-evident to get in touch with the midwife early or other medical experts already during pregnancy and certainly will make regular use of the support available when the baby is born. Possible physical and mental deficiencies will be detected early and may therefore receive effective treatment. Other groups of young parents, often low educated and/or with migrant backgrounds and/or poverty stricken, are often not reached by medical and social support and have to be actively approached by special programs. In recent years pressure is exerted on migrant and other minority group parents to adhere to modernized life course models with *both* parents contributing to the labour market and raising their children in such a way that they will enter formal education with enough (the right) cultural capital to succeed. It is a hot spot of public debate if publicly financed programs and interventions must help (force) parents who are not capable to live up to their parental tasks as they are defined by the dominant culture[93] (see further Chapter 8).

Of all discerned forms of learning young parenthood, *peer and network learning* pertains most to parental actions and negotiations at the local level. But while there is much educational and social-psychological literature on peer learning, and recently also on networking of adolescents,

[93] See for example the German debate on "Kindswohlgefährdung" and the practical consequence of a National centre for early help and the many (new) programs in other countries for the early detection and intervention in case of child abuse.

there is to our knowledge none specifically on *parental* peer learning and networking. Both forms of learning are at the heart of informal learning. From social capital theory it is known that people who are actively involved in neighbourhood networks are much more active citizens than those who are not (see also the Participation strand of Up2Youth).

Peer and network learning begin long before the baby is born. Young prospective parents are embedded in networks of friends, kin and acquaintances which include contacts with other prospective parents; potential and real resources are exchanged continuously over the course of the pregnancy. Information about childcare facilities belongs to the most important parental network knowledge. Not only young expectant mothers profit from these kinds of information sources, young fathers do as well, exchanging information about parental leave, part-time work or flexible work schedules. And during pregnancy young parents get into contact with other expectant parents, often leading to a broadening of existing networks. Exchanging all kinds of information, helping each other through the first difficult year of parenthood is indispensable learning for young parents.

We suppose that *all* young parents, regardless of country, social status and cultural background, learn most about their parental role through informal and network learning but that differences concern the *manners and effects* of such learning. Affluent countries and well-to-do parents have more resources at their disposal, their network contacts will be more potent in finding the right resources at the best conditions, and they will complement informal knowledge more readily and capably with formal knowledge through literature, official institutions and professionals. Parents in less affluent societies will use network learning actively to compensate for material poverty and finding alternative resources for missing support through officials. Parents of lower class backgrounds in all countries will have more kin-based networks in comparison with high status parents whose networks are clearly more status and profession-bound.

In general, we know very little about peer group and network learning in *migrant and other minority groups*. We suppose they will tend to stay within their own networks, not readily intermingling with other parents and thus probably form more homogeneous networks which by definition are less rich of resource variety than heterogeneous ones. Roma young parents for example will have no chance to enlarge their networks in non-Roma communities – and therefore stay among each other. An effect is the preservation of exclusive upbringing norms, values and practices. On the other side of the wall, white communities will stay apart or even flee minority ethnic neighbourhoods as witnessed in the Netherlands in recent years.

Each network, we conclude, is embedded in a different *time-space relation.* Time-space relations differentiate between parents not only on the basis of class, gender and cultural-ethnic background but also according to the distance between work and housing, full-time versus part-time and shift work.

When we said that there is no systematic research available about parental peer learning, we have to specify in so far that there is abundant literature about official (local) programs, courses and offers of all kind which are meant to help young adults to adjust to their new roles and tasks as parents and provide specific support for parents in need. Many of these offers which translate into practice what is fixed in family and youth support laws, involve parental peer learning; parent groups are brought together in local circles to discuss common problems and learn about finding

help. These offers are also meant to activate parents and help them to help themselves, thus promoting *self-professionalisation.*

In transition countries like Bulgaria and Slovenia a trend towards self-professionalisation (and thus problematizing) in matters of parenthood can be observed. The Bulgarian report suggests that there is a new interest in learning about new models of parenting aside from those handed down through traditional family ties and public libraries increasingly stock western literature about upbringing and educational styles. We have not yet systematically looked into the work of NGOs which are active in helping young parents in particular deprived groups; however, we have some insights into the work of Bulgarian NGOs with Roma which focus on healthy life styles of young people before and after they become parents; they teach them how to approach health professionals in childcare and disease prevention.

In the Netherlands, UK and Germany, less so in Italy, programmes for helping young parents are developed and brought into practice. In Bulgaria and Slovenia there are some programmes on sex education and childcare for Turkish and Roma groups and in Slovenia there are father support networks that aim to stimulate men towards a more active role in the family. In the Netherlands there are counselling agencies for 0-4 year olds for regular health and developmental check-ups, others for older children and prospective parents, there is maternity training for couples and many more. All these institutions have websites, most of them chat forums and other interactive devices to stimulate the contact between citizen and institution. Special information is available for young fathers, parents who are students, those with handicapped children, single mothers, big families, full-time working mothers, parents with toddlers etc. Dutch (young) parents are extremely active in all these activities. What remains, though, is that not all parents are addressed by such programmes; they often have an implicit social bias as they appeal more to certain social groups (white; high educated) than others.

In the UK qualitative studies have highlighted the influence of peers on young (teenage) mothers. This is a special case of peer learning, perceived by officials as negative but the young themselves as positive (agentic) and (probably) supportive. There are few counselling services available specifically for *young* parents aside from those provided to all parents and some specialist provisions for teenage parents which mainly concern health education. The National Health Service provides free antenatal classes, sometimes encouraging partners (fathers) to attend. Other courses are for lone young mothers only and others still for certain ethnic groups. Recognizing the weaknesses of formal education approaches to learning that adopt a moral stance toward teenage parents, initiatives try to empower young women to make positive choices with respect to sex and parenting (see also Edwards and Mackenzie 2008 about non-coercive Family Learning Centres which give opportunity to develop learning trajectories in both formal and informal settings). Mentoring and other forms of directed learning have been targeted at potential young mothers living within deprived neighbourhoods and special programmes target explicitly (teenage) young fathers (Sheriff 2007). *Experiential learning* through computerized baby dolls, which are programmed to sleep, cry and need fed in an attempt to provide young mothers with a direct experience of caring for a young child (Dench 2005; Carter and Coleman 2006; see also Spies 2008 and further Chapter 5.2).

In Italy very few official support systems are offered to young parents; family networks have to compensate for this lack of provision, and that strengthens the emotional strings between the

generations but might prevent agentic learning not only of the young Italian females but preferably the males. Young Italian parents create a mix of private and public support systems, they rely on informal friendship and mutual aid networks to support each other not only in practical matters but also emotionally. There are to our knowledge no self-help groups for young fathers – how different a situation from the Dutch example!

The latest German Family report (2005) demonstrated that *family capital* – competences acquired in family management – is of high value in the development of social capital in neighbourhoods and communities: young parents spend a lot of time with their families, relatives, friends and neighbours thus "inter-netting" different kinds of groups and people in a given neighbourhood. Families with children are a central factor for development and maintenance of social capital which also serves educational institutions and which is of special importance in regions which do not have enough childcare facilities. And vice versa: in regions and neighbourhoods with a good infrastructure it shows that parents are more engaged in civic activities. It follows that the general level of social capital is vital for a lively neighbourhood life (see also Brannen and Moss 1998). The Dutch government, for example, finances local experiments with mixed housing policy to upgrade run-down neighbourhoods and (tried to) prevent further "colouring". Part of that process is to install facilities for (young) parents and advocating the "brede school" (see 8.2).

There is, to our knowledge, no *comparative* research on the effects of self-help programs – and often not even on national level (for Germany: Textor 2007).

In all our countries it shows that *migrant parents* have more difficulty in finding adequate information and using local and neighbourhood resources, like schools, after school care, nurseries, transportation of children, child minders; language barriers can be an additional barrier (see also SOCCARE 2000-2004).

7.7 Research gains and gaps

Paying explicit attention to aspects of learning in young parental trajectories, we disclosed a new theme or rather suggested new ways of thinking about young parents and all they have to manage in contemporary European societies. To exploit this field further, one would have to look into existing research concerned with learning in a broad sense and "translate" findings and perspectives to young parenthood. Within this project we did no more than give some initial ideas how such translations might be done, and how that throws a different light on contemporary parenthood. Throughout the chapter we have pointed to research gaps that concern mainly two issues: firstly, more *systematic comparative studies* are needed in order to interconnect separate findings; secondly, knowledge on *migrant young parents* and how the "learn parenthood" in the respective societies is urgently missing.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

At the end of Chapter 3, we posed a range of research questions which we investigated over the course of this report through secondary analysis. In doing so, we departed from the basic notion of *agency of young people*, corroborating that notion with the theory of *structured individualization* in order to demonstrate the relationship, often tension, between social demands and biographical needs and wishes of the subjects involved. We collected and interpreted material about the *transition* of young people *to parenthood,* trying to take note of *general tre*nds as well as the *particularities* within each of our six research countries: Bulgaria, Slovenia, Italy, Germany, Netherlands and UK.

We approached the topic from essentially four perspectives. First we collected data about the *structural side* of individualization, paying attention to transition indicators as well as changes in family composition. Work participation and work- family models are the main factors in this sort of analysis and make quantitative country comparisons possible. A second perspective shifted attention to *the individual side*: how do young adults, before and after they become parents, approach parenthood? How do they feel about becoming a parent, what cultural settings are framing their agency, and how are they themselves doing culture by doing family? Gender cultures are of special interest in this respect.

Obviously it is neither possible - nor desirable - to separate structure and agency rigidly from each other. Instead we tried to show how they interact. That is all the more true for the third perspective when we deliberated about “learning young parenthood”. We asked about different learning modes, from more formal to more informal, covering the main areas of life of young parents. We closed our analysis by comparing family policies and “good examples” in our six research countries.

In the following paragraph 9.2 we first provide a comparative summary, and then (in 9.3) revisit our research questions: did we succeed in answering them properly? And if not: what kind of obstacles did we encounter? That investigation brings us to paragraph 9.4: research gains and gaps in our knowledge about becoming and being a young parent in contemporary societies; in other words about their transition to young parenthood. Omissions in certain aspects of young parenthood as well as methodological problems are discussed. In this concluding paragraph we make some suggestions and recommendations to further research in the field.

