

Various Aspects of Fatherhood from a Gender Point of View. A European Country Comparison

Irene Mariam Tazi-Preve (irene.tazi-preve@oif.ac.at)
University of Vienna
Austrian Institute for Family Research, Vienna, Austria

Jürgen Dorbritz (juergen.dorbritz@destatis.de)
Federal Institute of Population Research
Wiesbaden, Germany

DRAFT (do not quote)

Vienna/Wiesbaden February 2007

Abstract

In the context of changing gender relations and the current low birth-rate in Europe, this paper emphasises the fathers' contribution to family work. We intend a comparison with five countries with different political and gender-specific background. The portrayals are based on the data in the Population Policy Acceptance Study. Research was carried out 1) into changes in gender roles, 2) the influence of fathers on female labour participation and 3) towards desired fertility. The results show that the theory of the advance of the New Father is only partly true.

1. Introduction

The gender-orientated studies of recent years seem to have reached broadly similar conclusions as to the current situation in terms of changed gender roles: Gender relations, and the role of women in particular, together with the institution of the family, have undergone profound changes in recent decades. The traditional model of the middle-class family with the man as the breadwinner and the establishment of the woman in the role of housewife is being increasingly questioned by a growing number of working women and mothers. This model had been more or less overcome by the eighties at least in the more developed of the former Socialist countries, but regained significance in the post Communist societies with the partial expulsion of women from the labour market. In the “western” countries, an increasing number of mostly young women opted for other living, family and relationship arrangements. A greater willingness to undergo training, a higher level of education, as well as lower numbers of children or indeed childlessness and a rising divorce rate, are leading to an increasing presence of women on the labour market. Women are achieving greater economic independence, which makes them tend to turn away from the traditional roles. The increasing labour market participation, a variety of reconciliation models, as well as a growing number of forms of living arrangement, family or households, have led to more biographical options being open to women.

This is however only one side of the development. The question repeatedly emerges in the reference material, firstly, as to whether changes in the female role model have really led to more real options and emancipation strategies. Choice is contingent on a number of conditions which permit one to select among a variety of possibilities. This is related to the presence of an active partner, to regional conditions, as well as to factors concerned with the labour market, and to institutional childcare.

As to the division of tasks within families, studies repeatedly confirm that despite changes in participation by women on the labour market, little has changed in gender relations (eg. Blossfeld, Drobnic and Rohwer 2001). The change in the gender roles has taken place asymmetrically, i.e. only on the part of women. Housework and childcare have remained central tasks for women. A change can be observed in that gainful employment outside the home has been added to this traditional woman’s task. The perception of men towards family work and childcare, by contrast, has remained unchanged – men’s commitment to these areas of reconciliation tends to be more auxiliary in nature. Men in couples where both earn money continue to regard family and work as separate areas of life, and focus on non-domestic gainful employment. Women, by contrast, have fallen into the reconciliation trap because of the change in the gender roles, and regard themselves as being forced to overcome the tension between non-domestic gainful employment, or indeed career opportunities, and the traditional role allocation within the family.

The present article deals with this context. It targets men’s influence on the discretion open to women, and on their position on the labour market in particular, and is intended to make a contribution towards research into fathers. We wish to show the degree to which the presence of partners/fathers and their

attitudes towards the perception of mothers and fathers influence women's access to the labour market (as-is situation and situation regarded as ideal). In this context we will also focus on the perception of fatherhood and on attitudes towards family formation, such as desired fertility. First of all, to this end a variety of theoretical approaches are discussed concerning gender-specific access to the labour market. One of these approaches, the feministic approach, is then used as a starting point for the empirical analyses. The Population Policy Acceptance Study (PPAS) serves as the database of our study. The PPAS is a study of opinions and attitudes on demographically-relevant policies and demographic change in which several European countries were involved. A major focus of the analyses will be country comparisons (Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy) and the explanation of the existing differences.

2. Theoretical approaches

The care and upbringing of children is generally referred to as "parenthood", although it is mostly mothers who are responsible for general, ongoing care, whilst special things such as games and sport are taken care of by fathers. This opposite pair continues in research. Whilst mothers have been the subject of many areas of academic research for quite some time (psychology, pedagogics, sociology and others), fathers are comparative late-comers. It is now fathers who are researchers' new subjects of study, in light of the current fall in the birth rate in many parts of Europe.

With this context we have to focus on demographic assumptions on family and household. In her review of thirty years of articles in the journal "Demography" in the 90s the American demographer Susan Cotts Watkins (1993) highlighted arbitrarily accepted assumptions about women's behaviour which underpin much of quantitative demographic work. She found that issues of power within the family are ignored almost completely. Cotts Watkins suggested that demographers should submit those assumptions to a critical scrutiny in keeping with the principles of women's studies.

So basically it is necessary to understand the question of "gender inequity" as an important category within population science. As it was pointed out (Neyer 2000), power is a central issue for feminists, who seek to illuminate, not only the workings of political and economic power, but also previously neglected domains such as the differential distribution of power within the household. Many demographers still tend to speak of the family or household as an undifferentiated, harmonious unit. Yet women's attainments of the last three decades in the public sphere have changed the expectations of a whole new generation of women, which is now facing the challenge of juggling employment and family responsibilities. But such changes have not been matched by equivalent changes in social expectations of women's responsibilities in the private sphere. So power is the central issue for a demographic research, by which not only the workings of political and economic power but also previously neglected domains, such as the differential distribution of power within households, are illuminated.

Anyhow, awareness among demographers has been growing that the traditional family model with its life-long marriage, definite segregation of gender roles, etc. forms rather an obstacle than a supportive environment for higher parity births. So, we must realize that „the family is not a static, unchanging institution, a decision-making black box“(Folbre 1983). On the contrary, it is a group of individuals who make collective, but not necessarily consensual decisions.

Within “equity theory” McDonald (2000) argues that very low fertility is the product of the combination of growing gender equity in individual-oriented institutions with the persistence of only moderate gender equity in family-oriented institutions, that is, the continuation of the male breadwinner model of the family. What McDonald is leaving out is the fact that men`s fertility desire might be different than that of women`s desire.

The new *research into fathers* now ranges from pedagogical, psychological and sociological approaches, through to popular science. Research into men began at the beginning of the eighties, dealing from a variety of points of view with the crumbling patriarchal perception of the world and male self-perception. This entails approaches such as a “return to the real values of masculinity”, and in many cases took the form of experience reports (Bly 1993 et al.). At scientific level, critical research into men has become established as a new stream of research, the advent of which is closely linked to feminist research (Marschik and Dorer 2001, Hobson 2002).

In this context a stream of research deals with men`s low level of participation in the reproductive area. The question as to why fathers are subject to ever increasing pressure in terms of standards to take on the role of a father, but still hardly reduce their involvement in working life, is pursued by Esther Dermott (2002) in her qualitative study on “Fathers` orientation to paid employment”. She rejects the theory that men only remain in full-time employment for economic reasons after the birth of a child. Men, and those in well-qualified professions in particular, certainly derive other benefits from work, namely social status and personal satisfaction in their work. Hence, it also appears to be questionable whether men would really increase their share of reproductive work were the wage gap to become less pronounced or disappear altogether.

The sociologists Cheryl Benard and Edit Schlaffer (1993) diagnosed that women are burdened with the role of the only “adult” at home and in the family. They remark that the common parlance which is available to popular psychology for mothers is missing from the debate on fathers. The authors claim that whilst women`s expectations have changed, men are hesitant to change their traditional father role, and identify several reasons for this. These include the lack of a positive role model for this new fatherhood, men`s tendency to link the relationship with the children to the relationship with the mother of these children¹, furthermore, work for men is claimed frequently to take on a dimension which leaves virtually no scope for the relationship with their children.

Hollstein (2004) names the following reasons why fathers' involvement is rare at the level of conduct:

- Solving the question of reconciliation by including men in joint responsibility would require a re-distribution of productive and reproductive work between the sexes.
- This re-evaluation of production and reproduction would require men to have the courage to change their roles. The self-definition solely via performance at work and career would not be useable for relationships and family work.
- The socialisation conditions for men within society should be changed and improved to enable men to strike a balance between performance and ability to maintain relationships.

In our study we pursue the question of whether the understanding of the gender roles is changing, or whether men continue to define themselves primarily via their gainful employment. We are looking for indications of whether men wish to increase their involvement in the family as fathers, or whether it is women who are demanding such a change. A number of theoretical approaches has been developed to the problem of the division of family work and gender-specific access to the labour market:

A common approach is to apply economic explanation models to the domestic division of labour. Thus, to explain the fall in the birth rate, or indeed the imbalance in reproductive work, the economic theory according to which individuals seek to maximise their well-being (Becker 1991) is used as a reference in many cases. Accordingly, fertility and the gendered division of labour is a part of this optimisation strategy since a person gains a benefit not only from consuming goods or leisure, but also from the presence of children. In accordance with family economics, decisions on the allocation of time among the household members are taken according to the criterion of which of the two partners can achieve the highest income on the labour market. According to Becker's "*Human Capital Theory*", because of their biological child-bearing ability women are predestined to be better at childcare and running the household than men, who in turn are alleged to be more efficient in working life. This constellation is said to explain the imbalance in the division of tasks within families.