8.2 Comparative Summary

Coming back in a comparative perspective to the approaches we have used in this report for the different aspects which define the situation of young parents (and thus are influencing the decision-making towards young parenthood), we see some correspondence to what is typically to be expected when characterising the transition regimes. But: this clustering tends to conceal the changes which are going on regarding the political context and the ideational climate for young parenthood:

Table 8.1: Key features of young parenthood in th4 Tw0of

Slovenia and Bulgaria are only comparable through the fact that they undergo in some respects a tendency towards privatisation, with the increasing involvement of private (familial) responsibility for care issues. However, the developments in the two countries are very different, due to different levels of social wealth and a different basic orientation. If we look at public child care, Slovenia extends at the same time its already high level of public child care and is already close to the Barcelona targets: however in Bulgaria, parents over the last 15 years have suffered a drop of 40% in the number of public crèches although with 27% of public kindergartens they are still better equipped than in most other countries. This decline in public welfare has had its greatest impact on the rural economy. Also in terms of facilitating an equal balance of work between the partners, both countries go in different directions: while most Slovenian new fathers take at least 2 weeks of a much broader paternity leave option, Bulgaria prolonged the well paid (at 90% of the previous salary) maternity leave from 135 to 315 days, which in effect tends to exclude fathers from early childcare and therefore strengthens a gender division of care work, which was previously covered by the dual earner regime. These longer periods of leave implicitly directed to mothers make their re-entry into the work sphere a difficult task. Under these conditions, grandparents have become an ever more important resource for childcare – and even are entitled to parental leave.

Italy still has the profile of an under-institutionalized transition regime, which leaves most of the responsibility to the family. At the same time, it undergoes a slow transformation process e.g. recorded in an enhancement of fathers' involvement in childrearing due to new options for parental leave. But, as all relevant regulations exclude atypical workers, to which young adults predominantly belong these reforms can only be used by a minority of young parents. There are extreme differences between the North and the South of the country; in the South, mothers long for more even participation in the labour market, and start to reduce sharply the number of children they have. Italy is the European country with the biggest discrepancy between the desired and actual number of child births.

German family policies in recent years have tried to facilitate a stronger engagement of fathers, and at the same time show efforts to deconstruct the (West-German) myth of the "first three years" a parent should "normally" (and due to the gender pay gap: the mother) stay with her small child. This is major progress, and has led to a greater degree of involvement among fathers, albeit most of them stick to the minimum of two months. There are also promises to provide better childcare facilities in the west, whereas in the East, they remain on a much better level, although this is jeopardised by decline. Nevertheless, it remains rooted in the employment-oriented model, with a gendered normality of who the core breadwinner will be, and this West-German normality has totally covered the dual earner model from the East. The availability of family resources (e.g. childcare) remains a decisive factor for facilitating young parenthood, at least in the West, and at least for young people living away from urban centres.

The Netherlands is also actively working on the Barcelona targets, but – in contrast to the emancipatory self-concept – are still stuck to a rather conservative mother-ideology. The result for most young mothers: is that they work part-time, without leaving their job, and use a mixed childcare solution that also involves grand-parents. This could be a smooth model for the reconciliation of care and employment, especially as there is sufficient self-steered flexibility on employee/worker-side, but it tends to stabilise a gendered work share. Childcare is delivered increasingly by the market, while the state draws back.

The United Kingdom still shows to some extent its liberalist roots, but in recent years is beginning to modify this trait with the promotion of a more family friendly policy. Although the state still does not offer favourable conditions for active fathering, time studies show a significant increase in men's participation in domestic work. The costs for childcare are high for those in employment with a lack of sufficient public provision, when this is combined with low salaries this can lead to new and gender-atypical solutions among couples.

In all countries, there is a significant discrepancy between the desired and actual number of child births (Testa 2006). As "there is no one magic instrument to increase the birth rate"(Jenson 2006, p. 161), there is also no one-dimensional explanation for this discrepancy. The analysis of Kröhnert & Klingholz (2008) is most convincing in this respect which shows in an overview of European policies, that only a combination of "emancipatory policies", including labour market conditions, taxation, and childcare facilities for children over one year of age, could explain higher or lower fertility rates. This argument can also be extended to the explanation of discrepant family plans and realities.

One important thing to highlight from research carried out in Sweden, is that higher levels of gender equality go together with higher levels of expectation regarding the contribution of men (or society) to equal opportunities, and with ongoing dissatisfaction with regard to the social reality of the pretence of a gender-balanced reconciliation of work and care (see Transitions-project Lewis and Smithson 2006). This indicates, that gender relationships and the agency (young) women and men invest in re-working concepts of intimate relationships, of motherhoods, of fatherhoods (plural – there are various concepts!), of work share among them are, and will remain, probably the most important driving forces for familial development processes.

Our search strategies have questioned the public-private-divide and were directed at identifying new balances between the agency of young women and men and (the necessity of) policies that acknowledge this agency. We have found a lot of clues in this respect, but we still are not able to link such agency-related information consistently to the context variables that we have gathered. For example, there is some empirical evidence that fathers would like to be more involved in the fathering process: institutional changes (and also changes in working cultures in firms) often seem to be slower than changes in attitudes and everyday cultures. In Germany, for example and also in the Netherlands, organisations have been founded to offer professional advice to fathers so they can achieve more flexible working hours or convince their boss that they want to take up paternity leave. In the UK, fathers are overwhelmingly in support of the concept of transferable parental leave, which is not currently available. In Slovenia, the obligatory part of paternity leave (15 days after the birth of a child) seems to be effective, and fathers are actively involved in family life during that period, whereas in Bulgaria the dominant family culture does not see fathers as capable of taking care of small children (see also Cousin and Tang, 2004, for a comparison between NL, SE and UK). One important hindering factor is the gender pay gap and gender discrimination in gainful work and career development.

8.3 Research questions revisited

At the outset of our research, we asked how young adults arrive at the decision of becoming (not) parents, and in what social context. We were interested in their agentic capacities and possible constraints. We wanted to know as thoroughly as possible if there is knowledge about *how* they combine family and work obligations, and what role gender plays in the negotiations involved. What are the problems they face in realizing their family plans: when to have children; how many children; possibly no children and why not. What are their strategies in these respects and what do they do if things do not work out the way they want?

Of great importance here is the notion of *simultaneous transitions* as opposed to linear life-courses with each transition being the following step on one's way to adulthood and parenthood. We discussed this change in (post-) modern life-courses, applying the concept of "yoyoisation" which we developed in various other youth projects (see Walther et al. 2006). Learning plays a major role in managing complex life-course transitions; so we looked for research findings concerning the opportunities and barriers to learning in the private and working life of young parents, while paying attention to new trends in gender relations, like a "culturalisation" of the role of the (young) father. We were also interested in the use of social in addition to family capital through the formation of networks with other young parents and through using local resources – or failing to do so. Finally we discussed family policies on the European and national level and how they help or hinder young people to become and be parents. We summarise our main findings as follows:

First: The *transition of young people from education to the labour market* implies risks; not only for poorly educated young people but also for the higher educated and not only in South East European countries but in Northwest Europe as well. The interdependence between the educational system and the labour market in knowledge based societies affects young people in an uneven way. Today, low qualified young people have considerably poorer opportunities to gain employment compared to earlier generations and frequently they will have to fall back on their parents for support. That can affect their transition to family building negatively in two ways: either they have to delay parenthood longer than they would like to because they are not economically independent, or they might become parents early under detrimental circumstances (teenage mothers). But the situation is not unequivocally better for those with longer educational trajectories. Although their chances on the labour market are usually much better, they too face objective uncertainty and subjective insecurity. The "yoyoisation" of the youthful life-course applies to them as well, sometimes even more so. It makes planning children a hazardous affair, especially for women who want to capitalise on their education, and for mobile young couples. The employment situation of a couple is a determining factor for the timing of parenthood. Males who lack a job that gives them a fair perspective of a secure income tend to refrain from fatherhood, certainly from having a second child. Women also find economic security important, but to a lesser extent, whereby the higher the educational level, the more women calculate the opportunity costs of entering motherhood.

Second: We collected material which demonstrates for practically all countries a *discrepancy between the number of desired and realised child births*. This discrepancy applies to all educational levels, with many high educated women desiring more children than they (think they

will) have.[94] There are many reasons for this discrepancy (Jenson 2006; Crompton et al., 2007), but of special interest concerning young parenthood are: unresponsive labour markets, a lack of general gender equality (see Kröhnert & Klingholz 2008) and especially a lack of childcare facilities. It is increasingly important not to individualise or feminise the topic but to take into account the ideas and wishes of both partners.

Third: In none of our research countries is the *combination of childcare and family tasks with gainful employment* possible without severe drawbacks for both partners, but much more so for females. As a matter of fact, this is the most extensively researched part of contemporary parenthood. In all countries, considerable changes have taken place in gender relations: taking care of the children is no longer regarded as the sole responsibility of the woman; the male partners are much more involved in their role as young fathers than were earlier generations. "New fatherhood" has become part of a gendered discourse, much more than practice and even less part of policies. This does not hold equally for our research countries. We showed that the South Eastern European countries are by and large more traditionally inclined, in that the men are less prepared and under less "gender pressure" to engage actively in their fatherhood role than is the case in the Northwest European countries. However, there is no doubt that the imagery around parenthood has changed over the last decade.

Fourth: *Intergenerational relationships* shape the reality of young people's lives and also while becoming and being parents. Instead of getting looser, it seems that the generations get bound closer to each other in post-industrial societies, although this is not always done voluntarily. In particular, in countries with little state support, the parent generation must and do help with providing housing, caring for their grandchildren and at times of stress help emotionally and financially. The realisation of parenthood in combination with work would be plainly impossible for most young people without that intergenerational resource. This throws light on important omissions and failures in state family policies.

Fifth: In practically all our research countries similar groups of young people run considerable risks of not managing to get a fairly good level of education, to find well-paid work - or work at all, and to build up a life, including parenthood that guarantees social acceptance and personal satisfaction. Those groups are:

- - young single mothers (to a lesser degree fathers)
- - young persons/parents from migrant backgrounds (although not all migrant groups to the same extent)
- - young families with one or both parents unemployed
- - poverty-stricken young parents.

In as much as the various factors involved combine, the risk of social exclusion grows. All these different groups have their own cultural nexus which is often disregarded by research as well as policy intervention and is covered under a blanket of prejudices and schematic images

[94] Rille-Pfeiffer (2007: 26) suggests three types of female strategies (leaving out those of men) to categorize fertility decisions: 1. Career strategies (no children or one child); 2. Combination strategies: decision for, and number of children dependent on availability of childcare facilities; 3. Three phase strategy: women who decide to intermit their job career will have more children than type 1 women.

(ascriptions to Roma are the most drastic example). Not all single mothers are unhappy and to be pitied; not all young migrants are low educated and have little chances; not all the unemployed remain so in the long run, and not all poverty-stricken families do a bad job in bringing up their children. All these groups are also agents of their lives - albeit under more severe circumstances than others and (therefore) with different coping strategies.

Sixth: In our chapter about cultural images and practices we deepened the changes which have taken place in gender relations, but specified this according to the respective countries. We located as a large and hardly exploited research field the *imagery* of genders in relation to parenthood. Media images will certainly impact on the wishes and fears of young men and women on the threshold of becoming parents – but exactly how? Here one would have to go into the interrelationships between parenthood policies and image formation.

Seventh: With the notion of *learning young parenthood*, we tried to make plausible the idea that learning has taken a prominent place in becoming and being a parent in late modernity and vis-à-vis a knowledge society. Informed and agentic parents are the best guarantee to produce and educate children with the same potential. What is discussed extensively in European and national contexts is to make new connections between formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning; this new attention is also entering the discourses that surround young parenthood and young families. We discerned various modes of learning which are of importance in managing young parenthood, from learning to negotiate new gender relations, to semi and self-professionalisation in matters such as the healthy upbringing of children and from learning to fight for one's rights and interests as young parents on the work floor to creating and using networks as resource.

Eighth: Concerning *family policy*, it is evident that the European Commission, although formally not entitled to interfere, is pressing in the direction of sufficient childcare facilities in all member states in order to enable women to combine work and family life in order to encourage them to become (young) mothers. Young men/fathers are also getting much more attention. We found big differences in our countries in relation to family laws and support systems, but none would deny the necessity to provide adequate childcare facilities. This does not mean that all countries push equally strongly in the realisation of that aim. With the presentation of "best examples" in each of our countries we demonstrate a wide range of suggestions and practices to make the transition to and the state of parenthood more amenable for young adults. A more active role of the economic sector is part of promising solutions.

Finally, as to the role of *young people as actors* of their life before and after (or not) becoming parents, we conclude from our study in the first instance that contemporary young Europeans are realistic about systemic constraints, labour market conditions. They are also sober about the benefits of state support for young families. In none of our countries do parents feel that they are provided with sufficient support from the state and the public at large. It is mainly in the field of quality and affordable childcare that they miss such support, not only the lack of facilities but just as painfully in the disharmony between working hours and crèche hours. Housing is also a big problem for many potential young families, which can be a contributory factor to delaying

parenthood. All in all, what is painfully missing is an *integrated transition policy* for young people on their way to become and being parents.[95]

The factual action space of young people/young parents in contemporary European societies is certainly not in harmony with the claims of participation which are so dominant in European as well as national discourses.

8.4 Research gains and gaps – recommendations for future research

Getting back to our original concepts of agency and structured individualization, which we introduced in order to cover both the side of social support and its related constraints as well as the practices of young adults, their subjective needs and desires, here we conclude that there is more research that allows comparisons to be made in relation to the structural factors than to subjective ones.[96] The systemic impediments of reproductive behaviour in Europe are broadly discussed and researched, although not so much from a youth-sociological perspective as within the disciplines of demography, family sociology and gender studies. The latter pay great attention to the *double burden of women* when they become parents and they also begin to include "*father studies*".

Although there are many studies and statistics about reproductive behaviour in a comparative perspective, we found no theoretical and methodological agreement about the parameters to be used. The *transition regime typology* proved useful for some questions as a heuristic tool, more so in terms of gender and care policies than cultural contexts.

A large research gap in practically all our countries is the lack of attention that is paid to *young migrant people in their transitions to parenthood*.[97] The same holds true for the transition to parenthood of young adults living in *poverty.*

To place young people as actors in the centre of our study points to a neglect in existing research of the specific problems of parenthood of young people in transition when they are faced, not only with their (future) roles and new obligations of parenthood but with many other problems and tasks as well which belong to *late modern trajectories*.[98]

We see the following major research fields for a future research agenda which at the same time point to significant gaps in knowledge:

[95] In various previous EU projects, the EGRIS group has put forward the need for an integrated transition policy; see Walther et al. 2006; López Blasco et al. 2003.

[96] The EU has assembled a wealth of statistical material of its member states. See Eurostat 2008; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2007; OECD publications (see reference list) and diverse EU projects quoted throughout this report (see Vassilev, & Wallace 2007; Gstrein 2007).

[97] It seems that there comes attention to this subject. See "Betweeen Integration and Discrimination: Strategies of Immigrant Families in Europe. Findings from the Interface and Aware Projects. Conference held in Prague 6th June 200; see also the Generations and Gender Survey 2008.

[98] The special issue of Zeitschrift für Familienforschung 2/2006 on international family research shows that there is no attention to the problems and coping strategies of young people and on parenthood as a transition stage. Also Escobedo (2004) quarrels with the paucity in research on the cultural facts of young parenthood. See also Georgas et al. 2002:170.

- Exploring the *simultaneity of different transitions and trajectories* which have to be studied in their interrelatedness as well as in comparative perspective; no easy task even for interdisciplinary research[99]. These were also identified by the experts we spoke with at our expert meetings (see note 4 and 5) as a challenging but worthwhile task. This includes qualitative approaches, possibly in a process-oriented, longitudinal perspective which allows for the reconstruction of decision-making processes of individuals and couples, situated within multifaceted contexts. This also has to include issues of time management within life courses, coping with planning paradoxes etc..
- Exploring *(de-)gendering strategies* of first parents who struggle with or adapt to the latent *re-traditionalization* of gender roles after the birth of their first child through a lack of opportunities and public acknowledgement in the realisation of gender equality in all kinds of work – the professional sphere as well as family work. Under this heading, special questions could be looked at more closely:
  - Exploring the strategies and practices of inventing motherhoods and fatherhoods; negotiation strategies in intimate (parental) relationships and how young parents can be regarded as "trendsetters" (e.g. by creating new imageries of "being parent");
  - How do dual-career and highly mobile couples decide on yes-no-when to have children and if yes, how do they organize their lives after having become parents?[100]
  - Partner-seeking strategies of young women and men, (e.g. highly educated women who deliberately seek lower educated men in order to get rid of the problem of dual career stress?)[101]. Which of these strategies is likely to become a trend, a new "solution" for problems of women's emancipation?
  - New strategies of bringing up children (e.g. elite mothers re-enchanting motherhood and engaging in home schooling for their children, not inclined to engage in gainful employment.[102]
  - Strategies to reconcile different and conflicting demands (e.g. overworked fathers who nevertheless want to be "new fathers"). How do they navigate between their job and career obligations and their family - also vis-à vis their male peer group?
  - What about the different options for new strategies in different professional fields and among those on different levels of pay? (see Behnke & Meuser 2005)?
  - Negotiation processes on family building in patchwork families (e.g. family building under the specific condition where the male partner is much older than the female - an all too well-known constellation especially in north-west European countries: whereby

[99] See Fthenakis et al. 2002 as one of the most impressive studies to fill this gap. See also the recently started program PAIRFAM Panel Analysis of intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics, coordinated by J. Brüderl and H. Esser/University of Mannheim, J. Huinink/University of Bremen and B. Nauck and S. Walper/University of München. Both these German projects are designed as longitudinal projects in order to make clear that "young parenthood" should be studied as an ongoing process and not as simply a status. They will be enlarged towards comparative research.

[100] See special Issue *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung/Journal of Family Research* 2007/3 "Dual career couples".

[101] A point raised by Rachel Thomson at the Lisbon expert meeting; regognized for the Netherlands by M. du Bois-Reymond.

[102] Reported by Rachel Thomson; see also typology in national report NL.

the male often has children from a former marriage and is hesitant to take on the father role again while his young wife is eager to establish a family).

- Focus on transitions into parenthood under the conditions of migration and transculturality. Under this heading, special issues could be more closely examined:
  - How do young men and women manage their parental role when they have to live abroad? In the case of Bulgarian young men (what comes first: migration and delayed parenthood, or parenthood and therefore the necessity to emigrate to earn enough money; migrant young mothers who work in western countries and in some cases have to leave their children in their home country with kin, seeing them only a couple of times a year, like Polish mothers who work in Western Europe).
  - How do young adults from various ethnic-cultural backgrounds decide on parenthood and education-work-family-life balance? How much is the way they are "doing family" dependent on their families of origin and what resources can they provide?
  - How do young adults with migrant backgrounds cope with arranged marriages? What impact has transcultural "marriage-markets" on family building and gender relationships?[103]
  - What impact have "ethnisation processes" on family building, which can be observed in the Baltic States, as well as in the countries of former Yugoslavia?
- Focus on *transitions into parenthood under the conditions of poverty and housing difficulties.* Under this heading, the following special issues could be looked at more closely:
  - How do (did) young men and women in various countries/regions transit into parenthood that leads to family deprivation, and what specific strategies do they develop to cope with poverty?
  - How do teenagers (not only in the UK) come to get a child: become parents by accident or intention and what is the subjective meaning-making of early parenthood?
  - How are housing problems solved in the different countries among the generations?
- Focus on learning and support in transitions into parenthood. Here the following should be looked at:
  - Learning sites and learning opportunities for young parents – what public or private offers are available, and how much are they used by young parents? What is the impact of (self-) imageries in the media or on the internet in this respect?
  - What kind of "family education" or "parental education" would be appropriate for young mothers and fathers (see Mühling & Smolka 2007)?
  - What learning processes do young mothers/fathers reconstruct when looking at their transition into first parenthood?

[103] In Norway, 31% of all marriages are composed of a couple of which one has a non-Norwegian background (lecture E. Bernhardt Lisbon meeting 2007); similar developments in UK, DE and NL.

- What support do young parents need in specific situations of conflict? What support is available in these specific situations: how do young people who have just made the transition to parenthood, cope with a disabled child; what support do they get in relation to decisions about abortion?
- What is the impact of grandparents and peers on family decisions and the practices of young parents?

These and other constellations of young parenthood, if researched properly, could illustrate *different modes of modernisation.* They also are apt to bring into daylight the *agency dimension* without which transitions into parenthood cannot be understood properly, and which we think are crucial for conceptualising social change.