Economists hence explain reproductive work as a "natural circumstance", which can therefore be removed from the economic equation. This biologicistic approach is supplemented by the fact that the breadwinner-homemaker model consistently neglects indirect costs. In addition to expenditure on children, "fertility costs" also entail income lost during leave from work, or when mothers work less, to take care of a child. The gender-specific nature of fertility costs was only uncovered by feminist labour market-studies, and not until more women were going to work.

Within demographic research the *preference theory* (Hakim 2003) called attention to the aspect of explaining and predicting women's choices between work in the labour market and family work. The author tries to explain the heterogeneity in the preferences and priorities of women by focussing on historical developments in economy and culture from a gender point of view. Hakim predicts that men will retain their dominance in the labour market as they will stay work-centred. Women on the other hand are classified by three groups. Home-centred women prefer to give priority to private life

¹ Separation from the former partner frequently means that men become emotionally distant from their children.

following the model breadwinner/homemaker. The largest group, called adaptive, tries to combine work and family mostly by part-time work. Work-centred women are in fact childless women and the main priority in life is employment.

This theory is repeating Beauvoir's (1968) premise of the concept of the "mother trap", by which motherhood negatively affects the entire lifeline of a woman, in terms of labour force participation, income and retirement pay. Furthermore Hakim's typology has a tendency towards removing the fact that the arrangement within the reproductive area is the "pivot point" of gender trouble. Instead preference theory is strengthening gender roles by classification of realities without sociocritical claim.

The *social structure theory* concentrates on unequal access to market resources. It is presumed that the labour market is structured such that it largely excludes women from career opportunities because female work tends to be undervalued. Because of a lack of professional opportunities, women tend to be pushed into an arrangement within marriage in which they assume the main responsibility for children and housework. The income gap between men and women therefore perpetuates the traditional relationship in family work. If however the structural working conditions were to change, adherents (Guttentag/Secord 1983 et al.) of this theory presume that the distribution of household activities would indeed reverse.

From a critical point of view, it can be observed that the social structure theory rules out biological dispositions from its assumptions, but contains some gender-neutral presumptions as to factors on the labour market which prove to be barely plausible. It can be presumed that in view of the gender-specific structures, that is horizontal structures (segmentation into "male" and "female" areas) and vertical structures (fewer career opportunities for women), the circumstances on the labour market – including in the medium and long term – cannot be simply reversed.

System theoretical approaches presume a difference to exist between interactions and relationships in a system. The different interactions between mother and child and father and child hence do not necessarily lead to a difference in the respective relationship (Stechhammer 1981). System theoreticians presume that the different amount of time which mothers and fathers spend with their children does not necessarily have to mean that fathers have less influence on their children. One should rather consider the specific quality of the contribution that they make in their child's social network. The functional differentness, in other words the different functions that the family members take on, is to be seen as a whole within the family system. From this perspective, other theoretical approaches to research into fathers are alleged to take in only a partial view of the father-child relationship covering only extracts.

Even though such an approach is justified where fathers take on functions which otherwise would be left undone (sport and others), the – mostly male – system theoreticians reveal a tendency to seek to rehabilitate fathers and their place in the family from the allegation of "non-presence".

Feminist-orientated contributions (Eckart 1992, Novy and Adam 1998, Tazi-Preve, Bichlbauer and Goujon 2004) discuss the lack of participation by fathers in life within the family. Titles such as "New fathers" (Boeven 1988) or "New men" (Leube 1989) signal a presumed change in the father role and

note on the other hand that not much has changed. Arber and Ginn (1995) stress women's relative success in public life, which however is reported not to be accompanied by success in the private sector, namely in the family. Furthermore the empirical results of individual, work centred labour market studies from the last two decades show persistent inequalities between men and women in the labour market across industrialized societies (Blossfeld and Drobnic 2001).

In research into fathers, several adherents complain that men are pushed out of the family. Mitscherlich (1973) had coined the phrase "Society Without the Father", in which the perception of the working father had disappeared in the anonymity of modern companies and administrations. Since fathers' work had become bereft of its status, children had lost a major identifying component. Where some observe the "expulsion of the father", others speak of the "underfathering" (Zulehner 2003) of society and of education, and hence complain of the absence of fathers.

The question of the degree to which company structures further or hinder the division of labour between the sexes within society was the subject of the study entitled "Father and househusband as an additional activity" (König, Amesberger and Demel 1996). According to the authors, men have "virtually no difficulty" combining work and family, since in most cases it is their wives who devote themselves to the house and to family work, and in turn frequently restrict their gainful employment. For men, by contrast, the possibility of part-time work is not a realistic option. With regard to the fall in the birth rate, a "policy of new fatherhood" was already called for in the eighties (Beck-Gernsheim 1985). The contract between the generations, according to *Beck-Gernsheim*, was to be understood as a contract between the sexes, and women should no longer primarily take primary responsibility for upholding it. In contrast to the "Social Structural Theory" and the "Human Capital Theory", the feminist approach presumes that responsibility for the reproductive area is decisive for women's position in the public domain. The fact that women are largely responsible for family work has a variety of impacts in terms of access to opportunities offered by society, for instance on the labour market, namely unequal access, income and career opportunities. (Cyba 2000, McRae 1997, Garhammer 1996, Irwin 1999, Rosenberger 1995).

Last but not least, in demography the dimension of "gender" has been referred to only since the appearance of the phenomenon of fertility decline, and that with a focus upon the question why women are having less children. However, other tendencies show that especially men's wish for offspring is declining – our contribution deals with this context. Thus, beyond fertility being a "woman's question", we suppose it to be a "men`s question" as well.

3. Goals, data and method

3.1 Goals

The study aims to achieve an attribution of gender stereotypes. We would like to see to what degree the traditional attribution of gender roles, i.e. the tying of childcare and housework to the mother and of work and career to the father, continues or whether a more active father role can be observed. For this reason, respondents' perceptions of fathers and of mothers are examined in section 4.1. It is asked in detail whether the "New Fathers", who reject the traditional division of tasks in the family, exist today.

Secondly the data analyses in section 4.2 are guided by the feministic-orientated hypothesis – Theory 4 in the above section. This states that women's responsibility for the reproductive area is vital to their orientation in the world of work. The manner in which functions are attributed in the reproductive area influences the options available to women. If, therefore, there is a traditional role allocation to housework and family work, disadvantages relating to gainful employment, vocational training and career progress are to be expected, as are prolonged periods off work. The role of fathers is to be investigated in concrete terms, i.e. of the partner in a family with children, in particular their attitudes towards women's labour market participation. Firstly, the analyses are orientated towards the effects of the lack or presence of the father in the family. Here, it is presumed that the lack of an active father within the family hinders women's employment. On the other hand, the impacts emerging from fathers' attitudes towards the roles of women and men are also studied. It is presumed that men's conservative attitudes, being orientated towards breadwinner marriages, make it more difficult for women to go to work, and influence their attitudes towards the reconciliation of family and work, as well as their desired fertility.

Our third aspect is considering fertility intentions from a gender point of view, which means to check whether men and women opt differently in this matter and whether role orientation may affect fertility options.

3.2 The dataset and method

The Population Policy Acceptance Study constitutes a survey which makes it possible to study the above contexts on the basis of a gender module. The overarching objective of Population Policy Acceptance Study II² is the analysis based on cross-sectional survey data on Europeans' practices, attitudes and opinions concerning demographic changes, fertility behaviour, intergenerational exchange of resources and services, and population-related policies³. The study aims to analyse values and attitudes affecting fertility decisions, perception of advantages and disadvantages of

² An initial questionnaire – which was however thematically more restricted - (PPA I) was implemented at the beginning of the nineties covering seven European countries.

having children, meaning of family and parenthood, aspirations in life, opinions and attitudes towards population policy issues and measures, role of government in providing support to families and preferences and aspirations regarding gender roles, gainful employment and family life.

The basics of the representative study were worked out with the participation of 14 European states. In addition to Austria and Germany, Belgium (Flemish part), Estonia, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Cyprus took part. Comparative analyses are being implemented in the framework of an international comparative project which is being subsidised in the European Union's DIALOG scheme. The empirical studies took place between September 2000 and June 2003. Each of the participating countries has constructed its own survey tool on the basis of a jointly-developed standard questionnaire. However, since the data are not consistent, they do not permit individual questions for all five countries⁴. Table 1 depicts the countries by survey characteristics.

Table 1: PPA – Countries by survey characteristics

| Country | Survey implementation period | Sample size | | Age |
|---------|------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | women | men | |
| Austria | June - September 2001 | 1,169 | 826 | 20-65 |
| Germany | March – June 2003 | 2,080 | 2,030 | 20-65 |
| Finland | February - April 2002 | 2,199 | 1,617 | 18-69 |
| Hungary | September - December 2000 | 1,676 | 1,381 | 17-95 |
| Italy | January - March 2002 | 1,764 | 1,736 | 20-50 |

Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study

In the data analysis, first of all, the gender perceptions are investigated using the gender role indicators. That aspect is based on the “subjective fatherhood concept” (*Matzner 2004*). This means that attitudes towards fatherhood relate to views, convictions, meanings, feelings and standards as to the areas of fatherhood, motherhood, parenting, family, gender roles and division of labour. Since the PPA is an attitude survey, the level of realisation of the subjective fatherhood concept, in other words what it means in everyday life to be a father, is naturally disregarded.