Apart from this, the findings can also contribute to improved *theoretical models and methodologies* as well as more nuanced family measures and policies.

Considering young people as actors of social change, an important qualitative turning point in terms of the political proliferation of better opportunities to enfold such agency seems to be achieved. While a sound level of basic social security is favourable to fostering such agency (not only) in the context of young parenthood, it seems to be much more difficult to find the silver lining for supporting young people's agency and to turn them in the right direction. The political faith of "bettering living situations", which has been the guiding principle of social policies in the 1980's, has come to its end.

A perhaps more appropriate perspective can be found in Amartya Sen's – capabilities approach, which has shifted attention from inequalities in resources, outcomes and preferences to inequalities in capabilities, in other words his or her freedom to be or to do what s/he has reason to value. Not surprisingly researchers working on transitions into parenthood (see Crompton et al. 2007: 235, Vassilev & Wallace 2007) end up in this more option-related concept, which perhaps has to be further explored for transition policies in general.

References

Aassve, Arnstein., Iacovou, Maria, & Mencarini, Letizia (2006) Youth Poverty and Transition to Adulthood in Europe. *Demographic Research*, vol. 15, nr. 2, (287-338).

Ackers, Peter (2003) The Work-life Balance from the Perspective of Economic Policy Actors. *Social Policy & Society* 2:3, (221-229).

Alanen, Leena (2004) Theorizing Children's Welfare. *Paper* presented at WELLCHI Network Workshop 1: New perspectives on childhood. The Centre for research on Family, Kinship & Childhood. University of Leeds (UK), 12-13 November, 2004.

Alheit, Peter (2003): „Biographizität" als Schlüsselqualifikation. Plädoyer für transitorische Bildungsprozesse. In: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Betriebliche Weiterbildungsforschung e.V./Projekt Qualifikations-Entwicklungs-Management (Hg.): Weiterlernen – neu gedacht. Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse. Berlin [„Biographicity" as key qualification. Plea for transitory education processes. In: Project group in-firm further education research e.V./Project Qualification-Development-Management (ed.): Further learning – new thoughts. Experiences and insights. Berlin]

Allmendinger, Jutta (2008) Frauen auf dem Sprung – (women ready for takeoff) Study commissioned by women's magazin "Brigitte", http://www.brigitte.de/frau/gesellschaft/frauen-auf-dem-sprung/

and Family Social Work Vol. 9, No.3 pp 295-303.

Anttonen, Anneli & Sipilä, Jorma (1996) European Social Care Services: is it possible to identify models? *Journal of European Social Policy*, vol. 6, no 2, (87-100).

Armoedemonitor 2007 (Monitor poverty) ed. C. Vrooman et al./SCP, CBS: Den Haag.

Bäck-Wiglund, Margaret & Plantin, Lars (2007) The Workplace as an Arena for Negotiating the Work-Family Boundary: a case study ot two Swedish Social Services Agencies, in: Crompton, Rosemary, Lewis, Suzan & Lyonette, Clare (Eds.) 2007: *Women, Men, Work and Family in Europe*, Houndsmills et al.: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 171-189.

Barbagli, Marzio & Colombo, Asher (2001) *Omosessuali Moderni (Modern Homosexuals).* Bolgna: Il Mulino.

Barbagli, Marzio, Castiglioni, Maria & Dalla Zuanna, Gianpiero (2003) Fare Famiglia in Italia. Un secolo di ambiamenti (Being a Family in Italy. A century of changes*).* Bolgna: Il Mulino.

Bassani, Cherylynn (2007) Five Dimensions of Social Capital Theory as They Pertain to Youth Studies. *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 10, No. 1. (17-34).

Bauman, Zygmunt (1995) Life in Fragments. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bauman, Zygmunt (2000) Liquid Modernity. Cambridge: Polity Press.

BBSS Gallup International (2006) http://www.gallup-bbss.com/?id=122553405175&

Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth (1995) *The Normal Chaos of Love*. Cambridge: Policy Press.

Beckmann, Sabine (2007) Die geteilte Arbeit? Möglichkeiten einer sozialpolitischen Steuerung des Careverhaltens von Männern (Shared work? Possibilities of social-political steering the care behavior of men). *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung* Nr. 3, (371-392).

Behnke, Cornelia & Meuser, Michael (2005) Vereinbarkeitsmanagement, Zuständigkeiten und Karrierechancen bei Doppelkarrierepaaren (Work-family management, responsibilities and career opportunities of dual career couples). In H. Solga & Ch. Wimbauer (Hrs.) *"Wenn zwei das Gleiche tun..."- Ideal & Realität sozialer (Un-)gleichheit in Dual Career Couples*. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich.

Belcheva, Mara (1994) We and Our Children. Sofia: National Statistical Institute (NSI), Vol. XII.

Belcheva, Mara (2002) Fertility and reproductive behaviour, Dunav Press. Sofia.

Bereswill, Mechtild., Scheiwe, Kirsten & Wolde, Anja (Hrsg.) (2006) *Vaterschaft im Wandel* (Changing fatherhood) Weinheim/München: Juventa.

Bergnéhr, Disa (2008) Timing Parenthood. Linköping University.

Bernardi, Laura (2003) Channels of Social influence on reproduction, in: Population Research and Policy Review, 22: 5-6, 527-555.

Bernhardt, Eva M. (2000) "Female Careers between Employment and Children", Paper presented at the seminar "Low fertility, families and public policies", organised by the European Observatory on Family Matters in Sevilla, September 15-16-16

BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2004) Lebenslagen in Deutschland - Der 2. Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung [Living situations in Germany – The second poverty- and wealth-report of the federal government] http://www.bmas.de/coremedia/generator/900/property=pdf/lebenslagen__in__deutschland__de__847.pdf

BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2004) Nationaler Aktionsplan. Strategien zur Stärkung der sozialen Integration. Nationaler Aktionsplan zur Bekämpfung von Armut und sozialer Ausgrenzung 2003-2005 der Bundesregierung (Hg.) (National action plan 2004 – strategies to strengthen social integration. National action plan to fight poverty and discrimination 2003-2005 of the government) http://www.bmas.de/coremedia/generator/1870/property=pdf/nationaler__aktionsplan__2003__2005__implementierungsbericht.pdf

BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2008) Lebenslagen in Deutschland - Der 3. Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung [Living situations in Germany – The second poverty- and wealth-report of the federal government] http://www.sozialpolitik-aktuell.de/docs/Dritter_Armuts-_&_Reichtumsbericht.pdf

BMFSFJ 7 Familienbericht - Familie zwischen Flexibilität und Verlässlichkeit (Seventh family report Germany) (2005) http://www.bmfsfj.de/doku/familienbericht/haupt.html

Böhnisch, Lothan & Winter, Rainer (1993) Männliche Sozialisation (Male socialisation). Weinheim/München: Juventa.

Böhnisch, Lothar & Menz, Simone (2007) National Report Germany. Internal Document. UP2YOUTH project.

Böhnisch, Lothar (2003) Die Entgrenzung der Männlichkeit. Verstörungen und Formierungen des Mannseins im gesellschaftlichen Übergang. Opladen [Dissolving the boundaries of masculinity. Unsettling and forming masculinity in social transition. Opladen].

Boje, P. Thomas & Strandh, Matthias (2003) Households, Work and Flexibility. Country contextual reports. Schweden. In: Wallace, Claire (Hg.), HWF Research Report 2. Country contextual reports. Demographic trends, labour market and social policies. Wien, (97-133). www.hwf.at

Bos, Jasja & Hooghiemstra, Erna (2004) Het gezinsdal. Verandering van koopkracht na het krijgen van kinderen (Family downhill. Changes in consumption after becoming parent). *Bevolkingstrend,* 4de kwartaal 2004, Voorburg/Heerlen: CBS. (61-67).

Boyle, Paul J., Hill Hulu, Cooke, Thomas, Vernon Gayle, Mulder Clara H. (2006). The Effect of Moving on Union dissolution. MPIDR Working Paper WP 2006-002.

Bradshaw, Jonathan & Hatland, Axel (Ed.) (2006) *Social Policy, Employment and Family Change in Comparative Perspective.* Cheltenham, UK. Northhampton, MA, USA.

Brannen, Julia & Moss, Peter (1998) The Polarisation and Intensification of Parental Employment in Britain: consequences for children, families and the community. *Community, Work & Family,* Vol. 1, No. 3 (229-247).

Brannen, Julia (2003) Towards a Typology of Intergenerational Relations: Continuities and Change in Families. *Sociological Research Online*. Vol.8, No. 2.

Brannen, Julia, Lewis, Suzan, Nilsen, Ann, & Smithson, Janet (2002) Young Europeans, Work and Family. Futures in Transition. London: Routledge.

Brink, Gabriël, van den (2004) Schets van een beschavingsoffensief. Over normen, normaliteiten en normalisatie in Nederland (Sketch of a civilisation offensive. About norms, normalities and normalisation in the Netherlands. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Brüderl, Josef, Castiglioni, Laura,l Krieger, Ulrich, & Pforr, Klaus (2007). Methodological Report Research Project „Mini-Panel zur Familien- und Beziehungsentwicklung". Mannheim: 2007 (Mannheimer Zentrum für europäische Sozialforschung). http://www.mzes.uni.mannheim.de/sprache.php.

Buchmann, Marlis (1989) The Script of Life in Modern Society. Entry into Adulthood in a changing World. Chicago and London: The University Chicago Press.

Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (2005) National action plan against poverty and protection and

social inclusion of Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2006-2008.

Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (2006) National report on the strategies for social social inclusion, 2005-2006, http://news.netinfo.bg/?tid=40&oid=1115250, /accessed on: 24.11.2007

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2004). Elternschaft und Ausbildung (Parenthood and Education), Ein Gutachen des Wissenschaftlichen Beirats für Familienfragen beim Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Berlin

Bunting, L. and McAuley, C. (2004) Teenager Pregnancy and Parenthood: The role of fathers. *Child*

Burkart, Günter (2002) Entscheidung zur Elternschaft revisited (Decision for parenthood revisited). In: Schneider, Norbert, Matthias-Bleck, Heike (Hg.) Elternschaft heute. Gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen und individuelle Gestaltungsaufgaben. Opladen (pp. 23-48).

Burkart, Günter (2006) Positionen und Perspektiven. Zum Stand der Theoriebildung in der Familiensoziologie (State of art of family sociology). *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung* 18. Jg., H2, (175-205).

Butterwege, Christoph, Klund, Michael, & Zeng, Matthias (2005) Kinderarmut in Ost- und Westdeutschland (Poverty of children in East and West Germany) Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Bynner, John, Elias, Peter, McKnight, Abigail, Pan, Huiqi, & Pierre Gäelle (2002) *Young People's Changing Routes to Independece.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Carnoy, Martin (2000) The New Family and Flexible Work. In: M. Carnoy (ed.): Sustaining the New Economy. Work, Family and Community in the Information Age. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (pp. 105-151)

Casey, Catherine (2004) Knowledge-Based Economies, Organizations, and the Socio-Cultural Regulation of Work. *Economic and Industrial Democracy,* 25 (4), (613-633).

Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU Current status and way forward (2008) http://ec.europa/en/employment_social/spsi/docs/social_inclusion/2008/child_poverty_en.pdf

Chung, Heejung, Kerkhofs, Marcel, Ester, Paul (2007) Working Time Flexibility in European Companies. Establishment Survey on Working Time 2004-2005. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

COFACE Conferation of Family Organisations of the European Union (2006) Men and Families. Men's changing family roles in Europe. Project summary and recommencations. www.coface-eu.org.

Coffield, Frank, (ed.) (2000) Different Visions of a Learning Society. Bristol: Policy Press.

Cordón, Juan Antonio (2006) Low fertility and the Scope for Social Policy. In: Wolfgang Lutz, Rudolf Richter and Chris Wilson (eds): The New Generations of Europeans: Demography and Families in the Enlarged European Union, Springers, Netherlande, (29-58).

Cousins, Christine R. & Tang, Ning (2004) Working Time and Work and Family Conflict in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK. BSA Publ. Vol. 18(3): 531-549.

Crompton, Rosemary, Lewis, Suzan & Lyonette, Clare (Eds.) 2007: *Women, Men, Work and Family in Europe*, Houndsmills et al.: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dale, Angela, Lindley, Joanne K. & Dex, Shirley (2006) A Life-Course Perspective on Ethnic Differences in Women's Economic Activity in Britain. *European Sociological Review* Vol 22 No. 4 (459-476).

De Sandre, Paolo (2000) Patterns of Fertility in Italy and Factors of Its Decline. *Genues, LVI, 1-2.*

Department for Work and Pensions (2006b) *A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work.* www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform/ [retrieved 24 January 2008]

Department of Work and Pensions (2006a) *Working Together. UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08.* Available at www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/nap/WorkingTogether.pdf [retrieved 23 January 2008]

Deutsch, Francine M. (2007): Undoing Gender. *Gender and Society*, vol.21, 106-127.

Diepstraten, Isabelle, du Bois-Reymond, Manuela, Vinken, Henk (2006) Trendsetting Biogaphies: concepts of

navigating through late-modern life and learning. *Journal of Youthg Studies* 9, 2, (175-193).

Dinkova, Maria (2005) Motherhood in Bulgaria between 20th and 21st Century. *Paper* posted at www.assa-m.com/demografia.htm.

Distelbrink, Marjolein & Hooghiemstra, Edit (2005) Allochtone gezinnen. Feiten en cijfers (Migrant families. Facts and figures). Denn Haag: Nederlandse Gezinsraad.

Dixon, M. and Margo, J. (2006) Population Politics. London: IPPR.

Dobritz, Jürgen (2005) Kinderlosigkeit in Deutschland und Europa – Daten, Trends und Einstellungen (Childlessness in Germany and Europe – Figures, Trends and Attitudes). *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, 30, (359-408).

du Bois-Reymond, Manuela & Chisholm, Lynne (eds.) (2006) *The Modernisation of Youth Transitions in Europe.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

du Bois-Reymond, Manuela & Kret, Mariska (2006) National Draft Report the Netherland*s*. Leiden University.

du Bois-Reymond, Manuela & te Poel, Yolanda (2006) Work and Care in the Life-Course of Young Adults in the Netherlands. In: Carmen Leccardi & Elisabeth Ruspini (eds.): *A New Youth? Young People and Family Life*. Aldershot: Ashgate., (164-186)

du Bois-Reymond, Manuela (2001) Negotiation Families. In Manuela du Bois-Reymond, H. Sünker, & H.H. Krüger (eds.): *Childhood in Europe. Approaches, Trends, Findings*). New York, Washington etc.: Peter Lang, (63-90).

du Bois-Reymond, Manuela (2008) The Dutch "brede school". *Expertise* written for intern conference Bielefeld, Germany (May 2008).

Dykstra, Pearl. & Hagestad, Gunhild (2007 i.p.) Roads Less Taken: Developing a Nuanced View of Older Adults Without Children. *Journal of Family Issues***.**

Edwards, Anne & Mackenzie, Lin (2008) Identity Shifts in Informal Learning Trajectories. In Bwert van Oers, Wim Wardekker, Ed Elbers, René van der Veer (eds.) The Transformation of Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 163-181).

Emirbayer, Mustafa & Mische, Ann (1998) What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 103, no. 4, pp. 962-1023.

Escobedo, Anna (2004) Review of Research on the Relationship between Formal and Informal Care Work. Discussion Paper no. 2 EU Project Formal and Informal Work in Europe (FIWE), University or Hamburg.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta., Gallie, Duncan., Hemerijck, Anton, Myles, John (2002) Why We Need a New Welfare State, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

European Commission (2003) *European Employment Strategy Employment Guideline,2003* (http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/prop_2003/adopted_guidelines_2003.en.htm.

European Commission (2004) *Report of the High Level Group on the Future of Social Policy in an Enlarged Union.* Luxembourg: Office of Official Publications.

European Commission (2005) *Communication on Confronting Demographic Change: a new solidarity between the generations.* COM 94 final of 16/3/2005.

European Commission (2007) Report on Equality between Women and Men. (COM (2007)49 final).

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2004; 2007) *No Future Without Children: demographic developments in Europe.* Dublin: European Foundation.

European Observatory on the Social Situation, Demography and Family (ed.) (2003) Key family issues in the EU member states.

Fahey, Tony & Spéder, Zsolt (2004) *Fertility and Family Issues in an enlarged Europe.* Dublin: European Foundation of the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Field, John & Leicester, Mel. (eds.) (2002) *Lifelong Learning. Education Across the Lifespan.* London & New York:

Routledge Falmer.

Field, John (2002) Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order. Stoke on Trent, UK and Sterling, USA: Trentham Books.

Field, John (2003) *Social Capital*. London, New York: Routledge.

Fine-Davis, Margret, Fagnani, Jeanne., Giovanni, D., Høgaard, Lis & Clarke, Hilary (2004) Fathers and Mothers: Dilemmas of the Work-Life Balance. A Comparative Study in Foru European Countries. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Forssén, Katja & Ritakallio, Veli.-Matti. (2006) First Births: A Comparative Study of the Patterns of Transition to Parenthood in Europe. In Jonathan Bradshaw & Axel Hatland *Social Policy, Employment and Family Change in Comparative Perspective*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, (161-177).

Friedrich,Monika & Remberg, Annette (2005) Wenn Teenager Eltern werden ... : Lebenssituation jugendlicher Schwangerer und Mütter sowie jugendlicher Paare mit Kind ; eine qualitative Studie (When teenagers become parents) Köln: Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung.

Fthenakis, Wassilios., Kalicki, Bernhard & Peitz, Gabriele (2002) Paare werden Eltern (Couples becoming parents). Opladen: Leske & Budrich.

Gallie, Duncan & Paugham, Serge (eds.) (2000) *Welfare Regimes and the Experience of Unemployment in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gallie, Duncan (2002) The Quality of Working Life in Welfare Strategy. In G. Esping-Andersen et al. *Why We Need a New Welfare State* (96-129). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gauthier, Anne Helene (1996) The State and the Family: a comparative analysis of family policies in industrialized countries. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Georgas, James, Mylonas, Kostas, Aikaterini, Gari, & Panagiotopoulou, Penny (2004). Families and Values in Europe. In: Wil Arts & Loek Halman (eds.) *European Values at the Turn of the Millennium*. Leiden/Boston: Brill (167-204)

Gershuny, Jonathan (2000) Changing Times: Work and leisure in post-industrial society. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Giddens,Anthonie (1991), Self-Identiy. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goldstein, Joshua, Lutz Wolfgang, & Testa, Maria Rita (2003). The emergence of sub-replacement family size ideals in Europe. *Population Research and Policy Review* 22(5-6) (479-496).

Gstrein, Michaela, Mateeva, Liliana and Schuh, Ulrich (2007) Social Quality and the Changing Relationship between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe, Working Paper 2: Social, demographic and employment trends.

Haenisch, Walter, Krause, Peter, Bäcker, Gerhard, Maschke, M. & Otto, B. (2000) *Armut und Ungleichheit in Deutschland: der neue Armutsbericht der Hans'Böckle-Stiftung, des DGB und des Paritätischen Wohlfahrtsverbandes* (Hg.) (Poverty and disparity in Germany) Reinbeck: Rowohlt.

Hakim, Catherine (2003) Competing family models, competing social policies. *Family Matters* 64, no. 3:(51-61).

Hamburger, Franz & Hummrich, Merle (2007) Family and Migration (Family and migration). In: Jutta Ecarius (Hg.) *Handbuch Familie*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag (112-134).

Hannover, Irmela, Birkenstock, Arne (2005) Familienbilder im Fernsehen. Familienbilder und Familienthemen in fiktionalen und nicht-fiktionalen Fernsehsendungen (Family images in television). www.bmfsfj.de

Hemerijck, Anton (2002) The Self-Transformation of the European Social Model(s). In G. Esping-Andersen et al: *Why We Need a New Welfare State*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press (173-213).

Hinte, Holger (2007) In Deutschland und Litauen zählt die Familie am wenigsten – Studie zum familiären Zusammenhalt. Informationsdienst Wissenschaft. Pressemitteilung 13.08.2007 [In Germany and Lithuania, Family matters the least - Study on family solidarity. Information Service Sciences. Press release 13.08.2007].