It is possible to make out the following fundamental typology of perception of fathers (cf. *Matzner 2004*, *Werneck 1998*, *Zulehner 2003*):

- The traditional father: He symbolises power, authority and public competence. He concentrates on his career and defines himself via his work. He only acts in conjunction with the mother, who acts to make sure that the family work is done.
- The symbolic significance of the pragmatic father, who acts as a partner, is more that of a model, a benefactor and a partner interacting with the child, whilst in everyday life, in addition to his traditional work, his children also perceive him as a leisure time companion, playmate and active educator towards his children. In contrast to the traditional and the “new” father this type cannot be identified by our data.

³ For Austria cf. *Gisser 2003*, for Germany *Dorbritz, Lengerer and Ruckdeschel 2005*.

⁴ Further information on the PPAS is available on the Internet on the homepage of the Federal Institute of Population Research at <http://www.bib-demographie.de/ppa/Main.htm>.

- The “new” father gets involved in female experiences such as pregnancy, childbirth and caring for toddlers. The number of these fathers is relatively small. In partnerships of “new” fathers, the family functions become negotiable. The genuinely male contribution towards the education and socialisation of the children also remains unclear among researchers into fatherhood (Schneider 1989). The new fatherhood appears, rather, to be orientated more in line with the upbringing and care work previously done by mothers.

A more detailed study is then made in the sections below of the reconciliation situation and of desired fertility. Firstly, the general situation is always described in a country comparison, and then the gender-related problems are worked out by forming specific groups. To this end, firstly a so-called life situation typology is formed. This is based on the work situation (full-time, part-time, not working), the child situation (children aged up to 15 in the household or no children in the household) and the partner situation (partner in the household or no partner in the household).

Several features should be studied for each group:

- the actual form of reconciliation situation practiced by women and men,
- the ideals of the reconciliation of family and work, and
- the influence of the tension between family and work on the desired fertility of women and men.

Secondly, women and men are sub-divided into a modern and a traditional group as to their attitudes towards the status of women. Here, attitudes towards the role of women in earning the household income, and hence towards gainful employment, are selected as a starting point of group formation (both contribute towards household income, or it is the sole task of the man to earn money).

4. Countries and type of welfare state model

In our paper, we will compare the results of the German-speaking area (Austria and Germany) with those in Italy, Finland and Hungary. Such a comparison seems interesting because the countries studied have different political and cultural backgrounds. When selecting the countries, we followed both the regional principle and the differences in the construction of the welfare states. Here, we presume that the impact of men’s attitudes on their wives’ work situation also depends on the type of welfare state (cf. Esping-Andersen 1993, Gauthier 1996). In the selection of the countries, Germany and Austria hence represent the conservative or pro-traditional welfare state, in which families receive considerable financial support, but where reconciliation of family and work is made more difficult. In states applying that model the preservation of the nuclear-family is the main concern. In a gender-specific expansion of the typology of Esping-Andersen, Pfau-Effinger (2002) refers to the guiding family policy of (western) Germany as the “modernised male breadwinner marriage”. This preference is reflected in the low provision of childcare.

The situation in the German-speaking area is compared, firstly, with the southern European model, in which governmental family policy plays a subordinate role. These governments have a limited focus on social assistance and rather resemble the liberal welfare states. The Mediterranean model is characterized by its centrality of the family as a provider of care and ultimate responsibility-taker for its members welfare. For Italy it is also anticipated that the conservative role models have largely remained in place, and that they continue to grow as men climb the career ladder.

According to our expectations, a contrast to this should be formed by the results for the Social Democratic-type welfare state (or “pro-egalitarian model) in Finland, incorporating the so-called Nordic model which is strongly orientated towards equality of the sexes. This model is characterised by governments taking full responsibility in the support of families, especially working parents. They create conditions and opportunities to allow women to reconcile employment and family responsibilities more easily, and to allow fathers to take a larger role in childcaring. Here, positive effects as to the encouragement of working women by men are expected.

The former Socialist country of Hungary was chosen as a third country to be compared to the German-speaking area. The political and ideological contexts in the (former) state socialist countries differ from Western capitalist economies. Women as a rule worked full-time, the common employment pattern was based on a model with two earners working full-time. These countries had set up a comprehensive system of family benefits. It is known of the former eastern European countries that they were typified by a dualism of attitudes and conduct (Dorbritz and Philipov 2002). High female employment was accompanied by traditional attitudes towards the role of women. We presume that the situation has changed little in the 15 years since the end of Socialism, although the labour market is changing fundamentally. One may rather presume that with the expulsion of women from the labour market the traditional role allocation has become more established. It is yet to be seen whether the positive impact on women’s employment status continues.

5. Results

5.1 Perceptions of fathers

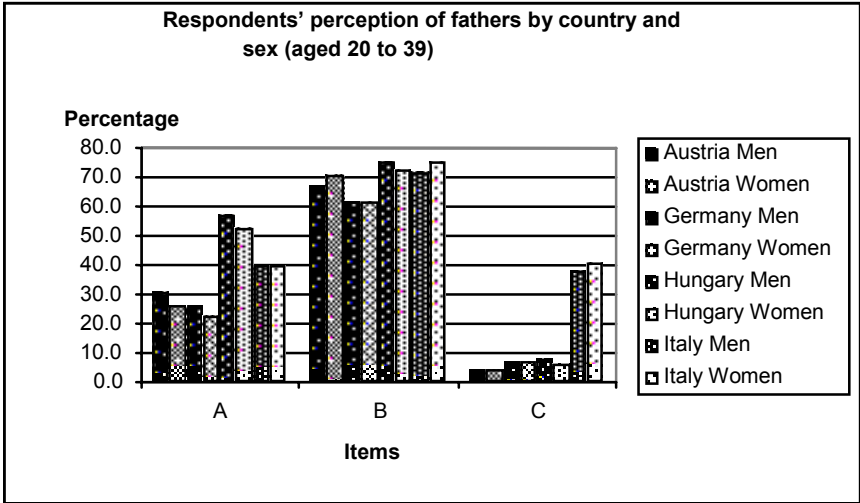
Whilst the serious problems involved in reconciling work and motherhood have already been well covered by academic and political debate, the changed requirements on men in providing for their children have been largely neglected thus far. Although women are making new demands of fatherhood, little change can be observed as to conduct. We are now studying whether the perception of fathers to become caring, committed fathers is shown at least at the level of attitudes. The question arises as to whether and to what degree the male self-perception has “modernised” in the view of the respondents. The indicators relating to male self-perception tell us something about the evaluation of family work and work by men – and by women.

The gender role indicators to be investigated cover in detail the traditional attribution of childcare to the mother and of work to the father, the effects on the children if the woman takes on an active role in working life, commitment to an active father role and the view that it is not good for the family if the father concentrates too much on work.

5.1.1. Respondents' perception of fathers

A comparative depiction of the perception of fathers could only be carried out for Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy.

Fig. 1: Respondents' perception of fathers (agreement)



N.B: Percentages
Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study

- A It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work.
- B Family life often suffers because men concentrate too much on their work.
- C For a man the job should be more important than the family.

The question as to agreement with reverse role distribution between the sexes read as follows: "It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work." (Fig. 1). The statement finds the least positive response in Germany. Thus, only one-quarter of German men and women (26 % and 22.9 %) expressly come out against a new male role. By contrast, about 44 % of men are open to a re-distribution of family work towards men. 30.9 % of all respondent 20 to 39-year-old Austrian men and 26.2 % of Austrian women say that they are traditional. In Hungary the greatest emphasis is placed on the division of labour not being reversed: 56.9 % of men and 52.9 % of Hungarian women reject such a model. Roughly 40 % of Italian women and men voted against it.

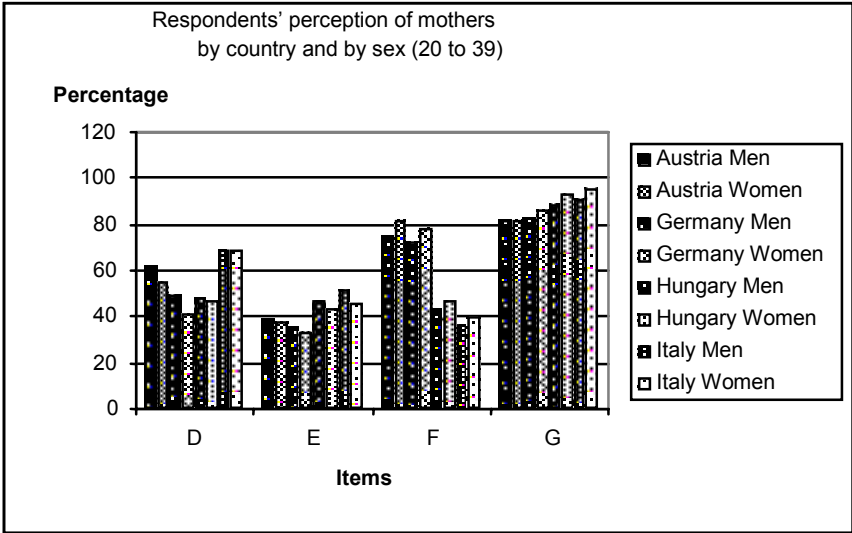
However, roughly two-thirds of respondents in all countries conceded that family life frequently suffers because men concentrate too much on their work. This is stated by both women and men, even if the

percentage is slightly higher among women. The level of agreement is lowest in this respect in Germany in particular, with only 59.9 % of German men considering this to be a problem. Agreement is greatest among Hungarian men (75.1 %) and Italian women (75.2 %).