Hirst, Julia; Formby, Eleanor & Owen, Jenny (2006) Pathways into parenthood: Reflections from three generations of teenage mothers and fathers, Sheffield: Sheffield University,

http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ceir/downloads/Pathways20into20Parenthood20full20report20Oct06.pdf

Hobson, Barbara. (ed.) (2007) Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinity and the Social Policies of Fatherhood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hofmeister, Heather, Blossfeld, Hans.-Peter (2006) Women's careers in an era of uncertainty: conclusions from a 13-country international comparison. In: Hans-Peter Blossfeld & Heather

Hofmeister, Heather: *Globalization, uncertainty and women's careers. An international comparison*, Cheltenham UK und Northhampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar (433-450).

Hrženjak, Majda (2006) SIPA (System of Household Assistance). *Research Report.* Ljubjana: Peace Institute.

Huinink, Johan (2006) Zur Positionsbestimmung der empirischen Familiensoziologie (The position of family sociology) *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung* H2 (212-252).

Huink, Johan. (2000) Bildung und Familienentwicklung im Lebensverlauf (Education

t e Hs 34n,4

Policy, Employment and Family Change in Comparative Perspective. Cheltenham, UK. Northhampton, MA, USA (179-196).

Köppen, Katia (2004) The compatibility between work and family life – an empirical study of second birth risks in West Germany and France. MPIDR Working Paper.

Kotowska, Irena.E. (2004) Fertility and Nuptiality in the CEE Countries in the Context of Weakening Families and a Weakening State. In Trudje Knijn & Aafke Kompter: *Solidarity between the sexes and the generations*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar (111-130).

Kovacheva, Siyka & Mitev, Petar-Emil (2004) FATE. Bulgarian National Report. Analysis of qualitative interviews. Plovdiv: Plovdiv University.

Kovacheva, Siyka & Petkof, Alexander (2006) National Draft Report Bulgaria. New European Centre for Regional Studies, Plovdiv.

Kovacheva, Siyka & Petkov, Alexander (2007) Young Parenthood in Bulgaria. National Report. Internal Document. UP2YOUTH project.

Kovacheva, Siyka., Lewis, Suzan & Demireva, Neli (2005) Changing Cultures in Changing Workplaces: UK and Bulgaria Compared. *Sociological Problems,* Special Issue. The Socioeconomic Cultures on the Balkans – Sustainability and Change (62-81).

Kröhnert, Steffen & Klingholz, Reiner (2008). Emanzipation oder Kindergeld? Was die neue Familienpolitik Deutschlands von anderen europäischen Ländern gelernt hat. Berlin-Insitut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung. http://www.berlin-istitut.org/studien/emanzipationoderkindergeld.html.

Kuhar, Metka (2007) Družina in njene nove podobe. (The new images of family). Ljubljana: Institute for Macroeconomic Research. conversation with dr. Bojana Pinter, daily newspaper Dnevnik, 8th Jan 2007 (in press)

Lave, Jean. & Wenger, Etienne. (1991) Situated Learning. Legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leccardi, Carmen & Camussi, Elisabetta (2005) Stereotypes of Working Women: the power of expectations. *Social Science Information*, 44(1), (113-140).

Leccardi, Carmen & Magaraggia, Sveva (2007) National Report Italy. Internal Document. UP2YOUTH project

Leccardi, Carmen & Ruspini, Elizabeth. (eds.) (2006) *A New Youth? Young People, Generations and Family Life.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Leccardi, Carmen (2005) Gender, Time and Biogaphical Narrative, *Journal of Social Science Education (JSSE)*, 2, (1-13).

Leccardi, Carmen (2006) Facing Uncertainty. Temporality and Biographies in the new century. In Carmen Leccardi & Elizabeth Ruspini (eds.): *A New Youth? Young People, Generations, and Family Life.* Aldershopt: Ashgate (15-40).

Leccardi, Carmen (2007) "Stereotipi di genere" [Gender Stereotypes], in Buzzi Carlo, Cavalli Alessandro, & de Lillo Antonio (eds.) *Rapporto giovani. Sesta indagine dell'Istituto IARD sulla condizione giovanile in Italia*, [Youth Report], Bologna: Il Mulino (233-248).

Leccardi, Carmen. & Magaraggia, Sveva. (2006). *National Draft Report Italy.* University of Milano-Bicocca.

Lee, Ellie, Clements, Steve, Ingham, Roger & Stone Nicole (2004) *A Matter of Choice: Explaining National Variations in Teenage abortion and Motherhood*. York: Rowntree Foundation.

Lenz, Karl (2002) Familien. In: Schröer, Wolfgang, Struck, Norbert/ Wolff, Mechthild (Hg.): *Handbuch Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*. Weinheim/ München [Families. In: Schröer, Wolfgang, Struck, Norbert/ Wolff, Mechthild (Ed.): Handbook child and youth services.] (147-175).

Lewis, Jane (2006/2007) Strukturwandel der Familie (Structural change in the family). *Transit. Europäische Revue* 32 Winter 2006/2007 (157-173).

Lewis, Suzan & Smithson, Janet (2006) Gender, Parenthood and the Changing European Workplace: Young Adults

Negotiating the Work-Family Boundary. *Final Report* 5th Framework Program of the European Union. www.workliferesearch.org/transitions.

Lewis, Suzan & Smithson, Janet (2006) Transitions. Final Report on the project "Gender, Parenthood and the Changing European Workplace: Young Adults Negotiating the Work-Family Boundary". www.workliferesearch.org/transitions.

Lewis, Suzan & Smithson, Janet. (2001) Sense of Entitlement to Support for the Reconciliation of Employment and Family Life. *Human Relations* 55(11) (1455-1481).

Limmer, Ruth (2005) Berufsmobilität und Familie in Deutschland (Occupational mobility in Germany). *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung,* 17. Jg., H2, (97-114).

Lister, Ruth., Williams, Fiona., Anttonen, Anneli. et al. (2007) *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe. New Challenges for Citizenship Research in a Cross-national Context.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

López Blasco, Andreu, McNeish, Wallace & Walther, Andreas (eds.) (2003) *Young People and Contradictions of Inclusion. Towards Integrated Transition Policies in Europe.* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Lück, Detlef (2006) The impact of gender role attitudes on women's life courses. In: Hans-Peter Blossfeld & Heather Hofmeister (eds.) *Globalization, Uncertainty and Women's Careers.* Cheltenham, UK., Northhampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar (405-432).

Lutz, Wolfgang, Richter, Rudolf & Wilson, Chris (Eds.) (2006) *The New Generations of Europeans. Demography and Families in the Enlarged European Union*. IIASA/Earthscan. London and Sterling VA.

MacInnes, John (2006) Voluntary childlessness. Fertility 'plans' and the 'demand' for children: evidence from Eurobarometer surveys. Centre d'Estudis Demogràfies.

MacKellar, Landis (2006) Europe's Future Generations; Closing Thoughts. In: Wolfgang Lutz, Rudolf Richter & Chris Wilson (eds.) *The New Generations of Europeans. Demography and Families in the Enlarged European Union.* IIASA/Earthscan. London and Sterling VA. (353-373).

Maihofer, Andrea (2004) Was wandelt sich im aktuellen Wandel der Familie? [What is changing in the Current Change of the Family?] In: Beerhorst, Joachim/Demirovic, Alex/Guggemos, Michael (Hg.) Kritische Theorie im gesellschaftlichen Strukturwandel, Frankfurt a. M., 384-408.

Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research 2008: Laboratory of Contemporary European Fertility and Family Dynamics.

McRae, Susan (1993) Returning to Work After Childbirth: opportunities and inequalities. *European Sociological Review*, 9:2 (125-138).

Meer kansen voor vrouwen (2007) Report on the emancipation of women (Emancipatienota 2008-2011), www.regering.nl/meer_kansen

Menniti, Adele & Palomba, Rossella (2000) "Le intenzioni di avere figli" [Intentions of having Children]. In: Gesano, Giuseppe, Menniti, Adele, Misiti, Maura, Palomba, Rossella e Cerbara, Loredana (a cura di) *Le intenzioni, i desideri e le scelte delle donne italiane in tema di fecondità*, *Working Paper* n. 01, Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali.

Menz, Simone (2006) National Draft Report Germany. University of Dresden.

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (of Italy) (2006) National report on the strategies for social protection and social inclusion. http://www.solidarietasociale.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/A2866363-A872-4D02-AD62-940E8B34CEB3/0/Rapportonazionaleinclusione.doc

Mirchev, Mikhail (2005) The Demographic Situation and Its Perspectives. *Report at the Conference "Family in Crisis, the Nation at Risk*', November 2005, Sofia.

Mitev, Peter E. (2001) 'Dynamics of poverty', *Review of Sociology*, Vol. 7, (11-35).

Mühling, Tanja & Smolka, Adelheid (2007) *Elternbefragung zur Familienb*

Nicoll, Katherine (2006) Flexibility and Lifelong Learning. Policy, discourses and politcs. London & New York: Routledge.

O'Reilly, Jacqueline, Roche Reyna, Jose, Nazio, Tiziana, Woodfield, Ruth, MacInnes, John, Haas, Barbara, Steiber, Nadia & Torres, Analia (2007) CARE AND EMPLOYMENT in: Vassilev, Ivalyo & Wallace, Claire (2007) *Social Quality and the Changing Relationship between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe*, Working Paper 1 of the WORKCARE project, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/nec/workcare/

OECD (2006) Starting Strong II. Early Childhood Education and Care. Paris: OECD.

OECD (2007) Babies and Bosses – - Reconciling Work and Family Life: A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries, **http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,3343,en_2649_34819_39651501_1_1_1_1,00.html**

OECD Family database (2007) (www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database

OECD PISA Survey (2006) http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

Oppo, Anna, Piccone Stella, Simonetta, Signorelli, Amalia (2000) Maternità, Identità, Scelte (Maternity, Identity and Choices*)*. Napoli: Liguori.

Ostner, Ilona (2004) 'What are children for?' Reciprocity and Solidarity Between Parents and Children. In Trudie Knijn & Aafke Komter (eds.) *Solidarity Between the Sexes and the Generations. Transformations in Europe.* Edward Elgar. Cheltenham, Uk. Northampton, MA, USA (167-184).

PAIFRAM (Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics (start 2008).

Palme, Joakim (2006/2007) Die Modernisierung der sozialen Vorsorge in Europa (The modernization of social welfare in Europe). *Transit. Europäische Revue* 32 Winter 2006/2007 (137-156).