Only a very small minority (less than 10 %) of respondents in Hungary, Germany and Austria think that the job should be more important for men than the family⁵. An entirely different picture emerges in Italy, by contrast: roughly 40 % of men and women agree with the traditional understanding of the division of labour between the sexes.

5.1.2. The respondents' perception of mothers

Fig. 2 Respondents' perception of mothers by country and sex (agreement)



N.B.: Percentages
Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study

- D A pre-school child is likely to suffer if mother works.
- E Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.
- F Having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent.
- G Most women have to work to support their families.

What is the attitude of 20- to 39-year-old respondents towards working mothers with pre-school children (Fig. 2)? The reservations of men and women are the highest by far in Italy (men: 69.1 %, women: 69.8 %) followed by Austrian men (62.7 %). By contrast, less than half of the respondents in Hungary (men: 48.5 %) and Germany (men: 49.1 %) are concerned that working women will have a negative impact on small children. The results show that the acceptance of working women rather depends on whether there are children to be cared for.

More than half of Italian men (52.5 %) think that the status of a housewife could be just as fulfilling as that of working for pay. Italian women are somewhat more sceptical, 46.2 % of them agreeing with the

⁵ Here, the family does not automatically mean reproductive work (household and children).

statement. Also, almost half of the Hungarian respondents (men: 47.8 %, women: 44.3 %) consider that life as a housewife is rather desirable for women. Two-thirds of German and Austrian respondents, by contrast, no longer share the traditional view of the woman as a housewife, 35.4 % of men and 33.6 % of women in Germany continuing to adhere to this model. In Austria this figure is 38.7 % and 38 % respectively.

When it comes to the question “Having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent.” two different worlds seem to appear. Whilst in the German-speaking area more than 70 % of men and roughly 80 % of women agree, much fewer respondents in Hungary and Italy agree with this statement. This applies to only 37.2 % of Italian men, 43.4 % of Hungarian men, 40.4 % of Italian women and 47.3 % of Hungarian women.

The last item “Most women have to work to support their families.” is more of a rhetorical question, and is in fact interpreted as such (between 80 and more than 90 %) in all countries, namely that women work rather more out of economic motives than for self-realisation or to pursue a career.

It can be summed up that Italy and Hungary show much more conventional attitudes than the German-speaking countries Austria and Germany, where ideas as to whether women define themselves primarily via motherhood or via gainful work have become increasingly negotiable. For Hungary this result confirms the findings of Dorbritz and Philipov (2002) for the traditional family patterns of former socialist regimes. However, even in the German-speaking countries, different expectations continue to be made of women than of men. Female work is certainly welcome, but it must take second place to family obligations. Here, too, there are differences in coordination conduct between the sexes. When it comes to the (self-)definition of women via motherhood or work, women are more progressive and demanding than men, who still have a more conventional perception of women.

5.2 The employment situation, ideals of reconciliation and desired fertility in connection with active fatherhood

Each of the descriptions below study the employment situation, the reconciliation ideal and women's desired fertility in relation to the “father situation”. Father situation means that one differentiates, firstly, according to whether the father belongs to the household or not, and secondly that the situation of the women is assessed on the basis of fathers' attitudes (traditional or modern). The analysis targets women aged up to 49 whose households include children. Childless women and women with children who no longer live in the household act as a control group.

5.2.1 The real reconciliation situation

The general situation

First of all, the general reconciliation situation is described according to whether the men or children belong to the women's household or not. Because of the small numbers of cases, no distinction is made as to the number of children. The living arrangement "living apart together" was attributed to the group with no partner in the household.

Table 2: Employment situation by living arrangements and sex in selected PPAS countries, answers of women and men about their children and partner situation and their employment status, age group: 20 up to 44 (in %)

| Living arrangements | | | Countries | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| Children Situation | Partner situation | Employment status | Austria | | Finland | | Germany | | Hungary | | Italy | |
| | | | f | m | f | m | f | m | f | m | f | m |
| with child(ren) | with partner | full-time | 23.3 | 93.4 | 64.7 | 83.9 | 18.8 | 88.6 | 52.6 | 87.1 | 63.2 | 92.3 |
| | | part-time | 32.9 | 2.1 | 11.0 | 1.9 | 44.5 | 4.1 | 2.4 | 0.2 | 15.8 | 7.7 |
| | | No job | 43.8 | 4.5 | 24.3 | 14.2 | 36.7 | 7.2 | 45.0 | 12.7 | 21.1 | - |
| with child(ren) | Without partner | full-time | 37.9 | - | 50.6 | - | 32.5 | - | 60.2 | - | 50.0 | - |
| | | part-time | 32.0 | - | 17.4 | - | 36.8 | - | 1.4 | - | 18.8 | - |
| | | No job | 30.2 | - | 32.0 | - | 30.7 | - | 38.4 | - | 31.3 | - |
| without Children | with partner | full-time | 60.2 | 89.0 | 60.7 | 72.6 | 70.2 | 81.3 | 80.9 | 84.9 | 73.0 | 72.2 |
| | | part-time | 14.6 | 3.9 | 8.0 | 4.2 | 14.0 | 3.8 | - | - | 13.5 | 13.9 |
| | | No job | 25.1 | 7.1 | 31.1 | 23.2 | 15.8 | 15.0 | 19.1 | 15.1 | 13.5 | 13.9 |
| without Children | without partner | full-time | 60.9 | 73.0 | 36.0 | 41.5 | 59.5 | 66.6 | 53.8 | 60.9 | 40.6 | 55.3 |
| | | part-time | 10.7 | 6.9 | 9.0 | 2.7 | 8.5 | 3.5 | 1.5 | 1.3 | - | 5.9 |
| | | No job | 28.4 | 20.1 | 55.1 | 55.8 | 32.0 | 29.9 | 44.8 | 37.8 | 29.3 | 38.8 |

Data source: International Population Policy Acceptance Study, own calculations

If one distinguishes first of all only between women and men, there is evidence of a known phenomenon. Men's employment status is much less influenced by the partner and the children situation than that of women. Men are largely in full-time employment independently of their family situation. Lower values of men's full-time employment are found only in the group of single people (no children, no partner), which because of the lower age is more often in the training phase, and hence shows high shares in the "no job" group (Tab. 2).⁶

Men's full-time employment is most common in the group in which family and work are reconciled on a partnership basis, where therefore women live together in a household both with a partner and with children. 90 % of men in families are in full-time employment. This is most common in Austria (93.4 %) and Italy (92.3 %). The share of men in full-time employment is lowest in Finland, at 83.9 %. The differences in the shares of women and men in full-time employment are considerable. If they are living as a family, this is accompanied with a traditional attribution of the gender roles to women and men. This is particularly common in the "traditional" or "conservative" (Castles and Mitchell 1993)

⁶ The results for lone fathers have not been evaluated because of the small case numbers.

welfare states of Germany and Austria. 18.8 % of women in Germany who live with a partner and children are in full-time employment (men: 88.6 %), a figure of 23.3 % being recorded in Austria (men: 93.4 %). These differences are less pronounced in the other three comparative countries. 64.7 % of women and 83.9 % of men in Finland in families are in full-time employment. In Finland, a country which is orientated to equality between the sexes, the gender-specific discrepancy in the hours worked regime is still there, but is the least pronounced. The differences are also relatively slight in Italy (92.3 % : 63.2 %) and in Hungary (87.1 % : 52.6 %). German and Austrian women solve the reconciliation problem above all through part-time employment or by leaving work. The largest group of women in Austria in families (43.8 %) does not work; in Germany it is women working part-time, at 44.5 %, who form the largest group.

Similarly large shares of non-working women can only be found in Hungary, at 45.0 %. There the situation has polarised. Part-time work is very rare; women either work full-time or not at all. This is likely to be linked to the country's Socialist past, in combination with the social transformation which took place after 1990. It was customary for women to work full-time work in the former Socialist countries, and this has been retained to some degree in Hungary. Women were expelled from the labour market in the transition phase following the collapse of Socialism, and this is now reflected in a high share of non-working women. For Italy the high share of mothers working full-time is in fact surprising and similar to the situation in Finland. They are also at odds with the Italian welfare state model which does not provide the same structural conditions (e.g. childcare facilities) like the Nordic model.

The conclusion of the above section is as follows: Living families with partner and children facilitates the traditional attribution of gender roles. If there are children, but no partner, the shares of women working full-time increase. This particularly applies to Germany and Austria, with traditional role attributions in so-called intact families. An increase from 23.3 to 37.9 % can be observed in Austria, and from 18.8 to 32.5 % in Germany. Here, material need can be presumed to exist, giving women a greater orientation towards full-time work. If there are no children, the share of women working full-time increases again, namely to values around 60 – 70 %. The influence of the partner situation can now no longer be observed. In both German-speaking countries, the negative influence of the family situation on female employment becomes particularly pronounced if one compares the shares of women and men who have a partner but no children. In this case, a pronounced approximation can be observed when it comes to full-time work. 60.2 % of women in Austria with such an arrangement work full-time (men 89.0 %) and as many as 70.2 % in Germany (men 81.3 %).

The situation no longer changes so drastically in Finland, Hungary and Italy, where also women are relatively frequently in full-time employment in families. Having said that, falling shares of men working full-time lead to improvements in equality between the sexes in this respect. In Hungary and Italy, no differences can be found when it comes to full-time work in the case of childless women who have a partner. In a historical context it was shown for the US (Leibowitz and Klerman 1995) that the

influence of women's employment status by the partner and children situation has waned over time since the late 1960s.

5.2.2 The ideal reconciliation situation

The above analyses have revealed that it is above all those women who live in families who are placed at a disadvantage as to their employment. The following observations aim to discover to what degree more traditional and more modern attitudes of men towards gender roles prevent or further the employment situation of women, respectively. Attitudes towards the ideal forms of reconciliation of family and work are used to observe these circumstances. The description covers first the general situation, and then the influence of the partner situation and of women's and men's attitudes towards gender roles, on the reconciliation ideals.

The general situation

Women were asked about their ideal form of reconciliation of family and work. In contradistinction, men were to state the reconcilability variant which they considered to be ideal for their partner. Unfortunately, data on this are available only for Germany and Italy. Because of the importance of the reconciliation of family and work for the gender question, these data should nevertheless be presented.

Women very clearly prefer parallel reconciliation of family and work (Tab. 3). 61.9 % of women in Germany selected a reconcilability model, this figure being as high as 75.5 % in Italy. Women however seldom consider it ideal to have children and work full-time, the focus lying clearly on part-time work and children. 50.6 % of women in Italy and 32.0 % in Germany want to have two or more children and work part-time. What is more, 14.0 % in Italy and 12.9 % in Germany would like to combine a child and part-time work. If no model of reconciliation of family and work is selected, women want to follow the classical breadwinner-homemaker model while the children are small. 21.0 % in Germany and 22.1% in Italy stated this to be an ideal model. Leaving work altogether is an option hardly considered by German women. Only 3.8 % would opt for this given the choice. This variant was not included in the questions in Italy. One notices for Germany that, at 9.2 % of respondent women, a relatively large number selected full-time employment and no children. This is an effect of the underlying concept of German family policy, which links considerable monetary transfer payments to marriage, and makes reconciliation of family and work more difficult. Consequently, women in Germany increasingly decide against children and for work and a career.

Tab. 3: Ideals of reconciliation of work and family (in %)

| Values | Germany | | Italy | |
|---|---------|------|-------|------|
| | f | m | f | m |
| Full-time work and no children | 9.2 | 9.9 | 1.4 | 2.6 |
| Full-time work and one child | 7.4 | 7.6 | 4.3 | 14.4 |
| Full-time work and two children or more | 9.6 | 13.1 | 6.6 | 51.2 |
| Part-time work and no children | 1.5 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| Part-time work and one child | 12.9 | 7.2 | 14.0 | 6.4 |
| Part-time work and two children or more | 32.0 | 11.1 | 50.6 | 21.4 |
| No work as long as the children are small | 21.0 | 9.4 | 22.1 | 3.2 |
| No work at all if there are children | 3.8 | 1.3 | n.a. | n.a. |

Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study, own calculations

If one compares these results with the situation at the beginning of the nineties, different trends have emerged in these two countries. The desire to combine the two areas of life has become less significant in Italy. Fewer women want to combine full-time employment with children, and above all the ideal to leave work for a time while the children are small has become more significant. The share of this form of reconcilability grew from 12.7 to 22.1 %. The willingness of young women to combine family and work has increased in Germany. The desire for reconcilability was always very strong in eastern Germany, also in the time prior to the end of the GDR. The increase is caused by changes in the West, where above all the model of part-time work with children has become more significant. By contrast, the share of women who want to leave work altogether when children come along has fallen considerably.

Some differences can be seen if one compares men's answers as to what they consider to be ideal for their partners with those of the women themselves. Men more frequently consider a full-time job with children to be ideal for their partners than women themselves. This situation is particularly common in Italy. The reconcilability variant full-time/two children was stated by 51.2 % of Italian men, but only by 6.6 % of women. The differences observed in Germany are less pronounced (men: 13.6 %, women: 9.6 %), but there too more men than women want women to work full-time. By contrast, men much more rarely favour the part-time/two children - and no work while the children are small - variant. In Italy, 50.6 % of women, but only 21.4 % of men opted for part-time/two or more children. In Germany it was 32.0 % of women and 11.1 % of men. Similarly marked differences can be found in the selection of the model of leaving work for a limited time while the children are small (Italy, men: 3.2 %, women; 22.1 %; Germany, men: 9.4 %, women: 21.0 %).

The family situation and the discrepancy between the ideal and reality

Using the typology developed in 4.2.1 referring to the partner, children and work situation, it is to be investigated to what degree the real reconciliation situation agrees with the reconciliation ideal. According to the selected hypothesis, the question is asked on the basis of the respondent women as to the influence exerted by the presence of a partner on agreement between the real and the ideal situation.

Table 4 contains the data for Germany. Furthermore, data are available for Italy the basic trends of which are virtually identical to those for Germany, and hence have not been included in the table, but are used for interpretation purposes.

Table 4: Germany: Real situation and ideal choice for reconciliation of child-raising and work for women, age group 20 up to 44 (in %)*

| Real situation | | | Ideal choice | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Children | Partner | Employment | Full-time No children | Full-time Children | Part-time No children | Part-time Children | No job if children are small | No job at all if there are children |
| Children | Partner | Full-time | 2.4 | 25.3 | 0.0 | 30.2 | 6.0 | 2.4 |
| No children | Partner | Full-time | 22.4 | 11.9 | 3.0 | 27.6 | 18.7 | 5.2 |
| Children | No partner | Full-time | 4.5 | 31.8 | - | 34.1 | 4.4 | 6.8 |
| No children | No partner | Full-time | 24.0 | 4.1 | 6.6 | 36.1 | 15.3 | 1.5 |
| Children | Partner | Part-time | - | 3.2 | - | 73.4 | 18.1 | 2.7 |
| No children | Partner | Part-time | - | 14.8 | - | 66.6 | 18.5 | - |
| Children | No partner | Part-time | 7.5 | 11.3 | - | 62.3 | 11.3 | - |
| No children | No partner | Part-time | 10.0 | - | 10.0 | 33.4 | 20.0 | 6.7 |

Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study, own calculations

* Difference to 100 % = other

Regardless of the real situation in which women find themselves, the reconciliation model which is most frequently regarded as ideal is “having children and working part-time”. In this group one also finds the greatest share of agreement between the ideal and reality. Many more than 60 % of women in Germany who work part-time also regard this form of employment as ideal if they have children. In the other groups broken down by the real situation, there is by no means such a share of agreement. Only 31.8 % of women in Germany who do not have a partner, but who do have child(ren) and are in a full-time job regard full-time employment with children as an ideal situation. The Italian comparison figure is 31.3 %. Non-working women more strongly favour the traditional model “No work as long as the children are small”. 34.5 % of women in Germany living with a partner who do not work and do not have children would like to stay at home as long as the children are small.

Both having a partner and having children exert an effect in Germany on the preferred reconciliation model. It was not possible to ascertain such an effect for Italy, but the degree of comparability is restricted because of low case numbers. As to the effect exerted by having partner: The partner effect takes the course which was already described in section 4.2.1. If there are children, but no partner, women tend more towards full-time employment. A few examples of this from Germany:

1.: 25.3 % of women who work full-time, live with child(ren) and a partner in the household regard the “full-time/children” model to be ideal. If there is no partner, 31.8 % of the women think along these lines.

2.: 73.4 % of women with child(ren) and a partner who work part-time also regard the “part-time/children” model to be ideal. This is at the same time the greatest degree of agreement found between the ideal and the real situation. If, by contrast, women live without a partner, the share falls to 62.3 %. At the same time, the share of women regarding reconciliation of full-time work and family to be ideal increases from 3.2 % (with partner) to 11.3 % (without partner).

3.: Women who do not work and who live with a partner⁷ frequently stated leaving work for a time to be ideal (with children 33.7 % and without children 34.5 %). These shares fall to 19.0 and 19.8 % respectively among women who do not have a partner. Reconciliation models find greater favour, by contrast.

As to the effect exerted by having children: The children effect is above all to be found in the area of full-time work and desired childlessness. Women with no children naturally much more frequently consider the model of “no children/full-time work” (22.4 and 24.5 % respectively) to be ideal than women with children (2.4 and 4.5 % respectively). This also applies vice versa. The model “full-time/children” is more frequently categorised as ideal by women with children. The partner situation does not influence the evaluation in this case.

It was possible to observe at least for Germany – as was also already noticeable in the analysis of the real situation – if women live in a household with a partner, that firstly the ideal of reconciling family and full-time employment is already less common. Secondly, it is possible to observe among women living in a traditional family model that the presence of a partner enhances the effect as to the conceivable ideal.

5.2.3 Desired number of children and active fatherhood

The general situation

In addition to the employment situation, the authors consider from a gender-specific view that particular interest attaches to fertility decisions. Desired fertility has very recently once more taken up greater attention in family research since the German-speaking area, Southern Europe and the Eastern European transition countries are typified by very low fertility rates. There are indications that gender inequality appears to have a major influence on this. Desired fertility⁸, understood here as the anticipated final number of children, has fallen in Europe in general terms. This is shown by evaluations of the Eurobarometer of Tony Fahey and Zsolt Speder (2004: 19 et seq.). This concerns in particular the German-speaking area and some of the Central and Eastern European transition countries. Of the countries to be compared here, however, this only applies clearly to Germany. As to the current birth rates, these are only relatively high in Finland (1.76); in Austria they are 1.38, in Germany 1.34, and they are even lower in Hungary and Italy (1.28 and 1.29 respectively).