Perrons, Diane (2003) The New Economy and the Work-Life Balance: Conceptual Explorations and a Case Study of New Media. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 10(1) (65-93).

Pfau-Effinger, Birgit & Geissler, Birgit (eds.) (2005). *Care and Social Integration in European Societies.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Pfau-Effinger, Birgit (1996) Analyse internationaler Differenzen in der Erwerbsbeteiligung von Frauen – theoretischer Rahmen und empirische Ergebnisse (Analysis of international differences in female labour market participation – theoretical approaches and empirical results). *Kölner Zeitschrift für Sozialpsychologie und Soziologie KZfSS*, 48(4) (462-492).

Philipov, Dimiter (1999) International Study „Fertility and Family". *Population*, Vol. 1-2 (60-78).

Phoenix, Ann (1991) *Young Mothers?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Pinnelli, Antonella**,** Racioppi**,** Filomena & Terzera**,** Laura (2007) Genere, famiglia e salute [Gender, Family and Health] Milano: Franco angeli,.

Plug, Wim & du Bois-Reymond, Manuela (2005) Contemporary labour market values of young people – between continuity and change, opportunities and risks. In Harriet Bradley & Jacques van Hoof (eds.) *Young People in Europe: labour market and citizenship.* Bristol: Policy Press (65-80).

Pohl, Axel, Stauber, Barbara, Walther, Andreas (2007) Youth – Actor of Social Change. Theoretical reflections on young people's agency in comparative perspective. *Interim discussion paper for the UP2YOUTH project.*

Poliandri, Donatella & Mauceri, Sergio (2007) The delay in the assumption of the parental role: a sociological research – Pilot Study. *Paper presented at ESA Conference.*

Portegijs, Wilma (2006) Emancipatiemonitor (Emanicpation monitor*)*. Den Haag/Voorburg: SCP/CBS.

Quinton, David L., Pollock, Sue B. & Golding, Jean (2002) The Transition to Fatherhood in Young Men: influences on commitment. http://www.regard.ac.uk.

Ranson, Steward (Ed.) (1998) Inside the Learning society. London & New York: Cassell.

Rapoport, Rhona, Bailyn, Lotte, Fletcher, Joyce K., Pruitt, Bette H. (2002) Beyond Work-Family Balance. Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reynolds, Tracey (2007) Friendship Networks, Social Capital and Ethnic Identity: Researching the Perspectives of

Carribean Young People in Britain. *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 10(4) (383-398).

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. & Correll, Shelly J. (2004): Unpacking the Gender System: a theoretical perspective on gender beliefs and social relations. *Gender & Society*, vol.18,l 510-531.

Rille-Pfeiffer, Christiane (2007) Geburtenentwicklung und Kinderwunsch im europäischen Vergleich. Eine Analyse der Länder Österreich, Schweden und Spanien (Fertility development and child wish. A European comparison between Austria, Sweden and Spain). *Working Paper* (part 1) Nr. 61. Austrian Institute for Family Studies/Universität Wien.

Robert Bosch Stiftung (2007) Magazin. 1. Jahrgang, November 2007 [Journal. Vol. 1, November 2007].

Rosina, Alessandro & Sabbadini, Linda Laura (2005) Diventare Padri in Italia. Fecondità e figli secondo un approchio de genere (Becoming Fathers. Fertility and Children in a Gender Approach). ISTAT, Roma.

Ruckdeschel, Kerstin (2007) Der Kinderwunsch von Kinderlosen (Fertility intentions of childless persons). *Zeitschrift für Familienforschung*, 19, Nr. 2, pp. (210-230).

Rupp, Marina (2008) Children in Same Sex Living Arrangements (running project – see www.ifb-bamberg.de/glg/).

Sartori, Francesca (2002) La Giovane Coppia (The Young couple). In: Carlo Buzzi, Alessandro Cavalli, & Antonio deLillo (a cura di) *Giovani del nuovo secolo. Quinto rapporto IARD sulla condizione giovanile in Italia (Youth in the New Century*, 5th IARD Report on the Youth condition in Italy). Bolgna: Il Mulino (187-228).

Schäfer, Thomas &Völter Bettina (2005) Subjekt-Positionen. Michel Focault und die Biographieforschung (subject-positionings. Michel Foucault and biographical research). In: Bettina Völter, Bettina Dausien, Helma Lutz, Gabriele Rosenthal (Hrsg.): Biographieforschung im Diskurs: Theoretische und methodologische Verknüpfung, VS Verlag, S.161-189.

Schneider, Norbert F. (2005) Mobilität und Familie (Mobility and family). *Zeitchrift für Familienforschung* 17. Jg. H2, (90-94).

Schneider, Norbert F. (2007) Changes in Parenthood and Childhood in Europe and Their Impact on Solidarity and Reciprocity in Parent-Child-Relationships. In: Ilse Lenz; Charlotte Ullrich and Barbara Fersch (eds.) *Gender Orders Unbound? Globalisation, Restructuring and Reciprocity*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, (345-360).

Schneider, Norbert F. und Limmer, Ruth (2007) Job mobility and living arrangements – why individuals become mobile and how mobility influences them and their families. In: Weert Canzler; Vincent Kaufmann und Sven Kesselring (eds.): *Tracing Mobilitie*s. Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, (103-119).

Scholz, Christian (2007) Special issue: Human capital management : more than just a phrase. Zeitschrift für Personalforschung *(21),*3.

Schulz, Florian & Blossfeld, Hans-Peter (2006) Wie verändert sich die häusliche Arbeitsteilung im Eheverlauf? Eine Längsschnittstudie der ersten 14 Ehejahre in Westdeutschland (Changes in the task division of household chores. A longitudinal study over the first 14 ears of marriage). *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie,* Jg. 58 H1 (23-49).

SCP Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau (2008) Gesinnen van de toekomst (Families of the future), www.e-quality.nl

Sennett, Richard (2006) *The Culture of New Capitalism*. Yale University Press.

Sgritta, Giovanni B. (2002) The situation of families in Italy-2001. European Observatory on the Social Situation, Demography, and Family. Retrieved from the World Wide Web at http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/eoss/index_en.html.

SJM (Slovenian Public Opinion Surveys) 2003/2; 2004/2.

Spéder, Zsolt (2005) Diversity of Family Structure in Europe. *Paper* written for the Day of European Demography, held as a part of the 25th conference of IUSSP (July 2005 in Tours, France).

Spéder, Zsolt (2006) Childbearing behaviour in the New EU Member States: Basic Trends and Selected Attitudes. In: Wolfgang Lutz, Rudolf Richter & Chris Wilson (eds.) *The New Generations of Europeans. Demography and Families in the Enlarged European Union.* IIASA/Earthscan. London and Sterling VA. (59-81).

Spies, Anke (2008) Zwischen Kinderwunsch und Kinderschutz. Babysimulatoren in der pädagogischen Praxis (Between the wish for children and protection of children: Baby simulators in pedagogical practice).VS Verlag: Wiesbaden.

Stamm, Margrit (2007) Begabtenförderung und soziale Herkunft. Befunde zu den verborgenen Mechanismen ihrer Interaktion *(*Education of the gifted and social background. Findings to the hidden mechanisms of their interaction). *ZSE Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation 27*. Jg. H 3 (227-242).

Stanley, Kate, Edwards, Laura. & Hatch, Becky (2003) The Family Report 2003: Choosing happiness*?* Institute for Public Policy Research.

Stauber, Barbara & du Bois-Reymond, Manuela (2006) Familienbeziehungen im Kontext verlängerter Übergänge. Eine intergenerative Studie aus neun europäischen Ländern (Family relationships within transitions. An intergenerational study in nine European countries*). ZSE Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation 26*. Jg., Nr. 2, (206-221).

Stefanov, R & Dimitrov, I. (2003) Planned Number of Children in Newlywed Families in Bulgaria under the Conditions of Social and Economic Transition. *Health Management* 2003, Vol.2.

Strandh, Mattias & Nordenmark, Mikael (2003) Households, Work and Flexibility. Survey Comparative Report. Research Report *#4*: Survey comparative reports (Volume 2: Thematic reports).

Sullivan, Cath & Lewis, Suzan (2001) Home-based Telework, Gender, and the Synchronization of Work and Family: perspectives of teleworkers and their co-residents. Gender, Work and Organization, 8(2) (123-145).

Švab, Alenka. & Kuhar,Metka (2005) Family and Social Contexts of Everyday Life of Gays and Lesbians in Slovenia. Mirovni InŠtitut: Ljubljana.

Testa, Maria Rita (2006) *Childbearing preferences and family issues in Europe*, Vienna Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Textor, Martin R. (2007) Familienbildung (Family education). In Jutta Ecarius (Hg.) Handbuch Familie. Wiesbaden (366-386).

Thiessen, Barbara & Paula-Irene Villa (eds.) (2008) *Mütter und Väter. Mediale Thematisierungen und alltägliche Wirklichkeiten*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, forthcoming.

Thompson, M., Vintner, Louise & Young, Viv (2005) Dads and Their Babies: leave arrangements in the first year. In: Working Paper Series No. 37. Manchester: Equal Opportunities Commission.

Thompson, Terry L. (1991) Family work: Women's sense of fairness . Journal of Family Issues, 12, 181–196.

Ule, Mirjana & Kuhar, Metka (2006) National Draft Report Slovenia. University of Ljubjana.

Ule, Mirjana; Kuhar, Metka & Svab, Alenka (2006) Draft Country Report Slovenia. Internal Document. UP2YOUTH project.

UNICEF (2008) Generations and Gender Surveys. http://www/unece.org/pau_docs/ggp/GGP_2006_SumDescr.pdf

Valk, Helga A.G. de & Liefbroer, Aart C. (2007) Timing Preferences for Women's Family-Life Transitions: Intergenerational Transmission Among Migrants and Dutch. In: *Journal of Marriage and Family 69:*1 (190-206).

Vancey, Martin, Patricia (2003) "Sad and Done"versus "Saying and Doing". Gendering Practices, Practicing Gender at Work. *Gender & Society*, vol. 17 no. 3, pp. 342-366.

Vassilev, Ivalyo & Wallace, Claire (2007) *Social Quality and the Changing Relationship between Work, Care and Welfare in Europe*, Working Paper 1 of the WORKCARE project, http://www.abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/nec/workcare/

Veil, Mechthild (2003) Kinderbetreuungs-Kulturen in Europa: Schweden, Frankreich, Deutschland. In: *Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. B 44/2003 [Child care cultures in Europe. In: Policy and History. B 44/2003].