Women want more children than men in all the countries compared. It is therefore men who make a major contribution to the low birth rate in Europe with their attitudes on children. Traditionally high desired fertility, with values around 2.2, is only found among women in Hungary and Finland (Tab. 5). A medium level is shown among Italian and Austrian women, with approx. 2 desired children. Desired

⁷ This combination is not included in table 4.

⁸ Desired fertility was calculated from the existing number of children plus the still desired children. Existing pregnancies were added. Respondents who answered the question of the desired number of children with “Don’t know” are not included in the calculation.

fertility is extraordinarily low in Germany, at 1.75 children. Desired fertility among men exceeds the value of 2 only in Finland, at 2.08. It is still relatively high in Hungary, at 1.91. In Austria and Hungary, men want 1.84 children on average. The lowest values, at 1.55 desired children, can be found in turn in Germany.

Table 5: Desired number of children of respondents by sex and age-group 20 up to 39 (in %)

| Desired number of children | Austria | | Finland | | Germany | | Hungary | | Italy | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | female | male | female | male | female | male | female | male | female | male |
| 0 | 9.5 | 21.0 | 10.5 | 14.7 | 14.4 | 26.5 | 2.9 | 13.1 | 5.3 | 8.8 |
| 1 | 17.7 | 9.2 | 5.0 | 5.1 | 16.6 | 15.3 | 13.4 | 11.2 | 16.2 | 12.5 |
| 2 | 43.0 | 46.9 | 39.5 | 39.0 | 54.0 | 40.8 | 56.0 | 58.3 | 56.1 | 60.6 |
| 3 | 22.8 | 16.7 | 31.3 | 28.1 | 11.4 | 14.3 | 20.7 | 15.4 | 18.9 | 16.0 |
| 4+ | 7.1 | 6.1 | 13.7 | 9.5 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 7.0 | 2.0 | 3.5 | 2.1 |
| Average | 2.03 | 1.84 | 2.15 | 2.08 | 1.75 | 1.55 | 2.20 | 1.84 | 2.00 | 1.91 |

Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study

The differences in desired fertility between women and men differ greatly. Women and men in Finland and Italy wish for almost the same number of children. Men only wish for slightly fewer children than women, with differences of 0.07 (Finland) and 0.09 (Italy).

Further information on desired fertility can be obtained by considering not the average number of children, but the structure of the desired fertility. It appears to be the case in all the countries that the majority of women and men would still like to have two or more children. The highest value can be found among women in Finland, at 84.5 %. The lowest proportion of German men, at 58.1 %, would like to have two or more children. The desire for precisely two children is dominant here. This is the majority of the population in Hungary and Italy. The desire for three children is strong in Finland, at 31.3 % among women and 28.1 % among men. The stronger desire for a third and fourth child explains the high average number of desired children in Finland.

The counterpole to the Finnish situation is formed by Germany. Desired fertility is low because higher-than-average numbers of respondents stated that they did not want any children at all. The share among German men is extraordinarily high, at 26.5 %. The highest values among women are also reached in Germany, at 14.4 %. The desire to remain childless is also strong among men in Austria. Of these, 21.0 % state that they do not want children. The differences in the average number of children wanted by women and men are also reflected in the structure of desired fertility. It applies to all countries that men more frequently wish to remain childless than women. The differences are particularly significant in Germany (women: 14.7 %, men: 26.5 %) and Austria (women: 9.5 %, men: 21.0 %). The gap is also relatively wide in Hungary, where virtually no women, 2.9 %, wish to remain childless, whilst men show a comparatively high value of 13.1 %. Very few Italians of either sex wish to remain childless. 5.3 % of women and 8.8 % of men do not want children.

The special situation in Western Germany should also be pointed out. There, desired fertility very quickly adjusted to the real situation. This relates not only to the circumstance that there is only a slight difference between the number of children achieved and desired fertility, but is also shown in the high proportion of desired childlessness. At present, there are only two countries in Europe, namely Germany and Switzerland, with high shares of childless women and men. For instance, it is anticipated in Germany that almost 30 % of women of the 1967 birth year will remain childless (Dorbritz and Philipov 2002). This situation is reflected in the reference material as population polarisation. This means that there is a population group (“family sector”) opting for the traditional path, which marries and also has children. The other group, the “non-family sector”, remains childless and as a rule unmarried. This polarisation situation is already included in desired fertility in Germany, and also among Austrian men.

Desired fertility of women and men according to the life situation typology

The analysis takes as a basis the typology of living arrangements developed in section 5.2.1 (children, partner, employment). The desired fertility of women and men has been calculated on this basis. Because of the case numbers, only the data for Austria, Finland and Germany could be accommodated. In Table 6 not all of the possible combinations are included.

Table 6: Desired number of children by sex and living arrangements, age group 20 up to 44 (averages)

| Real situation Children | Partner | Employment | Desired number of children (average) | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | | Women | | | Men | | |
| | | | Austria | Finland | Germany | Austria | Finland | Germany |
| Children | Partner | Full-time | 2,40 | 2,46 | 1,87 | 2,58 | 2,69 | 2,25 |
| No children | Partner | Full-time | 1,22 | 1,70 | 1,31 | 1,94 | 2,08 | 1,19 |
| Children | No partner | Full-time | 2,04 | 1,88 | 1,54 | 2,24 | 2,44 | 2,07 |
| No children | No partner | Full-time | 1,25 | 1,54 | 1,01 | 1,59 | 1,75 | 0,96 |
| Children | Partner | Part-time | 2,14 | 2,59 | 2,02 | 2,01 | 3,54 | 2,55 |
| No children | Partner | Part-time | 1,21 | 2,29 | 1,44 | 1,84 | 1,54 | 1,39 |
| Children | Partner | No job | 2,91 | 3,20 | 2,22 | 2,49 | 2,60 | 2,13 |

Source: Population Policy Acceptance Study, own calculations

Apart from the differences in desired fertility between the countries, the pronounced differences between the typologies established are noted in Table 6. Relatively marked patterns can be recognised within these differences for women and men:

- The trend is for the desired fertility of women to be highest where traditional reconciliation of family and work takes place. In Austria and Finland, desired fertility among women with child(ren) and a partner, but without a job, is 2.91 and 3.20 respectively, and hence reaches the highest values. In Germany, the second-highest value can be found in this group, at an average of 2.22 desired children. In general terms, it is typical of the respondent women that high desired fertility can be found in the so-called non-working environment. This effect is particularly strong in Germany.

- The desired fertility of women in the groups living with partner and child(ren) and reconciling family and work is also comparatively high. Here, the desired fertility of women working part-time is higher than among women working full-time. Women with a partner and child(ren) working part-time in Finland wish for 2.59 children and those working full-time would like to have 2.46 children. The figures in Germany are 2.02 and 1.87 children.
- Desired fertility is very low in those groups which do not have children and who work. If there is also no partner, full-time work and (as yet no) children, desired fertility falls further. The lowest desired fertility can be found in the group of women who work full-time, and do not have a partner or any children. Desired fertility then reaches a value of 1.01 in Germany, 1.25 in Austria and of 1.54 in Finland.
- Living together with a partner leads to higher desired fertility among women and men in all groups observed. The differences are relatively pronounced. Finnish women with child(ren) and a partner who work full-time have a desired fertility of 2.46. If for instance there is no partner, it is only 1.88.
- This situation tends to be similar for men, albeit it is less pronounced. In particular it is noticeable that men in partnerships and with children with a working partner have a relatively high desired fertility, higher indeed than that of women. With a desired fertility of 3.54, men in Finland, who live with a partner and children, and whose partner works part-time, have the highest desired fertility of all. The group among Austrian men with the second-highest desired fertility is where the partner works full-time and children belong in the household.

The results portrayed here are interesting for three reasons. Firstly, there is still a so-called traditionality impact according to which the fact of the woman not working is linked to higher desired fertility. Secondly, and this is a major result in family policy terms, the amount of desired fertility is not impaired by women working within families. If however, thirdly, the situation occurs that work of women takes place without children or a partner, this has a negative impact on desired fertility. Living together with a partner promotes desired fertility among both women and men, such that there is no negative partner effect here, in contradistinction to the work situation.

Attitudes regarding gender and father roles on desired fertility of women and men

We distinguish in the material below between attitudes towards gender roles and attitudes towards father roles, and would like to use this distinction to study influences on desired fertility. Both attitude groups are formed using the gender role indicators of the PPAS. Two sub-groups are formed, among both gender and father roles.

A distinction is made when it comes to the gender roles between a traditional and a modern group. Women and men who concurred with the statement “it is up to the man to earn money and to the woman to take care of the home and the family” are attributed to the traditional group. The modern group is formed by those who concurred with the statement that “both the man and the woman should

contribute to the household income”. A couple-specific view cannot be obtained with this approach. Data are available for Austria, Germany and Hungary.