Walby, Sylvia (2004) The European Union and Gender Equality: emerging varieties of gender regime. In: *Social Politics,* vol 11, no 1, (4-29).

Wallace, Claire (2003) Households, Work and flexibility. Final Project Report (http://www.hwf.at)

Walther, Andreas, du Bois-Reymond, Manuela. & Biggart, Andy (eds.) (2006) Participation in Transition. Motivation of Young Adults in Europe for Learning and Working. Frankfurt a.M. etc.: Peter Lang.

West, Candance & Zimmermann, Don H.(1987) Doing Gender. *Gender and Society 1(2), pp. 125-151.*

Widener, Anmarie J. (2006) Sharing the Caring. State, Family and Gender Equality in Parental Leave Policy. PhD, University of Leiden. https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/dspace/handle/1887/4453

Yachkova, Mirolyuba (2002) The family in Bulgaria at the turn of the century: prerequisites, analyses and forecasts. Sofia: ASSA-M.

Yaxley, Darren, Vintner, Louise & Young, Viv (2005) Dads and Their Babies: the mothers' perpective. Equal Opportunity commission Working Paper Seri*es* No. 41. Manchester: EOC.

Zeitschrift für Familienforschung/Journal of Family Research 3/2007: Special issue on Dual-career couples.

Zelitzer, Viviane A. (1985) The Priceless Child. New York: Basic Books.

Zevenhuizen, Marloes (2005) Lesbische stellen voeden net zo goed op als hetero's, al levert het ouderschap de moeder wel meer stress op (Lesbian couples are as competent als hetero couples, although parenthood is more stressy for the mother). *Trouw* 03-01-2005.

Annex: context table

The following table has to be handled with care: it serves for a general orientation which could be helpful for the reader. However, we are aware that it is far from being complete and coherent – for several reasons:

- not all data we are interested in is available for all our countries. E.g., figures for the average age of men becoming fathers are not available, and there is only spurious information about the rate of fathers on parental leave.
- Some data are misleading, as e.g. the rate of childless women. These data do not consider a prolongued phase of reproductive behaviour, and as long as they count childlessness with an age-limit of 39, the figures are highly over-estimating childlessness. We therefore decided to leave them out.
- Some data are not comparable respectively are not differentiated enough. E.g. the OECD-data on maternal employment do not consider part-time and full-time work, which however makes a big difference.
- The latest LSF data are presented to the public in an aggregated way, which would not server for country comparison,
- The database of the RECWOWE project is still under construction when finishing this report.

Context information	**Source / year of publication**	**Slovenia**	**Bulgaria**	**Italy**	**Germany**	**Netherlands**	**United Kingdom**
Main status (prior activities) of young people (15-24)	EU – LFS (DisYouth-Project, figures 2004)	Train+edu: 69,0 Empl: 21,1 Unempl: 8,7 % Other: 1,1	Train+edu: 54,0 Empl: 22,0 Unempl: 7,5 % Other: 16,5	Train+edu: 57,7 Empl: 24,6 Unempl: 14,0 % Other : 3,6	Train+educ: 89 % (resp. 39% 20-25) Empl: Unempl: 7,7 %	Training+educ : Empl: Unempl: other	Train+edu: 44,1 Empl: 41,7 Unempl: 5,4 % Other: 8,8
Rate of unskilled young people (percentage of respective population)	Eurydice 2005 ISCED 0-2 ISCED 3 C	 10,0 25,6	 22,5 (-)	 30,9 6,2	 26,7 (-)	 26,7 13,2	 22,8 18,6
Early school leavers aged 18 – 24 (in % of the population of the same age)	Eurostat, LSF 2007	Female: 2,7 Male: 5,7	Female: 16,9 Male: 16,3 %	Female: 15,9 Male: 22,6	Female: 11,9 Male: 13,4	9,6 14,4	Female: 11,4 Male: 14,6
Age of leaving parental home	Eurostat 2005	Female: 27 Male: 30	Female: 25 Male: 31	Female: 27 Male: 30	Female: 21 Male: 23	Female: 21 Male: 24	Female:2c -0.0022 Tw 0 1C

Flexible work arrangements for partners according to their desires	Eurostat 2006 (fig. for 2004)	Female: 1,8 % Male: 3,1 %	??	Female: 5,4 % Male: 7,6 %	Female: 7,3 % Male: 7,4 %	Female: 20,3 % Male: 16,1 %	Female: 14,4 % Male: 24,6 %
Gender pay gap[104]	EU SILC 2006 (*2005)	8 (prov.)	14	9*? 31,6	22	18*	20*
National fertility rate	Eurostat 2005	1.23	1.31	1.32	1.36	1.73	1.80
Abortion rate (per 1.000 living births)	National statistics				BiB 2008: all Germany, all age groups: 73 per 10.000 women 15-18 year olds: 39 (West); 62 (East); 18-25 year olds: 102 (West); 124 (East) (2006)		
Teenage pregnancy rate (15-19) (pregnancies per 1000 females of this age)	Council of Europe 2005 (Eurostat??)	6.1	40	7,0	10,7	6,3	26,9
Mean age of young women getting 1st child	Eurostat, Statistic. Yearbook 2008 (figures 2005)	29,4 years	26,0 years	30,7	29,4	30,5	29,0
Mean age of young men becoming fathers			-				
2nd child – if and when			-				
Rate of single mothers and single fathers (%)	EU-SILC 2005	8	No data	16	16	13	24 %
Children born out of the wedlock (%)	Eurostat Figures 2007	48,10	50.20	20.71	29.95	39.73	42.27

[104] difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings

Maternity leave – time and money	MISSOC	Maternity leave: 105 calendar days, of which 28 days before the confinement. 100% of the salary or other individual basis for the last 12 months.	45 days before and 270 days after birth at 90% pay, then 15 months paid a flat rate (till child 2 years), then 6 months unpaid till the child gets 8.	2 months before, 3 months after, possibility to increase to six more months, paid at 80% the compulsory period and 30% for the supplementary period.	6 weeks before, 8 weeks after giving birth (paid with full salary)	16 weeks, paid at 100% *parental leave* up to the age of 8 of the child 13 times the weekly working hours (employee has the right to take up the full leave or spread it over a longer period in agreement with employer.	paid maternity leave: increase from 26 weeks to 9 months. (first 6 weeks paid at 90% of the mother's average weekly earnings, remaining 33 weeks paid at the minimum statutory rate (144 Euro) or 90% of their average weekly pay if it is below this figure. Additional unpaid 3 months maternity leave can be taken, whilst retaining the right to return to the same job position.

Paternity leave - availability for fathers	MISSOC	After these 105 days, one of the parents has the right to 260 days leave with full salary (basis: salary of the 12 months prior to the leave (the entire parental leave is therefore 365 days, either as 260 days of full leave or 520 half-days, combined with working part-time). The parent that is caring for the child up to their 3rd birthday, has the right to work shorter hours	6 months unpaid leave from the second to the eighth year of the child (according to the latest regulation he can transfer these months to the mother). Besides he can take the whole or some of the 15 months paid leave at the flat rate after the maternity leave and up to the second year of the child.	both parents together can take a total of ten months (11 months if the father uses more than two months in a row). Six months of the total can be taken up to the child's third birthday at 30% of earnings, and the rest can be taken up to the child's eighth birthday without payment (an exception is for low–income families who continue to receive 30% of their earnings).	Since 2007: 12 months "parenting time" plus 2 other months for the father (in case he does not take this minimum of 2 months, they get lost)	2 days 100%, paternity leave also for fathers??	Paternity leave: Child's father or partner of child's mother or adopter is entitled up to 2 weeks leave after birth of child if they have been employed for 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the week the baby is due or ending with the week in which the adopter is matched with the child for adoption.
Rate of fathers making use of paternity leave?	National statistics	70 % of fathers using first 15 days	No big use, because of too low pay and gender pay gap	number of fathers using this leave increasing, but still low (rate of civil servants applying for paternal leave is 19% in 2003)	With the old regulation: 3 % With the new regulation: 21 % (autumn 2008)		

Child care facilities (public) - availability and costs	MISSOC	Good availability: 25.6% for those under 3, 77,8 % for children from 3-5 years (2005/06). Tax financed universal scheme for families with an income below the national average	Group net enrolment rate by levels of ISCED – in 2004/5 – 73.6 pre-primary (ISCED – 0), in the age group 3-6 the net enrolment rate was 76.3%	only 6% for those under 3, 95% for children older than 3; high costs (30 to 50 % of a salary)	west-Germany: only 8 % for those under 3; east-Germany; 37 % (2008); policy: TAG 2005;	up to 5 years: € 62.47 6 - 11 years: € 75.86 tax reduction for parents to compensate for part of the costs.	Predominantly private and expensive childcare for children under 3, universal access to free nursery education provided for all 3 and 4 year olds for 12.5 hours/week for 38 weeks of the year.
Child-raising allowances	MISSOC		Benefits of fixed rate, small tax releases	No special allowances	Partly benefits, more important: tax releases	Basic amount per child aged 12-17 in family with: 1 child: € 89,25; 2 child.: € 100.32, 3 child.: € 104.07; 4 child.: € 122.21, etc. Children between 6 and 11 years: 85% of the basic amount. *Double* amounts if the child is: • < 16, not living at home, student or disabled; • 16 or 17, not living at home, student, or disabled or unemployed.	No child-raising allowance.

Child care allowances	MISSOC	Nursery school fees - based on the parents' income as a percentage of the price of the programme in which the child is taking part (at most 80 % and at least ten % of the programme's Price; difference between this payment and the programme's full Price covered by the municipality. Parents receiving Financial Social Assistance don't have to pay fees		No special allowances	No special allowances	No special allowances.	Help can be given with childcare as part of Working Tax Credit.
At-risk-of-Poverty rate (before and after social transfers) (%)	EU SILC 2005; resp. Nat. sources	16 (fem:18,m:15) resp. 10 (fem. 11, m. 9)	18 (fem:20, m.15) resp. 15 (fem.17,m. 13)	23 (fem:24, m.212 resp. 19 (fem:20,m:18)	24 (fem:26,m:21) resp. 16 (fem:18,m:13)	23 (fem:24,m:22) resp. 12 (fem:12,m:12)	29 (fem:30,m:28) resp. 18 (fem:19,m:17)