Tab. 7: Desired number of children by countries, sex and gender as well as father role orientations, age group: 20 up to 44 (averages)

| Country | Gender role orientations | | | | Father role orientations | | | |
|---------|--------------------------|------|-------------|------|--------------------------|------|---------|------|
| | Modern | | Traditional | | Active | | Passive | |
| | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male |
| Austria | 1.69 | 1.46 | 1.98 | 1.67 | 1.84 | 1.62 | 1.84 | 1.24 |
| Germany | 1.65 | 1.45 | 1.98 | 1.66 | 1.79 | 1.68 | 1.64 | 1.58 |
| Hungary | 2.03 | 1.78 | 2.26 | 1.71 | 2.13 | 1.81 | 2.20 | 2.20 |
| Italy | - | - | - | - | 1.93 | 1.96 | 1.93 | 1.86 |

Source: International PPAS database

Table 7 shows that modern and more traditional orientations with regard to the gender roles exert a major influence on the degree of desired fertility. Those with more traditional attitudes towards the role of women in earning the household income, and hence towards gainful employment, would like to have more children. Women in Austria with more traditional attitudes would like to have an average of 1.98 children, whilst women with more modern orientations would like 1.69 children. Among men it is 1.67 and 1.46 children respectively. The situation in Germany is virtually identical to that in Austria. Among Hungarian women, similar differences can be found at a higher level (trad.: 2.26, mod.: 2.03). Only among Hungarian men was it not possible to identify such a difference.

To study the influence of the role played by fathers on desired fertility, a distinction has been made between an active and a passive type (cf. Chapter 5.1). The active type includes those fathers who also consider themselves to be responsible for the reproductive area, in this case those who have concurred with the statement that the man can also stay at home and look after the children and who agree that family life suffers if men focus too much on work. By contrast, those men have been defined as the passive father type who reject the idea of the man staying at home and who take the view that family life does not suffer if the man focuses too much on work. The results show that men’s admission of an active father role correlates positively with desired fertility. This is particularly common in Austria, but can also be found in Germany and Italy. Men in Austria who favour an active father role would like to have 1.62 children, whilst in the passive group this is only 1.24 (Tab. 7). In Germany the differences are 1.68 as against 1.58, and in Italy 1.96 as against 1.86. No such link could be found for Hungary. Women’s view of the father roles by contrast exercises virtually no influence on their desired fertility. A difference is found only in Germany, where women who concur with an active father role also have a higher desired fertility (1.79) than those who accept a passive father role (1.64). No differences were ascertained for the other countries.

Men’s view of their roles in partnership and family certainly influence their desired fertility. Traditional gender attitudes and favouring an active father role go hand-in-hand with higher desired fertility. These do not appear at first glance to fit together. Modern attitudes towards gender arrangements do not increase desired fertility. A reversal of the roles, which is only conceivable for “new fathers”, is also linked to a positive attitude towards generative conduct.

6. Summary and discussion of the results

For a stocktake on fatherhood in our study we have used data from the Population Policy Acceptance Survey, an opinion poll on demographic development, family and gender perceptions, and on demographic policy measures. For analysis, we chose the areas male (self-)perception, the ideals for reconciliation of child-raising and family and the desired fertility of men and women. The article is devoted to a survey of the traditional attribution of gender roles. The main focus is on characterising perceptions of fathers and their influence on female employment and on desired fertility.

It is only partly possible to provide evidence for the theory that the “new father” is marching on. Germany and Austria show the greatest change in the perception of the sexes. In Germany, however, things are moving faster. It has already been pointed out (Dorbritz, Lengerer and Ruckdeschel 2005) that openness is predominant in the new German Federal Länder, hence influencing the overall result. The younger generation is increasingly prepared to question the male self-perception, in that a significant proportion of both men and women complain of work-related absence of fathers in the family. Traditional models of the division of tasks within the partnership also offer greater scope for negotiation as seen by the respondents. It can also be stated that women’s expectations towards men are changing more quickly. The “new father” is hence more demanded by women. The “cliché of the new man” as a replacement for the traditional male role is however rejected. There is certainly no desire to merely swap the roles. In Hungary and Italy, by contrast, a greater tendency is shown towards retaining conventional patterns of the division of labour between the sexes, in other words the male breadwinner/female homemaker model. However, the attitudes of women are more progressive here too.

The authors go on to presume the feministic hypothesis according to which women’s involvement in working life depends on the attribution of tasks in the family area. The detailed analyses target the role of men, firstly asking whether the lack or presence of partners/fathers influences women’s employment. For the data analysis, a life situation typology has been constructed which encompasses twelve groups differing in gender-specific terms according to characteristics (work situation, partner situation, children situation). For these groups, therefore, the real reconciliation situation, the ideals of the combination of family and work, and desired fertility, have been investigated.

The data analyses on the work situation first of all show that men’s employment status is virtually uninfluenced by children and by their partner situation. Men are as a rule in full-time employment regardless of their life situation, whilst women’s gainful employment depends heavily on their situation as regards children and a partner. The analyses have hence confirmed the feministic hypothesis according to which the presence of a father favours the traditional attribution of roles to women. It can be seen quite clearly that the presence of a partner impairs women’s employment, above all full-time employment. If there is a family, in particular the so-called “intact family”, this is connected with a traditional distribution of the duties in the reproductive and productive area. This result matches with

the findings of other studies on German couples testing the effects of partners on their wife's employment careers (e.g. Blossfeld, Drobnic and Rohwer 2001).

The differences between the different countries studied are considerable. The results show very clearly that the type of welfare regime has a major influence on the gender-specific role attribution in the area where family and work meet. A considerable influence is exerted in the conservative welfare states of Germany and Austria on the traditional attribution of roles to women. If there is no partner, the chances for women in particular to work full-time increases once more. For Finland indications can be found that the Nordic model is providing better opportunities for women to combine full-time employment and childcare. On the other hand Italian mothers show the same patterns like Finnish women. Actually this question can only be answered by elaborating the country specific structural conditions (e.g. childcare facilities). Moreover further research is necessary for Italy to interpret the huge disparities in ideal work-family constellations between Italian women and their partners. Also Hungary expresses views which are very different to the other countries. The employment patterns of Hungarian women (high unemployment rates) might be explained in the context of the unstable labour market situation.

The ideal of reconciliation of family and work which could only be tested for Germany and Italy reveals a strong desire on the part of women to be active in both areas. The highest degree of preference attaches to the variant of having children and working part-time. However, the variant of the three-phase model, leaving work as long as the children are small, also takes on a certain degree of significance. A major family-policy conclusion is found here. These results show that women do not have the "option" to try to reconcile their responsibility for childcare and the household with gainful employment. Due to a work-centered partner and furthermore structural constraints this is largely achieved via part-time employment.

Because of the highly-traditional role attributions observed in Germany, the degree of agreement between ideal and reality as to the work and children situation has been studied. A relatively high degree of agreement can be ascertained solely in the group of "part-time work/children". There are much more pronounced deviations, in particular as to the "full-time/children" model, between the ideal and reality. Put exclusively for traditionalistic Germany, this now confirms a negative effect of living together in families, permitting one to add to the starting hypothesis. "Intact" families (presence of a father) prevent the realisation of the ideal of "full-time work and children" among women. It should be mentioned that this result does not mean that it is easier for single mothers to realise their ideal of full-time work than for partnered mothers.

Various past studies have pointed to the negative trend in desired fertility, above all in the German-speaking area. This caused the authors to look at desired fertility from a gender perspective. Noticeably low desired fertility can be found in Germany with both sexes and among Austrian and Hungarian men. It is worth observing here the wish among men to remain childless, which is very

pronounced in Germany. In this respect, the PPAS confirms research results from other studies. Why the desired fertility of men and of women differs has not yet been the subject of sufficient research. Three explanations can be put forward. Firstly, men stay single or live without a partner longer than women, which might explain why more of them want to remain childless. Secondly, the increasing orientation towards gender equality has led to men coming into more intense contact with the problems of reconciliation of family and work, which might contribute to a fall in desired fertility. It was already shown (Tazi-Preve, Bichlbauer and Goujon 2004) that the traditional division of household labour is correlated with a negative wish of men for a (further) child, while an egalitarian partnership influences this wish positively. Thirdly, achieving desired fertility is a topic with which women talk about more intensively and more emotionally, also because of the shorter period of time available to achieve their ambitions in this area, which might lead to them wanting more children.

Desired fertility shows three noticeable tendential gender-related specifics. Firstly, the attribution of traditional roles to women in terms of their becoming housewives is accompanied by higher desired fertility. One may however also presume that this is a special group which holds traditional attitudes, only aspiring to achieve its desired fertility if work is discontinued. Secondly, a result which is significant in demographic and family-policy terms is that women working full-time in families with children are impaired in implementing their ideas of gainful employment, but that if they are successful in doing so, this does not have a negative influence on desired fertility. This leads to the conclusion that above all in the group of women who wish to reconcile work and family, the improvement of the reconciliation conditions permits one also to anticipate positive influences on desired fertility. Thirdly, it is noticeable that the absence of child(ren) and of a partner has a negative influence on desired fertility. The impact of childlessness can be explained as follows: Women who have no children, or who do not yet have children, are in general terms more strongly orientated towards work and career, and less so to partnership and family, something which correlates with lower desired fertility. The negative effect on desired fertility of not having a partner reveals the effort to achieve desired fertility in a partnership.

Another issue should be pointed out at this juncture. The connection between desired fertility and the birth rate is not considered in demographic research as being particularly close (Testa 2002). Nevertheless, desired fertility has a certain orientation function. It is now so low that it only is high enough in two countries to reach the replacement level if it is achieved in full (which is highly unlikely). This is the case for Finland, and for Hungarian women. In general, it appears that desired fertility is approaching the real low-fertility situation in Europe, and that this will also have consequences for family policy. The previous argument that the young population would like to have children and one only needed to improve the conditions to make the fertility desire implementable then no longer applies.

Our results however also show that fathers who can conceive of a role reversal as househusbands, in other words who can be referred to as “new fathers”, have much higher desired fertility. This applies in particular to Austria, as well as to Germany and Italy.

The conclusion of our investigation is hence ambivalent. Firstly, living in families with partner and children prevents women’s integration in the process of gainful employment. Secondly, desired fertility is higher in the social group where a traditional role allocation can be found, in which women do not work and have more traditional attitudes. Thirdly, new fathers have higher desired fertility. Desired fertility is hence to be found in a conflict between gender inequality and fertility, which can largely be only solved via a new understanding of the role of men/fathers. The comparably high desired fertility of women who successfully reconcile family and gainful employment, as well as that of active fathers, nevertheless permits one to take an optimistic view of the future, even if these groups are still relatively small.

Thus, there is scientific work to be done concerning the state of imbalance of power relations and power structures in the field of social and political structures. Demography should expand its concepts of „economy“ to include a more comprehensive understanding of the labour market and of work. Including a gender perspective (as a structural and procedural category) and a political perspective would open up the possibility to view fertility as an expression of the relation between women and men, the state, economy, and society.

References

- Arber, S. and Ginn, J. (1995). "The mirage of gender equality: occupational success in the labour market and within marriage". *British Journal of Sociology*, 46 (1): 21-43.
- Beauvoir, S. de. (1968). *Das andere Geschlecht*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Bly, R. (1993). *Eisenhans. Ein Buch über Männer*. München: Kindler.
- Beck-Gernsheim, E. (1985). *Vom Geburtenrückgang zur neuen Mütterlichkeit? Über private und politische Interessen am Kind*. Frankfurt a.M: Fischer Taschenbuch.
- Becker, G. (1981). *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benard, Ch. and Schlaffer, E. (1993). *Sagt uns, wo die Väter sind. Von Arbeitssucht und Fahnenflucht des zweiten Elternteils*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Blossfeld, H.P. and Drobnic, S. (2001). A Cross-National Comparative Approach to Couples' Career. In: Blossfeld, HP. and Drobnic, S., editors. *Careers of Couples in Contemporary Society*. New York: Oxford University Press: 3-15.
- Blossfeld, H.P., Drobnic, S. and Rohwer, G. (2001). Spouses' Employment Careers in (West) Germany. In: Blossfeld, H.P., Drobnic, S., editors. *Careers of Couples in Contemporary Society*. New York: Oxford University Press: 53-74.
- Boeven, H. (1988). Teilzeitbeschäftigte Männer und Hausmänner - eine neue Form partnerschaftlichen Zusammenlebens. In: Brähler, E. and Mayer, A., editors: *Partnerschaft, Sexualität und Fruchtbarkeit*. Beiträge aus Forschung und Praxis. Berlin: Springer Verlag: 33-45.
- Catles, F.G. and Mitchell, D. (1993). Worlds of Welfare and Families of Nations. In: Castles, FG., editor. *Families of Nations: Patterns of Public Policy in Western Democracies*. Aldershot: Dartmouth, 93 – 129.
- Cotts Watkins, S. (1993). „If all we knew about women was what we read in „Demography“, what would we know“?, In: *Demography*, Vol. 30, No. 4.
- Cyba, E. (2000). *Geschlecht und soziale Ungleichheit. Konstellationen der Frauenbenachteiligung*. Opladen: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Dermott, E. (2002). *Fathers' orientation to paid employment*. New Working Paper Series. London School of Economics. Gender Institute.
- Dorbritz J., Lengerer, A. and Ruckdeschel, K. (2005). *Einstellungen zu demographischen Trends und zu bevölkerungsrelevanten Politiken*. Ergebnisse der Population Policy Study in Deutschland. Schriftenreihe des Bundesinstitutes für Bevölkerungsforschung. Special Issue. Wiesbaden.
- Dorbritz, J. and Philipov, D. (2002). „Zur Struktur und Kontinuität regionaler Fertilitätsunterschiede in Westdeutschland nach der Wiedervereinigung“. *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, 27, 4: 427-463.
- Eckart, C. (1992). Suchbild Vater. Interpretationen des Tochter-Vater-Verhältnisses aus der Sicht der Töchter. *Psychoanalyse im Widerspruch*, 8: 7-24.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1993). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fahey, T. and Speder, Z. (2004). *Fertility and family issues in an enlarged Europe*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Geneva.

- Folbre, Nancy. Of patriarchy born: the political economy of fertility decisions“, *Feminist Studies*, 9 (2), 1983, 261-284.
- Gauthier, A.H. (1996). *The State and the Family. A Comparative Analysis of Family Policies in Industrialized Countries*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Garhammer, M. (1996). Auf dem Weg zu egalitären Geschlechterrollen? Familiäre Arbeitsteilung im Wandel. In: Buba, HP. and Schneider, N., editors. *Familie zwischen gesellschaftlicher Prägung und individuellem Design*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag: 319 – 336.
- Gisser, R., editor. (2003). *Population Policy Acceptance Survey (PPA II). Familie, Geschlechterverhältnis, Alter und Migration. Wissen, Einstellungen und Wünsche der Österreicherinnen und Österreicher*. Tabellenband und Zusammenfassung ausgewählter Ergebnisse. Forschungsbericht Nr. 25. Institute for Demography. Austrian Institute for Family Research. Vienna.
- Guttentag, M. and Secord, PF. (1983). Too many women? The Sex Ratio Question. Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publication.
- Hobson, B., editor (2002). Making Men into Fathers. *Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood*. Cambridge UK: University Press.
- Hollstein, W. (2004). *Geschlechterdemokratie*. Männer und Frauen: Besser miteinander leben. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Irwin, S. (1999). Resourcing the Family. Gendered Claims and Obligations and Issues of Explanations. In: Silva, E.B. and Smart, C., editors. *The New family?*, Thousand Oaks, London, 31 – 45.
- König, I., Amesberger, H. and Demel, K. (1996). *Nebenjob Vater und Hausmann. Betriebliche Strukturen und gesellschaftliche Arbeitsteilung*. Studie im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Frauenangelegenheiten und des Bundesministeriums für Jugend, Familie und Umwelt. Vienna.
- Leibowitz, A. and Klerman, JA. (1995). “Explaining changes in Married Mothers’ Employment over Time”. *Demography*, 32 (3): 365 – 378.
- Leube, K. (1989). Neue Männer, neue Väter – neue Mythen? In: Deutsches Jugendinstitut, editor. *Wie geht’s der Familie?* Ein Handbuch zur Situation der Familien heute: München: Kösel Verlag: 145-154.
- Marschik, M. and Dorer, J. (2001). “Kritische Männerforschung. Entstehung, Verhältnis zur feministischen Forschung, Kritik”. *SWS Rundschau*, 1: 5-16.
- Matzner, M. (2004). *Vaterschaft aus der Sicht von Vätern*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- McDonald, Peter. 2000. Gender Equity in Theories of Fertility Transition. *Population and Development Review* 26 (3): 427-439.
- McRae, S. (1997). “Household and labour market change: implications for the growth of inequality in Britain”. *British Journal of Sociology*, 48 (3): 384-405.
- Mitscherlich, A. (1973). *Auf dem Weg zur vaterlosen Gesellschaft*. Munich: Piper.
- Neyer, G. 2000. Gender and the Welfare State. In: Workshop „Gender Relations, Family and Work“. Solicited Papers and Country Reports. NIEPS, September 15-16, 2000, Czechia. 25-30.

- Novy, K. and Adam, G. (1998). *Von Spielgefährten, Arbeitstieren, Sportlern und anderen Vätern*. Wie Kinder ihre Väter erleben und wie Väter sich selbst sehen. Bericht zur Lage der Kinder 1998. Vienna.
- Pfau-Effinger, B. (2001). "Wandel wohlfahrtsstaatlicher Geschlechterpolitiken im soziokulturellen Kontext". *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*. Special issue 41, 53: 487 – 511.
- Rosenberger, S. (1995). Auswirkungen sozialpolitischer Maßnahmen auf die Gestaltung der Geschlechterverhältnisse. In: Bundesministerium für Frauenangelegenheiten/ Bundeskanzleramt, editor. Bericht über die Situation der Frauen in Österreich. Frauenbericht 1995, Vienna: 387 - 397.
- Schneider, W. (1989). *Die neuen Väter – Chancen und Risiken*. Zum Wandel der Vaterrolle in Familie und Gesellschaft. Augsburg.
- Stechhammer, B. (1981). *Der Vater als Interaktionspartner des Kindes*. Ein pädagogischer Beitrag zur Erfassung sozialer Bedingtheiten des väterlichen Interaktionsverhaltens. Frankfurt a.M: Haag und Herchen.
- Tazi-Preve, I., Bichlbauer, D. and Goujon, A. (2004). "Gender Trouble and Its Impact on Fertility Intentions". *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland*, 40: 5-24.
- Testa, M.R. (2002). *Eurobarometer 56.2. Attitudes of Europeans towards fertility: Ideals, desires, intentions and realizations*. Survey organised and managed by European Opinion Research Group EEIG. Unpublished paper. Vienna.
- Werneck, H. (1998). *Übergang zur Vaterschaft*. Auf der Suche nach den „Neuen Vätern“. Vienna-New York: Springer Verlag.
- Zulehner, P. editor. (2003). *MannsBilder*. Ein Jahrzehnt Männerentwicklung. Im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz. Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag.